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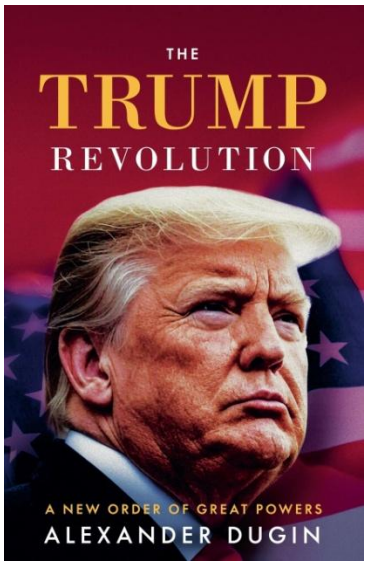
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The Trump Revolution: A New Order of Great Powers

By Alexander Dugin (Author) (Publisher: Arktos Media Limited 2025)

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This book review provides a critical evaluation of Alexander Dugin's "The Trump Revolution: A New Order of Great Powers" (Arktos 2025) from a Chinese International Relations perspective. Drawing on Chinese academic debates on multipolarity, development-oriented statecraft, and institution-centered engagement, the review examines Dugin's characterization of Trumpism as a "post-liberal civilizational revolution" emerging from the erosion of the liberal international order (p. 16). The analysis is methodological rather than normative, situating the book within broader theoretical discussions in IR, particularly concerning multipolarity, civilizational politics, and great-power ordering, and assessing the explanatory scope and empirical alignment of Dugin's Russia-centered framework when considered through China's approaches to global order and systemic transformation.

Dugin frames world politics through a land–sea dyad, contrasting a resurgent "land-based civilization" with "maritime hegemony," and interprets Trump's electoral success as evidence of an emerging multipolar order (pp. 26–27). This binary, however, oversimplifies complex rivalries and obscures divergent interests among the so-called "civilization-states."

From a Chinese analytical perspective, the book serves as a heuristic that illustrates how Russia-centered civilizational thinking can misinterpret China's strategy. China is not the continental subordinate implied in Dugin's narrative; instead, it pursues a pragmatic, institution-centered, and flexible approach to multipolarity, grounded in multilateral engagement and discursive adaptability, rather than a "decoupling revolution."

The book advances five interconnected claims about global transformation, tracing a Russia-centered multipolar order from civilizational "decoupling" to a proposed "new Yalta," a hierarchical great-power settlement intended to stabilize competition (pp. 12–13).

Dugin portrays Trump as the pivotal agent in dismantling liberal globalism, interpreting "America First" as a shift from universalist imperialism toward sovereign great-power politics. He envisions the United States aligning with civilization-states such as Russia, China, and India to form a "distributed order of great powers." This claim is more programmatic than evidentiary, as

later debates over reduced US commitments and episodic discussions of rapprochement with Russia are cited as suggestive rather than conclusive (Wang 2024). From a Chinese analytical perspective, Beijing has strengthened sovereignty and resilience through the dual-circulation strategy (*shuang xunhuan*), prioritizing domestic robustness while maintaining selective external linkages (Zhang 2021). China emphasizes pragmatic cooperation and mutual benefit rather than alignment based on civilizational affinity.

Rejecting Huntington's "Islam vs. the West" framework and a simplified US–China binary, Dugin reframes conflict as an internal schism within the West: a "land-based civilization" of traditionalist heartlands versus a "maritime civilization" of coastal liberal elites. His notion of a "distributed Heartland" internalizes civilizational conflict within states and cites China's inland nationalism and technological self-reliance, including advances in 5G and AI, as a model for resisting cosmopolitan elites (Duan and Du 2020). While conceptually inventive, this approach compresses the interaction between domestic cleavages and international structures that jointly shape civilizational identities.

Dugin treats "decoupling," popularized in US discourse by Vice President Mike Pence in 2019, as both a symbol and a driver of systemic fragmentation, aimed at reducing strategic reliance on China (Brühl 2024; Garcia-Macia and Goyal 2021). He contends that China, Russia, Iran, and India are reconfiguring technological, financial, and cultural ties with the West to consolidate autonomous civilizational cores. Renewed US–China trade frictions and the expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative across the Global South lend prima facie plausibility to aspects of this trend (Zhai 2025). Nevertheless, China's stated posture emphasizes "reformist embeddedness" rather than outright decoupling. As a 2023 government report notes: "China adheres to the basic national policy of opening up to the outside world, steadfastly pursuing an open strategy of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation… opposing protectionism, opposing 'building walls and barriers' or 'decoupling and breaking chains'… and promoting the liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment" (State Council Information Office 2023). This strategic flexibility diverges sharply from Dugin's framework.

Dugin further posits a value-based convergence between Trumpism and Putinism, anchored in sovereignty and the rejection of liberal progressivism, culminating in a "conservative civilizational alliance" vis-à-vis the European Union. This claim rests on contestable premises. Russia's Eurasian project is widely viewed as relying on coercive, hierarchy-seeking instruments (Flockhart and Korosteleva 2022), which sit uneasily alongside Trumpism's transactional retrenchment and sovereignty-first unilateralism. The resulting vision of a US–Russia condominium appears more normative than descriptively sustainable. From a Chinese analytical perspective, the "alliance" frame misinterprets Beijing's posture. Coordination with Moscow remains selective and domain-specific, mediated through institution-centered platforms such as BRICS rather than consolidated into a bloc (Zhai 2025). In Chinese discourse, multipolarity is understood as development-centered balancing that emphasizes connectivity, diversification, and standards-setting, rather than ideological alignment (Luo et al. 2025).

Reviving Mackinder's Heartland thesis, Dugin outlines a "World-Island" architecture alongside a "new Yalta" of civilizational spheres. In this scenario, Russia, China, and a Trump-led United States would jointly supersede or marginalize the United Nations and Atlantic institutions, while each civilization governs its sphere autonomously. This design presupposes durable alignment between the United States and China, which conflicts with ongoing frictions

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over the South China Sea, Taiwan, and technology controls. As realist scholars note, multipolarity more often generates balancing and recurrent contests for advantage than stable concord (Mearsheimer 2019), rendering Dugin's optimistic scenario difficult to sustain. The gap between this blueprint and contemporary rivalry underscores the speculative nature of his proposed order.

China's official discourse on multipolarity emphasizes pragmatism, development, and institution-centered engagement, sharply contrasting with Dugin's binary and confrontational vision. Whereas Dugin depicts world politics as a zero-sum struggle between land-based and maritime civilizations, China foregrounds a development-oriented approach through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the BRICS framework, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). As Zhai (2025) observes, this orientation is closely linked to the concept of a "community of shared future for mankind," which prioritizes multilateral dialogue and inclusive growth. This outlook diverges fundamentally from Dugin's civilizational antagonism (Qin 2023).

Dugin's argument also contains a theoretical tension. Having rejected liberal universalism, he nevertheless proposes a Yalta-style civilizational pact premised on stable spheres of influence and mutual recognition. However, his advocacy of radical decoupling and ideological mobilization points in the opposite direction, leaving unclear how a durable equilibrium could be sustained amid deliberate rupture. This tension undermines the coherence of his multipolar design.

Empirically, the framework fits uneasily with observable policy trajectories. China's "dual circulation" strategy balances domestic innovation with selective global integration rather than comprehensive decoupling (Zhang 2021). In technology, advances in areas such as 5G and renewable energy, particularly within the Huawei ecosystem, have helped China navigate Western restrictions while providing replicable models for Global South partners (Sun 2024). Within BRICS, China has moved less toward bloc leadership and more toward infrastructure-oriented partnerships that support resilient supply chains and regional connectivity (Luo, Wang, and Dong 2025). The divergence from Dugin's vision is therefore both structural and tactical.

From a Chinese analytical standpoint, this book is best read as a provocative heuristic rather than a policy guide. Its civilizational essentialism and maximalist vocabulary of "decoupling" and "reconstruction" may resonate rhetorically, but they depart from the discursive flexibility and institutional embeddedness that characterize China's external engagement. The projected alignment among Russia, China, and a Trump-led United States presupposes a convergence of normative orders that is difficult to reconcile with China's diversified posture and preference for issue-specific coordination through multilateral platforms (Zhai 2025).

For Global South actors, the book's emphasis on sovereignty and civilizational autonomy gestures toward potential repertoires of resistance to Western dominance, but this must be disentangled from the confrontational ethos of Dugin's manifesto. A more transferable insight lies in the strategic value of connectivity, infrastructure, and technological capacity, as illustrated by BRICS-related initiatives and the African uptake of Chinese digital infrastructure (Zhai 2025). As Zhang (2018) observes, multilateral coordination and development-oriented statecraft remain among the most viable tools for navigating fragmentation without intensifying geopolitical antagonism.

Alexander Dugin's "The Trump Revolution: A New Order of Great Powers" is less a conventional geopolitical analysis than an ideological manifesto. It fuses Eurasianism,

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civilizational multipolarity, anti-liberal narratives, and the mythologization of Trumpism into a traditionalist counterproject to global liberalism. To its credit, the book clarifies the normative logic and symbolic appeal of civilizational geopolitics at a moment of perceived liberal retreat. Its value lies less in predictive accuracy than in revealing a distinct intellectual style of world-order thinking.

At the same time, its empirical grounding and policy feasibility remain limited. The book ultimately functions as a mirror of discursive contestation, "othering" China and Russia even as it frames them as "civilization-states." Its primary contribution is therefore heuristic: it highlights how multipolarity is operationalized in practice through institutional reform, infrastructural coordination, and discursive flexibility, rather than through bloc alignment or civilizational rupture.

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