

Trump: The Psychology of the Rise or Decline of an Empire/Empires.

Psychological, Political Science and Philosophical Perspectives

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Abstract: *This paper explores the political figure of Donald J. Trump from an integrative perspective, combining the psychological analysis of his personality with the political, political science, and philosophical implications of his presidential mandate. It investigates the relationship between personality traits, leadership style, and public rhetoric, as well as the ways in which these dimensions influence the dynamics of global power. The study also compares Trump's psychological and discursive profile with those of Volodymyr Zelensky and Vladimir Putin in order to offer a perspective on different models of leadership in contexts of geopolitical crisis.*

Keywords: *Trump, political psychology, political science, world leaders, empire, decline, Zelensky, Putin*

Introduction

The political rise of Donald J. Trump led to a profound transformation of the United States between 2016 and 2025. As an unconventional leader, Trump reshaped American political discourse, challenging the traditional rules of diplomacy, transatlantic relations, and even the core values of liberal democracy. This paper aims to analyze this political figure from a multidisciplinary perspective -psychological, political science, and philosophical -seeking to answer the question of whether the Trump era marks a rise or a decline of the “American empire”.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis builds upon established psychological theories: the Big Five Modelⁱⁱⁱ¹, the concepts of cognitive bias and fast/slow thinking formulated by Daniel Kahneman², and the framework of emotional intelligence defined by Daniel Goleman³.

¹ Paul T. Costa, Robert R. McCrae, *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R)*, Psychological Assessment Resources, Odessa, 1992.

² Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2011.

³ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York, 1995.

In the political and political science domain, the study engages with theories of hegemony and imperial decline formulated by Toynbee⁴, Huntington⁵, and Nye⁶, complemented by Fukuyama⁷'s perspective on the fate of the liberal order.

Gramsci⁸ introduces the concept of cultural hegemony, emphasizing that power is maintained not only through coercion but also through the construction of cultural consensus. In the Trump era, media polarization and the redefinition of national narratives illustrate this theory vividly.

Chomsky⁹ offers a radical critique of the structure of power in the United States, highlighting the role of political discourse and mass media in the “manufacturing of consent”¹⁰, thereby sustaining hegemony through the manipulation of public opinion.

Psychological Dimensions of Political Leaders: Trump, Zelensky and Putin

A comparative assessment of the psychological profiles of the three leaders, viewed through the lens of the Big Five model, reveals a set of characteristics marked by strong contrasts:

Big Five Dimension	Donald Trump	Volodymyr Zelensky	Vladimir Putin
Extraversion	Very high – dominates social space; constant search for attention; energized by mass interactions	High – strong stage presence, direct communication, public visibility	Low – controlled, limited public exposure, oriented toward authority and control
Agreeableness	Low – confrontational style, strong competitiveness, tolerance for criticism	High – empathy, low cooperation, constructive	Low – toughness, social distance,

⁴ Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1947.

⁵ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996.

⁶ Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, PublicAffairs, New York, 2004.

⁷ Francis Fukuyama, *Liberalism and Its Discontents*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2022.

⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, International Publishers, New York, 1971.

⁹ Noam Chomsky, *Consequences of Capitalism: Manufacturing Discontent and Resistance*, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2021.

¹⁰ Noam Chomsky, Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books, New York, 2002.

Big Dimension	Five Donald Trump	Volodymyr Zelensky	Vladimir Putin
		interpersonal engagement	dominance orientation
	Moderate – tactical discipline during campaigns,	High – organization, discipline,	High – procedural
Conscientiousness	impulsivity communication decision-making	in strategic and coherence in actions	rigor, incremental planning, operational rigor
Emotional Stability	Fluctuating – heightened emotional reactivity critical contexts	High – calm, efficient in emotional regulation, crisis resilience	High – flat affect, marked self-control, reduced reactivity
Openness Experience	Moderate–selective to rhetorical innovation, skepticism toward technical expertise	– High – strategic yet flexibility, rapid integration of expert knowledge	Low – preference for traditional paradigms and tested strategies

The analysis of the personalities of these contemporary political leaders requires integrating validated models from personality psychology and political psychology, as well as assessing traits associated with the so-called “*Dark Traits*”. Recent studies^{11 12 13} emphasize that political leaders display varying combinations of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and subclinical psychopathy—traits that significantly influence their decision-making style and public behavior.

According to the scientific literature, high levels of narcissism are associated with a strong need for validation and with narrative self-centrality¹⁴. Machiavellianism correlates with strategic

¹¹ Alessandro Nai, “Populism and Dark Triad Traits”, *Personality and Individual Differences*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2022.

¹² Marta Prusik, “Dark Traits Attribution to Political Leaders”, *Journal of Research in Personality*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2025.

¹³Yüksel Çifci, “Child, Family, and Narcissistic Political Leadership: A Comparison of Hitler, Putin, and Trump”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, Lausanne, 2025.

¹⁴ Dan P. McAdams, “The Mind of Donald Trump”, *The Atlantic*, Washington, 2016.

manipulation and the instrumentalization of others¹⁵, while subclinical psychopathy is linked to emotional coldness and moral disengagement¹⁶.

Donald Trump's personality has been described in numerous studies as displaying strongly extraverted traits and a high level of openness to new experiences, as well as impulsivity and low frustration tolerance. Within the Big Five framework, his profile is characterized by high extraversion, low agreeableness, moderate conscientiousness, low emotional stability, and moderate openness to unconventional ideas.

Several studies^{17 18} confirm the presence of pronounced narcissism in Trump's personality, mainly expressed through a constant need for validation, a tendency to dominate public discourse, and an intolerance to criticism. Çifci¹⁹ suggests that the origins of this narcissistic structure may be linked to early family patterns of validation and competition. This trait correlates strongly with his decision-making style and his polarizing rhetorical strategies.

His Machiavellianism is assessed as moderate, evident in his aggressive negotiation tactics and polarizing communication. Subclinical psychopathic traits are limited, manifested primarily through harsh rhetorical expressions rather than through stable, clinically relevant behavioral patterns²⁰.

Volodymyr Zelensky's psychological profile emerges as emotionally and cognitively distinct, characterized by high emotional intelligence²¹, empathy, cooperation, and elevated agreeableness, as well as a high openness to diverse perspectives. His leadership style is defined by transformational crisis leadership, critical thinking, and a logical, well-structured discourse, coupled with resilience and highly effective strategic communication within a military context.

His Machiavellianism is low, and psychopathic traits are minimal. Zelensky is distinguished by strong empathy and a prosocial orientation, as highlighted by rhetorical studies

¹⁵ Alessandro Nai, "Populism and Dark Triad Traits", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2022.

¹⁶ Mackin et al., "Dark Triad Predictors of Offensive Political Expression", *Journal of Research in Personality*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2024.

¹⁷ Dan P. McAdams, "The Mind of Donald Trump", *The Atlantic*, Washington, 2016.

¹⁸ Marta Prusik, "Dark Traits Attribution to Political Leaders", *Journal of Research in Personality*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2025.

¹⁹Yüksel Çifci, "Child, Family, and Narcissistic Political Leadership: A Comparison of Hitler, Putin, and Trump", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Lausanne, 2025.

²⁰Yüksel Çifci, "Child, Family, and Narcissistic Political Leadership: A Comparison of Hitler, Putin, and Trump", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Lausanne, 2025.

²¹Liang Wang, "Zelensky's Wartime Communication Strategy", *Frontiers in Communication*, Lausanne, 2024.

published in the past three years. Research on his wartime rhetoric (2023–2025) demonstrates an effective use of moral and democratic storytelling.

Putin presents a profile characterized by high emotional stability and strong affective control, high conscientiousness, pronounced Machiavellianism^{22 23}, strategic narcissism²⁴ and a marked orientation toward control and order. His cognitive style is strongly ideological, filtering information through securitarian paradigms, and his leadership is authoritarian-strategic in nature.

García-García²⁵ identifies elements of the “*hubris syndrome*” in Putin’s behavior, defined by an exaggerated confidence in one’s historical mission and by the belief that one is indispensable to the destiny of the nation. Machiavellianism is high, observable in his incremental geopolitical strategies and in the instrumental use of coercion. Subclinical psychopathic traits are moderate, reflected in a high tolerance for instrumental violence ²⁶.

Analysis of Discourses, Cognitive Styles, and Leadership

Trump employs a simplified, polarizing discourse, grounded in slogans and appeals to primary emotions (“Make America Great Again”). Zelensky adopts a mobilizing, narrative-driven discourse addressed to the international community and to democratic values. Putin uses an ideological, justificatory discourse anchored in themes of national security.

From Chomsky’s perspective, Trump employs classic techniques of “distraction and simplification,”²⁷ transforming political debate into a media spectacle and reducing the complexity of political issues to binary solutions.

Goleman²⁸ defines emotional intelligence (EI) as the ability to perceive, use, and manage emotions. In the behavior of political leaders, EI influences rhetorical style, mobilization capacity, and affective regulation in situations of crisis. Trump employs an intuitive form of social EI

²² Alessandro Nai, “Populism and Dark Triad Traits”, *Personality and Individual Differences*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2022.

²³ Gregory Brown, “National Narcissism and Support for Putin”, *International Review of Social Psychology*, 2024.

²⁴Yüksel Çifci, “Child, Family, and Narcissistic Political Leadership: A Comparison of Hitler, Putin, and Trump”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, Lausanne, 2025.

²⁵J. García-García, “Hubris Syndrome in Political Decision-Making”, *Political Psychology*, 2024.

²⁶ Gregory Brown, “National Narcissism and Support for Putin”, *International Review of Social Psychology*, 2024.

²⁷ Noam Chomsky, *Consequences of Capitalism: Manufacturing Discontent and Resistance*, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2021.

²⁸ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York, 1995.

orientated toward mass persuasion, but with inconsistent affective regulation, marked by reactivity and emotional polarization²⁹.

Zelensky exhibits high EI, characterized by emotional attunement to diverse audiences and by the ability to transform collective emotions into moral action³⁰. This form of EI contributes to the legitimacy of his transformational leadership.

Putin, by contrast, stands out through cold affective control, typical of authoritarian leaders, and by strict emotional regulation. His empathy is largely confined to a narrow circle of loyalty, while emotions are used strategically to reinforce national identity³¹.

According to Kahneman³², cognitive style is influenced by heuristics, biases, and internalized mental structures. Trump adopts an intuitive and rapid cognitive style, dependent on “gut feeling,” characterized by confirmation biases and excessive simplification³³.

Zelensky employs an analytic–narrative style, integrating data, technical consultation, and logical justification³⁴. His dominant bias is strategic optimism, which is useful for mobilization but potentially risky in protracted crises.

Putin operates with a calculated and ideological cognitive style, grounded in a relatively fixed mental paradigm. His dominant bias is systemic confirmation, amplified by his near-total control over internal information flows³⁵.

The analysis of the critical thinking styles of the three leaders reveals major differences in how they process information and make decisions. Trump exhibits a confrontational form of critical thinking, one that is more deconstructive than constructive. His ability to challenge the status quo and dismantle institutional narratives demonstrates a reactive critical thinking style, yet one frequently filtered through confirmation bias and a tendency to oversimplify complex issues. His use of arguments is often selective and orientated toward the emotional mobilization of the electorate.

Zelensky demonstrates a structured and adaptive form of critical thinking, capable of rapidly integrating information from military, diplomatic, and social domains.

²⁹ Dan P. McAdams, “The Mind of Donald Trump”, *The Atlantic*, Washington, 2016.

³⁰ Liang Wang, “Zelenskyy’s Wartime Communication Strategy”, *Frontiers in Communication*, Lausanne, 2024.

³¹ Gregory Brown, “National Narcissism and Support for Putin”, *International Review of Social Psychology*, 2024.

³² Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2011.

³³ Dan P. McAdams, “The Mind of Donald Trump”, *The Atlantic*, Washington, 2016.

³⁴ Liang Wang, “Zelenskyy’s Wartime Communication Strategy”, *Frontiers in Communication*, Lausanne, 2024.

³⁵ Alessandro Nai, “Leader Dark Traits and Affective Polarization”, *European Journal of Political Research*, 2025.

His speeches follow a coherent argumentative logic, closely aligned with the Toulmin model (claim → data → warrant), which indicates a high level of critical reasoning. Through his communicative strategy, Zelensky succeeds in building international consensus and mobilizing the support of the global community.

Putin demonstrates sophisticated, long-term strategic thinking, yet one strongly influenced by his own ideological framework and by the strict control of information. Critical thinking is present at a tactical level but is partially inhibited by mechanisms of information filtering and by systemic confirmation bias, which can lead to a distorted perception of international reality.

The three major categories of leadership identified in the scholarly literature—namely populist, transformational, and authoritarian-strategic^{36 37} can be correlated in the following way: Trump exemplifies the populist-charismatic type, orientated toward spectacle and polarization; Zelensky embodies crisis-driven transformational leadership, capable of generating meaning, cohesion, and resilience; and Putin represents the authoritarian-strategic model, characterized by discretion, incrementalism, and an emphasis on coercion.

Studies on political leadership^{38 39} show that deep-seated motivations shape public behavior. Thus, Trump is orientated toward status, prestige, and validation, with values centered on loyalty and competition. Zelensky's motivations are directed toward public service, solidarity, democratic values, and freedom, whereas Putin is driven by the restoration of imperial status, and by values related to sovereignty, tradition, and security.

From the perspective of risk tolerance and decision-making, the three leaders can be characterized as follows: Trump exhibits a high appetite for risk, with a reactive evaluation of consequences⁴⁰; Zelensky demonstrates calculated risk-taking, with constant consultation of experts and gradual adjustment⁴¹. Putin engages in hard-calculated risk, yet his decisions are affected by overconfidence due to unilateral access to information⁴².

³⁶ Alessandro Nai, "Populism and Dark Triad Traits", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2022.

³⁷ Yüksel Çifci, "Child, Family, and Narcissistic Political Leadership: A Comparison of Hitler, Putin, and Trump", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Lausanne, 2025.

³⁸ Alessandro Nai, "Populism and Dark Triad Traits", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2022.

³⁹ Marta Prusik, "Dark Traits Attribution to Political Leaders", *Journal of Research in Personality*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2025.

⁴⁰ Dan P. McAdams, "The Mind of Donald Trump", *The Atlantic*, Washington, 2016.

⁴¹ Liang Wang, "Zelensky's Wartime Communication Strategy", *Frontiers in Communication*, Lausanne, 2024.

⁴² J. García-García, "Hubris Syndrome in Political Decision-Making", *Political Psychology*, 2024.

Table 2. Cognitive Styles

Leader	Openness to Opposing Perspectives	Logical Coherence	Use of Data	Dominant Cognitive Bias	Level of Critical Thinking
Donald Trump	Low	Medium	Selective	Confirmation bias	Medium–Low
Volodymyr Zelensky	High	High	High	Strategic optimism bias	High
Vladimir Putin	Low	High (ideological)	High, but filtered	Systemic confirmation bias	Medium

Analysis of Strengths and Vulnerabilities

Analyzing the psychological strengths and vulnerabilities, we can observe that Donald Trump demonstrates a remarkable capacity for emotional mobilization of the public, supported by high social energy and by a form of narcissistic resilience that enables him to maintain his identity narrative even in contexts of intense contestation. These characteristics enhance his effectiveness in persuasive communication and in consolidating electoral loyalty.

However, his behavior is marked by impulsive decision-making, pronounced emotional reactivity, and a persistent tendency toward polarization—elements that may limit strategic coherence and amplify both domestic and international political tensions.

Volodymyr Zelensky stands out through a high level of empathy, a morally grounded legitimacy perceived both domestically and internationally, and a rapid adaptive capacity that enables him to respond effectively to major crisis situations. These competencies contribute substantially to the effectiveness of his transformational leadership model. His vulnerabilities stem primarily from strategic optimism bias, which may lead to overestimations of external support or available resources, as well as from the risk of decision fatigue in the context of an already prolonged crisis.

Vladimir Putin exhibits psychological discipline, strategic patience, and a high degree of consistency in pursuing his objectives—traits that support a systematic approach to governance and to the projection of international power. These elements are characteristic of authoritarian-

strategic leadership. On the other hand, his profile is affected by ideological rigidity, which limits decision-making flexibility, as well as by an “echo-chamber” information ecosystem, resulting from strict domestic media control. This environment reduces access to critical feedback and can lead to strategic miscalculations.

Table 3. Integrated Psychological Profile of the Leaders (Big Five, Dark Triad, Strengths & Vulnerabilities)

Dimension	Donald Trump	Volodymyr Zelensky	Vladimir Putin
Extraversion (Big Five)	Very high; social dominance, attention-seeking	High; direct communication, strong public presence	Low–controlled; calculated public exposure
Agreeableness (Big Five)	Low; confrontational, highly competitive	High; empathy, cooperation	Low; social distance, dominance orientation
Conscientiousness (Big Five)	Moderate; tactical discipline, impulsivity	High; strategic rigor and consistency	High; long-term planning
Emotional Stability (Big Five)	Fluctuating; reactivity	High; calm and affective control	High; flat affect, external emotional regulation
Openness (Big Five)	Moderate–selective; media skepticism expertise	innovation, High; rapid integration toward of expert input	Low; strategic traditionalism
Narcissism (Dark Triad)	High; need for validation, narrative centrality	Low–moderate; “healthy narcissism”	Moderate–high; self-agentic” image as an “indispensable leader”
Machiavellianism (Dark Triad)	Moderate; hard negotiation, political instrumentalization	Low; collaborative orientation	High; cold calculation, instrumental use of resources

Dimension	Donald Trump	Volodymyr Zelensky	Vladimir Putin
Subclinical Psychopathy (Dark Triad)	Low–moderate; harsh rhetoric, impulsivity	Very low; high empathy	Moderate; moral disengagement in hard decisions
Strengths	Emotional mobilization; social energy; narcissistic resilience	legitimacy; adaptation; transformational leadership	rapid Discipline; strategic patience; consistency; methodical planning
Vulnerabilities	Impulsivity; reactivity; polarization; risk of strategic incoherence	Strategic optimism; “echo-chamber” fatigue in prolonged crises	Ideological rigidity; risk of informational ecosystem; risk of strategic miscalculation

Political Science and Philosophical Perspectives on the Trump Era

Political science and political philosophy provide a robust analytical framework for understanding the structural tension between the will to power, political legitimacy, and the reconfiguration of hegemony during the Trump era. Beyond the individual traits of the leader, this period can be conceptualized as a crisis of the liberal political order, characterized by the contestation of institutions, social polarization, and the emergence of post-truth discourse.

From a philosophical standpoint, the analysis may begin with Friedrich Nietzsche’s perspective, according to which leaders such as Donald Trump can be understood as manifestations of an unfiltered *will to power*, orientated toward self-assertion, domination, and the continual reenactment of power relations⁴³. In this interpretation, Trump emerges as a political actor operating within a primordial register of competition, positioning himself outside the traditional norms of political morality.

In a different interpretive key, Oswald Spengler would regard Trump’s rise as a symptom of a Western civilization in its phase of “*Caesarism*”, a late stage of cultural decline marked by

⁴³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Macmillan, New York, 1990 (1886).

the emergence of authoritarian, charismatic, and voluntaristic leaders who assume control amid institutional fatigue and the disintegration of shared values⁴⁴. This analytical framework suggests that the Trump era is not an anomaly but rather a structural outcome of the evolutionary trajectory of Western civilization.

In contrast, Jürgen Habermas would critique this period from the perspective of communication theory. For him, the Trump era exemplifies a profound erosion of rational dialogue, the undermining of the public sphere, and the proliferation of post-truth—a phenomenon in which factual discourse is replaced by emotional assertions, slogans, and affective polarization⁴⁵. Thus, the central problem is Adopting a deeper socio-political orientation, Antonio Gramsci would interpret the Trump era as a genuine “*hegemonic crisis*”, in which the liberal cultural consensus becomes insufficient to sustain the existing political order⁴⁶. During such a period, the old hegemony is no longer legitimate, while a new hegemony has not yet consolidated its authority. The emergence of populist-charismatic leaders thus reflects an interregnum in which “the old is dying and the new cannot yet be born”, not merely the leader himself, but the deterioration of the deliberative infrastructure of democracy.

From the perspective of media critique, Noam Chomsky provides additional arguments for understanding the Trump era as a consequence of the concentration of economic and political power, the corporate influence over institutions, and the mechanisms of “*manufacturing consent*”^{47 48}. For Chomsky, the rise of a populist leader is not a historical accident but rather a symptom of the dysfunctions of a democratic system increasingly captured by private interests. This perspective draws attention to the ethical and structural dimensions underlying the functioning of American democracy.

Thus, the integration of these philosophical and political science interpretations outlines a complex image of the Trump era: a period marked by tensions between the individual will to power, the institutional crises of liberal democracy, and the reconfiguration of global hegemony.

⁴⁴ Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991 (1918), op. cit.

⁴⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *Liberalism and Its Discontents*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2022, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, op. cit.

⁴⁷ Noam Chomsky, Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books, New York, 2002.

⁴⁸ Noam Chomsky, *Consequences of Capitalism: Manufacturing Discontent and Resistance*, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2021.

The World in the Era of Trump, Zelensky, and Putin: Geopolitical Reconfigurations and Perspectives from Political Psychology

The era shaped by the leadership of Donald Trump, Volodymyr Zelensky, and Vladimir Putin represents one of the most intense periods of geopolitical realignment since the end of the Cold War. Beyond their political actions, their distinct leadership styles — populist-disruptive (Trump), crisis-driven transformational (Zelensky), and authoritarian-strategic (Putin) — produce systemic effects on the international architecture, the distribution of global power, and the collective imaginaries of the “contemporary world”.

From a geopolitical perspective, the United States has remained the primary global hegemon; however, during the Trump administration, visible tendencies toward strategic retrenchment emerged, subsumed under the doctrine of “America First”. This involved the tightening of relations with NATO and explicit demands for increased financial contributions from member states; the renegotiation of major trade agreements, such as the transformation of NAFTA into USMCA, in line with an economic protectionist logic⁴⁹; and the redefinition of relations with the European Union, increasingly perceived as an economic competitor rather than as a strategic partner. These shifts have been interpreted as part of a tactical reorientation aimed at conserving hegemony by withdrawing from commitments deemed unprofitable⁵⁰.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 marked the emergence of a new type of leadership embodied by Volodymyr Zelensky — a leader who operates simultaneously across military, diplomatic, psychological, and symbolic registers⁵¹. Under his influence, the world has witnessed a moral repoliticization of geopolitics, in which values such as democracy, freedom, and solidarity become strategic instruments; the consolidation of European unity, accompanied by an acceleration of common defense policies⁵²; and the emergence of a new form of political communication—existential storytelling—through which a nation articulates its right to survive in both emotional and juridical terms⁵³. Thus, Zelensky becomes not merely a national leader but a

⁴⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *Liberalism and Its Discontents*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2022, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, PublicAffairs, New York, 2004, *op. cit.*

⁵¹ Liang Wang, “Zelensky’s Wartime Communication Strategy”, *Frontiers in Communication*, Lausanne, 2024.

⁵² Josep Borrell, *Discursuri și analize asupra politicii de apărare europene*, *op.cit.*, 2023.

⁵³ Zelensky Rhetoric Studies, “Rhetorical Analyses of Wartime Addresses (2023–2025)”, *Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics*, 2023–2025.

global symbol of democratic resilience, generating an unprecedented form of transnational solidarity⁵⁴.

Conclusions: The World Between Hegemony, Resistance, and Revisionism

The Trump–Zelensky–Putin era highlights a fragmented global landscape positioned at the intersection of competing dynamics:

- the relative disengagement of the American hegemon from certain areas of global responsibility;
- the emergence of a new model of empathetic–transformational leadership with broad moral and geopolitical impact;
- the reactivation of authoritarian–revisionist ideologies that heighten international instability.

Overall, the world is likely in a transitional period marked by volatility, strategic interdependence, and the continual redefinition of power centers.

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