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The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on the Change in the Balance of Power in the International System

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Abstract: From a historical perspective, it can be seen that the balance of power has been one of the most important issues in the international system. Maintaining or changing the balance of power has always been done by a great power or a group of great powers, which has been the reason for an important international event. In this regard, the war between Russia and Ukraine, which has also caused a global confrontation at the level of the international system, shows one of the most important geopolitical developments of the 21st century. Except for the literature that has been able to predict the change, there is no such thing. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between the war in Ukraine and the change in the balance of power in the international system. This study, with a causal approach, combines library data and empirical observations and has reached the conclusion that: Russia and China are heading on one side and Europe and America on the other have strengthened their alliances and moved towards a bipolar or multipolar system. While it is evident that the unipolar system is eroding, it is not yet clear whether the system being formed will be bipolar or multipolar. Since changes in the international system affect the capabilities of states in the international system, the importance and effectiveness of this research lies in the fact that it can provide a basis for effective policymaking in the foreign policy of countries in a situation where the world is transitioning from unipolar to multipolar.

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INTRODUCTION

The liberal international order was formed after World War II in 1945, led by the United States, and reached its peak after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Despite enduring several major crises—including the stagflation and oil shocks of the 1970s, the Asian financial crisis of 1997, and the global financial crisis of 2008—this order persisted until at least 2021, during which time no actor posed a serious challenge to American dominance. Until the United States withdrew from Afghanistan (Aqeli & Tisheyar, 2024, p. 34) and subsequently Russia dared to attack Ukraine.

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Over the seventy years of the Western-led international order, two distinct phases can be identified: the bipolar era (1945–1991) and the unipolar era (1991–2021). the first period was marked by intense ideological and geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, which saw many exchanges of ideas between the two on a global scale which divided the world into two blocs, East and West (Firoozabadi, 2017). EXcept for the Non-Aligned Movements (which were also under the influence of both great powers), all other countries were either part of the Soviet bloc or the United States. The second phase was characterized by the global spread of liberal democracy, during which the liberal international order faced no significant challengers (Fukuyama, 2006). Although Islamic Movements fought against the liberal order in all corners of the world and sometimes achieved victory, they were unable to confront the policies and power of the United States on a global level and therefore, the United States, as a liberal country, took on the responsibility of democratizing authoritarian and war-torn countries (Balkhi, 2020). Within the framework of unilateralism, it sought to overthrow authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and achieved some victories in this regard, but it was unable to stabilize their governments. For example, it suffered severe defeats in Afghanistan and Iraq. This suggests that the unipolar moment that neorealists refer to (Layne, 1993, p. 7) is coming to an end. The Ukrainian war, which took place in 2022 and for which there is no clear path yet (Nadkarni et al, 2024, p. 450; Stępniewski, 2024, p. 138), prompted military and strategic experts to present various and sometimes contradictory analyses in this regard.

Some believe that the Russia-Ukraine war has no effect on the international system and, as a result, did not cause others to balance against the United States. For example, Kortunov (2022) believes that of the three possible scenarios after the war, namely reconstruction, reform, and revolution, reconstruction is the most doubtful scenario. Therefore, minor reforms are the closest scenario in which the current order will remain. (Nadkarni et al, 2024) believe that despite major changes, it is not possible to talk about the formation of a balance of power or a change in the international order. In an analysis, he believes that the alliance of Russia and Iran in the current situation is difficult.

Others believe that this war will weaken Russia and further strengthen the United States and the West, which will turn the declining unilateralism into a powerful unilateralism and keep the United States as the world leader for years to come. Krastev (2015) can be placed in this category. Although his article was written before the 2022 war, he sees the annexation of Crimea and Russia's war with Ukraine and the West as a manifestation of Russia's powerlessness in the face of Western power. He believes that President Putin's secret speech to the Russian inner circle in February 2014, the moment he decided to invade Crimea, conceived the fact that Russia had lost Ukraine and was economically defeated in its economic competition with the West. Ghimire (2023) also belongs to this category. He also sees the war as beneficial to Europe in the short term, but beneficial to America in the long term. The third example is Stępniewski (2024). who believes that this war will bring Russia and the West closer together.

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Others believe that this war will change the fate of the world and weaken the United States, which in turn will lead to a rebalancing, but none of the works in this category say how this is possible. For example, Kapitonenko (2024) believes that the Russia-US war will affect the international system in two legal and structural areas. In his opinion, as the gap between the established powers (the West) and the rivals (Russia and China) narrows, the risks to international security will increase. The Russia-Ukraine war has been an example of such miscalculations in the assessment of the balance of power, which, together with Russia's willingness to test Western hegemony, may signal the beginning of a profound crisis in international security resulting from a perceived or actual power transition. In his opinion, the steady rise of China, along with the consolidation of Russia in the 2000s, represents pivotal junctures. The Russia-Ukraine war acts as a constituent element in a chain of international conflicts that symbolizes a broader global crisis in international security resulting from a shift in the balance of power. Noori (2022) Also believes that the current order is changing, and if Russia succeeds in this war, the world will move from a unipolar American order to a multipolar order in which Russia has an equal share with other great powers. Mirfakhraei (2023) also believes that the Ukrainian war will change the nature of the international system and intensify the decline of America and the West.

This is what international relations refer to as a multipolar system. The importance of this article for Afghanistan is that by using it, it is possible to adopt effective diplomacy to prevent the possibility of further conflicts at the global level with correct understanding of the possible future occasion.

The theoretical framework of this research will be Neorealism. Neorealism is loyal to the principles and assumptions of classical realism such as state-centeredness, power-centeredness, balance of power, anarchy or the international state of nature, and the integrity and rationality of countries (Mojared, et al, 2017, p. 3).

Neorealism was presented as a systemic theory in international relations with the publication of Kenneth Waltz's book under the title Theory of International Politics in 1979. As a systemic theory this theory considers the international order to be anarchic and attributes a causal role to the international system in the behavior of states. Waltz believes that this theory can explain the behavior of large states and provide the possibility of analysis in bipolar conditions. Waltz's main concern was the relative security of states in the bipolar conditions of the Cold War, and he believed that states would not survive in unipolar conditions. Because in conditions of self-help and distrust of others, competitors will resist the hegemon and will not allow a hegemonic power to form. Since the international order centered on the United States from 1991 to 2021 was unipolar, Waltz argued that this was a transitional stage and the international system will inevitably move towards a balance of power (Waltz, 2000, p. 27-28).

Within the framework of Waltz's neorealist vision, the Russia-Ukraine war is a pressing issue. In fact, the Russia-Ukraine war has created a security problem, a systematic challenge to the international order and international security, and is becoming a manifestation of a

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deep crisis in international politics. According to Kapitonenko, this war impacts the international system in two ways: normatively, by influencing the maintenance or transformation of the "law-based international order," and structurally, by affecting the distribution of power within the system. Structural changes at the global level cause adaptation in the national security strategies of large, medium and small powers, leading to new alliances and balances of power. Normative changes in world politics, made possible by war, change the ways in which the international community functions and also change the rules of the game (Kapitonenko, 2024, p. 2).

Waltz's neorealism is based on three fundamental principles through which the causes and consequences of this war on the international system can be analyzed and evaluated: the anarchy of the international system (Waltz, 2015, p. 126), the distribution of capabilities (Waltz, 2015, p. 139; Dunn & Schmidt, 2013, p. 344), and the functional similarity of units (Waltz, 2015, p. 137; Moshirzadeh, 2014, p. 114-115).

Realists consider the only way to temporarily resolve the security dilemma to be confronting power with power, a concept referred to as the "balance of power" or "balance of forces" (Simbar & Salehian, 2017, p. 33). From Waltz's perspective, there are two ways to achieve balance. One is internal, which means increasing one's own power, and the other is external, which means alliances and coalitions. (Vosoughi, et al, 2016, p. 75).

The aim of the present study is to examine the impact of the Russo-Ukrainian war on shifts in the balance of power within the international system. The main research question is: What impact has the Russia–Ukraine war had on the balance of power in the international system?

The current article proposes three hypotheses in accordance with the background of the subject:

- The first alternative hypothesis is that the Russia-Ukraine war has not caused any change in the international system and Russia-China will not balance against the West, as a result of which the unipolar system led by the United States will not be replaced by a system of great powers.
- The second alternative hypothesis is that the Russia-Ukraine war will not only not cause any change in the international system, but will also strengthen the unipolar system led by the United States for many years.

The Main hypothesis of the current article is that the Russia-Ukraine war has become the main cause of change in the international system and Russia-China will balance against the West, as a result of which the unipolar system led by the United States will be replaced by a system of great powers.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data collection method is library-based. The author has gathered the 120 significant articles written on the Russia–Ukraine war by scholars and experts from around the world over a three-year period (2022–2025). The focus was placed on those articles that specifically

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examined the war's impact on the international order. The author aimed to identify and analyze the most relevant works in this field, using objective observations to evaluate their content. In this study, four main criteria were applied to determine the eligibility of articles: first, the relevance of the topic to the study's research question; second, the credibility of the journal in which the article was published; third, the credibility of the article's author; and fourth, the novelty of the study. Articles meeting all four or at least three of these criteria were included, whereas those meeting fewer than three criteria were deemed ineligible for review and were excluded from the analysis. More than two-thirds of the articles, that is nearly 70 articles, were excluded. The analysis process was as follows: first, feature codes were created using a deductive strategy in MAXQUDA24 software, and then articles were collected based on those codes. The change indicators were collected, the analysis was performed on them, and conclusions were drawn from their positions and findings.

In addition, to avoid bias and to ensure fairness, the articles of the English and Persian authors have been compared and their opinions have been critically evaluated.

FINDINGS

Hypothesis test (1): The Russia-Ukraine war has not caused any change in the international system, and Russia-China Are not balancing/ have not effectively balanced against the West. As a result, the unipolar system led by the United States will not be replaced by a system of great powers.

Based on the realistic understanding, namely the structural realism of Waltz's theory of the international system, the international system tends toward balance and the balance of power order can ensure the security and survival of states/great powers. In the case of Russia and the West, this is possible when either Russia and China balance against the United States and the West. change to a situation that can be described as bipolar, or each of the great powers forms its own satellites, in which case we can talk about a multipolar system.

Regarding the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war, many authors believe (Nadkarni et al, 2024) that the problems of Russia and China are more than the two speaking from a single position against the United States and the West. Russia and China are no less pessimistic about each other, if not as much as the West. This pessimism has historical roots, partly due to the Russo-Chinese war that led to the secession of Mongolia, and partly to China's separation from Moscow during the Cold War, which transformed the rigid bipolar bloc into a flexible bipolar one, ultimately leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union and its decline from a superpower to a regional power. However, having experienced 110 years of historical humiliation, China is unlikely to involve itself in a game that is not its own. China is making the most of the existing international order and is not yet ready to lead an untested one.

According to this group of authors (Szczudlik, 2025) China's support for Russia and its efforts to counterbalance the West can distance China from its soft ambitions and impose huge economic costs on it. So, if China cannot support Russia, Russia alone has the ability to

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confront the United States and the West. The collapse of the Soviet Union has once taught Russia a great lesson, and this time it should take a more cautious step and not claim confrontation. Because, according to the logic of realism that states are rational actors, the logic of power dictates that Russia evaluates its Capabilities in the military, political, and economic fields, and in this evaluation, it is clear that it is a great power only in the military dimension and has serious limitations in other indicators.

Kristev (2015) believes that Putin's speech in February 2014, which was delivered to decision-making circle in the Kremlin, was similar to the speech of January 8, 1962 given by Nikita Khrushchev, which remained secret for more than forty years. Khrushchev had told his colleagues in the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party that it had so failed in the superpower struggle with the United States that Moscow's only option was to take initiative in international affairs. According to Krastev, Russia's decision to invade Crimea in 2014 was to hide the fact that Russia had lost Ukraine and was economically failing in its economic competition with the West (Kristev, 2015, p. 24).

From the perspective of neorealism, it can be understood that the attack on Ukraine in 2022, like in 2014, was a structural necessity, rather than a military strategy derived from Russia's capabilities in the international system. The authors of this category of works believe that Russia's goal in attacking Ukraine is not to change the international order, but to confront the aggressive view of the West within the framework of NATO. This means that if Ukraine had abandoned its extreme Westernization and abandoned the idea of joining NATO in line with NATO's expansion to the east, the attack would not have occurred and the Russia-Ukraine war would not have occurred. Most of these authors cite the speeches of Russian President Putin (Putin, 2014), who has always said that we did not go near the US borders, they wanted to come near our borders and create a security threat. For example, the findings of Najafov et al (2024) show that the main differences between Russia and Ukraine are related to the Black Sea Fleet, the conflict over the Crimean Peninsula, border demarcation issues, ethnic issues, concerns about Ukraine's membership in the Euro-Atlantic Union and oil and gas supplies. There is also a conflict over NATO's expansion to the east and the maintenance of Russian influence near its borders (Najafov et al, 2024, p. 98).

Edinger believes that the United States and its European allies unnecessarily provoked Russia by continuing NATO's eastward expansion. In his view, Russia was too weak during the 1990s to prevent Western intervention in the Balkans or to prevent the Baltic states from joining NATO in 2004, except after the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, which promised eventual membership for Georgia and Ukraine (Edinger, 2022, p. 1874).

Edinger quotes Henry Kissinger as saying that, apart from an attempt to rebuild the empire, Russia's action could be interpreted as "a recognition of Russia's growing relative weakness." The West was approaching through Ukraine, and Putin's war was essentially a last-ditch effort to show the limits of what Russia could tolerate (Edinger, 2022, p. 1881).

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Mearsheimer also sees Russia's stance on the war as purely defensive, and that the role of the West is also prominent. He says: The United States is primarily responsible for creating the Ukrainian crisis, even if Putin is the one who started the war and is responsible for Russia's behavior on the battlefield: According to Mearsheimer, the United States pursued policies towards Ukraine that Russia considered an "existential threat" (Mearsheimer, 2022).

In the view of this group of authors, the war in Ukraine went against Moscow's expectations. In fact, Russia has failed to meet the requirements for maintaining its regional hegemony in the post-Soviet space in the post-Cold War era, thereby jeopardizing its great power status, which is a defining feature of Russian political culture. In order to maintain its influence in the region and counter the influence of foreign powers, as well as to keep pace with great power competition, the Kremlin has focused on its strengths, namely hard power measures, such as armed force and economic coercion. In this sense, in the context of preventive war, Russia's assertive policies can be considered a strategy rather than a reckless reaction (Turhan, 2023, p. 214).

From the perspective of neorealism theory, the position of these authors has a serious weakness, which is that they present imbalance as a wise and logical strategy, while neorealism does not consider imbalance as a foreign policy strategy, but rather as a structural necessity and believes that the international system will move in that direction whether it likes it or not.

Testing Hypothesis (2): "The Russia-Ukraine war will not lead to a transformation of the international system; instead, it is expected to consolidate the unipolar structure dominated by the United States."

Some other authors emphasize that the Russia-Ukraine war is not in Russia's long-term interests. This war, which has killed thousands of Russian soldiers and has put Russia in confrontation with the West, can never end in Russia's interests (Ghimire, 2023, p. 14). Because this war has caused very severe sanctions from the West and blocked billions of dollars of Russian capital in the West. It has crushed Putin's prestige internationally and exposed Russia's military weakness. Since the West, led by the United States, won the Middle East war against Iran (in Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq and Syria) and Iran is Russia's ally, it has reduced Russia's power and seriously challenged the possibility of its support from Iran. Therefore, Russia cannot confront the West alone. On the other hand, because China has an economic perspective on the Russia-Ukraine war, it gains economic benefits from the continuation of the war and sanctions on Russia by the West, such as purchasing cheap oil and gas (Ng and M[illegible]2024).

Therefore, it is unlikely to provide military and political support to Russia (U.S.-China Economic AND Security Review Commission, 2025). While the entire Western Europe and North America practically provide military, political and economic support to Ukraine. They provide it with short-range, medium-range and long-range missiles, defense systems, fighter jets and dozens of other types of support (U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE, 2025). They also

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launched a media war in support of Ukraine and are using it to strengthen their moral standing. While Russia relies on military power and does not have many media outlets to create a narrative. A prominent example of Western support is the signing of a security agreement between Ukraine and the European Union in June 2024 in Brussels, which guarantees support for Ukraine for at least ten years (Stępniewski, 2024, p. 137).

More importantly, the West has understood that the Western liberal order will be challenged if Putin wins and China's economic advances. Therefore, Western countries will do their utmost to ensure that the current order remains and the West maintains its place in the power hierarchy. The question is, what specific case will strengthen the West and weaken Russia? One important case is the role of China. Whether China stands by Russia or follows its own way is a complex issue. Some believe that China is not a strategic partner of Russia and is almost neutral. Because it knows that it must act with caution. Although the Sino-Russian partnership is much less than an alliance, as both sides act largely independently, it is crucial for Moscow as a force multiplier (Konstantinovsky, 2024).

For Putin, this relationship is key to realizing his vision of Russia as a revived global power. Chinese President Xi Jinping determines the level and pace of bilateral cooperation, taking advantage of the fact that China is a much more important international actor than Russia and has many more options. (Lo & Has, 2024, pp. 17-18).

Testing Hypothesis (3):"The Russia-Ukraine war has emerged as a key factor in transforming the international system. Russia and China are expected to counterbalance the West, potentially leading to the replacement of the unipolar order led by the United States with a multipolar system of great powers."

Based on the third hypothesis, the Russia-Ukraine war is not a war between two countries, but a war between two groups of countries, the Western (European-American) group seeking to maintain unipolar power and the Eurasian (Russian-Chinese) group seeking to balance against the West. As Najafov and his colleagues have said, this war is not only caused by the events between Russia and Ukraine, but also affects the future prospects of the great powers and the international order (Najafov, et al, 2024, p. 101).

Years ago, Waltz (2000) said in his speeches and writings that the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union were an exception and the world would move towards a balance of power. According to Waltz's structural realism, balance is not a chosen or selectable approach in the foreign policy of states, but rather balancing is a necessity that states will move towards whether they want to or not. Based on the third hypothesis, the world is led by a superpower. The unipolar system in its best and most ideal form includes the years 1991-2001 (Firoozabadi, 2017). The first challenge of this unipolar world led by the United States was the attack of the centers of military power (Pentagon), political power (White House), and economic power (World Trade Organization) in 2001. The second challenge was the attack on Iraq (Balkhi, 2020). The third was the financial crisis of 2008 (Acharya, 2020). The fourth challenge was the annexation of Crimea (Samiei-Esfahani and Farahmand, 2022). The fifth

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challenge to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2021 (Aqli & Tishiyar, 2024) and the final challenge that officially pitted other powers against the West was Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Mearsheimer, 2024).

Since the Kremlin does not accept the existence of an international order based on Western norms, the Western order is seen by Russia as illegitimate and impractical and its rules are nothing more than American-style globalization. Putin believes that "the world is becoming more diverse, and Western methods and norms of governance cannot be considered universal values" (Putin, 2023). For Moscow, the natural alternative to the Western liberal order is a "multipolar order" or "polycentric system." Importantly, however, Moscow does not believe that this has yet emerged. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov complained at the UN General Assembly in 2023 that the West is "doing everything to prevent the formation of a truly multipolar and more just" international order. The old version of the Western-led order is on the way out, but it has not yet been replaced. The struggle continues (Lo & Has, 2024, p. 7).

based on the third hypothesis, the war between Russia and Ukraine can be understood through the lens of balancing against the West. Jill Lawless, in her book "Global Impact", pints out five effects of this war on the global security system: a return to war in Europe, testing and strengthening alliances, a new Iron Curtain, a lo and changing economy, and a new era of uncertainty. (Najafov, et al, 2024, p. 98).

Russia is angry that the post-Cold War European order has been anchored in Western institutions such as NATO and the European Union. Also, in the 21st century, it is searching for a new order to replace the Western order. In this sense, the Kremlin's violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity was not the beginning of the crisis of the post-Cold War European order, but the final stage of a long process during which Russia sought to replace an order in which it saw itself a major and decisive power in world affairs. (Krastev, 2015, p. 19) The question is whether Russia can take on the West on its own. The answer is no. Unless, of course, it secures possible with China's cooperation. Beijing needs a partner like Moscow to change the world order by ending Western dominance. Therefore, it is not in China's interest for Russia to lose this war. (Najafov, et al, 2024, p. 98).

Why would Beijing want to side with Russia against the West? The reason is the constant US interventions and China and the Taiwan issue. But China also has strategic interests in Russia. It does not want to sell Russia cheaply (Boguszm & Rodkiewicz, 2025). Therefore, it can be concluded that the Ukrainian war has led to a closer alliance between Russia and China, turning them into strategic partners. In short, as Mearsheimer believes, "we have now left the unipolar and moved to a multipolar world in which great power war is once again possible and security competition between great powers is intensifying. Therefore, it is time to pay serious attention to great power politics" (Mearsheimer 2024, p. 1).

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DISCUSSION

The Russia-Ukraine war is considered the most important. Considering the testing of three research hypotheses, the findings show that the war can be evaluated as an independent variable in the formation of a new order. The first and second hypotheses were not supported by either theoretical studies or empirical evidence, while the third hypothesis, which claims a change in the balance of power in the international system, is confirmed both from the theoretical perspective and from the perspective of observations made over three years.

The main reason for the theory is based on Structural realism theory, which believes that a stable system is a bipolar and multipolar system, and that unipolar systems cannot remain stable. According to this theory, Russia and China contribute to establishing a balance against the West. This balance does not result from a deliberate choice; rather, it is a structural requirement of the international system. From an empirical and observational perspective, clear indications of such a balance are already evident with the war. From Iran's cooperation in sending drones to the presence of North Korean soldiers and Jinping's powerful presence alongside Putin and his support for the change order. On the West side, a dual tendency has also formed that reduces its power against those who maintain the status quo. Such as the opposing tendencies of Europe and the United States in supporting Ukraine. Many of the articles analyzed as sources indicate that the foundations for change began to emerge at the start of the twenty-first century were further reinforced in 2014, and reached a critical stage in 2021 following the withdrawal of Western resources from Afghanistan. And the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 is the beginning of a new stage in the formation and consolidation of the international order.

It can therefore be concluded that there is sufficient evidence to support the third hypothesis, based on the theoretical and empirical analyses conducted in this study. The theoretical foundations are grounded in the works of leading scholars in international relations, and this study aligns with Mearsheimer's argument concerning the transformation of the U.S.-led liberal international order. According to the author, the other two hypotheses are rooted in the acceptance of the fact that the West has come to the realization that the world has changed and that Russia and China can challenge the existing Western-led order due to empirical observations about the decline of Western support for Ukraine and the pressure on Ukraine by the US to negotiate with Russia.

From the empirical standpoint, the findings of this study are consistent with the studies of Ghori (2022), Kapiotunoko (2024), and Mirfakhraei (2023). These studies collectively suggest that the current international order is undergoing transformation, primarily driven by the war in Ukraine, which has contributed to the emergence of a new balance within the international system. One of the strengths of the current article is its explanation of the conditions of change and the way power is arranged in the international system. The most important weakness of the article is its focus on scientific-research articles and some diplomatic conversations, which may be more of a policy statement than a real policy. In short, the lack

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of access to strategic information is one of the main limitations of this research. This limitation limits the power of prediction.

CONCLUSION

The main issue was whether the war between Ukraine and Russia could promote counter-Western alliances and shift the global balance of power? After reviewing the research literature, three groups of hypotheses were obtained: some claimed that the existing order would be maintained, meaning that there would be no significant change in the existing international system. Another group believed that Russia would be weakened and the decline of America would be delayed, and the West would be differentiated. The main hypothesis was that other countries would balance against the West and the policy and alliance would be strengthened day by day. We would no longer be in unipolar conditions, and the international system would become bipolar or multipolar.

The hypotheses were tested using an evidence-based approach, Two of the three were ultimately rejected, while the third was confirmed due to consistent empirical validation. This means that the findings from the review and testing of the hypotheses lead us to the conclusion that the international order after the war in Ukraine would no longer be a liberal international order led by America. This is a multi-axial order led by global powers, which in the most pessimistic case is bipolar (America-West on one side and Russia-China on the other) and in the most eloquent case, it is a regional order that will be shaped by the great powers, and instead of a global hegemony, we can speak of regional hegemony.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

The author solely contributed to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the study, as well as to the drafting and final approval of the manuscript.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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