



Research Paper

## Dawn of New Cold War – Geopolitical significance of Russia - Ukraine Confrontation in a Multipolar World.

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### ABSTRACT

The intrusion of Russia in Ukraine can be looked at through the prisms of geo-culture, geopolitics and geoeconomics. This episode once again proved that international system is always volatile and dynamic. The green foliage that camouflaged the fragments of frightening cold war period are shattered by this confrontation, bringing to light cold war in new forms. The bizarre act of Russia has eroded the faith in dialogue and diplomacy in international relations. The dark episode has once again proved to the world that UNO is defunct in averting crisis and tensions when the nations involved are powerful; the lacuna which needs to be addressed for the better future.

The snowballed Russian military action on Ukraine can also be seen as a curtain raiser for Russian assertion for Super Power status and also the dawn of new cold war situation between Russia and America. As in the initial years of Cold War America tried to build an iron curtain to curtail the spread of Communism by erstwhile USSR, so is the attempt of Russia to halt the spread of NATO under the leadership of America into Central and Eastern Europe. During the post-Cold War period NATO is successful in expanding its tentacles into almost ten Eastern and Central European countries and four more countries including Ukraine in the line. This expansion of America's influence up to its borders is a concern for Russia.

The major war after 1945 amply brought to forefront the nascent rebalancing of power equations involving USA, European Union, Russia, China and India as major players, the truth which the world leaders have to reckon with. The war in Ukraine is affecting the global economy, climate change, nuclear stability and the Charter principles of the United Nations that underpin the rule of law in international relations. Bringing the war to an end is imperative for global security and safety. Wars typically come to an end either through outright victories or talks. The first year of the war suggests that the first option is unrealistic for either side, which means Russia and Ukraine and the West should prepare for an eventual settlement. The earlier they begin talking to each other the better it would be for the whole world.

In the changing scenario the stand of third world is of paramount importance. The concept of Active Non-Alignment (ANA) has come to the fore in the recent times. ANA originated in 1955 and was developed in 2020 in response to the U.S. – China struggle for primacy, in which Latin America was caught in the middle. ANA has been described as Latin America's most significant foreign policy development since the end of cold war. It calls on Latin American governments to not accept a priori the positions of any of the Great Powers in conflict. They must act, instead, in defense of their own national interest, without giving in to pressures from hegemonic powers.

*The New South that has emerged in the new century, can play a crucial role in working out a mediated solution to the conflict. BRICS group, in many ways embodies the New South that has emerged in the new century has the potential to play a critical role in furthering some sort of a mediated solution to the Ukraine conflict. India played a crucial role in easing tensions during Cold War period by adopting non-alignment policy. This is the time for India, once again to play a proactive role in the emerging New Cold War situation, and rise to the occasion to contribute its part in stabilizing international peace. As leader of the G-20 this year India could watch this peace settlement happen.*

*The present study attempts to research on the significance of Russia – Ukraine confrontation in shaping the new world order. This conflict can be seen as the curtain raiser for tectonic readjustment of the international system which till date was regulated by the principles of power, national interest, balance of power and collective security. This paper endeavors to study reasons for the dawn of new cold war in different forms and between different state actors.*

**Keywords:** *Intrusion, Cold War, Balance of Power, Active Non-Alignment, Nascent.*

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## I. Introduction

“War is the test for the existence of disequilibrium”. The military confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, a major European war after more than seven decades of peace, woke up the world to the reality of change in equations of power. The trajectory of disequilibrium during this transition resulted in a friction that finally projected in the form of war. This episode turned into a vortex gravitating all the nations into one or the other spinning rings.

Balance of Power, one of the fundamental principles of international relations, has been the underlying formula that prevented any major war and sustained peace for many years. The unfought war between America and Soviet Russia during fierce cold war period from 1945 to 1991 exemplifies the role of equilibrium in maintaining world peace. The Soviet-American Cold War showed that cooperation to avoid catastrophe need not be explicit: no treaty specified that nuclear weapons, after 1945, would not again be used in war. Instead, existential dangers produced tacit cooperation where negotiated formalities almost surely would have failed. The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine can be seen as the tip of a pyramid with a wider base and many layered international possibilities. It can be viewed as resurfacing of cold war between America and Russia, or the dawn of New Cold War between America and China, or between ‘west and rest’ or the emergence of new balance through the entente of Russia and China. International systems are anarchic, volatile and unpredictable. No component within them is fully in control. Strategy may reduce uncertainty but will never eliminate it: humans are fallible, and artificial intelligences, the new threat, will surely be also. There are, though, patterns of competition across time and space. It may be possible to derive from these, specially from the Soviet-American Cold War. Categories of surprises are likely to occur because of Russia – Ukraine war. The tectonic plates of international system are shifting and are in the process of bringing new balance to prevent American hegemony. President Richard Nixon told Time magazine in 1972, ‘I think it will be a safer world and a better world, if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other’.

### Cold War

The Cold War has been a predominate factor in determining the conduct of international affairs in post-second world war period. Florence Elliot and Michael Summer in ‘A Dictionary of Politics’ defined cold war as “a state of tension between countries in which each side adopts policies designed to strengthen itself and weaken the other, line falling short of actual hot war”<sup>1</sup>. Cold War, the open yet restricted rivalry that developed after World War II between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies. The Cold War was waged on political, economic, and propaganda fronts and had only limited recourse to weapons. The term was first used by the English writer George Orwell in an article published in 1945 to refer to what he predicted would be a nuclear stalemate between “two or three monstrous super-states, each possessed of a weapon by which millions of people can be wiped out in a few seconds.” It was first used in the United States by the American financier and presidential adviser Bernard Baruch in a speech at the State House in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1947.

### Origins of the Cold War

Following the surrender of Nazi Germany in May 1945 near the close of World War II, the uneasy wartime alliance between the United States and Great Britain on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other began to unravel. By 1948 the Soviets had installed left-wing governments in the countries of eastern Europe that had been liberated by the Red Army. The Americans and the British feared the permanent Soviet

domination of eastern Europe and the threat of Soviet-influenced communist parties coming to power in the democracies of western Europe. The Soviets, on the other hand, were determined to maintain control of eastern Europe in order to safeguard against any possible renewed threat from Germany, and they were intent on spreading communism worldwide, largely for ideological reasons. The Cold War had solidified by 1947–48, when U.S. aid provided under the Marshall Plan to western Europe had brought those countries under American influence. On the other side the Soviets with their own plan called COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) had provided economic relief to the war-torn countries and had installed openly communist regimes in eastern Europe.

### **The struggle between superpowers**

The Cold War reached its peak in 1948–53. In this period the Soviets unsuccessfully blockaded the Western-held sectors of West Berlin (1948–49); the United States and its European allies formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a unified military command to resist the Soviet presence in Europe (1949); the Soviets exploded their first atomic warhead (1949), thus ending the American monopoly on the atomic bomb; the Chinese communists came to power in mainland China (1949); and the Soviet-supported communist government of North Korea invaded U.S.-supported South Korea in 1950, setting off an indecisive Korean War that lasted until 1953.

From 1953 to 1957 Cold War tensions relaxed somewhat, largely owing to the death of the longtime Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in 1953; nevertheless, the standoff remained. A unified military organization among the Soviet-bloc countries, the Warsaw Pact, was formed in 1955; and West Germany was admitted into NATO that same year. Another intense stage of the Cold War was in 1958–62. The United States and the Soviet Union began developing intercontinental ballistic missiles, and in 1962 the Soviets began secretly installing missiles in Cuba that could be used to launch nuclear attacks on U.S. cities. This sparked the Cuban missile crisis (1962), a confrontation that brought the two superpowers to the brink of war before an agreement was reached to withdraw the missiles.

The Cuban missile crisis showed that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union were ready to use nuclear weapons for fear of the other's retaliation (and thus of mutual atomic annihilation). The two superpowers soon signed the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty of 1963, which banned aboveground nuclear weapons testing. But the crisis also hardened the Soviets' determination never again to be humiliated by their military inferiority, and they began a buildup of both conventional and strategic forces that the United States was forced to match for the next 25 years.

Throughout the Cold War the United States and the Soviet Union avoided direct military confrontation in Europe and engaged in actual combat operations only to keep allies from defecting to the other side or to overthrow them after they had done so. Thus, the Soviet Union sent troops to preserve communist rule in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979). For its part, the United States helped overthrow a left-wing government in Guatemala (1954), supported an unsuccessful invasion of Cuba (1961), invaded the Dominican Republic (1965) and Grenada (1983), and undertook a long (1964–75) and unsuccessful effort to prevent communist North Vietnam from bringing South Vietnam under its rule.

### **End of Cold War**

In the course of the 1960s and '70s, however, the bipolar struggle between the Soviet and American blocs gave way to a more-complicated pattern of international relationships in which the world was no longer split into two clearly opposed blocs. A major split had occurred between the Soviet Union and China in 1960 and widened over the years, shattering the unity of the communist bloc. In the meantime, western Europe and Japan achieved dynamic economic growth in the 1950s and '60s, reducing their relative inferiority to the United States. Less-powerful countries had more room to assert their independence and often showed themselves resistant to superpower coercion or cajoling.

The 1970s saw an easing of Cold War tensions as evinced in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) that led to the SALT I and II agreements of 1972 and 1979, respectively, in which the two superpowers set limits on their antiballistic missiles and on their strategic missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. That was followed by a period of renewed Cold War tensions in the early 1980s as the two superpowers continued their massive arms buildup and competed for influence in the Third World. But the Cold War began to break down in the late 1980s during the administration of Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev. He dismantled the totalitarian aspects of the Soviet system and began efforts to democratize the Soviet political system. When communist regimes in the Soviet-bloc countries of eastern Europe collapsed in 1989–90, Gorbachev acquiesced in their fall. The rise to power of democratic governments in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia was quickly followed by the unification of West and East Germany under NATO auspices, again with Soviet approval.

Gorbachev's internal reforms had meanwhile weakened his own Communist Party and allowed power to shift to Russia and the other constituent republics of the Soviet Union. In late 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed and 15 newly independent nations were born from its corpse, including a Russia with a democratically elected, anti-Communist leader. The Cold War had come to an end.

### **Disintegration of Soviet Union**

Ukraine was a member of the Soviet Union until 1991. After the failed coup against the Soviet President Michael Gorbachev August 18, 1991, the republics of USSR, including Ukraine, moved rapidly to claim their independence. In a vain attempt to preserve its power, the Communist Party of Belarus led the rush by declaring independence on August 25, just 72 hours after Gorbachev's return to Moscow. On August 27 the parliament and Grand National Assembly of Moldavia, renamed Moldova, proclaimed the republic's independence and initiated the process of leaving the union. In September all three Baltic states formally left the Soviet Union and were admitted to the United Nations as the independent countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Georgia and Armenia each went their own way, and Kazakhstan and Kirgizia (renamed Kyrgyzstan) took control of their republics' resources and began economic reform and privatization. The other Central Asian republics tended to support continued union, but they lacked the economic and political influence of their neighbours<sup>2</sup>.

In November seven republics, including Russia, agreed to form a new "Union of Sovereign States," but it remained a shell. On December 1 Ukraine voted overwhelmingly for independence, and, a week later, on December 8, representatives from the three Slavic republics—Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine met in Brest, Belarus, and declared that the Soviet Union no longer existed. They proclaimed the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), an international association of sovereign countries whose administrative centre would be located in Minsk, Belarus.

### **Russia – Ukraine confrontation**

Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, before declaring itself an independent country, cementing the move in a referendum days before the USSR collapsed in December 1991. The country has maintained its independence ever since. But Russian President Vladimir Putin still refers to Ukraine as Russian, and denies it's a nation in its own right. He told then-US President George W. Bush in 2008 that Ukraine wasn't even a country.

Ukraine and Russia have shared cultural and linguistic ties for hundreds of years. Ukraine was the most powerful in the Soviet Union after Russia. Ukraine has been a hub for commercial industries, factories and defence manufacturing. Ukraine also provides Russia with access to the Black Sea and crucial connectivity to the Mediterranean Sea.

Economic factors could be identified as the reason for Russia's military advances into Ukraine. Russia, considering the economic significance of Ukraine, sought Ukraine's membership in the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC), which is a free trade agreement that came into being in 2015. With its huge market and advanced agriculture and industrial output, Ukraine was supposed to play an important role. But Ukraine refused to join the agreement.

The Geo-Political and Strategic Factors are crucial underlying cause for the confrontation. Russia claims that the eastward expansion by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which they call "enlargement", has threatened Russia's interests and has asked for written security guarantees from NATO. Led by the U.S., NATO has planned to install missile defence systems in eastern Europe in countries like Poland and the Czech Republic to counter Russia's intercontinental-range missiles. Enlargement of NATO is the process of including new members into its fold. Since the German unification in 1990, the NATO has added new members five times. The alliance had 12 founding members in 1949, which currently has 31 independent member countries, Finland being the latest country to join NATO. Members include three Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that share border with Russia. Russia severely condemned the 'open-door policy' of NATO and US involvement in Eastern Europe.

### **Geopolitical significance of Russia - Ukraine Confrontation.**

Cold War is the major phenomenon that influenced the International Relations during the post World War II period. Though the international community believed that Cold War has come to an end in 1991 after the disintegration of USSR, *per se* the wounds of the dark period are not completely healed. As long as the nation-state system prevails there will be substantial reasons for the continuation of cold war in one form or other. Between 1945 – 1991 the bi-polar world limited the cold war between the power blocks led by USA and USSR. But post 1991, the emergence of multi-polar world has diversified the cold war situation: between the arch rivals USA and Russia, between USA and China, Between West and the rest, between Democracies and Totalitarian states, the emergence of new balance through the entente of Russia and China or the emergence of Active Non-

Alignment (ANA) and so on. The confrontation between Russia and Ukraine is the curtain raiser for this new, diversified and strategic phenomenon.

### **1. Resurgence of New Cold War between America and Russia**

Russian full-scale invasion places Ukraine at the centre of a geopolitical struggle reminiscent of the Cold War days when Germany and its capital city Berlin were split in two by a wall dividing Western democracy and Russian communism. In fact, as Ukrainian scholar Yevhen Hlibovytskyi puts it, Ukraine is the new “Berlin”<sup>3</sup>. Instead of capitalism and communism, the ideological battle lines this time will be between democracies and autocracies.

The autocracies that might loosely align in a new Cold War coalition vary in their type of political regimes, but they share the common characteristic of leaders exercising unlimited power and authority. Some are authoritarian, as in Russia. Others are communist, such as China and North Korea. And still others, like Iran, are Islamist theocratic.

During a conflict such as in Ukraine or potentially in Taiwan, autocracies might support one another through diplomatic backing, economic cooperation and military assistance. Their support in turn would be met by democratic countries’ cooperating politically, economically and militarily. ‘Quasi-mediation Diplomacy’ the new approach of China in West Asia to promote its broad commercial, diplomatic and political interests is an example of spreading influence and acceptance of totalitarian regimes in the modern world<sup>4</sup>. Today, the U.S. is aware of its limitations. It is also facing bigger conventional challenges. So, to address this task of retaining America’s influence in West Asia with reduced commitments, the U.S. came up with the proposal of collectivising its alliances – bringing Arab allies and Israel closer so that Israel can take a larger security role in a collective front against Iran<sup>5</sup>.

NATO’s expansion has become a flashpoint for Putin, as has the potential in the future of Ukraine’s NATO membership. NATO provides collective defence for its members so that an attack on one is considered an attack on all. Founded in 1949 with 12 original countries – 10 Western European countries and the U.S. and Canada – NATO has added 14 new member countries since 1999, all formerly communist countries that comprised the Eastern bloc. Finland is the latest country to join NATO on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Continuation and expansion of NATO even after Warsaw Pact was declared to have ended on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1991, is a concern for Russia that kept the water of Cold War flowing.

Given Russia’s huge nuclear arsenal, and its possession of the largest conventional military in Europe, it is doubtful that Russia’s military security is really threatened. Of more concern to the Russian leadership is the spread of democracy. Putin’s real fear lies in Ukraine’s democracy, its independence and its desire to be part of Europe. This precedent might give Russians and other Eastern Europeans a front-row seat to a functioning democracy that sharply contrasts with their current authoritarian governments.

### **2. New Cold War between America and China**

“Russia is the storm; China is climate change.” This metaphor – evoked in October 2022 by the head of Germany’s domestic intelligence service – is, indisputably, an accurate portrait of the reality faced by the world in a turbulent geopolitical atmosphere<sup>6</sup>.

The current global crisis may have been caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine – which has focused international attention for nearly a year – but the main driving force of the 21st century is the ongoing competition between the United States and China. The incursion into US airspace of a Chinese balloon – which Washington claims was part of a broader program to spy on military installations around the world – represents a striking reminder that, despite the signals of détente issued at the Bali G-20 summit this past November, the two powers are clearly engaged in a battle for global supremacy. The wingspan of this new Cold War has stretched across the breadth of the planet.

Several recent events show how, regardless of what the two superpowers do internally – such as seeking to strengthen their military, technological or economic muscle – or in their bilateral relationships, both are operating to advance their international position in a multitude of ways.

Tensions have been increasing for some time. According to an exclusive by the *Financial Times*, China Mobile and China Telecom withdrew from the South East Asia-Middle East-West Europe 6 (Sea-Me-We 6) submarine cable project, after the American firm SubCom was selected to build the cable over Hengtong Marine – China’s principal fiber-optic cable manufacturer. Earlier this year, the Philippines granted the Pentagon access to another four of its military bases. Meanwhile, Japan and the Netherlands have gone along with US restrictions on microchip exports to China, while Tokyo and Washington have expanded their defense alliance to include outer space<sup>7</sup>.

In the summer of 2022 – at a G-20 summit attended by four Asia-Pacific countries – the US managed to get NATO to include China in its strategic concept, specifically with the purpose of maligning Chinese activities. It was decided that Taiwan would receive new military financing from the American government,

while Australia and the United Kingdom committed to expanding their cooperation on nuclear-powered submarines to include hypersonic weapons.

China, meanwhile, signed a strategic statement affirming an “unconditional” relationship with Russia just before the invasion of Ukraine. And then, in December of 2022, President Xi Jinping carried out a significant visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, intent on strengthening ties with the oil-rich kingdom, whose relationship with Washington is deteriorating. The month before the trip to meet Mohammad Bin Salman, the Chinese president received German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Beijing. This meeting symbolized China’s efforts to prevent Europe from completely aligning itself with the US. The Chinese government has also been attempting to reformulate its Belt and Road Initiative – sometimes referred to as the New Silk Road – an ambitious infrastructure project stretching from Western China to Western Russia, which has lost steam in recent years.

“We’re in a kind of Cold War. We’re witnessing a great strategic competition between the US and China, who are not only playing on their own board, but on the global one,” notes Alicia García Herrero, the chief economist for Asia at the French investment bank Natixis and a senior researcher at Bruegel, a Brussels-based economic think tank<sup>8</sup>.

“There’s a growing consensus that we’re facing a Second Cold War,” says Jorge Heine, Professor of International Relations at Boston University’s Pardee School of Global Studies. “It’s a notion that I’ve held since at least 2020. At the time, this position was criticized by several colleagues, who saw it as premature, considering that there was only a commercial-technological conflict, but without ideological-military overtones. It’s now becoming increasingly apparent that the conflict does have the latter elements – the notion is now widely accepted.

“Of course, there are differences between this Second Cold War and the first, above all due to the size of the Chinese economy and the interdependence between the two countries. There are important differences, but, in many more ways, the cold wars are similar. And there are no signs that it will change in the immediate future,” says Heine, who once served as Chile’s ambassador to China.

Mikko Huotari, executive director of the Berlin-based Mercator Institute for China Studies, agrees that, while there are differences, strong similarities with the First Cold War are evident, “from elements of a nuclear arms race to aspects of an ideological competition. We’ve entered a territory of low intensity conflict.”

## **Factors for escalation of tensions between US and China**

### **a. Indo-Pacific**

This region is the object of intense activity on the part of both countries. The US has been strengthening ties with its allies – as demonstrated by the establishment of the Aukus alliance – which will allow Australia to have a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines. There is also growing support for Taiwan, an expansion of a US-Japanese alliance to tackle the domain of space, as well as increased American access to military bases in the Philippines.

The US high command show a clear sign that the next few years will see the biggest military changes in decades with its underlying attempt to bring strategic positions closer to India, another giant with the ability to define the balance of power. In the first decade of this century, the United States was focused on the war against terrorism. Obama already tried to change that, with what he called the ‘Pivot towards Asia’. In this vision, India has an important role.”

The logic is obvious, given the size of India and its issues with China. Washington has been trying to cultivate this relationship for years, with a clear rapprochement between former president Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There have been other attempts, from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue forum (QUAD, together with Japan and Australia) and, most recently, by the Biden administration, labelling India as a friendly country and urging US companies to redirect their production towards it and reduce reliance on Chinese manufacturing. Apple, for instance, is working on this: production in India and Vietnam has increased.

However, this shift has its limitations. “Firstly, because the Indian economy is much smaller than the Chinese one; secondly, because New Delhi is not integrated into the regional cooperation mechanisms. Also, India’s attraction as a potential manufacturing relocation destination is superior to what China offers in terms of infrastructure investment and trade. The US market is closed. Decoupling from China may gain momentum in the long term but not in the short term. It’s very difficult to prepare the workforce and the logistics.

China, for its part, is cultivating the relationships it has with its partner countries, such as Pakistan. Beijing is trying to cement relations via investments as part of the New Silk Road. One such project is an important railway line that has been built in Laos. The struggle to get closer to countries that are not clearly aligned – such as Indonesia – is intense. Senior officials from the US and China often pay visits to Jakarta. In some countries, there is considerable fluctuation in public opinion. A survey carried out by the Yusof Ishak Institute of Singapore – within the framework of ASEAN, an organization that brings together a dozen

Southeast Asian nations – detected an increase in confidence toward the US and greater suspicion towards China: 61% of citizens would opt for Washington and 39% for Beijing “if ASEAN were forced to choose.” In 2022, the ratio was 57% to 43%. Cambodia and Laos also recorded a strong shift away from Beijing<sup>9</sup>.

**b. European Union / NATO**

The European Union (EU) – the third-largest global economic player after the United States and China – is fundamental in this clash of the titans. Washington is pushing for its European partners to support its policy towards Beijing, both in the EU dimension and in that of NATO. However, there are many voices in Europe that advocate good relations with China. The differences between partner countries can make management difficult.

Some – such as those on the Eastern flank of the EU and NATO – consider a close relationship with the US as the only guarantor against the Russian threat. For this reason, they’re willing to follow the tough policies that Washington proposes towards Beijing. But others – especially Germany – are wary of a drift that could have a very serious impact on their commercial interests.

The German government clearly considers it opportune to try to avoid a world of blocs, with the G-7 on one hand and China and Russia on the other. How to maintain necessary economic ties with China, in the shadow of growing U.S. pressure to align with it against Beijing, is a balancing act Germany is still struggling to master<sup>10</sup>. Beijing is trying to take advantage of this trump card. The EU has a strong dependence on China for the supply of strategic raw materials, as well as essential products in the green transition, such as solar panels.

Faced with this situation, the European Commission seeks to chart its own path. It’s working on a plan to guarantee greater autonomy in terms of strategic raw materials. Additionally, EU leadership eschews the American language of decoupling with China and proposes a more balanced approach, one based on risk-reduction. Last summer, the US managed to get NATO to include China in its strategic concept for the first time. However, due to the resistance of European allies, the reference was less forceful than Washington had hoped for.

“Unfortunately, I’m afraid that, in Europe, we’re puppets of this strategic competition. We’re much more vulnerable and, therefore, we don’t have a real option to fully decide where we are between the two giants,” opines García Herrero. The analyst asks us to consider the deficits that the European bloc suffers from in essential matters, such as security, digital and green technologies, or even in traditional industrial areas. “We’ve been so concerned with defending ourselves – that is, with protecting the balance of the single market, competition, the balance between member countries, etc. – that we’ve forgotten about competition from outside Europe. It almost seems that we forget that we’re part of the world,” she points out<sup>11</sup>.

**c. The rest of the world**

The US has a clear advantage over China, thanks to a dense network of alliances woven for decades with dozens of countries that are, today, among the most-developed in the world. These include some of the thirty countries that make up NATO and Asia-Pacific partners such as Japan, South Korea and Australia.

Beijing is responding with two major lines of action: firstly, with the building of a close relationship with Russia – a country with which it shares the desire to reformulate a world order they both perceive as dominated by the United States and its partners. However, the brutal war launched against Ukraine – and the Russian weaknesses it has exposed – call into question the future value of the relationship, although Beijing is reaping the benefit of cheap energy along the way, as it buys up massive Russian oil and gas supplies.

Secondly, Beijing may have certain advantages over Washington in vast areas of the world, including in dozens of countries in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. These are areas neglected by the US – many are suspicious of the leading world power, due to Washington’s shady past actions. Many of these countries aren’t interested in receiving lessons on democracy, the rule of law or gender equality. Instead, these governments prefer funding to foster infrastructure and economic development.

China has long understood that there are large areas of the world with an enormous need for financing for development. International institutions did not adequately cover that need and that the discourses of democracy were of much less interest than the money to build roads, ports and railways. Through this economic path, China has been building political relations. It is not, however, a smooth road.

China has turned to more classic diplomatic strategies to regain ground. Xi Jinping’s visit to Riyadh in December was a powerful symbol of a desire to break through on the weak flanks of Washington, whose relationship with its old Arab ally is going through very trying times.

It’s difficult to find corners of the globe where the tremor of the titans goes undetected. There is, however, one spot in particular that has the potential to turn this new Cold War into a hot one: Taiwan. Only time will tell what happens there.

### 3. **Active Non-Alignment (ANA)**

“Europe has to grow out of its mindset that Europe’s problems are the world’s problems, but the world’s problems are not Europe’s,” the statement by India’s External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, projects the voice of the third world in their reaction against the attitude of the west. Where super powers are involved, the last thing developing nations need to do is to take sides, allow themselves to become ‘the plaything of others’ as quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru. As the world is on the verge of second cold war, this time between the U.S. and China, the concept of Active Non-alignment (ANA) has come to the fore<sup>12</sup>.

The key word ‘active’ denotes ‘not passive neutrality, but embodying a pro-active attitude aimed at solving problems and generating the badly needed solutions the troubled world needs. Unlike the Cold War Non-Aligned Movement, which focused primarily on defending members from the great powers, active non-alignment seeks to deepen relations with larger countries, recognizing the benefits of globalization and the need for global cooperation on issues such as climate change, global terrorism pandemics etc. It is an approach that The Economist has characterized as “how to survive a superpower split.”

ANA originated in 2019 and was developed in 2020 in response to the U.S. – China struggle for primacy, in which Latin America was caught in the middle. ANA has been described as Latin America’s most significant foreign policy development since the end of cold war. It calls on Latin American governments to not accept a priori the positions of any of the Great Powers in conflict. They must act, instead, in defense of their own national interest, without giving in to pressures from hegemonic powers. ANA has been referred to as ‘the region’s most significant foreign policy development since the end of the Cold War’. Foreign Policy Magazine, 2022, called it ‘the year of non-Alignment’<sup>13</sup>.

The difference between this new “nonalignment” and a similar approach adopted by nations in decades past is that it is happening in an era in which developing nations are in a much stronger position than they once were, with rising powers emerging among them. For example, the gross domestic product in regard to purchasing power of the five BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – has overtaken that of the G7 group of advanced economic nations. This growing economic power gives active nonaligned nations more international clout, allowing them to forge new initiatives and diplomatic coalition-building in a manner that would have been unthinkable before.

The growth of active nonalignment has been fueled by the increased competition and what I see as a budding second Cold War between the United States and China. For many countries in the Global South, maintaining good relations with both Washington and Beijing has been crucial for economic development, as well as trade and investment flows.

It is simply not in their interest to take sides in this growing conflict. At the same time, active nonalignment is not to be confused with neutrality – a legal position under international law that entails certain duties and obligations. Being neutral means not taking a stance, which is not the case in active nonalignment.

Nor is active nonalignment about remaining equidistant, politically, from the great powers. On some issues – say, on democracy and human rights – it is perfectly possible for an active nonaligned policy to take a position closer to the United States. While on others – say, international trade – the country may side more with China<sup>14</sup>. The Civil Nuclear Deal of India with US without joining NATO or Non-Proliferation club can be viewed as India’s policy of ANA.

### 4. **The New South or Global South**

As India assumed the presidency of the G20 group of countries for 2022 to 2023, Prof. Jaishankar said on December 1 that India would be the voice of the Global South that is otherwise under-represented in such forums. The term has since been used multiple times, such as when Jaishankar said of ongoing global conflicts, “polarisation may occur elsewhere, the people who suffer most are the Global South”. ‘Global North’ refers loosely to countries like the US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia and New Zealand, while ‘Global South’ includes countries in Asia, Africa and South America.

For a long time in the study of international political systems, the method of categorising countries into broad categories for easier analysis has existed. The concepts of ‘East’ and ‘West’; First World, Second World Third World countries; Developed, Developing, Under-Developed countries; North-South are in vogue. In the post-Cold War world, the First World, Second World, Third World classification was no longer feasible.

#### **Emergence of Global South**

- **Colonial past:** A big commonality between the South countries is that most have a history of colonization, largely at the hands of European powers.
- **No say since de-colonization:** Region’s historical exclusion from prominent international organizations – such as from the permanent membership of the UN is intriguing.



- **Consciousness for decision-making:** As bodies like the UN and the IMF are involved in major decision-making that affect the world in terms of politics, economy and society, the exclusion is seen by these countries as contributing to their slower growth.
- **Economic emergence:** China and India have emerged economically sound in the past two decades.
- **Declining US hegemony:** Many consider the world to now be multipolar rather than one where the US alone dominates international affairs.
- **Climate reparations:** In the ongoing debate adds Northern countries paying for funding green energy, having historically contributed to higher carbon emissions.

## II. Conclusion

The world may not, as yet, be on the brink of a global conflict, but it is perilously close to it. Distrust between the two camps presumably led by United States and China/Russia, respectively, resulted in the dawn of new Cold War. Apart from US and European nations such as Germany, many nations elsewhere are participating in what is turning out to be Europe's war with a global impact. The multi-polar world emerged after 1990s gave a jolt to American hegemony, and the tectonic shifts in the power equations thereafter are surfacing in the form of seismic tremors like Russia – Ukraine confrontation, readjusting the International System to the new Balance of Power. Active Nonalignment has surfaced parallel to the formation of power blocs to reassert the independence of choice of developing nations. This European war brought to the forefront the changing world order. The present international system in the form of multi-polar orientation is on the cross roads open to alignments and realignments towards a sustainable and near practical equilibrium. From 1945 to 1991, when Cold War was at its high, and the world order was Bi-Polar, the equilibrium was maintained by the concept of 'Balance of Power'. But in the emerging multi-Polar world order, the concept of 'Collective Security' is the only panacea to stabilize international peace and security.

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