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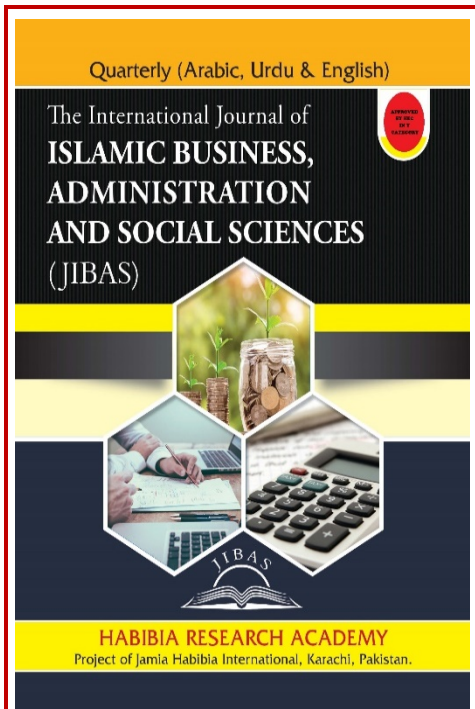
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**TOPIC:**  
**UKRAINE: THE DILEMMA OF THE "GATE OF EUROPE"**

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**UKRAINE: THE DILEMMA OF THE "GATE OF EUROPE"**

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**ABSTRACT:**

*Europe has been caught up in a new round of security crises since 2021, when Russia built up heavy troops on its border with Ukraine. The West speculated that Russia would launch an attack on Ukraine, the media exaggerated the imminent war, and major think tanks began to pay attention to Russia's strategic intentions and trends. The United States and major European powers responded to the crisis through diplomatic and military means. Known as the "Gate of Europe", Ukraine fought against Russia in 2013-2014. Now it has once again become the focus of global geopolitics, and its fate has attracted international attention. This article will discuss NATO "opportunities" that exacerbate the international security dilemma and China's strategic choices that will not end the unstoppable geopolitical dilemma. The other part will show the unsuccessful course of the modern state in the Ukraine crisis, and will also enlighten the Russian-Ukrainian conflict; the dual security dilemma. Finally the fate of the gates of Europe: bridges or a barrier?*

**KEYWORDS:** security crises, Economic Belt, imminent war, strategic intentions, global geopolitics.

**INTRODUCTION: "Gate of Europe" History of Ukraine in 2000**

Ukraine, located on the fault line of civilizations on the western edge of the Eurasian steppe, was born when the East and the West met, and for many centuries was the gateway to Europe. When wars and conflicts came, the closed door of Europe became a barrier against invaders from east or west, and when the door of Europe opened, Ukraine became a hub connecting Europe and Asia, East and West. Beginning in the time of Herodotus, the land of Ukraine has witnessed the rise and fall of empires for two thousand years and has undergone many changes in the world order. Sedentary and nomadic, Orthodox and Catholic... Here different civilizations come into contact, shaping Ukraine's unique frontier identity. It was the breadbasket of Europe, and at one point it became a battlefield for killing. From the Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire, from the Habsburgs to the Romanovs, and even Hitler's Third Reich, every empire demanded Ukraine's land and wealth to leave its mark on the land. To this day, Ukraine remains the focal point of a conflict of power between the East and the West. Without understanding the complex forces that have shaped Eastern Europe for two millennia, it is impossible to see the current turmoil affecting the world. Ploki, Dean of the Ukrainian Institute at Harvard University, wrote with sympathetic understanding of the two thousand years that the Gate of Europe has experienced and witnessed, filling the missing piece of the puzzle in order to understand the past, present and future of the East and the West.

**Ill-fated history:** The history of Ukraine becoming a modern independent country is only more than 30 years, but there have been historical dramas on its land that still have a profound impact on the national movement of Ukraine. Today, the land of Ukraine used to be the homeland of many ethnic groups. Ukrainians, Russians, Poles, Jews, Tatars, Belarusians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, Germans, Romanians, etc. lived here for a long time. Ukrainian soil is also at the crossroads of different cultures, where Orthodox, Catholic, Orthodox, Judaism and Islam spread. This land has seen the formation and destruction of civilizations, the fusion and conflict of nations, the rise and disintegration of empires, the rise and turn of revolutions, and the decline and revival of cultures. In the

Middle Ages, the Ukrainian land used to be called "Ruthenia". It was not until the 16th century that Ukraine was widely used as a region name, when it meant "the border region of the Kingdom of Poland" ("Ukraine" in Slavic means "edge", "frontier" and "frontier"). In a sense, the history of Ukraine is the history of the people living in that land who continued to find their own identity. According to the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, the ancient nomadic Scythians inhabited Ukrainian lands as early as centuries BC. They did business with the Greeks and fought with the Persians. At a time when ancient civilizations were eclipsed, the Slavs took to the stage of history. Ukraine is also known as "the cradle of the Eastern Slavs". In 862 AD, the Eastern Slavs established the Rurik dynasty, the first Rus kingdom in Novgorod, and later occupied Kyiv and established Kievan Rus. In 988 Kievan Rus Grand Duke Vladimir was baptized and accepted Christianity from the Byzantine Empire as the state religion.

The conversion of Kievan Rus to Christianity had a profound impact on modern Russia, Ukraine and other countries. However, historians are not without controversy over who is the real heir to the mantle of Kievan Rus. Ukraine sees Vladimir's baptism as the beginning of its history and claims to be the sole heir to Kievan Rus' culture and institutions, while Russians firmly believe that only Russia has the right to inherit Kievan Rus' heritage. According to Russia, after the Mongols retreated, the population of Kievan Rus moved northeast, taking its culture and institutions with it, and Kievan Rus brilliantly reborn in the Grand Duchy of Moscow.

Kievan Rus fell apart in the 11th century AD. In 1237, Mongol Batu led his army to swept the Urals and entered Rus. In 1240 the Mongol army occupied Kyiv and took control of the area. In 1299 Kyiv lost its status as a regional religious center. For the next 500 years, Kyiv fell into decline. In 1363, Archduke Algirdas of Lithuania led his army to defeat the Golden Horde at the Battle of Blue Water. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania occupied about half of ancient Rus, expanding its territory from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. In 1386, Grand Duke Jagiellon of Lithuania converted to Christianity, married Queen Jadwiga of Poland, and was crowned King of Poland. Ukraine thus established links with Poland that lasted for hundreds of years. In 1494, Kyiv gained autonomy from Lithuania. In 1569, Lithuania and Poland signed an agreement to establish the "Lublin Union". The formed Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became a major power in Europe at that time, controlling what is now Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia and western Russia from the 16th century to the end of the 18th century. Territories, the people living on Ukrainian soil are called "Ruthenians".

In 1648, Khmelnytsky led the Zaporozhye Cossacks to revolt, broke away from Poland and established the Cossack Emirate. In 1654, the Cossack Emirate signed an alliance with Tsarist Russia. Tsarist Russia gave the Cossack Emirate autonomy, and the Cossack Emirate pledged allegiance to the Tsar and obtained protection. Then the Polish-Russian War broke out. In 1658, the Cossack chieftain Worhoftsky and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth signed the "Hajachi Treaty" in an attempt to transform the Poly Commonwealth into the Commonwealth of Poland, Lithuania and Ruthenia. In 1667, Russia and Poland signed the Andrewsov Armistice Agreement, dividing Ukrainian lands along the Dnieper River, Russia obtained the "left bank Ukraine" (the east bank of the Dnieper River), and Poland controlled the "right bank Ukraine" (the west bank of the Dnieper River). Ukrainians see this period of history from 1648 to 1667 as a period of

Ukrainian resistance against Polish oppression, while Russians see this history as the moment when "the lost Ukrainian stream returns to the Great Russian River". Later, Mazepa, the chief of the Cossack Emirate, was dissatisfied with the unequal alliance between his country and Tsarist Russia, and turned to Sweden and tried to achieve the unification of the Ukrainian land. In July 1709, Czarist Peter I led the army to defeat Sweden in Poltava, which not only ended Sweden's status as the dominant power in northern Europe, but also marked the collapse of Cossack autonomy.

The Poly Commonwealth was divided among the Russian Empire, the Prussian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1772, 1793 and 1795. Among them, Ukrainian land was divided between Russia and Austria. Russia acquired the territory of "Right Bank Ukraine" and established the Voron, Podoliya and Kyiv provinces. Austria gained Galicia and Lodomeria. From the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century, Ukrainian lands were part of two empires, the Austrian Empire (later Austria-Hungary) and the Russian Empire. Within the Russian Empire, the people on the east and west banks of the Dnieper were called "Little Russians", and this region was called "Little Russia". And many more people on Ukrainian soil consider themselves "Ruthenians".

In the 19th century, with the rise of Ukrainian nationalism, the Ukrainian intellectual elite wrote in Ukrainian, and the poet Shevchenko became a banner figure. But it wasn't until the late 19th century that the concept of the Ukrainian nation and the word "Ukraine" as a proper name began to emerge, marking the local rejection of "Little Russia" and "Ruthenia." In order to curb Ukrainian nationalism, in 1863 the Minister of the Interior of the Russian Empire, Baluyev, issued a decree prohibiting publications in Ukrainian languages other than literary works. The 1876 decree extended the publication ban to literary works and also prohibited the import of Ukrainian language works from abroad. Austria-Hungary supported the rise of Ukrainian nationalism, and Ukrainian-language publications could legally be published there. The Ukrainian intellectual elite devoted to the creation and development of Ukrainian literature, theatre and music in Austria.

**NATO's "opportunity" will only exacerbate the international security dilemma:**

With Russia's recognition of the independent status of the two "republics" in eastern Ukraine, the United States and Europe have imposed a new round of severe sanctions on Russia, and the Ukraine crisis has reached a turning point. The Ukrainian crisis is not just a problem between Russia and Ukraine, but consists of several contradictions: the sovereign territorial dispute between Russia and Ukraine, the competition for the dominance of European security affairs between the United States, Russia and major European countries, the security of NATO and Russia Concept and security range battle. In these two relations, NATO is a core factor. It is not only the main tool for the West to solve the Ukraine problem, but also an important source of the intensification of the Ukraine crisis.

At the end of the Cold War, neither the US nor European members of NATO immediately saw the need for NATO expansion, and even began to discuss the need for NATO to exist. Major European countries have begun to seriously consider a European security framework without the United States, at least not unilaterally dependent on the United States, among which Germany is particularly active. In Germany's view, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the vast space between Germany and Russia is its own economic and strategic opportunity, and it does not want to share it with other countries. But the crisis in

the former Yugoslavia exposed the security vulnerabilities of European countries, giving NATO a chance to survive and expand. NATO was first expanded in March 1999 to include the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

The eastward expansion of NATO has at least three effects: Germany has changed from the front to the rear, the European part of NATO has gradually increased, and the strategic conflict between NATO and Russia has become increasingly intensified. At the Bucharest summit in April 2008, Croatia and Albania were invited to join NATO. The United States also said that Ukraine and Georgia will eventually join NATO. In this case, Russia is determined to counter NATO's expansion momentum. In August 2008, Russia attacked Georgia under the pretext of the South Ossetia issue, and temporarily froze the possibility of Georgia joining NATO.

Ukrainian issues are far more important and sensitive than Georgia's. Ukraine has long been regarded as the "Gate of Europe" and the main gateway between Russia and the West. Ukraine has thus become the country that has been mired in the deepest geopolitical quagmire since the Cold War. The superposition of domestic and foreign contradictions has reduced Ukraine from a developed republic in the Soviet era to one of the most backward former republics of the Soviet Union. The long-term stagnation and regression of the social economy, and the fact that all factions in Ukraine are looking for reasons from each other, make the differences within Ukraine gradually evolve into differences, contradictions and conflicts. Pro-Russian and pro-Western forces took turns playing, giving external forces the opportunity to intervene and manipulate. At the end of 2013, pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich suspended ties with the EU and free trade agreements, arousing dissatisfaction with pro-Western forces, and was overthrown and resigned as a result. Feeling that the momentum of Ukraine's inversion to the West was unstoppable, Russia adjusted its long-standing strategy of political and economic competition with the West in Ukraine, and took back Crimea in March 2014. A few days later, Europe and Ukraine signed a landmark association and free trade agreement, and militias in eastern Ukraine officially raised the banner of independence.

The United States and Europe agree on protecting Ukraine's sovereignty, but disagree on how to treat Russia. After the Crimea incident, the United States and Europe came to different conclusions: the United States believed that the pressure on Russia was not enough, and the alliance system was not united, giving Russia a chance. European countries, especially France and Germany, believe that Russia should not be overly provocative on this sensitive issue and should communicate and negotiate with Russia. European countries have long dominated the mediation process involving the conflict in eastern Ukraine. The United States was absent from the two Minsk agreements. The sudden intensification of the Ukraine crisis has also disproved the powerlessness of European countries on security issues. European security affairs are back in the old pattern of confrontation with Russia and NATO domination of the West.

The eastward expansion of NATO and the intensification of the Ukrainian crisis are actually a process of mutual cause and effect. If judged by a single principle such as sovereignty, the result will be very clear. But many events in the international community are often not so simple. The principle of sovereignty is the foundation of today's international order. On this basis, each country also needs to choose a path and direction according to its own national conditions and international environment. Ukraine is in the

cracks of geopolitical competition and deep ethnic and cultural divisions, neither big enough to hold its own destiny, nor small enough to be ignored to gain diplomatic freedom. If such countries fall to any party and get close to any party, they will face strong international and domestic reaction forces, and problems may arise. The Ukraine crisis has had a series of consequences: Ukraine has been damaged, Russia has become more isolated, the security autonomy of European countries has been weakened, and the status of the United States and NATO has become more prominent. Therefore, the Ukraine crisis is not only a problem for Ukraine, but also a problem for the international community. From the perspective of international law, Ukraine has the right to decide its own domestic and foreign affairs. From the perspective of international security, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the continued existence and expansion of NATO will lead to further imbalances in the international security pattern, which has become a major threat to international security. In this way, Ukraine's sovereign rights are superimposed on the problems of the international community.

This has put many countries in a dilemma: neither wanting to see the Russian-Ukrainian crisis intensify, nor sitting by and watching NATO continue to expand. This alternative could have been avoided. From a historical and practical point of view, a domestically reconciled and internationally neutral Ukraine that continues to act as the "gate to Europe" rather than becoming a contested geopolitical barrier between Russia and the West is the best choice for Ukraine. Only in this way can the international community be freed from the entanglement between sovereign rights and international security.

**Ukraine crisis, hegemony is the root of all evil:** No one would have thought that 2022 would start in such a form. Years of history and political grievances have fueled the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The European security crisis caused by the conflict is spreading and expanding, triggering more humanitarian crises, refugee crises, sanctions crises, energy crises, financial crises, and supply chain crises. In this tragedy, the Ukrainian people who are deeply involved in the war are sympathetic, and the sanctioned Russian people are sympathetic. They are all victims.

English poet Wei? Shen Stone said, "War bleeds the majority of people, but fattens the minority." Whoever eats human blood steamed buns to fatten himself, who does not put out fires and pick up troubles without worrying about them, Who is the one who tied European countries to chariots and created a security dilemma? Hegemony is the root of all evil. In times of fear and grief, European countries should remain sober and calm, see the truth and essence, ease crises and conflicts, prevent hegemonic conspiracies from succeeding, and open up a path for peace and security. Injustice has its head, and debt has its owner. As early as more than 80 years ago, the famous British international relations scholar Edward? Carr reminded people, "We should be clear that the United States is a master of the art of using the cloak of kindness to cover up their selfish national interests." Who is the initiator of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict? It is the hegemonic country - the United States. Ukraine is known as the "Gate of Europe". As a country with excellent geographical location, resource endowment and excellent industrial foundation, Ukraine can develop as a European hub. However, it has become the poorest country in Europe, the forefront of NATO's eastward expansion, and a color revolution. How can it not make people feel embarrassed?

In the early days of Ukraine's independence, a relatively balanced policy was pursued. However, the United States supported the instigation of the "Orange Revolution" in 2004 and the "Square Revolution" in 2014, subverting the legitimate regime and pushing a pro-Western line, causing political divisions in the eastern and western regions of Ukraine. The geopolitical situation between Russia and Europe has deteriorated sharply. The United States fanned the flames, and European countries worked hard to put out the fire. After the crisis in eastern Ukraine in 2014, Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine negotiated many times and signed two Minsk agreements in an effort to de-escalate the situation.

Naturally, the United States would not be reconciled. Not only did it not join the Minsk Agreement, it continued to cheer up the anti-Russian and pro-Western forces in Ukraine, and it also pushed the conflict in eastern Ukraine to escalate. Russia and Ukraine are really fighting now. The United States is taking advantage of the conflict. Watching Europe is burning with anxiety, watching Russia fall into the abyss of sanctions, watching the Ukrainian artillery fire, neither sending a single soldier nor going to save people, exquisite. The face of the self-serving "scumbag" is exposed. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said sadly and indignantly: "Ukraine is fighting alone now, and the West has completely abandoned Ukraine." In fact, the United States initially intervened in Russia-Ukraine relations to provoke a conflict between Russia and Ukraine, trying to drag Russia to death and trap it. Death in Ukraine, as for the life and death of the Ukrainian people, the United States does not care, nor does it care. There are two fundamentally different paths for human peace and security. One is the so-called "hegemonic stability theory" and the other is the "common security theory".

Since the 20th century, the European continent has experienced World War I, World War II, and the Cold War. It was on the ruins of Europe that the United States "achieved" its hegemony. On the one hand, Europe has to rely on the U.S. military hegemony represented by NATO, and on the other hand, it seeks every opportunity to achieve European self-owned common security. In 1975, at the height of the Cold War, and when the US hegemony suffered setbacks and had to retreat, under the leadership of European countries, the West and the Soviet Union signed the Helsinki Agreement, established the European Security Organization, and established that "security is indivisible". Principles such as "common security" and "comprehensive security". After the end of the Cold War, history was forced to change course, and the United States completely hijacked the European security agenda. Russia's proposal to join NATO has been rejected four times. The United States needs to find an imaginary enemy for the legitimacy of its hegemony - Russia. In 2001, the United States withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, concocting Europe's beggar-thy-neighbor security dilemma step by step. Since 1999, the United States has promoted the eastward expansion of NATO five times, pushing the border more than 1,000 kilometers eastward, bringing a large number of Eastern European countries into its account, dividing the interior of Europe, using the new Europe to balance the old Europe, and also extending its borders to the CIS such as Ukraine and Georgia. The country made a promise of eastward expansion, and the tip of the knife reached the Russian border.

Under a series of operations by the United States, the Helsinki Process was cut in half, and the inseparable concept of common security was smashed. Russia, Ukraine, and other European countries became prisoners in the security dilemma, fighting with each other, while the United States "handed knives" aside. . Former U.S. Rep. Gabbard said in a recent

interview that Biden could easily prevent a war by simply promising not to admit Ukraine to NATO, but they didn't. One is that once a war breaks out between Russia and Ukraine, the United States will have a clear excuse to impose severe sanctions on Russia; the other is that the military-industrial complex that controls the Biden administration will make a fortune from the war. NATO, which has been expanding eastward in the name of "security", has been trying to keep Europe permanently torn apart from the very beginning. Only Europe, which is never safe, can follow the United States with all its might and give the United States one order after another. As for the security of Europe, that is also the case. not important. The Ukraine crisis is just one episode in a series about the global security crisis written and directed by the United States. Looking back at history and looking at the world, it was the United States that started wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and other countries, remotely controlled the "Arab Spring" in Asia and Africa, directed "color revolutions" in Eurasian countries, and promoted "new" in Latin America. The Monroe Doctrine", engaged in coups, assassinations, and "peaceful evolution" around the world, undermining the global order and threatening human peace.

Norm? Chomsky, Robert? Kagan and other well-known American scholars have pointed out more than once that the United States has become a "rogue superpower". Even more alarming is that when the superpower begins to decline, the rogue nature will be more dangerous. American Cold War historian John? In "The Long Peace," Cadiz argues that hegemony begins to decline as a dangerous time, before material power is exhausted, it will behave strangely and even desperately.

The United States is like an aging tyrant in the power game who cannot control power. It is extremely selfish and suspicious of everything. It pretends to be fair and plays with contradictions. The real heart of the tyrant is not in Ukraine, the more sinister conspiracy is in Asia. The "rogue superpower" has been deliberately creating a security crisis in Asia and disrupting the region before China's rise. In 2010, the United States proposed "returning to Asia", and suddenly raised the South China Sea issue at the ASEAN Regional Forum to attack China; in 2012, the United States launched an upgraded version of "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing", provoking the Philippines and China to confront China on Huangyan Island, and single-handedly concocted the South China Sea arbitration. The case advocated the defense of the Diaoyu Islands against Japan; last month, the United States released a new version of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy", which felt like a return to the Cold War and the 19th century power struggle for hegemony. In the report, the "Five Eyes Alliance", "Quadrilateral Mechanism" and "Trilateral Security Partnership" have intensified, using the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework" to exclude China's supply chain, and incorporating "Taiwan to control China" into the regional strategy to encourage allies to work together. Support "Taiwan independence".

We can deduce that in the near future, more nuclear submarines will cruise in the depths of the South China Sea, more warships will run rampant in the Taiwan Strait, and more economic and trade barriers will be established between Asia-Pacific countries. Lin Li. The "Indo-Pacific Strategy" is the Asian version of NATO's eastward expansion. The purpose of the United States is to create a Cold War, cobble together NATO, and contain China. It is to trump ASEAN's status, undermine regional cooperation, provoke regional conflicts, and create another Iraq, Afghanistan, and Ukraine in Asia. America's wolf ambitions are clear. As for security and peace in Asia, the United States does not care or care. Hegemony

is the root of evil and the source of all security crises, while the security community is the right way out and a bright road to get out of the security dilemma. No matter Asia or Europe, the basic principles of security are the same. Security cannot be enjoyed exclusively, but only shared. You cannot win or lose, only win-win cooperation. With a lot of money, only regional countries can firmly control their own destiny.

The Ukrainian crisis is still evolving, the eastward expansion must be stopped, the conflict should be resolved, and dialogue is the way out. European security is not a dream. As long as a balanced, effective and sustainable European security framework is built, Europe will surely become a continent of peace and prosperity. The same is true for Asia-Pacific security. The key is to remove the hegemonic haze of the "Indo-Pacific strategy" and the ghosts of the Cold War, and build a new regional security architecture featuring peaceful coexistence, symbiosis, and win-win cooperation. Bismarck said that in the 19th century, "British policy was to find fools in Europe who would use their bodies to defend British interests". Today, in the 21st century, "Britain" has been replaced by "America". But people can't be too sophisticated, they can't do things absolutely, treat other countries as fools and cannon fodder, drive into safety traps, and they will eventually set themselves on fire.

**The unsuccessful course of the modern state:** The First World War led to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. After the October Revolution, the People's Republic of Ukraine and the People's Republic of West Ukraine ("Lviv") were established on Ukrainian soil. From the end of 1918 to August 1921, the Red Army fought against the White Army, Polish Army, Ukrainian Army and Cossack peasant armed forces for the liberation of Ukraine. In 1922, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic joined the Soviet Union, after which the Soviet Union implemented a localization policy to encourage the use of the Ukrainian language. By 1931, 89% of Ukraine's newspapers were published in Ukrainian, and 97% of primary school students studied Ukrainian. In 1932 the Soviet Union changed its policy. From 1932 to 1933, the Great Famine devastated Ukraine. World War II killed 8 million Ukrainians, mostly civilians, and 1.5 million Jews from Ukraine were victims of the Holocaust. In 1954, the Soviet Union annexed the Crimea region to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. During the Soviet period, Ukraine was the Soviet Union's agricultural, steel, and military production base, as well as the location of the Black Sea Fleet and the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Also unforgettable for Ukrainians is the Chernobyl nuclear accident in April 1986.

In 1991 the Soviet Union was precarious, and the building would collapse. After the 8.19 incident, Ukraine declared independence on August 24. On December 26 of the same year, the Soviet Union officially disintegrated. After independence Ukraine was committed to political and economic transformation and state-building. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine became a de facto nuclear state. In 1994, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia signed the "Budapest Memorandum" with Ukraine. Ukraine offered security guarantees in exchange for denuclearization, and all countries respected Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and borders. In the 30 years since Ukraine's independence, the country has been captured by oligarchs and other vested interest groups, and a stable and mature political system has not been formed, and the task of building a country has not yet been completed. In 2004, the electoral dispute between pro-Russian politicians and pro-Western politicians triggered the "Orange Revolution", and in 2013-2014, the "Plaza Revolution" broke out due to President Yanukovich's refusal to sign the agreement with

the EU, which eventually led to the Crimea. Asia was incorporated into Russia, and eastern Ukraine became a conflict zone.

Ukraine is not only a shaper of its own history, but also to a certain extent Russia's history. During the period of the Russian Empire there were concepts of "Great Russia", "Little Russia" and "Belarus". The different historical narratives of Ukraine and Russia have become a factor affecting Ukrainian-Russian relations. In 2003, then-Ukrainian President Kuchma published the book "Ukraine is not Russia". In 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin published a long article "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians", emphasizing that Russians and Ukrainians are "the same nation" and that modern Ukraine is a product of the Soviet Union. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky claimed that it is difficult to think of any brotherhood between Russians and Ukrainians.

**Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Dual Security Dilemma and China's Strategic Choice:**

At present, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is still going on, and the crisis and turmoil caused by it are still fermenting. There are both complex historical latitudes and latitudes that lead to this tragedy, as well as multiple security dilemmas. The lessons the conflict has brought to the world deserves reflection by every peace-loving person, and the common security logic and global security concept behind China's position and proposition also need to be better understood and used for reference by all parties. The continuous escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is caused by the superimposed resonance of two classic security dilemmas. One is the "Prisoner's Dilemma". In a state of anarchy, countries will pursue national security out of self-interested motives. Focusing only on one's own security rather than common security often results in a surge in the insecurity of relevant parties, and takes corresponding measures to enhance their own security, and finally falls into a vicious circle of "every party pursues security but becomes increasingly insecure". This is evident in the situation in Ukraine. The eastward expansion of NATO has brought Russia a strong sense of insecurity, but the United States and the West have ignored such security concerns for a long time, until it touches Russia's strategic bottom line. Against the background that NATO's eastward expansion could not be stopped through negotiations, Russia tried to achieve this goal through aggressive military means. The result was an escalation of insecurity and a loss of control. Eventually, the war broke out and Russia's security environment further deteriorated. Today, this vicious cycle continues. Security is not absolute, but relative, it is not only a kind of ability, but also a state. If we cannot break through the limitations of traditional Western security thinking, consider security issues from the point of view of common security, and fully accommodate the reasonable security concerns of all parties, the security paradox of the "Prisoner's Dilemma" will be difficult to resolve.

Another is the "Game of the Coward" dilemma. With the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, with NATO and Ukraine on one side and Russia on the other side, both sides have increased deterrence and exerted extreme pressure in pursuit of victory. Russia has resorted to nuclear deterrence, while the United States has used a "nuclear bomb" in the financial sector, threatening to kick Russia out of the SWIFT system, and cooperating with some countries to impose the most brutal economic sanctions on Russia. The two sides are like two racing cars rushing towards each other, depending on which side can't hold the steering wheel first. At present, neither side is willing to compromise, nor do both hope to end in their own victory. As a responsible major country, what China needs to do is to persuade

peace and promote talks, ease tensions, and bring the two sides back to the negotiating table, so as to prevent either party from making desperate attempts in this extreme confrontation, which will lead to the realization of extreme deterrence measures.

The Chinese government has upheld the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. The purpose is to prevent the world from falling into the trap of a new Cold War and to prevent the "tragedy of the commons" from happening under the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

Although the Cold War has long since passed, the problems left over from the Cold War have not been effectively resolved, and have become the focus of today's world peace and development. The Ukrainian crisis is also related to this. The Cold War ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the new Russia can be said to be the "terminator of the Cold War" to a certain extent. The United States, however, sees this win without a fight as a victory for its containment policy and treats Russia with the attitude of a defeated country. After the Cold War, the United States has always aimed to prevent the resurgence of the Soviet Union as its strategic goal, restricting and weakening Russia, promoting the eastward expansion of NATO, and eroding Russia's geo-security space. As a legacy of the Cold War, NATO's historical mission should have ended with the end of the Cold War, but the United States has used it as a tool to promote hegemonic expansion. Europe's strategic autonomy has been greatly restricted by the existence of NATO, and a stable European security framework has never been established. The crisis in Ukraine also raises the risk that the world will plunge into a new Cold War. Although the United States has spared no effort to exert diplomatic pressure and hope that China will join the sanctions against Russia, it has always tied China and Russia in international public opinion, carried out political smears, kept stirring up the flames on the Taiwan issue, and continued to hype China as the number one strategic threat to the West. The US hopes to use the crisis to strengthen Europe's strategic dependence on the US, and its motivation to transform "Western solidarity" into a strategic deterrent force against China is evident. In this Russia-Ukraine conflict, China opposes both the hot war and the new cold war. It emphasizes respecting the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, and opposing the tendency of the world to "camp-confrontation". and cooperation to solve problems, firmly support Europe's strategic independence, and firmly support the establishment of a balanced, effective and sustainable European security framework based on Europe's own interests.

The radiation effects of the security dilemma are comprehensive. The Ukraine crisis not only exacerbates major power conflicts and confrontations, but also exacerbates the "tragedy of the commons" and global security governance issues. At present, this crisis is spreading to the fields of economy, finance, diplomacy, people's livelihood and so on. Derivative security crises such as food crisis, energy crisis and industrial chain crisis are coming one after another. All countries in the world need to work together to solve the crisis, and also need to be "people-oriented", pay attention to and help innocent people in war from the perspective of preventing humanitarian crises, adhere to the bottom-line thinking, and prevent the crisis from spreading and threats from expanding. Based on this, China has put forward a "six-point initiative", and China's overall national security concept and common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable global security concept may be

able to solve the current security dilemma and promote sustainable global security governance. Lessons learned.

A slap didn't make a sound, and everyone gathered firewood with a high flame. In the face of the interweaving of the epidemic of the century and the changes of the century, and the resonance of non-traditional security and traditional security issues, the world has come to another strategic crossroads. In this crisis, China's strategic choice is very important, but what is more important is the common understanding and common choice of all countries in the world. After the painful lessons of World War I, World War II and the Cold War, how can we prevent the next world war? How do we update the security concept, break the shackles of traditional thinking, and solve the current security dilemma and emerging security problems? How can we think about national security issues from the perspective of the needs of the times and the common needs of mankind, so as to promote a safer development of the world? The answer lies in this crisis, and even more outside of this crisis.

**Unstoppable geopolitical dilemma:** Ukraine is located between the West and Russia, and its geopolitical choices have attracted the attention of major international actors such as major powers. In terms of area, Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe after Russia. Ukraine was once a hub for Russia's energy supply to Europe, but the completion of the Nord Stream-2 natural gas pipeline has weakened its position in Europe's energy supply. The unique geographical location makes Ukraine an important country that influences the geopolitical landscape of Eurasia. Ukraine, the second largest republic in the Soviet Union, played a key role in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Independent Ukraine has become a sensitive area of geopolitics in Eurasia. In 1996, the then British Foreign Secretary Rifkind said: "Ukraine is a strategic hub in Europe and will determine the future prosperity and security of the (European) continent." In 1997, Brzezinski, a well-known American geopolitical expert, believed that, "Ukraine is a new and important place on the Eurasian chessboard. Its existence as an independent state helps to transform Russia, so it is a geopolitical pivot state. Without Ukraine, Russia would no longer be a Eurasian empire. Russia without Ukraine can still claim imperial status, but builds basically an Asian empire and is more likely to be drawn into conflict with awakened Central Asians and pay a heavy price"; "If Moscow regains control With a population of 52 million, vital resources and access to the Black Sea, Russia will naturally regain the capital to build a powerful trans-Eurasian empire. The loss of Ukraine's independence will immediately affect Central Europe, turning Poland into a geopolitical arm of the eastern frontier of integration Axis Country". Whether Ukraine can maintain its independence will not only directly affect Russia, but also central European countries such as Poland. After the enlargement of the EU and NATO, Ukraine became a de facto buffer zone between Russia and Europe. As early as March 2014, when Russia made moves in Crimea, Brzezinski said that if Russia is ready to seize Crimea, it will eventually have Crimea, and Ukraine will lose it forever. Crimea will never forgive Russia. After the crisis of Ukraine-Russia relations in 2013-2014, Ukraine's geopolitical choice became clearer. In 2019, participation in European integration and "Euro-Atlantic integration" was written into Ukraine's constitution as a national development vision.

The current escalation of tensions between Russia and Ukraine stems from the failure of the post-Cold War European security structure to take into account Russia's security concerns and to establish a fair and inclusive peace order. With the end of the Cold War, the Warsaw Pact, a military alliance led by the Soviet Union, was dissolved, while NATO led by the United States did not withdraw from the stage of history. After five rounds of expansion in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2017 and 2020, NATO has become the dominant security structure in Europe. So far, 14 Central and Eastern European countries have joined NATO. The West and Russia's European security concepts are completely different. The West emphasizes a "complete, free and peaceful Europe", while Russia is extremely concerned about the impact of the United States on European security and advocates a "truly equal, stable and lasting peace in Europe". The West believes that the expansion of NATO and the EU contributes to European security, while Russia believes that the expansion of NATO and the EU undermines European security. At the Munich Security Forum in Germany in 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin severely criticized NATO's eastward expansion, emphasizing that NATO had promised not to deploy troops in the east of Germany. After the escalation of Ukrainian-Russian relations this time, the Russian side proposed the "European Security Treaty" plan, which did not receive a positive response from the United States and the West. This plan includes the withdrawal of NATO from the Central and Eastern European countries, returning to the status quo in 1997; the withdrawal of the 2008 NATO Bucharest summit resolution to ensure that Ukraine and Georgia do not join NATO. The West has rejected the Russian proposal, hoping to discuss practical issues such as mutual security assurances and arms control. French President Emmanuel Macron, who advocates Europe's "strategic autonomy", and Russia began to discuss the European security order, arguing that if Russia is not safe, Europe will not be safe either. Since the European security system involves multiple interests, it is an "impossible task" to form a European security system that accommodates Russia's concerns in the near future.

The predicament of Ukrainian-Russian relations lies in the conflict of security concerns and the lack of trust between the two sides. After losing Crimea in 2014 and Donbas became a "frozen conflict zone", Ukraine pinned its hopes of realizing its own security on joining NATO, but this constitutes a fundamental challenge to Russia's interests and is an unacceptable "red line" for Russia. ". In 2021, Putin warned that "Ukraine is being dragged into a dangerous geopolitical game step by step", "becoming a springboard against Russia", and "only with Russia can Ukraine gain real sovereignty." Putin once called the collapse of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical disaster" of the 20th century. Thirty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, he described the disintegration of the Soviet Union as "the disintegration of historical Russia" "in the name of the Soviet Union". Today, Russia has not yet fully recovered from the trauma of the disintegration of the empire, and regaining its former glory is still the dream of the Russian elite. Since Ukraine has chosen the road of "Brexiting Russia and joining the European Union", it must face the reality of

unresolved relations between Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine wants to knock on the "door of Europe", but the key to this door is in the hands of major powers including Russia, and Ukraine cannot control its own destiny.

**The fate of the gates of Europe: bridges or a barrier?** Nearly 30 years ago, American political scientist Samuel Huntington put forward the famous "Clash of Civilizations Theory", in which he asserted that those "cleft countries" sitting on the borders of civilizations lurked. The dangerous prospect of conflict, because such countries contain large populations who identify with different civilizations, have far different values and have different visions of the country's future that are difficult to reconcile. Ukraine, he asserts, is one of the most quintessential fault states.

The current Russian-Ukrainian war seems to confirm his prediction. It can be said that the history of Ukraine in the past two thousand years is a history of intertwined and conflicted forces - it has always been a "fault country", regardless of terrain, ecology, culture, religion, ethnic groups and other aspects, the interior is full of fault lines. The original meaning of the word "Ukraine" is "frontier". It has always been a contact area where different forces confront each other. Therefore, it is both pluralistic and divided, and its history is difficult to be decided by the Ukrainians themselves.

The Ukrainian-American historian Proki named the book in which he wrote the history of his homeland, "The Gates of Europe," which is both a highly refined version of the country's experience and his expectation: he sees Ukraine as a gateway to Europe. The portal of , is the transition zone between the East and the West, but this also implicitly shows that it is at a loss between the two heterogeneous parts. This country has been wandering between East and West for two thousand years, and it has not been able to form a stable shape. Ukrainian culture has always shared living space with other cultures. In fact, even the word "Ukraine" didn't come into widespread use until the 19th century.

It is worth noting that the "door" in the original title is in the plural, which implies that Ukraine is a multiple "door", in different historical periods, for different ethnic groups and cultures: it is located in Eurasia The dividing line between the steppe and the plains of Eastern Europe is therefore situated on the dividing line between the sedentary civilization and the nomadic civilization, and is ultimately divided by the Western Christian and Eastern Orthodox civilizations. As a concrete epitome of this cultural clash, the population of western Ukraine is predominantly Orthodox - Catholic in doctrine, sacraments, but with Orthodox rituals.

This invincible plain is open to almost everyone, which not only allows Ukrainians to borrow culture from religion, writing, and state polity in constant contact with the outside world, but also makes them particularly vulnerable to foreign enemies. In this case, whether the external environment is turbulent or peaceful often determines the fate of Ukraine. As the book states, "In certain times, wars and conflicts resulted in the closure of the 'gateway,' and Ukraine was a barrier to aggressors from east or west. For most of Ukrainian

history, the door is open and Ukraine is now a bridge between Europe and Asia, facilitating the exchange of peoples, goods and ideas."

The worst situation for Ukrainians is to be at the mercy of a single external force - no matter where it comes from. Ukraine was a prosperous crossroads when it was a platform where all ethnic groups could communicate peacefully, but every time it was conquered by an outside force, not only was it forced to end its ability to maintain contact with other diverse cultures, and the Ukrainians themselves would lose their bargaining power.

In this sense, the Mongol invasion 800 years ago was a milestone for Ukraine, as it marked the steppe polity becoming the dominant political, economic and even cultural force in the region, and the identity of Ukrainians is precisely in the Such a long-term wandering between East and West, struggling to establish. After the collapse of Mongol rule, the "Ukraine" was gradually formed precisely because it was a "three-no-go zone" that was not fully controlled by the forces of all parties.

But it also comes at a price, as it can also mean long-term volatility. Especially with the rise of bureaucratic states in modern times, intermediate regions like Ukraine are increasingly losing their independence, the steppe frontiers of Europe are closing, and the formerly vague and open borders are now being torn apart by empires armed to the teeth. Three major powers participated in the struggle for Ukraine in the early modern period: Russia, Poland, and the Ottoman Empire. No matter which side wins, the Ukrainians are the losers. This requires that the only powerful local Cossack leader must maintain the unity of the group, and must constantly maneuver between the three major powers. It is not surprising that almost no one can successfully accomplish such a task. As a result, the Cossacks kept changing camps in the complex game fought by all parties, but in the end they lost more sovereignty. The eastern and western parts of Ukraine fell into the hands of Russia and Poland respectively, which had a profound impact on the future of the country, and the resulting internal fault has continued to this day. After such setbacks, Ukraine has survived. The first line of the Ukrainian national anthem is "Ukraine is not yet dead", which is exactly the same as "Poland is not dead" at the beginning of the Polish national anthem, perhaps from similar experiences between the two countries.

Ukrainian and Russian are not very different. Under Russian rule, Ukrainians could not develop their own independent political entities, and were regarded as "Little Russia". However, after three hundred years of Russian rule, the early 20th century Ukrainians have a stronger national identity than they did in the 17th century. In addition to the difficulty of digesting such a huge heterogeneous culture in Russia at that time, this cannot but be attributed to the awakening and efforts of the Ukrainians. Uniquely, because Ukraine was divided by two empires, Ukrainian culture survived and developed, because when it was suppressed on one side, it was able to continue on the other side of the border. Proki rightly points out that the main feature of Ukrainian history is "the ability of Ukrainian society to cross internal and external borders and to acquire the identities created by those borders".

It was not until the ruins of World War I that Ukraine became a modern independent state for the first time. The Ukrainians at that time were the largest European nation whose national question remained unresolved, and their lands were divided among four countries: Russia, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. As the British historian Alan Palmer said in "Six Kingdoms Between the Cracks" when he talked about the small Central and Eastern European countries caught between the great powers, for these countries, "in order to achieve independence, national consciousness alone It is not enough, it must be backed by a powerful foreign power." The fate of Ukraine has repeatedly confirmed this.

In Soviet times, Ukraine was a "model republic", and there is a rather expressive joke about the Russification of the Ukrainian elite: "You can teach a Jew to speak Ukrainian immediately, and teach a Russian about two or three years, but It would take a lifetime to teach an ambitious Ukrainian." According to the 1989 census, 40 percent of Ukraine's 51 million people spoke Ukrainian as a common language, and most were culturally Russified. Even current Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, a native Russian speaker, said more than once that he was "trying to improve his Ukrainian language."

Ukraine originally recognized its cultural center Lviv as belonging to Poland in 1920, but by the time of World War II, the Soviet army reclassified it to Ukraine. The war pushed the Soviet border far west, which in the long run pushed Poland, which had been forced to relinquish its eastern territories, to the west, while Lviv, recaptured for Ukraine, became a center of radical nationalism after the Cold War , most of Ukraine's pro-Western politicians come from this region.

For both the Soviet Union and Russia, Ukraine was extremely important. It was not only the "Bread Basket of Europe", but also the most important industrial base and buffer zone. However, the dream of the Ukrainian nationalist elite was to integrate into Europe. This just stimulated the nerves of Russia, and also caused social unrest within Ukraine, and even caused all parties involved to regard it as an irreconcilable conflict between Eastern and Western civilizations, between Russia and Europe, and Ukraine once again unfortunately, it has become the forefront of the conflict between the forces of all parties.

Looking back at this history, we can better appreciate the words of former US Librarian of Congress and Russian history expert James Billington: "The humanities are more insightful than the computational social sciences, especially It's time to determine some big questions about the direction of history." Ploki also expresses similar thoughts at the beginning of the book: "I write this book precisely because history can provide us with insights into the present, and then Influence the future." So, under this seemingly endless "fault", what kind of future can this country have?

I think he has given his own answer implicitly: Ukraine has historically been known for the cultural hybridity of its society, which is both celebrated as cultural diversity and has been shown again and again to be its Achilles heel in the face of enormous external forces. It is not to eliminate this hybridity, but to create a force of unity in the pluralism, to establish

the subjectivity of Ukraine between the East and the West, and to move from "dilemma" to "both right and left".

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