**Is the Soviet Union II in the making?**

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Is Russia in the process of forming the Soviet Union II, or the United States is helping to speed up the process to counter China so that the international system does not stand on multilateralism but remains on bilateralism? The argument is certainly debatable. Some would straight away declare it a conspiracy theory, and some might argue that BRICS and SCO are strong enough to keep Russia and China together in the foreseeable future.

If Realism remains the most dominant theory in international relations, the power and security matrix will continue to dominate the international system. The wars and conflicts will continue at the same rate as they were in the earlier centuries, primarily to serve the interests of the developed nations so that their Military Industrial Complex (MIC) remains relevant.

At this time when a widespread conflict and expanded military engagements across different regions are widely anticipated, global stakeholders are making no effort to defuse tension between warring nations. The so-called sole superpower, the United States (US) has resisted a ceasefire resolution for months in case of Israel’s unjust offensive on Gaza, and concurrently fuelling the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine instead of making any serious effort to achieve an end to it.

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On the other hand, Russia continues to make its advances in the heart of Ukraine amid warnings by President Zelensky that if the US does not support us we will have no option but to retreat. However, the US at this time is heavily involved in defending the interests of Israel. The US has again exercised its veto power, this time against the full membership of the Palestinian state. Therefore, for the US-led Western countries, the Ukrainian episode has nearly ended barring face-saving statements accompanied by little financial and military support, which is not sufficient to keep Russia away from its politico-military objectives of establishing a safety corridor with NATO forces, should Ukraine still join the Alliance.

Russia is perhaps eyeing reviving the spirits of the Soviet Union of the past by forming a larger alliance that can effectively oppose NATO. If President Trump is re-elected after an absence of four years from the White House, NATO will face an existential threat due to Trump’s demand for more and more financial contributions for the sustenance of the Alliance. In that situation, President Putin will have far more options to play his cards as per his choice particularly because of strong support from China. Interestingly, Soviet Union II may not be geographically contiguous as it was in the post-WWII era when the Iron Curtain was drawn across Europe. This time around the emphasis would be on gathering the maximum number of alliance partners regardless of geographical considerations. Perhaps the process has already started in Europe and Africa where more and more states are likely to form part of the Russian Camp.

On that account, will there be a clash of interests between Russia and China? Perhaps not at the moment till the common adversary, the US has been sufficiently marginalized in international affairs. As of today when the US is heavily involved in the defense of Israel, both Russia and China, under the banner of SCO and BRICS are cementing their ties to newer heights. The expected fall of the US from an unbeatable position will give Russia and China enough space to share the bounties from the developing states.

The neo-politics, as introduced in last week’s article, evolves as a paradigm of international significance, the US-led Western world will realize that they wasted too much time and money in wars and conflicts since the beginning of the 21st Century. Notwithstanding the conspiracy theory about the execution of the tragic events of 9/11, historians will write that the response of the Bush Administration to turn Afghanistan, a war-ravaged state, into ruins was the biggest mistake of the sole superpower of the time.

The successive US Administrations failed to appreciate and anticipate the unusual cooperative relationship between Russia and China on a single agenda point relegating the US influence on international institutions through the process of de-dollarization. Concurrently, isolating the US from Africa, and reducing its size in the Middle East. The process had been slow in the beginning but it has suddenly picked up due to Israel’s insistence of continuing an expanded war in the region. If there is a new war in the Middle East, the process of the decline of the US will speed up and the evolution of neo-politics will be accepted not as a terminology alone but as a practice in international relations.

Perhaps, there is still some time before the US loses its grip on international affairs as a sole superpower, but it will have to forgo Israel’s wars and withdraw its support to Ukraine to consolidate itself for a no-war period of at least half a century.

*The writer of this article has authored three international books: “Nuclear Deterrence and Conflict Management Between India and Pakistan” “South Asia Needs Hybrid Peace” and “Understanding Sun Tzu and the Art of Hybrid War.”*