

Unipolarity's Shield: Two Criminal Heads of State Hold the World Hostage

AN OPINION EDITORIAL BY CYNTHIA MCKINNEY, PHD

It is February 28, 2026 and the unthinkable has just been unleashed on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Bombs are falling and missiles are being launched. Innocent people are dying. And two rogue states are at it again: Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and now Iran, the latest in a long chain, are their victims. I'm talking about the United States (U.S.) and Israel. Between them, these two states have not only dropped more bombs on their targets than any other state, but the U.S. has also actually used its array of A,B,C weapons: atomic (against Japan in World War II), biological (against Korea and China in the Korean War, and against Cuba in the U.S. war against Castro's Cuba) and chemical (against Vietnam, Iraq, and Yemen). While this unipolar moment, *Pax Americana*, was supposed to bring peace and democracy and freedom and liberty to the world, instead it has brought constant war and today, the threat of another global conflagration. And just as these two states have found each other in their global criminal enterprise, so, too, is the case with their leaders, having been found guilty of crimes by their local courts. How does this happen and how can these two hold the world hostage for World War III? That is the source of my confoundment today.

Unipolarity and What it Means Today

After World War II, the United States was the most powerful state on the planet with its economic and industrial might and its technologically superior military with global reach. Rather than use this dominant positioning to promote peace, the U.S. used it to enforce a universal culture in every corner of the world, even to countries that didn't want it. Economically, the world became a colony of the U.S. and the military was its enforcement wing, used against any and every state that sought to prioritize its sovereignty. The one President who spoke out about the world not needing a Pax Americana was murdered in broad, open daylight—sending a powerful message to those who succeeded him. Thus, every U.S. President since John F. Kennedy, with the sole exception of President Jimmy Carter, has bombed another state during his tenure. That demonstrates that unipolarity can and has become a structural nightmare: a system exactly the opposite of that enshrined in the U.S. Constitution: one of checks and balances and dispersed—not concentrated—power. Unipolarity is a global order that has no effective check on the power of its leader, even when that leader is a

convicted felon. Even worse, unipolarity extends its protective shield to the hegemon's primary ally, in this case Israel, allowing Israel to operate with the same impunity as the U.S. By removing all external constraints on the superpower and its inner circle, unipolarity does not prevent world war; it actively enables the very leaders most desperate to start one. Today, this means that Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu own the world with no effective constraints on their power or their use of force.

Two Criminal Profiles, One Shared Logic

Donald Trump was convicted in May 2024 on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records—a domestic criminal conviction that, in many other countries, would have disqualified him from office. But the U.S. Constitution does not bar felons from the presidency, and no international body can overrule that. By 2026, Trump had returned to the White House as the first convicted felon to serve as U.S. president. His personal desperation—the threat of prison, the humiliation of conviction, the fear of what comes after when there is no sovereign immunity—drove Trump even closer to his donors who wanted an Israel-first foreign policy and that then became a driver of U.S. military policy. Trump's situation is compounded by his complicity in the crimes of convicted pedophile Jeffrey Epstein, whose criminal empire extended even to Mar-a-Lago, Trump's Florida home. Therefore, Trump is both pushed by his donors who want to protect Israel from its neighbors at all costs and pulled by his fear of Epstein's shadow, always lurking behind every stage.

Benjamin Netanyahu has been on trial since 2020 for corruption. Israeli courts have not yet reached a verdict, but the threat of conviction hangs over him. He has repeatedly used wartime emergencies to delay legal proceedings, weaken judicial oversight, and argue that “you cannot judge a prime minister in the middle of seven wars.” Unipolarity makes this strategy viable because Donald Trump, and almost any U.S. President, will veto any international condemnation and shield Israel from consequences; Netanyahu faces no pressure from the world's hegemon to de-escalate. No other external forces can stop him. His domestic legal jeopardy and his aggressive foreign policy are two sides of the same coin.

Therefore, in today's unipolar world, U.S. President Donald Trump could stop Netanyahu, but his own problems force him to shield a sitting prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on trial for corruption while he escalates toward regional war. Donald Trump, with his own problems, attacks Iran, strategic partner of both Russia and China, and escalates toward global war. Together, these two criminal heads of state demonstrate the lethal logic of unipolarity.

Unipolarity Is a Trap, But Multipolarity Is No Panacea

As the world sits on a precipice between total catastrophe and the dawn of a "New World Order," multipolarity has been positioned as the next great hope for mankind: delivering us from the dirges of a unipolar world that has come to this. But, can we really expect multipolarity, governed by the same malignant forces to deliver anything to us but another form of despotism wrapped in a new language for a new age? I think not. Multipolarity would only multiply the havens of impunity. Breaking the cycle will not come from rearranging power among states but from dismantling impunity itself. Universal jurisdiction must ensure that no leader, however mighty, can hide behind borders. The International Criminal Court must be empowered to prosecute crimes without exception, and the veto that has paralyzed the United Nations must be abolished so justice cannot be strangled by politics. Yet institutions alone are not enough. It is an empowered global civil society—citizens across continents refusing to be silenced—that must demand accountability, insisting that no man's desperation can outweigh humanity's survival. Only when people themselves rise to enforce justice will the world escape the trap of unipolarity and the false promise of multipolarity. Until then, we remain at the mercy of criminal leaders who gamble with our future. The choice is stark: either humanity breaks the cycle of impunity, or the cycle of impunity breaks humanity