

The End of Peace in Europe and the Western-dominated World Order? | Chas Freeman

Remarks to an international conference on ending the disaster in Ukraine organized by Radio Roma News TV / Amici Network. Full conference video here: https://youtu.be/bEkgZZs4MR4?si=X42Y9c_OZfSxIPka Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr. (USFS, Ret.) Remarks delivered on February 22, 2025 How wars end matters. The Napoleonic wars ended in the reconciliation of Europe's great powers, including the defeated French, at the Congress of Vienna. The resulting, inclusive "Concert of Europe" ensured a long, if imperfect, peace that ended only in World War I. That war was fought mainly in Europe. It was followed by the vindictive exclusion of two great European powers from any role in or commitment to sustaining stability in Europe. The excommunication of Germany and Russia laid the basis for World War II, which – for Americans – was both transatlantic and transpacific. That war ended not in a peace but in a cold war – a tense but stable order sustained by mutual deterrence through military confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. The failure to include a role for Russia in Europe commensurate with its power has now once again brought war to the continent. The lessons of history are clear. There can be no stable order in Europe that excludes any of its great powers. Those with no peaceful way to ensure respect for their security interests will see no reason not to use force to defend them. And if there is no prospect of a sustainable framework to safeguard their interests, they will prefer outcomes on battlefields to those contrived at the negotiating table.....

#M2

Hello, everybody. Today, I'd like to share an assessment of Ambassador Chas Freeman, who has been on this channel several times. On February 22nd, Ambassador Freeman gave the following remarks, entitled "The End of Peace in Europe and the Western-Dominated World Order," at an international conference on ending the disaster in Ukraine, organized by Radio Roma News TV. You'll find the full version linked in the description. It's the YouTube homepage that you can see right here.

Ambassador Freeman asked me to share his presentation as a standalone video, which I'm more than happy to do as I regard him, next to people like Chuck Matlock, John Mearsheimer, and Jeffrey Sachs, as one of the United States' greatest and most humanist international relations thinkers. Among other positions, Ambassador Freeman served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense from 1993 to 1994 and as U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1989 to 1992. He was also Richard Nixon's principal interpreter during his 1972 visit to China, which led to the normalization of U.S.-China relations. Here you go.

#M1

Good evening. I'd like to speak to you this evening about the question of peace in Europe and whether the dominion of the West over the world has now ended. The two are connected. How wars end matters. The Napoleonic Wars ended in the reconciliation of Europe's great powers, including the defeated French at the Congress of Vienna. The resulting inclusive concert of Europe ensured a long, if imperfect, peace that ended only in World War I. That war was fought mainly in Europe. It was followed by the vindictive exclusion of two great European powers from any role in or commitment to sustaining stability in Europe.

The exclusion of Germany and Russia laid the basis for World War II, which for Americans was both transatlantic and transpacific. That war ended not in peace, but in a Cold War—a tense but stable order sustained by mutual deterrence through military confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. The failure to include a role for Russia in Europe commensurate with its power has now once again brought war to the continent. The lessons of history are clear: there can be no stable order in Europe that excludes any of its great powers. Those with no peaceful way to ensure respect for their security interests will see no reason not to use force to defend them.

And if there is no prospect of a sustainable framework to safeguard their interests, they will prefer outcomes on battlefields to those contrived at the negotiating table. This is the story of the Ukraine war. After nearly three decades of indifference and rejection of Russian security concerns by the United States and NATO, Russia issued an ultimatum demanding negotiations on three of these concerns. First, neutrality for Ukraine, rather than its incorporation into NATO, an alliance premised on armed hostility to Russia. Second, respect for the linguistic and cultural rights of Ukraine's large Russian-speaking population.

And third, agreement on Europe-wide security arrangements that could mitigate and relieve Russian security anxieties, as well as those of the West. The West flatly refused to discuss these issues. This left Russia with a choice between abandoning its ultimatum and accepting NATO and American forces everywhere on its western borders, or going to war to prevent this. Russia quite predictably chose war, though it limited this to what it called a special military operation. Russia's invasion of Ukraine was followed within weeks by a draft treaty in which Ukraine agreed to meet the basic Russian requirements. But the West was more interested in isolating and weakening Russia than in a ceasefire. It persuaded Ukraine to repudiate what it had agreed to.

The Ukraine war is now about to enter its fourth year. It has been catastrophic for Ukraine and humiliating for the West. Ukraine is on its last legs, depopulated, deindustrialized, depleted of military manpower, shorn of its democracy, bankrupt, and territorially reduced. Meanwhile, Russia has not been isolated or weakened. It has continued to limit its objectives, but its terms for peace are hardening. Ukraine's options continue to narrow. Russia will not cease to insist on a Ukraine that

does not threaten it and a broader framework for peace in Europe. There will be no ceasefire or Korean-style demilitarized zone between Russia and the West in Ukraine. The West has failed to prevail on the battlefield.

It will not prevail at the negotiating table. The alternative to war in Ukraine is nothing less than a peace that sets agreed borders between Ukraine and Russia and prevents the division of Europe into mutually hostile blocs. Achieving this will require Russia and the West each to address and take actions to alleviate the other's fears and suspicions. That will not be easy for either side, but it is time for both to try. An agreement to end the war has clearly been made more difficult by the ways in which the world has changed since it began. The United States has become a serial violator of the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*: agreements must be kept. No one, least of all Russia, now trusts Washington to honor its word.

The collective West's shameless backing for Israel's sadistic genocide in Palestine, attacks on its neighbors, and territorial expansion have made it clear that the Atlantic community no longer adheres to or feels bound by international law. The blatant double standards the West has applied to Ukraine and Palestine have cost it its moral authority with all of the peoples it formerly colonized. The global majority sees Western policies as unjust. The promiscuous imposition by the United States and G7 of sanctions and other coercive measures on other countries has resulted in their almost universal withdrawal of respect for Western leadership and willingness to follow it.

Strained and worsening relations between the West and resurgent powers like Brazil, India, and China, which are interested in helping broker peace in Ukraine, ensure that they will be less supportive of the West than they otherwise might have been. The cumulative effect of these and other recent changes in the world order will be either mounting chaos or the emergence of a new international system in which renewed respect for the sovereign equality of nations and for their security concerns replaces the current global anarchy. How the war in Ukraine ends will determine which of these alternatives rules our future. Thank you.