

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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China's (Unreal)Multilateralism and (De)Americanization of New World Order: Rhetoric Analysis of Russia's War on Ukraine

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Abstract

Decentralized and multilateral world order is the emerging concept in the context of Russia's war on Ukraine. The perception of de-Americanized world order is visible in the rhetoric of Russian and Chinese premiers. This study thoroughly analyses the narratives on Russian war against Ukraine primarily centered around democratization of international relations and de-Americanization of new world order. The Russia's war on Ukraine has started re-shaping the world order largely in the direction of decoupling the America-centric bellicosity. The colonial mindset of the west in the foreign and security affairs has already been questioned by the idea of the de-westernization, but since within the west also there is a divide on accepting American belligerence there is a need to thinking the new world order as de-Americanization. The American direction and dominance in the matters of international peace and security has largely been parochial. But in the context of Russia-Ukraine war now the post-western and extra-western narratives have put forth the validity and dominance of the ideas of non-western countries of the world. The rejection of western ideas and technologies is no longer a new phenomenon. Many countries in the world have developed their own social space for communicating the indigenous ideas without getting influenced by western or American narratives.

1. De-Americanization of World Order

De-Americanization is an idea which rejects the dominance of America in international affairs pertaining to security and peace. This is the reflection of the outcome of the "clashes of civilization". The think tanks in the east and southeast Asia have largely been successful in analyzing the threats of the western dominance and convincing their governments and policy makers. America has already perceived the threat to its dominance in the world affairs and this reflected in the "Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World" on February 4, 2021, in which Biden said that "we will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's. American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism, including the growing ambitions of China to rival the United States and the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy". The American think tanks though have tried their best to reset the narrative in the context of Russia-Ukraine war that the world requires the "US energy dominance" but this idea has been quashed by Russia. Commenting on the hegemony of America pertaining to world affairs the Russian President Vladimir Putin, while receiving the credentials from foreign ambassadors in Moscow, said on September 20, 2022, that "the objective development toward a multipolar world faces resistance of those who try to preserve their hegemony in global affairs and control everything - Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa." Putin further added that "the hegemon has succeeded in doing so for quite a long time, but it can't go on forever".

2. Unreal (Multilateralism) in Chinese world order

"Democratization of International Relations" and "Real-multilateralism" are two major instruments being used by China to challenge the US-led world order. China has repeatedly claimed that US has breached the UN charter and now it is time to shift towards a multilateral world order. The argument that Chinese world order and the Russian world order are going to be real multilateral deserves thorough examination of their acts in recent past. Transformation of world order is strategic in nature and for China it's a "long game to displace American order" observes former Brookings fellow Rush Doshi. A new world order is under construction which is "China-led order". Therefore, it's going to be a complex dynamics of regionalizing and globalizing the Chinese-order and destroying the American-order in a strategic way. The countries in the east have their own think tanks where the actions of the west are not only being critically evaluated but also an original action plan is prepared ensuring the interest of the individual nation. In the recent developments India has set a benchmark for effectively telling the world that a sovereign nation can have its own say in the matters of international relations without getting influenced by the traditions of the past.

3. Russian war on Ukraine as an Opportunity

Rohan Mukherjee while analyzing the "Chaos as opportunity" argues that the declining commitment of the US to international order has led to "changing global distribution of power". Mukherjee believes that this chaos is an opportunity for India to benefit from the flux. India's stand on Russia-Ukraine war had been that what India does is in its own

"interests" which has been repeated several times by Indian Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar. US administration has tried its best to convince India that Russia is not a credible ally for India, but India has never been under the influence of America. India's constant reference to its "interests" stems from its desire not to challenge China and prevent its own economic destabilization. India's stand on Russia-Ukraine war is being observed keenly by the US. During the Jaishankar's visit to Russia, in November 2022, the US State Department Spokesperson commented that "India reaffirms that it stands against this war (Russia-Ukraine war), it wants to see diplomacy, dialogue, and an end to this war".

China and Russia had been the rivals for long but to de-Americanize the world order these two countries have become the unnatural allies. Sparring of both China and Russia with US has led to new view on world order where US is being seen as a "force arbitrarily interfering in the international affairs of the Russia and China". Evidently, the countries of the world are trying to reposition themselves in their own interests and America unfortunately has failed to skew the world order in its favor as before. The power game of US-China-Russia has led to a disturbance in international order where, for the time being, de-Americanization is the most obvious phenomenon compared to the long game of so-called China or Russia-led world order.

Acharya (2018) while elaborating on agency and change in world politics argues that global order has till date been viewed very narrowly and hence it has got an outlook of western or somewhat US-led world order. He also argues that "while the US will remain a major force in world affairs, it has lost the ability to shape world order after its own interests and image. As a result, the US will be one of the anchors including emerging powers, regional forces, and a concert of the old and new powers shaping a new world order".

4. Monopolistic World Order to Democratic World Order

There are several "strategic ideas" like "German Conquest", "American Internationalism", Japan's "opening" which have shaped the evolution of new international order in last few decades (Legro, 2016). Ikenberry (2014) has analyzed the rise of China and the future of the world order in the context of "great power strategies" and existing "international order". In another study Ikenberry (2015) has largely discussed the proposed shape of liberal world order. Drawing from the foreign relations of traditional China Fairbank (1973) had already thought of a Chinese World Order. A shift from monopolistic world order may lead to oligopoly in New World Order where a China-Russia-led world order is also a possibility. The Russian leadership's decision to invade Ukraine is the result of increased military co-operation between the Ukraine and the West since 2014 and kind of disturbance created by the cooperation created between US, Ukraine, and NATO. Russia has always believed in limiting the spread of NATO and Ukraine's attempt to be part of NATO has culminated in the Russian War on Ukraine. NATO officially stated in 2008 that "Ukraine and

Georgia will be members of the alliance" and did stick to this commitment all the way (Institut Montaigne, 2022).

5. Offensive in Ukraine and United Nations

Russia launched a military offensive in Ukraine on the night of 23 to 24 February 2022. The UN considered this attack to be "a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine" and termed this offensive as "contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". UNRIC has a detailed list of what action UN has taken since February till date. Different bodies of United Nations have initiated some activity but ultimately UN has failed to ensure peace in Ukraine despite all sorts of statements and resolutions.

The first article of the United Nations Charter clearly states that the purposes of the United Nations is to "maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace". The most critical questions on the role of United Nations arises out from this very first article. Ukraine is perceived as a peace-loving country, but Russia saw it as a threat to its sovereignty. The question is if in this case the UN has failed to ensure peace and has also largely failed to intervene then what's the worth of this United Nations Charter and how the member nations of the United Nations can have faith in this charter. Further Article 14 of the Charter of the United Nations says that "the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations, including situations resulting from a violation of the provisions of the present Charter setting forth the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations".

China is among the charter members of the United Nations and one of the permanent members of the Security Council and hence the position paper of China on UN Charter needs to be evaluated in the context of recent Chinese reports on UN Charter. Position Paper of the People's Republic of China for the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly had the mention of multilateralism which is being propagated strategically by China. It stated that "Multilateralism is a cornerstone of the existing international order". The same position paper had a reflection of fake multilateralism which said that "resolving the Taiwan question to realize China's complete reunification is the shared aspiration of all Chinese people". China has similar aspirations as Russia when it comes to sovereignty of nations. And, hence when questioning the US-led world order China and Russia should introspect whether their positions are multilateral in conduct.

Russia while exercising the veto power on September 30, 2022, against the resolution of the Security Council termed the resolution as "low grade provocation". The draft resolution of the United Nations Security Council had termed Russian offensive as an attempt to unlawfully annex four regions of Ukraine and as "a threat to international peace

and security". Before the draft resolution was circulated the United Nations Secretary General had criticized the Russian offensive and termed it as "dangerous escalation" and "violation of international law". Despite United Nations strict warnings Russia repeated its stand that it is not going to turn back. Not only this the Russian Ambassador to UN termed the draft resolution of the UNSC as "openly hostile actions on the part of the West, are a refusal to engage and cooperate within the Council".

Apparently, when it comes to the unlawful actions of the permanent members of the UNSC no resolution of the UNSC works whether it be US, China, Russia, France or UK.

6. Conclusion

Whether it is US's decision to invade Iraq or Russia's decision to invade Ukraine or China's aspirations to unification of Taiwan; in all these cases UN has remained a mute spectator because all these big countries have got veto power. The provision of veto was vested with the powerful five nations of the world after World War II. UN can't take any meaningful action against these countries even if majority of the member nations are against the action of these five nations as there is no provision to remove a permanent member from the Security Council of the United Nations. Therefore, even the world order shifts from the dominance of the US or it gets De-Americanized there won't be any change in the veto power of either US, Russia, China, France, or United Kingdom. The other countries are helpless in this scenario if any of these five countries exercise their veto power. The idea of "Multilateralism" and "Democratic International Relations" propagated by China is not going to be materialized unless undemocratic structure of the UN is challenged by the members of the United Nations.

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