

THE OWL SHOGUN ESSAYS



ON THE REPUBLIC - Part Three -

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At the start of this year, I celebrated the launch of my newest novel which had only *just* been published; marking the fifth installment for my flagship Greco-Roman fantasy series: **Deorum Legions**TM. My intent after this was to pivot towards the completion of Part Two of my Asian-fantasy series: **Yokai Country**TM, which I failed to publish on time due to schedule constraints. Little did I know, on the same day of my publication, the world was about to witness an event of unparalleled significance; one which threatens to usurp the very foundations of our international rules-based order. I had originally desired to abstain from any further articulations of my (deviant) political views in favor of less contentious and more creative pursuits. In truth, politics is a most exhausting affair. With each year, I find that weariness becomes ever more pervasive, despite its slow gradualness. If my inner reservoir of energy to perform whichever acts I deem fit are to become more limited by the sheer passage of time, then I'd rather devote it towards activities which bring me joy, not stress and utter disillusionment as politics so often provides.

But alas, the urgency of this moment has compelled me to draft yet another document in regards to the state of our Republic which I hold dear. And thus, I present to you the *third* part of my essay series titled **On The Republic**. If you haven't done so already, I invite you to read the prior entries first so that you'll have a much better understanding as to where *I* stand amidst these uncertain times... Let us begin!

IN DEFENSE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW -----

With the conclusion of World War II, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan were resolutely defeated by the allied powers; thus closing a dark chapter in human history. What

came next was perhaps one of the greatest moments of the 20th century. In sunny San Francisco, California, about 850 representatives from over fifty countries met in what was then the largest international gathering ever recorded. This resulted in the drafting of a magnificent document known to us as the **UN Charter**; thus establishing the **United Nations**. This legally binding agreement between all signatory polities now includes 193 sovereign states as of this writing. Much like with the constitution of my own homeland, I find myself enamored by the opening preamble of the UN Charter:

“The peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women of all nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained and to promote social progress and better standards of life.”

Over the 80 years of its existence, the United Nations has, through its many organizations, achieved numerous initiatives with the aim of improving the lives of people and fostering peace in a world where nuclear Armageddon is merely a button press away. Among such goals are:

- The elimination of poverty
- Disaster relief
- Providing food and aid to those in need
- Improving health services
- Protecting and promoting human rights
- Upholding international law

But while the United Nations has certainly made great strides in building a better world, many pundits have levied criticisms against the institution. A common grievance is the UN's seeming inability to genuinely resolve conflicts such as in Ukraine and Syria. Then there are the outdated structures of the body's bureaucracy which lead to inefficiencies and slow decision-making. It is also the case that the vested interests of various UN member states often collide as they tend to prioritize their own agendas at the expense of the global good. I, dear reader, submit to you that the biggest issue with the UN stems mainly from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Comprised of five permanent members (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States), the UNSC is the United Nation's most powerful tool; capable of approving binding resolutions, economic sanctions or military action. It's also in the Security Council where we see the greatest obstacles to meaningful solutions. The reason is that each permanent member possesses the all-encompassing power of the veto. Let's suppose that there is an armed conflict in Turkmenistan and a draft resolution has been proposed to tangibly end the conflict. Even *if* four of the five members agree to back such a resolution, a single veto and undo everything; undermining all progress towards real peace.

We've seen this most recently in Gaza where countless Palestinians have been under siege by Netanyahu's Israel; leading to a humanitarian crisis of such scale and extremes as to garner international condemnation. As of the start of 2026, the total death toll of Palestinians killed since October 2023 has surpassed 70,000. The United States' unwavering support of Israel and their colonial project has done little to soothe outrage from the nations and people of Earth. But it

wasn't until later in 2025 that the United Nations officially announced that Israel was indeed committing a genocide in Gaza; confirming what the sane and rational people of the planet already knew to be true. Amidst all the drama and global pressures, various draft resolutions had been pushed through by the UN only for America to veto six of them; further prolonging the chaos unleashed by Netanyahu and defying the collective will of humanity. This is where we get to the heart of this essay's topic; that being my country's blatant disdain and disregard for the very international rules and norms that it itself had helped to establish. Nothing demonstrates this better than the event which inspired the birth of this document which you are now reading.

In the early morning of January 3rd 2026, Donald Trump unilaterally ordered the United States' military to launch an operation at the Venezuelan capital of Caracas. In just over two hours, Nicolás Maduro Moros (President of Venezuela) was abducted and spirited away to New York where he and his wife, Cilia Flores, remain in US custody. This dramatic stunt has stoked all manner of reactions around the world; especially when considering that kidnapping the leader of a sovereign nation is a flagrant violation of international law which undermines the very idea of our current world order. Despite what the propagandists at the White House have said, this is indeed an act of war carried out without the express authorization of the United Nations nor the direct approval of congress. The Founding Fathers of old had the incredible foresight to frame our constitution in such a way as to bestow only the LEGISLATIVE BRANCH with the power to declare war. They understood that granting such power to a single man was an invitation for tyranny to take root within our fledgling Republic.

If Trump truly believed that this aggression was in the best interests of the American people, then he should have presented his case to congress so that our representatives, duly elected to be our voice in government, could make a vote on the issue. His Republican sycophants would have certainly allowed it given their collective moral turpitude and the Democrats' aversion to fight back. But just like an ancient Roman emperor, Don Trumpus bypassed congress and in effect bypassed the sacred will of the people in order to satisfy his own delusions of grandeur.

Now before I proceed further, I believe it *is* crucial to acknowledge the very real plight of the Venezuelan people for they have long suffered under the repressive chains of tyranny. Since 2014, almost 8 million have fled the country and sought asylum abroad. This mass exodus was certainly felt where I live as many of them came to Florida. When you listen to their stories, you are inundated with the gruesome realities of life under Maduro. Any person who embraces the promise of freedom will recognize Nicolás Maduro for what he is: the head of an oppressive government guilty of a staggering number of evils. Among such offenses are the arbitrary detention of activists, mass incarcerations, unfair trials, media suppression and censorship, the stifling of free expression, torture, gross mismanagement of the economy, and an incalculable host of other human rights violations. Maduro's guilt is without dispute. That he deserves death is a palpable sentiment shared by many among the Venezuelan diaspora; especially considering the utter glee and jubilation they all demonstrated on the streets upon learning that the dictator had been removed from power.

That being said, we've been here before... Presidents of the past have sent us to war in foreign lands over a myriad

of reasons; many of them hardly worthy of being considered a suitable *casus belli*. Back in 2003, President George Bush began his “*War on Terror*” by having the military invade Iraq under the pretense that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. Of course, we later discovered that there never were WMDs of any kind. And though we enshrined our militarism in the lofty language of freedom, liberty, and delivering democracy to a troubled region, it seldom ended well for all the nations involved. To this day, Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan remain in a state of perpetual turmoil at the expense of millions of lives and many trillions of wasted taxpayer dollars.

This time, the rhetoric has shifted towards a new war on illegal drugs. For months Trump and his conspirators have set their sights on Venezuela in preparation for a new assault on the nation’s sovereignty. For months Trump has tried to convince us that Nicolás Maduro’s regime is comprised of Narco-terrorists. For months the Trump administration has saw fit to carry out numerous illegal bombings of seafaring vessels across the Caribbean under the guise that they were drug traffickers despite providing zero tangible evidence or testimony. In the coming days, Maduro will face a slew of criminal charges in court centered not around his inhumane treatment of the Venezuelan people or abuse of power, but on the subject of illegal drugs. In essence, Venezuelan drug trafficking is Trump’s modern equivalent to Bush’s Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. It’s tacitly clear to me that this is yet another false pretense to justify a new war of imperial conquest upon a weaker and resource-rich neighbor.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has always had a troubled history marred by corruption, social upheaval, and authoritarianism; this is without dispute. But in regards to

the global illegal drug trade, it is an insignificant player. If we are to believe that Trump is indeed fighting to halt illegal drugs from entering the country, then Venezuela is a rather questionable target for military action. By this logic, we should be invading the actual major producers of cocaine such as Mexico, Peru, Colombia or Bolivia as well as China for their role in fentanyl and other precursor chemicals. So why Venezuela? Why this bizarre insistence on fighting a war over drugs when just last month Trump decided to pardon the man known as Juan Orlando Hernández, one of the world's most notorious drug traffickers? It's because this has *nothing* to do about drugs. It's America's bad habit of pushing regime change in the name of foreign policy.

Of course this event can't be attributed *solely* to Trump. We have Marco Rubio (Secretary of State) to thank for this. Much of his career has been dedicated to the overthrow of lawful governments in Latin America with additional hopes of replacing them with puppet states subservient only to American capitalist interests. On behalf of all Floridians, I must apologize for my home state's tendency to produce some of the most wretched of politicians such as Rick Scott and Ron DeSantis who care so little for the common people yet devote everything towards the enrichment of patricians and lobbyists. Marco Rubio is cut from an even worse cloth it seems. Now he has the willful ear of the President to enact his deepest and darkest fantasies onto the world stage. And according to them, Venezuela is *only* the beginning.

Let us not delude ourselves into thinking for a second that we removed Maduro to advance the righteous cause of freedom, liberty, justice, and democracy. Seldom were the ancient Romans so noble in their own imperial expansions. This current White House has repeatedly expressed its intent

to annex Canada, Greenland, as well as to conduct further incursions into Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Cuba. These are not the confessions of a sensible or even a benevolent hegemon seeking to bring stability to the world. Such threats are the boastings of a belligerent nation bent on world domination.

I wish this was entirely hyperbole on my part but mere days after Maduro's abduction Trump and his accomplices reasserted their desire to expand the theatre of war across the Americas and grow our imperium to encompass the lawful territories of our closest allies. Trump even went so far as to cite the old Monroe Doctrine as a justification for America having total and complete impunity to do whatever it so pleases. A year of dismantling our democratic institutions and getting away with virtually every crime a politician can possibly commit has no doubt given him an increased sense of invulnerability; especially when our craven judicial and legislative branches refuse to do anything to reign in on the man's autocratic propensities.

I wrote in prior works that a second Trump presidency would see the coming of a more hostile America which may threaten to usurp the current world order, sow chaos, and erode existing alliances to the detriment of all. But even *I* am alarmed by the overwhelming speed of unfolding events and the sheer aggressiveness of their occurrences. Gone is the America I grew up in. From the halls of congress to the local voting booth, we have lost our way and forgotten our values. In the span of a single year, we are positioning ourselves as the paramount enemy of the free world.

Does the United States have an inherent right to act as sole arbiter in the world? Does the President have the divine authority to impose military actions without consideration

for and cooperation with the international community? No! By ignoring the core tenets of the UN Charter and the ideals it aspires to, we're signaling to all countries of the world that America is dangerous and unworthy of trust. If indeed we move forward with the conquest of Latin America and our northern allies, then we have no right to cry foul when China finally integrates Taiwan into its mainland. With the current administration acting as an imperial power and subverting international law, we are becoming a rouge state no better than Tojo's Japan or even Hitler's Germany. Under the man known as Donald J. Trump, the United States is losing its supreme mandate as leader of the free world.

THE EAST-WEST RIVALRY -----

The United States has an extensive history of deploying state-sanctioned violence against its neighbors in order to fulfill its strategic objectives whilst laying the groundwork for empire building. Latin America has always been a region of which, time and time again, these imperial games are played out in the form of economic strangulation, military force, or other coercive means to interfere with the political destiny of sovereign powers. This of course is a horrendous violation of Article 2, section 4 of the UN Charter which prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity of any independent state.

Even after the founding of the United Nations, the United States has relied on the blunt use of force, political manipulation, and covert operations to push regime change all across the planet; a claim of which there is an abundance of documented evidence for. Between the years of 1947 to 1980 alone there have been as many as 70 US-backed coups and regime change initiatives carried out by my government

such as in Iraq , Honduras, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, and many more. Among such nefarious methodologies used to achieve such aims are:

- False flag operations
- Targeted assassinations
- The instigation of civil unrest
- Covert intelligence operations
- Bribery of public and military officials
- Economic warfare meant to seriously deprive local populations in the form of sanctions
- The manipulation of mass media
- Financial and military support for armed groups
- And, when all else fails, open warfare.

I'm sure that I'm missing a few things but... Every one of these acts are categorically illegal under international law and, despite whatever dishonest propaganda might emerge from the White House (designed primarily to placate the American public), such unilateral actions have historically led to ongoing violence, political instability, social upheaval and a prolonged suffering for the affected populations. But even with our overwhelming list of regime change attempts, never in recent history has an American president blatantly declared his intentions to dominate entire swathes of the planet for nothing else other than to bolster his ego.

Part of me wants to believe that what we are seeing is merely a desperate ploy from a dying empire struggling to maintain its preeminence in a rapidly changing world. For years we have tried to "contain" China with little success. And while our share of the global economy has dwindled along with the significance of the dollar as a global reserve currency, China and its communist leadership continues to

nurture powerful relationships and invests in countries all throughout the world as part of its Belt & Road Initiative. Even as I type this, China remains the largest trading partner for over 120 countries. The BRI has proven instrumental in setting the foundations for a more prosperous multipolar world with an emphasis on empowering the global south countries in the form of better infrastructure and a greater capacity for utilizing their own productive forces. In lieu of Trumps' illegal tariffs, sanctions, and his plethora of other antagonistic policies, many nations are eagerly looking to derisk themselves from the United States. This is all part of a much larger international momentum for dedollarisation.

Latin America has been a prime region for Chinese investments; much of it for the same reasons that Trump covets it so much. But rather than rely on the use of threats or force, the Chinese have created roads, bridges, factories, shipping ports, trains, and other essential building blocks to help raise the recipient nation's capacity to plot a better future for themselves. Though it is not a *perfect* process by any means, it *is* a welcome departure from the strongman bullying that is favored by my country.

This past year alone (2025), China has continued to make breakthroughs across a vast array of sectors. Among such technological advancements was artificial intelligence integration, quantum computing, robotics, semiconductors and sustainable green energy. This is all in alignment with the Communist Party's five-year plans where they cleverly direct the productive forces of their economy to achieve utterly remarkable results; often in ways that tend to benefit the whole of Chinese society rather than *only* their elites. Here in America, it seems as though our leaders are unable to plan anything beyond the next election cycle. There is no

long-term vision of the future given to the American people even remotely comparable to the vision Xi Jinping presents to his fellow countrymen. Regardless of how you might feel about China or of their unique system, the sheer speed of their progress and their unyielding dedication to the shared prosperity of all citizens is something to admire.

But this growing ascendancy of China is also the result of decades of strategic industrial policies and investments. Today, they control about 60% - 70% of rare-earth mining and over 90% of its processing. This dominance over the global rare-earth supply chain places China in a supreme position when it comes to high-tech industries who depend on such resources. While American elites kept betting on oil and gas-powered cars, China brilliantly bet on the promise of electric vehicles. Now they lead the world in EVs with plans to do the same in other sectors. But even the best laid plans can fail in the face of geopolitical tensions. China, like America, relies on other countries to supply the resources necessary for creating higher technologies like computer chips, satellites, weapons systems, wind turbines, and solar panels. This is precisely what Trump seeks to undermine.

Fully cognizant of China's immense achievements and the growing international coalition to dethrone America as the premier power, Trump planned to bully the world into obedience via the blunt instrument of exorbitant tariffs. In Trump's primitive mind, he believed that such bullying would force enemies *and* allies both to bend the knee and capitulate to his demands. Some countries indeed cowered and became shamelessly compliant with their suzerain like the weakening powers of Europe and Japan. Others, like China, stood firm in their resolve and challenged America's attempt to coerce them into submission.

China learned from the first Trump presidency that they could no longer put faith in an America who reneges on their international treaties, agreements, and obligations with such cavalierness. When Trump came at them with tariffs, China was able to rely on other trading partners across a planet-wide supply chain of their own creation; studiously built over decades of careful planning. They even responded with their own retaliatory tariffs which, when compounded with the tariffs aimed against all other nations, began to wreak havoc upon the US economy.

For decades American leaders, both Republicans and Democrats alike, dreamed of China's collapse only to be proven wrong every time. Trump and his conspirators had hoped that China's Xi would eventually yield to American pressure similarly to how Japan did in the 1980s when the United States imposed the Plaza Accord on them. This not only stifled Japan's economy (which led to the bubble burst of the 1990s) but to this day their capacity for recovery has forever been stunted. It still puzzles me how Japan can still adore my country despite its servility to American interests. Although we must give credit where it is due; America is exceptional when it comes to brainwashing its loyal imperial subjects. As it so happens, China saw this and refused to end up an object of loot and plunder like Japan had willfully become. The People's Republic of China envisioned a future free from western domination.

If there's one thing the leaders of my country hate more than anything, its *real* competition. Whenever a nation rises to threaten their perceived right as hegemon, my leaders do everything in their power to ensure such eventualities never come to pass; sanctioning and crippling all who would seek to free themselves from America's yoke. But after decades of

sensible and forward-thinking leadership, China is now able to defend itself against American muscle as well.

A NEW WORLD ORDER -----

On the 3rd of September 2025, a great military parade was held on Chang'an Avenue in Beijing. There, over 12,000 troops from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) assembled to show the Chinese people (and the entire world) China's latest advancements in military hardware and war-making capabilities. Officially, this was meant to celebrate the 80th anniversary in the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War (**World War II** for us in the west). A total of 26 world leaders and dignitaries attended and bore witness to this extraordinary parade. I myself watched the livestream via YouTube with eager anticipation.

It is necessary to know that much of what underpins China's rise is their desire to correct the many injustices imposed on them during the Century of Humiliation. This was a period when Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Austria-Hungary and the United States carved up the Chinese mainland and subjugated its people to colonial rule. Most famous is the British Empire's usage of opium in an attempt to flood the Chinese market with the narcotic; thus weakening an already fading Qing Dynasty. The illegal Japanese invasion of Manchuria back in 1931 still remains a major and sensitive topic among the Chinese people.

To this day, some within the Japanese leadership insist that Japan did nothing wrong and even go about venerating the very war criminals responsible for the deaths of so many across the Pacific. One such dramatic event was the genocide committed in Nanjing, China where up to 300,000 civilians

were killed by Japanese soldiers. After Mao's ascension, the Chinese people vowed to never again be subjected to the whims of foreign powers.

In that fateful parade, the world was presented with a stunning multitude of next-generation intelligence systems, underwater combat units, cyber-electric forces, and various hypersonic weaponry. All of this served to highlight the PLA's growing capacity to adopt emerging technologies suited to the ever evolving nature of warfare. I sat there in front of my tiny computer screen utterly awestruck by this development. I just couldn't believe that this was the same country which, not long ago, was one of the world's poorest nations. Now, in a single lifetime, it is challenging the west and has already surpassed us in a myriad of ways.

I understood that this parade instilled a very real sense of fear and suspicion among many in the western world as they are unaccustomed to seeing a non-white population taking the reins in geopolitical affairs – despite that having been the case for most of human history. For 2,000 years, the two largest economies in the world were that of China and India. It is only in the most recent 200 years that the west was able to colonize the planet due to the industrial revolution. In the sapient words of former Singaporean diplomat and Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, Kishore Mahbubani, this unusual period of western domination is an aberration in world history.

Now the great pendulum of history is swinging back eastward as China, India, and the rest of Asia rises up to reclaim their natural status as the center of the planet's economic gravity. This deeply disturbs many in the west to the point where western leaders are, from my perspective at least, in a state of total denial. Others look on with animosity

and call for more extreme measures in order to maintain the west's privileged position.

American political analysts such as John Mearsheimer see the world through the combative lens of a zero-sum game. They subscribe to the notion that every great power must struggle for dominance and that conflict is all but a certainty. This is a central pillar to his anarchic theory on Offensive Realism which aligns well with Graham Allison's Thucydides Trap, a concept which stipulates that whenever a nascent power rises to challenge the established hegemon, war invariably follows. This is a reference to Ancient Greece during the Peloponnesian Wars when an ascendant Athens challenged the might of Sparta, plunging the Hellenic world in a decades-spanning conflict.

The west seems fixated on making the comparison of US-China relations to this ancient rivalry between Athens and Sparta. But according to the Chinese, they do not seek hegemony or expansion (Taiwan being a notable exception as they consider it a rogue province). They don't believe in the concept of a zero-sum game for it is the spirit of mutual cooperation that more closely directs their actions. They also have a revulsion to the idea of being interventionist. In fact, the People's Liberation Army primarily operates as peace-keepers at the behest of the United Nations.

Unlike those in the west, China expresses no interest in exporting communism to other countries nor in forcing a sovereign state to conform to their ideology just to conduct business. They couldn't care less if you are a democracy, a dictatorship, a kingdom, or a mix of the three. They do not care if you're a Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, or atheist. China loves to conduct trade and business as it is what they excel at most. That being said, whether or not

China shall *continue* this reasonable position is something only the future can tell.

The Trump administration often likes to cite that they hold all the cards whereas China calmly reminds them that it is they who *make* the cards. With the sweeping tariffs of 2025, we soon learned that America was (and still is) in fact far more reliant on China than the Chinese are on the USA. As a result, everyday Americans continue to languish under rising costs and inflationary pressures which have left many of us on the brink of financial ruin. But before I go further, it's critical that I look back to the chronology of how we all got here in the first place.

2025 marked a most pivotal year in the decline of US hegemony and its unipolar world order. At the same time, it also proved to be a moment of precipitous degradation for our own democracy. In Trump's first year in office, we have seen a disturbingly well-orchestrated effort to weaken and undermine the very institutions which define our Republic. I feared that such a potentiality would come to pass and wrote of such anxieties in parts one and two of this essay series. But perhaps the thing that terrifies me the MOST is that a sizable portion of the American public still, even in 2026, seems to completely support and celebrate the actions of this criminal occupying the White House; a man who is proving more lawless with each passing day.

We the people can no longer agree on even the most fundamental of issues. The words written in this indulgent document will be seen as treasonous by those of the MAGA cult. Should the country continue this unsightly descent into madness, they may even attempt to take my life and the lives of anyone, leftist or otherwise, who do not adhere to their depraved views; as autocracies often do.

Amidst the chaos and abject cruelty of this Trumpian Cartel, my inherent faith in the Republic wanes ever more. The United States of America is, in essence, becoming a land inhabited by white-supremacists and fascists... A realm of neo-Nazis and traitors; enemies of freedom and adversaries of the entire world. As the wheels of history spin, I am left only with a foreboding sense of helplessness. What can a novelist like *me* do in the face of such unfettered hatred? What tangible difference can I contribute to try and make amends for an America that is losing its way? In the end, all I *can* do (at least for now) is use my command of the written word to condemn and denounce all that this Trumpian menace stands for.

But oh my! This third installment is already getting too lengthy for comfort. Therefore, I shall resume these thoughts in a sequel essay with an emphasis on how 2025 set the stage for a world on the brink of anarchy. I will then pivot back to how this all relates to the wider geopolitical contest between the USA and China.

(To be continued in **Part Four!**)