



Article

## Ukraine War and Historical War Cycles: Was it to be Expected? Exploring the Futures of the War in Ukraine through Historical War Cycles

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### Abstract

*The study of history through time cycles, particularly those related to war, has been the focus of several theories. The objective of this article is to explore the results achieved by researchers in this field. In order to achieve this aim, two cycles are used to illustrate the incidences of war and peace in the west and its sphere of influence since the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the article investigates the foreseeable position of the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict based on the expected development of these cycles. Specifically, we determine the place that the current conflict would occupy, up to a certain point. The study concludes with a prospective exercise that is based on the war cycles analyzed and it provides a scientific analysis of historical ones and their implications for future conflicts.*

### Keywords

Warlike Cycles, Historical Cycles, Cultural Cycles, Prospective, Ukraine

### Cycles In the Ukrainian War: Linking Past and Future

Following the pandemic, the war in Ukraine has been one of the most striking events of the current century. According to Sukhorolskyi (2022), it has displaced other crucial issues such as climate change to the background and altered our expectations for the near future. Moreover, the war's eruption on the European continent has resurrected ghosts of prior conflicts, reinstating the historical division between countries situated in the east and west. Therefore, given the conflict's capacity to reopen old wounds, we must question whether this war, which initially caught us by surprise, was, to some extent, foreseeable.

In this context, it is essential to recognize that to discuss processes that change while they repeat themselves entails referring to temporary cycles. At present, there are numerous cyclical theories that could help us understand the dynamics that might have sparked this war and its potential future if it follows patterns from previous conflicts.

In this respect, natural cycles that determine the fundamental aspects of our existence have always been the object of human study and observation. Recently, several researchers have discovered cyclical behaviors in human activities, including politics, economics, generational change, and cultural development. It is important to highlight the fundamental difference between natural cycles and those caused by the artificial systems created by humans. Although some authors have occasionally referred to the influence of climatic rhythms, they have primarily attributed the spring of economic, political, warlike and historical cycles to generational succession (Ibn Khaldun, Ferrari, De Miguel, Ortega y Gasset, Ligeti, Kondratieff, Turchin, Spengler, Wright, Modelski, Schlesinger Jr., etc.).

In addition to the cycles that have been passed down as traditions and beliefs, with an already historical and scholarly aspect, we can mention authors such as Thucydides, Polybius, Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, and Vico. Since the 19th century, notable figures such as Petrie, Spengler, Ligeti, Toynbee, Deulofeu, Barzun, Riencourt,

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and Otero Nova. Specifically in the field of economics, we can cite Juglar, Kitchin, Kondratieff, Schumpeter, Elliott, Dewey, Wheeler, Kuznets, Forrester, Mandel, and Mensch. Still further, cycles of war and politics are also evident in works by Marx, Adams, Wright, the Schlesingers and Burnham. In the recent publication edited by Galtung and Inayatullah called *Macrohistory and macrohistorians* (1997), many of these twenty macrohistorians use cycles to explain their historical theories (p. 246).

Some even developed a view of history from these economic cycles, as it is the case of Simiand, Labrousse, Braudel, Kennedy and Miguel. Today, this perspective on history is reflected on schools and theories such as the following:

- Hegemonic cyclical and pluralist wave theories. In the former, we include the World-System (with authors such as Wallerstein, Frank, Gills, Goldstein and Arrighi), and the Long Cycle (developed by Modelski, Thompson and Devezas). The wave theory is Professor Doran's Cycles of Power.
- The Cliodynamics, explained in the works of Turchin and Nefedov.
- Generational theory of Strauss and Howe.

After Thucydides (ed. 1910, 1.22.4), the possibility of using the past to think about the future has been one of the interests to learn about History:

But if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content.

Many macrohistorians and researchers of historical cycles believe that similar circumstances often follow a repetitive pattern. This phenomenon may shed light on the striking and shocking news about the Ukrainian war, and prompt us to ask whether studying the past in this cyclical way can help us understand the present and think about the future.

### **Cycles of war and peace**

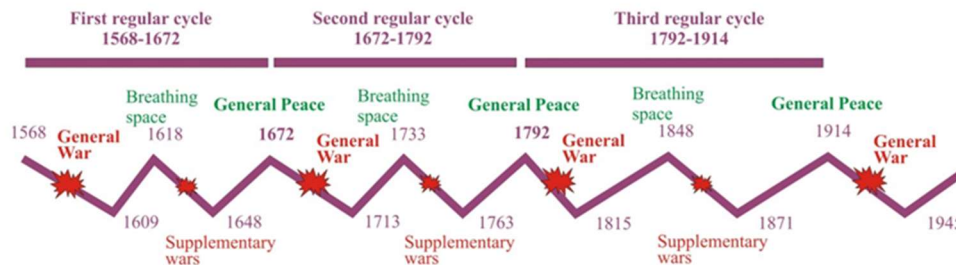
In the works of Spengler (1966), a historical and war interpretation based on cyclical patterns can be found. Toynbee, on the one hand, presents his own theory of the "War-and-Peace Cycle", which consists of four regular periods of 100-120 years, structured in two periods of 50-60 years (1987, p. 272). Wright (1951) also recognizes this periodicity, while Goldstein (1988) explains these 50-60 years war cycles in relation to the Kondratieff business cycles (K-waves), which have the same duration. On the other hand, according to Pastore, these theories suggest that "a great war corresponds to each K-wave, but every two consecutive K-waves, a great war and a super war occur" (2007, p. 116).

This is the same span of the revolutionary cycle explained by Ferrari (four generations of 30 years) (Marías, 1949, pp. 47-52), following a similar pattern of generational succession exposed by Ibn Khaldun (three generations of forty years, or three generations of thirty years in a hundred) (ed. 1977, pp. 348-350). In a similar way, in Ch'ien's theory, cycles of about 100 years are composed of cycles of 30 years (Galtung and Inayatullah, 1997, pp. 16, 249; Hoffman, 2014, p. 17).

### **Cycles of about 120 years**

Concerning the issue of war activity, cycles of 50/60 years, often grouped into double units of about 100/120 years (great wars) are well known. Periods of these magnitudes are explained in the works of authors such as Ibn Khaldun (ed. 1977), Ferrari (Marías, 1949), Ligeti (1931), Toynbee (1987), Wright (after Klingberg, 1970; and Goldstein, 1988), Wallerstein (1984) (and also Hopkins et al., 1982), Goldstein (1988), Arrighi (after Valiani, 2009), Barzun (2002) and Modelski (1978 and 2001) (also Devezas and Modelski, 2003; and Modelski and Thompson, 1996). As an example, in figure 1 we can see a comparison between the war periods of Toynbee and Goldstein (those of the latter, also following the economic cycle). We have marked the matches in red.

**TOYNBEE** War-and-Peace Cycle



**GOLDSTEIN** K waves and wars

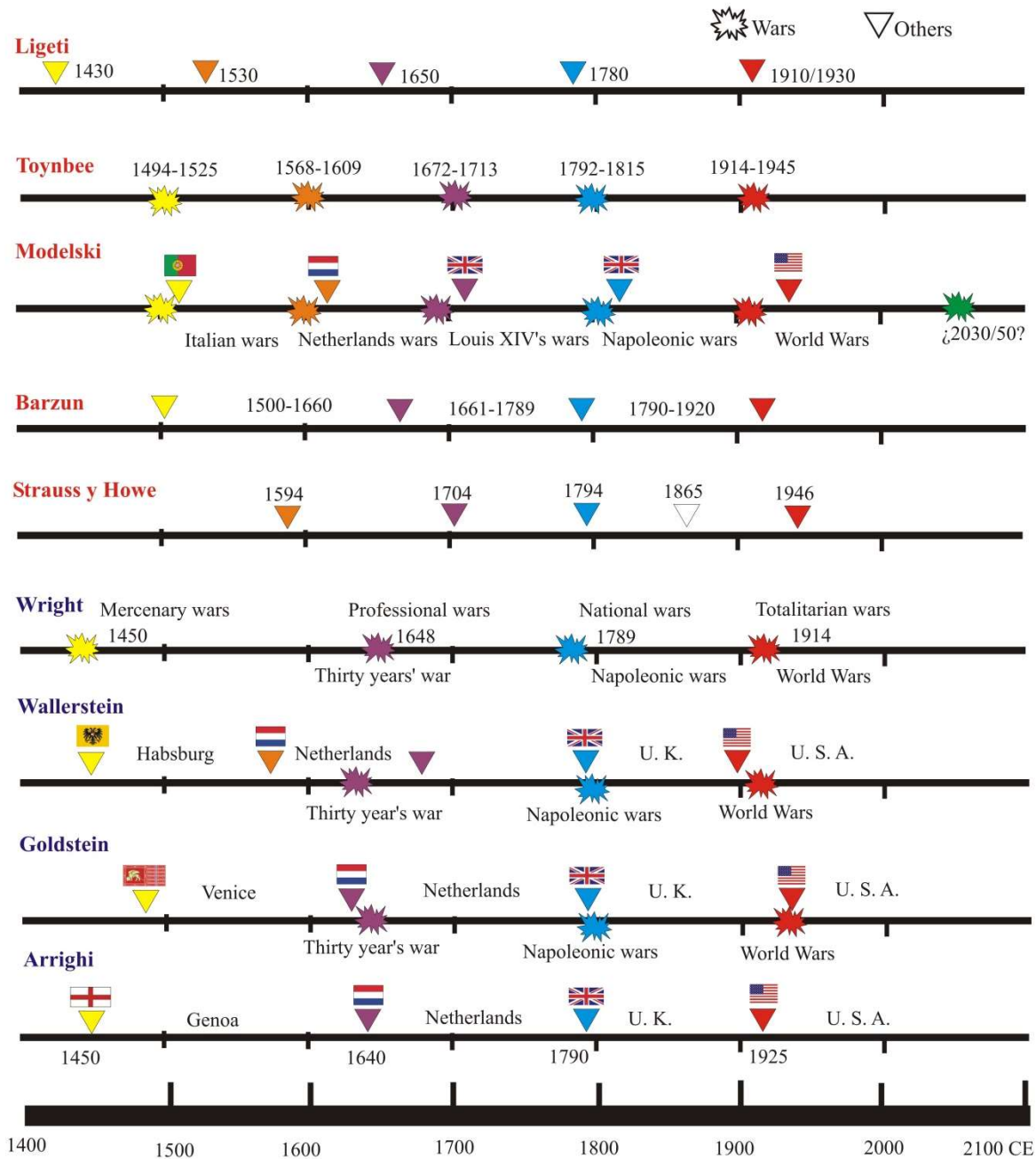


**Fig. 1:** Comparison between the Toynbee's and Goldstein's warlike cycles (Toynbee, 1987; Goldstein, 1988).

A comparative analysis of these researchers' calculations indicates not only a near 120-year period but also unanimity regarding specific conflicts. As illustrated in figure 2, the two world wars are typically followed by the French and Napoleonic revolutionary wars and the wars of Louis XIV (authors labeled in red) or the Thirty Years' War (authors labeled in blue). However, Doran (2012, p. 17) considers Louis XIV's wars as the most significant after the World Wars. In the Renaissance period, several dates are inconclusive, but typically point to a conflict in the 16th century and another in the 15th.

In addition to the aforementioned cases, there are other war episodes that are associated with periods of approximately 120 years, such as the "hundred-year wars". These include the First Hundred Years War, which lasted from 1154 to either 1259 or 1299 (105 or 140 years), the Hundred Years War which occurred from 1337 to 1453 (116 years) and the Second Hundred Years War that took place between 1689 and 1815 (126 years). Furthermore, even in ancient times, such as the Syrian Wars that lasted from 274-168 BCE (106 years or 113 years if the war of 281-279 BCE is included) and the Punic Wars which occurred from 264-146 BCE (118 years), these cycles of about 120 years can be observed.

Thus, these war cycles of about 120 years not only allow for comparisons between the wars of Louis XIV, Napoleon and Hitler but also between these modern periods and those of antiquity. However the question remains: are these ancient war cycles of about 120 years related in some way to the modern ones?



**Fig. 2:** Warlike, hegemonic and cultural cycles of about 120 years compared (Ligeti, 1931; Toynbee, 1987; Wright after Klingberg, 1970 and Goldstein, 1988; Wallerstein, 1984 and also Hopkins et al., 1982; Goldstein, 1988; Arrighi after Valiani, 2009; Barzun, 2002; Modelski, 1978 and 2001; Devezas & Modelski, 2003; and Modelski & Thompson, 1996).

**Cycles of about 1,800 years**

We must bear in mind that most authors employ embedded patterns (cyclical systems) to interpret historical events. This is exemplified in the 120-year war cycles, which are incorporated within larger cycles of around 1,800 years. By examining the 120-year cycles, we can compare major conflicts with each other. Moreover, by placing these periods within the context of the longer 1,800-year cycles, we can also draw comparisons between contemporary wars and those of the ancient world approximately 1,800 years ago.

Looking at the evolution of the civilizations, cultures and arts, many researchers have established parallelisms between Antiquity and our modern world following a cycle of about 1,800 years. This is the case of the works of Petrie, Spengler, Toynbee, Deulofeu and Ligeti, among others. In the case of Ligeti, cycles of about 120 years follow their activity uninterrupted since Antiquity until today.

The calculations on these cycles have oscillated between the 1,700 years of Deulofeu (according to Gutiérrez, 2014) and the 2,100 years of the tables of Spengler (1966). Devezas and Modelski (2003), for example, talk about a 2,000-year cycle that they call the “active zone”. Understanding that the average would be about 1,900 years as in the works of Toynbee (1956) or Ligeti (1931, pp. 173-189), and that would make Napoleon parallel to Julius Caesar, we have refined this comparison in more detail, setting the average at about 1,845 years.

For this reason, in the following sections, we are going to combine these cycles (of about 120 and 1,800 years) to see similarities and differences between the ancient Roman war cycles and those of the current world. Specifically, on the one hand, we refer to the comparison between the *Pax Augusta* and the *Pax Britannica*, and on the other hand, *Pax Romana* with *Pax Americana*, proposed by authors such as Parchami (2009, pp. 24-25), and Takacs and Cline (2015, p. 186). By following the historical cycles, we can gain insights into whether the ongoing war in Ukraine was to be expected. This is the main question that this article aims to answer. In order to verify the cyclic nature of the events, we will compare the old dates, marked by a double bar, with the parallel dates obtained by adding approximately 1,845 years (e.g. 178 CE//2023 CE, since  $178 + 1,845 = 2023$  CE).

**Case study: warlike cycles leading to the present war...**

The idea that appears in the work of these cited authors is that in ancient Rome, as well as in the modern world, these war-and-peace periods of about 120 years are made up of about 20-30 years beginning and ending in strong conflicts, followed by some 90-100 years of peace. Actually, as we can see in table 1, these time frames are those followed by the different Roman dynasties with enormous accuracy. Furthermore, as we have seen in the previous sections, they are the cycles that numerous scholars have established for the great conflicts of the modern world.

**Table 1:** War periods of about 123 years separated by about 1,845 years

<b>I CYCLE A: PAX AUGUSTA: 127 years</b>	
WAR PERIOD: 27 years.	PERIOD OF PEACE: 100 years.
From the Gallic Wars to the Battle of Accio	Pax Augusta/Romana
58-31 BCE Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.	31 BCE-69 CE Julio-Claudian Dynasty
<b>Some 1,845 years later</b>	
<b>I CYCLE B: PAX BRITANNICA: 125 years</b>	
WAR PERIOD: 26 years.	PERIOD OF PEACE: 99 years.
From the French Revolution to the Battle of Waterloo	Pax Britannica
1789-1815 CE	1815-1914 CE
<b>II CYCLE A: PAX ROMANA: 124 years</b>	
WAR PERIOD: 27 years.	PERIOD OF PEACE: 97 years.
From the Year of the 4 Emperors to the Dacian Wars	Pax Romana
69-96 CE Flavian Dynasty.	96-193 CE Antonine Dynasty.
<b>Some 1,845 years later</b>	
<b>II CYCLE B: PAX AMERICANA: ? years</b>	
WAR PERIOD: 31 years.	PERIOD OF PEACE: ?
From the First to the Second World War	Pax Americana
1914-1945 CE	1945-?

***I Cycle. The Pax Augusta and the Pax Britannica***

As we can see in table 1, the first cycle begins with the war period of about 30 years unleashed by Julius Caesar (the Gallic Wars, the Egyptian campaign, etc.); which would be strictly parallel to the thirty years of the Napoleonic period: the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Egyptian campaign and the like. In this regard, Zarzeczny states: “we know Napoleon read about Caesar (...) and commented about Caesar (...) [and] claimed to

have much in common with Julius Caesar (...) like him, Napoleon hoped to create his own Mediterranean empire as a restoration of the Roman Empire” (2013, p. 64).

After surpassing these thirty years of war, a period of around 100 years of peace would ensue, providing continuity to these eras. In ancient times, this was achieved through the *Pax Augusta* (Roman Empire: Julio-Claudian dynasty), while in modern times, the *Pax Britannica* (European imperialist age: British, Second French and German Empires) played this role.

Moreover, as in antiquity the last three emperors (Caligula, Claudius and Nero) lead to the war, in modern times (37-68 CE//1882-1913 CE) the last three *Kaisers* ("Caesars" in German) of the Germanic Empire (1871-1918) (William I, Frederick III, and William II) put a new end to the modern peace period. These similarities between the ancient Caesars and the modern *Kaisers* were drawn before the First World War by the French writer Juliette Adam (1836-1936) and the German historian Ludwig Quidde (1858-1941), awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1927. He published in 1894 a pamphlet entitled: *Caligula: A Study in Roman Imperial Insanity*. Talking about the present but also about the future, he drew unequivocal comparisons between these Caesars and William II (see Adam, 1917, pp. 140-141; and German Historical Institute, nd).

Based on this comparison, it appears clear that the nearly 100-year-long *Pax Britannica* was drawing to a close, just as the 100 years of *Pax Augusta* had ended in the past. Once more, the possibility of war was looming over Europe. In the past, such wars had brought an end to the Julio-Claudian dynasty, paving the way for the Flavian dynasty. Similarly, in modern times, wars had led to the downfall of empires and dynasties, marking the beginning of a new era.

## ***II Cycle. The Pax Romana and the Pax Americana***

The 30 bellicose years of the Flavians (69-96 CE, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian), began with the conflict of the Year of the Four Emperors (69 CE), in which the *Pax Augusta* was broken and Jerusalem was conquered (70 CE). According to the cycles of 1,845 years (69 CE//1914 CE), this time corresponds to the First World War and the new capture of Jerusalem (1917 CE). We must remember that there was also a "Year of the Three Emperors" in 1888 in the German Empire and "Big Four" during World War I: the heads of the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy (USHMM, nd).

This era was described by Tacitus as “a period rich in disasters, frightened in its wars” (Tacitus, ed. 1942. See also ed. 1990, pp. 7, 37). The period came to an end with the figure of the terrible Domitian and the Dacian wars (at the end of the Flavian dynasty). This parallel can also be drawn with Hitler and the end of his regime in World War II, as noted by Dunham (1945, p. 417). In conclusion, these would be the 30 years corresponding to the Flavians (69-96 CE//1914-1941 CE).

After this period, a new era of nearly 100 years of peace ensued, marking the continuation of the previously interrupted *Pax Romana*. During this time, the empire reached its maximum splendor and expansion, referred to as “the most happy and prosperous” period by Gibbon (1830, p. 43). Tacitus also spoke of this era, describing it as a time of “rare happiness”, when people were free to express themselves (ed. 1942). The Trajan column, erected in Rome in 113 CE, depicts the Roman triumph in the Dacian wars, serving as the hallmark of the beginning of this phase (Palomero, 1996, p. 63).

Aurelius Victor wrote about this period that “up to this moment [96 d. C.], the Empire had been governed by men born in Rome or Italy. From then on, so did others who came from outside, and (...) it seems to me that these were much better” (cited by Canto, 2003, p. 305). With these words, he is referring to the emperors who began this stage, sometimes called "Hispanics" because they came from *Baetica* (the former western colonies). They are known as the “Ulpio-Aelia” or “Antonine” dynasty: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius (with Lucio Vero) (Canto, 2003).

They are also known as the “Adoptive Emperors” or “Five Good Emperors” because, theoretically, they would be “chosen based on unbeatable human and political qualities, the most advantageous for the State” according to Canto (2003, p. 320). In the same group but excluded from the five, remains Commodus, the last one, for being the fleshly son of Marcus Aurelius and for ending up being “crueler than Domitian, more impure than Nero” (according to Writers of Augustan History, ed. 1919, p. 171).

By comparing the start dates (96 CE // 1941 CE), we can draw a parallel between that of *Pax Americana* (since 1945). From a European perspective, once again, the fate of Europe is being influenced by politicians “from outside”, from the former western colonies (in this case, from North America), elected democratically. However, just as in ancient Rome, at the end of this period of nearly 100 years of peace and stability, there was a significant decline in peaceful relations.

*The Marcomanni and Sarmatic wars... or the Ukrainian and Russian ones*

The erection of the column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome between 180 and 193 CE serves as a monument imitating Trajan's column and marking the culmination of the era of the Five Good Emperors. This period coincides with the zenith of Rome's magnificence. Nonetheless, the reign of Commodus following the demise of Marcus Aurelius witnessed the decline of Rome from a “golden empire” to a “rusty iron empire”, as affirmed by Dio Cassius (Palomero, 1996, p. 63).

The era of the Philosopher Emperor witnessed significant historical events, such as the Parthian War (161-166 CE) that resulted in the looting of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, located near Baghdad. Additionally, it marked the beginning of one of the most devastating pandemics of ancient times, the Antonine plague. According to Muñoz-Sanz (2012), this outbreak could have originated in present-day China (García, 1980, p. 74). Interestingly, the US invasion of Iraq (2003-2011) took place during the same dates as the Parthian War (161-166 CE//2006-2011 CE) (AFP, 2018). Furthermore, the world has been struck by recent pandemics, including COVID-19, which started in Wuhan, China.

In this respect, Muñoz-Sanz (2012, p. 554) distinguishes between the so-called “Antonine plague” or “Galen's” (beginning in the year 164/165) and the “Commodus epidemic” that began around 189/190. The parallel dates would be 2009/2010 and 2034/2035, respectively, with a time difference of +1,845 years. However, Gozalves and García (2007, p. 17) suggest a broader timeline that includes three different outbreaks: 165-169/170, 178-180, and from 189, with parallel dates of 2010-2014/2015, 2023-2025, and from 2034. This timeline could include previous pandemics to COVID-19, such as the influenza A outbreak in 2009.

In this context, the aforementioned column of Marcus Aurelius narrates in stone the Marcomannic and Sarmatic wars that took place in Eastern Europe (Palomero, 1996, p. 63). These occurred between the years 166-180 CE. The first period would cover from the year 166 to 175 and the second from 177 to 180 CE. More accurately, García (1980, pp. 73-74) divides them into the First Germanic War (169-174) and Sarmatic War (174-175) for the first period and the Second Germanic War (177-180) for the second period.

In the year 166, some 6,000 Germans crossed the border of the Danube and Marcomanni and Quadi did the same in 167. The Roman military response to defend its borders and restore order was immediate, and these wars, in which the Sarmatians were also involved, lasted until the year 175. Then, Marcomanni and Quadi, among others, rebelled again around the year 177, giving rise to another successful Roman response that would culminate at the time of the death of the emperor himself due to plague or fatigue in Vindobona (Vienna), in the year 180 (Rinkleff, 2016, pp. 1031-1033; García, 1980, p. 73).

The Romans called this conflict the “War of Many Nations”. Although the Marcomanni (mark men, “frontier people”) gave their name to this war, the Quadi and Sarmatians turned out to be resistant enemies (Rinkleff, 2016, p. 1030). Approximately, the Marcomanni would inhabit present-day Bohemia (Czech Republic), the Quadi in Moravia (Czech Republic) and Slovakia, and the Sarmatians in the Hungarian plain (García, 1980, p. 73). Regarding the Sarmatians, Quirós (2003, p. 243) translates the opening paragraph of Tacitus's *Germania* in this way: “all Germania is limited from the Gauls, Rhetians and Hungarians by the rivers Rhine and Danube, and from the Sarmatians (modern Russians) and Dacians by mutual fear or by mountains”. And it is that like these, the Sarmatians “occupied a spacious terrain from the Urals to the Danube basin” (Kozłóvskaia, 1999, p. 86).

The dates parallel to these ancient world wars, if we follow the cycle, would be: 166-175 CE//2011-2020 CE and 177-180 CE//2022-2025 CE. In the first period, Eastern Europe saw the annexation of Crimea by Russia (year 2014) and the start of the Dombas War (since 2014) (Crespo, 2022) (2014 would be parallel to 169 CE, the first Germanic war according to García, 1980); and in a second moment from 2022, the invasion of Ukraine itself (whose name also means “borderland” or “border country”) (Britannica, nd).

On the one hand, let us note that the temporal location is practically the same and the geographical one equally similar, given that in both cases it is an incursion from the east and in the same area, on the borders of the west and NATO, in a “border land” between two blocks (Rome and the foreigners/West and Russia), inhabited by “border people” (Marcomans/Ukrainians). As a result, from a pro-Western point of view, the president of the Ukrainian parliament recently said that “Ukraine defends the borders of the civilized world” (President, 2022).

On the other hand, Russia is calling its new nuclear missile “Sarmat”. It is named after the Sarmatians, “nomadic tribes that roamed the steppes of present-day Southern Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan” (Singh, 2022). According to some news, the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria Zakharova, would have said: “we call our defensive weapons “Sarmat”, having every right to do so, as the heirs of the great and strong culture of the past” (Mail BD, 2022).

As Sukhorolskyi (2022) states, after the recent events, “it became obvious (...) that the Russian empire is not only a phenomenon of the remote past, but probably also of the nearest future”, and that “it became quite popular to embed the present actions of Russia into an orderly logic of its imperial policy throughout its history (...) modern Russia (...) constantly refers to imperial attributes of the remote past”.

What is more, we can wonder if Putin, often called “the new Tsar”, or the “new Stalin”, is trying to emulate the historic great leaders of his country. Montefiore thinks that Putin is “co-opting elements of Romanov and Soviet imperialism” (2022). From Putin's perspective, Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians were part of Ancient Russia but Ukraine is now under the domination and influence of the “foreigners” and it is being used against Russia like a NATO puppet. He believes that Russia is being surrounded by NATO (Herrera, 2022).

Still further, in relation to China, a study about its alternative futures from a macrohistorical approach has been made by Hoffman, (2014) (see also Sukhorolskyi, 2022; and Motti, 2018). But about the actual situation, Martín (2022) states that

International analysts claim that if there is no response to the invasion of Russia, the next move would be the invasion of the Asian giant to the island of Taiwan, becoming the dominators of the Pacific axis. In fact, the other day Russia called Taiwan an 'enemy', and China responded by saying that the island does not exist as an independent entity, but as 'property' of China. (...) Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, that "China understands Russia's legitimate security concerns" although he added that the Asian country "always respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states".

### **...and warlike cycles leading to futures scenarios**

Galtung (1997, p. 6) argues, “the macrohistorian is unable to promise unlimited progress. Sooner or later the downswing will come, as predicted by a cyclical theory” but he also asks “but why can macrohistory not stop short for the future? Because it is nomothetic, with “laws” disrespectful of borders in time, including the line for “now”. And then, concludes: “Historians may say we cannot learn from the past. Macrohistorians insist we can. That is their promise and problem”.

To begin with, let us discuss the ongoing war in Ukraine. If we assume that the current cycle will continue at a constant rate, the date that corresponds to the end of the ancient Roman war would fall around the year 2025 CE (180 CE // 2025 CE). Rinkleff noted that the Romans were never able to subjugate Marcomannia, and although “this region remained relatively peaceful for centuries”, the Romans gained little from their “Pyrrhic victory” after more than a decade of savage conflict (2016, p. 1032). While this is merely a mathematical average and not an exact prediction, it is based on a real historical event. Nevertheless, circumstances are never identical and technological advancements have greatly changed the nature of warfare.

Moreover, another possibility is that this war may be a precursor to even greater conflicts. For instance, the next date that corresponds to the approximately 123-year war cycle would be 2037 CE (1914 CE + approximately 123 years = 2037 CE). If we compare this to ancient Rome, what was the situation at the corresponding dates?

If we follow a similar course to the past, a new war cycle would begin after Commodus in the “Year of the Five Emperors” (193 CE // 2038 CE) and would end with the “Year of the Six Emperors” (238 CE // 2083 CE) during the period of the Severan dynasty. If this trend continues, it is possible that in a few years, a new “Commodus”



could appear in international politics and end the current peaceful stage, ushering in a new war cycle. However, it is important to note that this is only one possibility and a warning, not an infallible prediction or inevitable fate. In fact, it is not difficult to find comparisons between current politicians and Emperor Commodus in the media, although these comparisons may vary in their degree of accuracy.

Following the explanations of Toynbee (figure 1), the response to a challenge follows an undulating pattern: sometimes a warlike prelude leads to a general war, followed by a breath. Then, supplementary wars arrive to conclude the challenge, and then, come the general peace (1987, p. 272). These cycles have an average of 100 years (74-122 years) and the last starts in 1914 CE. In this very sense, could the war in Ukraine be the prelude of a general war as in the Toynbee’s war-and-peace cycle?

In addition to this, Modelski and Denemark (2009, p. 64) mention various authors who, based on the trends discovered in their studies, believe that a global outbreak of violence could occur around 2030 (Modelski and Thompson), 2030-2040 (Arrighi), or 2050 (Wallerstein). This is what the authors call in that quote “a strange mix of predictive unity and analytical disharmony”. According to them, Alves (2014) considers also the possibility of a technological revolution around 2040 and great wars around 2070-2080.

As we can see in Modelski’s cycle of war (figure 2), the next global war that would mark a decisive moment in the turning of the global hegemonies (as the Napoleonic ones, or the World Wars) may take place between 2030 and 2050 CE if the cycle keeps constant (Modelski and Thompson, 1996, pp. 8, 54, 67). As in the case of Wallerstein, Goldstein and Arrighi, a new warlike conflict about these dates will be always related with a change in the global hegemony (led nowadays by the United States). But also with a cycle of economic development: K-waves as we can see in Goldstein (figure 1), S-shaped K-waves and long cycles in Modelski’s theory, or systemic cycles of accumulation in Arrighi’s works.

Although this comparative study has focused on European history, it is clear that its implications are global in terms of geopolitics, especially since the World Wars. But also among the infinity of possible future scenarios, authors such as Lukin (2014a and 2014b) point to an imaginary conflict between the “Indo - Pacific coalition” (India, Japan, USA, Australia, Philippines, NATO members, etc.) and the “Eurasian alliance” (China, Russia, Belarus, Pakistan, etc.). Professor Lukin also makes his forecasts for 2034-2074, imagining it as a new Thirty or Fifty Years’ War. Lukin (2014 b) also thinks that China have completed its reunification with Taiwan by 2030 (2014a, 2014b). That is also why it seems very opportune that these comparative studies be carried out with other countries and cultures that could be involved in a future major conflict.

**Table 2:** War periods of about 123 years separated by about 1,845 years and macrohistorians/researchers insights about a future warlike period.

<b>III CYCLE A: CRISIS: 120 years</b>	
WAR PERIOD: 45 years.	CRISIS PERIOD: 75 years.
From the Year of the 5 Emperors to the Year of the 6 Emperors 193-238 CE Severe Dynasty	From the Third Century Crisis to Constantine 1238-313 CE
<b>Some 1,845 years later... .</b>	
<b>III CYCLE B: CRISIS?: 120 years?</b>	
WAR PERIOD: 45 years?	CRISIS PERIOD: 75 years?
From one warlike period to another 2038-2083 CE?	2083-2158 CE?

And other insights about future wars:

Macrohistorian/Researcher	Pattern	Insights on violence/war
Turchin	Cliodynamics	2020 CE
Modelski and Thompson	Long Cycle	2030 CE
Arrighi	Systemic Cycles of Accumulation	2030-2040 CE
Wallerstein	World System	2050 CE
Alves	A revolution and wars	2040 and 2070-2080 CE
Lukin	A new Thirty or Fifty Years’ War	2034-2074 CE

## Conclusions

In conclusion, the cyclical nature of violence and conflict is a complex phenomenon that can be attributed to a variety of causes, including economic and political troubles, generational shifts in social psychology, and theories of social cohesion and natural life cycles. While there is no fateful date that can be directly blamed for the outbreak of violence, the similarities between past and present cycles can provide insight into the potential duration and disintegration of civilizations. Through the study of these cycles, we can better understand the history of human conflict and even think about future trends.

Arguing about the causes of these cycles, we can find different theories: the losing of the *asabiya* (social cohesion) explained by Ibn Khaldun, the laws of *corsi/ricorsi* according to Vico, the natural life cycle as in Spengler's works, the challenge-and-response mechanism expressed by Toynbee, etc. What is more, the famous economist Kondratieff, stated that "wars and revolutions are not causes of cyclical movements, but one of their symptoms, as a consequence of the "acceleration of the rhythm and tension of economic life" (according to De Miguel, 1986, p. 42).

What is more, at the present time, one of the most interesting theories explaining the violence cycles is generational, like in the Ibn Khaldun works. In agreement with the ideas of Ortega y Gasset (1996) and others, Turchin (Cliodynamics) establishes the fathers-and-sons model as the mechanism of the cycle (social psychology). In this theory, violent episodes would be like a fire or an epidemic: once they have broken out and lasted for a while, the population that has experienced its horrors seeks pacification and stability (they are "immunized"). This peaceful period usually lasts for a generation (20-30 years). But then a new generation appeared that did not know the ravages of the war and since the underlying causes that led to the first conflict are still latent, violence breaks out again. Consequently, these episodes are repeated every two generations, that is, every 40-60 years (Turchin and Nefedov, 2009, pp. 27-28).

But beyond these causes, these cyclical movements draw strong parallels between the past and the future, and may let us know how long they usually last and how these processes of disintegration work, common to all civilizations. Like Thucydides, Ibn Khaldun says that "the reader (...) will already be able to properly know the history of the ages that have preceded him; will even be able to foresee what could arise in the future" (ed. 1977, p. 20).

In this case, the comparison drawn by the cycles about the Ukrainian conflict may show how the Western civilization has reached, once more, a new peak in its expansion to the East, like in the times of ancient Rome. A formidable expansion, viewed sometimes like a threat to some neighbors with similar desires of growth toward the Western side. Is this a "threat" used like an excuse for war, like in the recently criticized Thucydides Trap of Allison?

About the deep cause of these times of troubles related to the disintegration of the civilizations, Ibn Khaldun states that is the loss of the "*asabiyyah*" (the group feeling or social cohesion) (ed. 1977, pp. 20-22). In the same line of thought, Toynbee thinks that civilizations perish by "suicide", no by "murder": "no civilization has ever perished through the violent impact, from outside" (1964, p. 613). And among other reasons, Tainter explains that "industrial and technological progress only comes at the cost of increasing a structural complexity of enormous energy and social costs; and, the most progress (the greater complexity), greater resources to maintain them, which leads to an inexorable collapse" (Ruyet, 2011). About this, the Laboratory of Futures (2022) points that

In the atmosphere of all-encompassing hysteria and bullying, it's imperative to remind people that life goes on and that staying human is the first and foremost necessity. Any representative of Homo sapiens belongs to humanity first (...), and some national or ethnic entity, way down the list. Fighting dehumanization on both sides of the front is crucially important. It's something that's in our power. It's something that we can control. We have work cut out for everyone here. (...) The "special operation" will end, and we will have to live in its aftermath. But, if we let xenophobia and nationalist fervor take hold, ordinary people will keep suffering, and different kinds of predators and parasites will keep feeding off it. Only by preserving humanity and throwing off the stereotypes thrust down our throats will we be able to unite, survive in the hard times, and rebuild the looted, destroyed countries. And

then to lodge our bill to those who started this nightmare.

As Alves (2014) points out, the likelihood of the predictive calculations being accurate is unlikely. However, in the field of prospective studies on the future, it is more crucial to generate hypotheses, possibilities, and pose questions than to accurately predict outcomes. By rejecting determinism, if a global war would happen on the calculated dates, we would at least have various explanations as to why it happened at that time (Modelski and Denmark, 2009, p. 64). The real mystery lies in why, despite being aware of the tragedies of our past, we continue to repeat history.

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