Recently, Polish President Andrzej Duda, during a meeting with President Trump, asked for a permanent US military base on Polish soil. The reason for the request, and why it will be considered, is a great example of the second order of geopolitical codes. So far, the US hasn't acquiesced to a costly full-time military presence in Poland, though it does rotate troops through the country. But, the decision to locate a base there has a lot more to it than financial considerations. Even though only US and Polish territory and resources would be involved, to do so would not be a private matter between the two countries; Russia is actually the key consideration here. This is what is called the second order of geopolitical codes. The first order of geopolitical codes is A’s relationship to B. When agent A considers the relationship between agents B and C to formulate policy, this is the second order of geopolitical codes. In this case, the United States (A) is considering the relationship between Poland and Russia (B and C) when making its geopolitical code. Explicitly stated throughout the article by both the US and Polish leaders is that this military base would be established with Russia in mind. In fact, the long-standing relationship between Poland and the US can be understand as a function of Poland's proximity to Russia, which the US views as a geopolitical competitor. Establishing a stronger military presence in Poland wouldn’t just be a move closer to the host country, but also a move against Russia. A specific concern is Russia’s Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, dependency on which both leaders fear would give Moscow too much political leverage. And so, if the US were to establish the proposed ‘Fort Trump’ in Poland, it would be a reaction to Russian energy’s effect on Germany… but that’s the third order of geopolitical codes.

Also at issue here is geopolitical representation: how will you justify your decisions? Often, these justifications will mention another geopolitical agent. A serious discussion of a military base in Poland is done using phrases like “Russian aggression” and “threaten our mutual security”. In the future, pay attention to how geopolitical decisions are justified; you'll notice that an action is rarely taken without an accompanying representation.