

A Sino-Russian Request For a Multipolar World: Reality and Ambitions

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Abstract:

RUSSIA and CHINA have adopted a political discourse calling for the establishment of a Multi-Polar International Order in response to the geostrategic circumstances of the post-cold war ; in their actions in order to achieve this aim the two nations are assisted by the sharing of common interests and the same approaches on a number of regional and international issues ; the effects of this policy, however, have been constrained, and their endeavor as well as the idea of the International Multi-Polarity itself have suffered as a result of their competing interests and political divergences regarding the nature of this Multi-Polarity...

Keywords: *International Status ; Polarity ; Polar Actor ; Uni-Polarity ; Multi-Polarity.*

1. Introduction

In the post-Cold War era, characterized in particular by the United States of America's dominance over world affairs and its quest to establish a Uni-Polar International Order and to be the center of its activity ; and, in the face of this situation, voices have been raised calling for the establishment of a multi-polar international system ; and among these countries, we find, above all, Russia and China, which have made enormous efforts to promote the emergence of this system.

the problem posed over our article is the following: is the establishment of a multi-polar international order possible in the near future?.

Our research falls within a historical epoch marked by numerous manifestations

and indicators which reveal the transformations of the post-Cold War international order that the United States of America attempted to maintain following the end of its cooperation with the former Soviet Union and the latter's disappearance in 1991 ;

In order to address this question, we will focus on the following elements:

- The historical context of the discourse calling for the establishment of a Multi-Polar World.
- The concept and forms of Polarity in international relations theory.
- The Russian discourse on Multi-Polarity of the World.
- Chinese discourse on Multi-Polarity of the World.

2. Historical contexts of the discourse calling for the establishment of a Multi-Polar International System:

Most scholars agree that the early 1990s saw the end of the bipolar system, with the former Soviet Union losing its global pole position and the United States emerging as a political, economic, and, above all, incomparable military power (Alida. p.59) ; Despite the fact that, at the end of the cold war, it appeared that the world was moving toward the establishment of a multipolar international system, this was not the case, and that, contrary to these hopes, the United States was moving toward hegemony over world affairs, which was enshrined in the first Gulf War, which America waged outside the framework of international legitimacy represented by the United Nations. was the UNIQUE POLAR ; and Charles Crowe Thamer is credited with being one of the first to use the term "unipolarity" in an article published in the journal FOREIGN AFFAIRS, in which he considered the international system that was built on the ruins of the bipolar system to be unipolar, and dominated by a superpower, the United States of America. (Alida. p.59) ; in the context of this historic development, voices opposing this trend in international relations have emerged, calling for the establishment of a new international order based on multipolarity, as an alternative to the international order that the Americans seek to establish, and which they would apply over time on the ground, as well as through their speeches, such as US President George H.W. Bush's announcement of the start of a new era ; other countries that oppose this trend include those that support the concept of a

"multi-polar" international system; among the most prominent supporters of the need to establish a multi-polar international system are Russia and China. The question that arises on this subject is: what are the motivations and goals of several countries' request and quest to establish a multipolar international system? This is demonstrated in this article by the case of significant joint efforts between Russia and China. (Courmont and Mottet. p.09).

3. The concept and forms of Polarity in international relations' thory:

We will address the following questions in order to better understand the issue of Polarity in international relations:

3.1. The concept of Polarity in international relations' theory:

Before delving into the issue of multipolarity, it is necessary to define polarity in the context of international relations ; here it can be said that: Polarity is a theoretical concept that carries a threshold for the distribution of power values between States in the international system, and it attempts to define those values that a State must possess in order to be described as a Polar Actor(Courmont and Mottet. Pp. 57-58).

3.2. What's a Polar Actor in International Relations' theory:

In his book The Theory of International Politics (1979), K. WALTZ defined the Polar Actor as: " any State that possesses a significant level of power necessary to achieve its objectives within its international environment because it surpasses and excels the rest of the States in this domain " (Courmont and Mottet. P. 58) ; other researchers consider the Polar Actor to be any state that possesses a

significant power that combines political stability and economic capabilities in addition to military power, particularly nuclear weapons ; this is in addition to its advanced scientific and technological capabilities, as well as its ability to exert influence on countries in its regional environment and in international organizations ; they can also ensure that other countries consider their interests when dealing with regional or global issues (**Burles. pp.29-30**) ;

K. Waltz went on to say in his aforementioned book that a state must have the following elements of power to qualify as a polar actor: a large population, a significant geographical territory, diverse natural resources of varying sizes, a significant economic power Above all, it must possess formidable military power (**Burles. pp.29-30**) ; according to TATOS TARIFA, a Polar Actor is defined as: " any State or international alliance possessing the power to change the nature and structural constitution of the international system in itself " and Tarifa lists four main components of power on the basis of which the state's status as a Polar Actor within the framework of the international system's structure is determined: Political, economic, military, and technological power (**Alida p.58**).

4. TYPES OF POLAR SYSTEMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS' THEORY:

Researchers in international relations distinguish three types of Polar Systems, namely:

4.1. The International Uni-Polar System:

The Uni - Polar International System: is an international system characterized by the presence of a single Polar Actor which

possesses the aforementioned characteristics (power components) and wields significant cultural, economic, political, and military power within the international system, and that it dominates all of its units ; controls the system's business reins ; according to neo-realist logic, unipolarity is an international structure in which the capacities of the polar agent are so great that they are not parallel to the capacities of other international actors, and when it becomes possible to balance the power of this agent, this international system loses the description of unipolarity. (**Alida. pp.58-59**).

4.2. The International Bi-Polar System:

The Bi-Polar International System is: an international system in which the structure of power distribution is such that its affairs are dominated by only two States, which have significant influence in the political, economic, and military fields ; and this type of international system emerged in the aftermath of World War II, with the world divided into two camps led by the United States of America for the capitalist camp and the former Soviet Union for the socialist camp (**Alida p.58**).

4.3. The International Multi-Polar System:

In light of the definitions of the unipolar and bipolar international systems, it can be stated that: the multipolar international system is characterized by the presence of more than two polar actors who dominate the conduct of its affairs and of its stakes; the term "multipolarity" is thus a structural description of the distribution of power between states in this system such that dominance over its affairs is vested in a small group (**Scott. p. 32**) ; and, according

to Charles Kupchan, the international multi-polar system is distinguished by the absence of a center of gravity around which the rest of its components revolve (Etzioni. p.32).

What is multipolarity?

The geopolitical situation that arises when multiple centers of power balance each other out is referred to as Multi-Polarity ; this term is commonly used by political scientists and international relations scholars to describe what happens when no nation-state has overwhelming power over the others. After World War II, the term "Multi-Polarity" was first used in this context.

During the Cold War, the US was viewed as a Uni-Polar Power atop a Multi-Polar World. Multipolar systems have historically been the norm, resulting from the balance of power between states ; the Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648, is an example of a Multi-Polar Treaty designed to bring an end to a conflict between two poles: Spain and France, on one side ; and England and Sweden on the other (de Aguiar Patriota).

Multi-Polarism does not insist on maintaining national States (the Westphalian World) or restoring the Bi-Polar Model (the Yalta world), nor does it freeze that transitional State where international life is currently situated, in contrast to Uni-Polarism and Globalism. Instead, it is a call to preserve everything as it is. Multi-Polarism is an attempt to organize the world order on entirely new concepts and elements. As such, it represents a major reworking of the ideological, philosophical, and sociological assumptions upon which modernity is based.

Multi-Polarism, Uni-Polarism, and globalization are all focused on creating something that has never existed before, on the creative strain of (Dugin. P. 01).

5. Russian discourse on Multi-Polarity of the international system:

To assess the Russian discourse on multi-polarity in the international system, we will discuss at the following topics: the contexts of this discourse, its goals, and the nature of its relationship with Russia's quest to reclaim its place as a great power at the global level:

5.1. Contexts of the Russian discourse on multipolarity in the international system:

The Russian discourse on Multi-Polarity and the call for the establishment of an international system based on this foundation emerge in the aftermath of the Cold War and the fall of the former Soviet Union, with the disappearance of the socialist camp and its military arm, the Warsaw Pact, on the one hand ; on the other hand, Russia has failed in its policy of joining the club of Western countries led by the United States, a policy followed during the time of former President Boris Yeltsin.

Following the election of the President Vladimir Putin in March 2000 and the shift in Russian foreign policy orientation, particularly since his second term, the Russian demand for the establishment of a Multi-Polar International System became more prominent than ever (Billette. p.21) ; as a result, the issue of Multi-Polarity has gained prominence in Russian foreign policy formulation (Billette. p.21), as evidenced by Russian politicians' speeches in international forums and official state documents referring to this issue, we note

Russia's emphasis in the 2013 edition of the document "the Russian Federation's Concept of Foreign Policy" indicate that the international environment is currently moving toward more decentralization, which eventually leads to the establishment of a "Multi-Centralized World" (Monaghan, Andrew. 2013. pp.03-05) ; that is, to say a "Multi-Polar World," and by this we see Russia's preservation of this principle, which we also find in the years 2000 and 2008 editions of the same document, at least in his official political discourse.

5.2. The objectives of Russia's discourse on Multi-Polarity of the international system:

The discourse of pluralism, at the global level, in Russian political practice, and its quest to establish a multi-polar international system, arose to counter the trend of post-Cold War international relations, characterized by Uni-Polarity and embodied by American behavior in international affairs, and it believes that only a Multi-Polar International System can guarantee stability and peace in a diverse and multi-interested world (Billette. p.21).

One of the most glaring aspects of the modern international order is American supremacy in the distribution of global capabilities; the end of the cold war did not usher in a return to multipolarity ; instead, the already-dominant United States gained material superiority ; we presently inhabit a single Super-Power System, a situation unheard of in the contemporary age ; no other Super-Power has ever possessed such advantages in terms of material capabilities, including military, economic, technological, and geographic advantages. While other

countries compete with the United States in a variety of fields, its multifarious nature puts it in a class by itself. (Ikenberry, G. John, Michael Mastanduno, and William C. Wohlforth . p. 01).

Russia's call and quest to establish a Multi-Polar International System is also linked to its tireless work to reclaim its position as one of two superpowers of the Bi-Polar International System that prevailed during the Cold War ; and despite their different intellectual leanings and partisan affiliations, most Russian leaders: Marxists, Statists, Westerners, and Eurasiaists agree that Russia is destined to be a great power and nothing else (Larsson, Deborah-Welch et al. p.70).

Despite serious problems at all levels, Russia has not given up on regaining the status of a great power, or rather regaining it after having lost it since the demise of the former Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War ; the restoration of this position has become the obsession of Russian leaders, especially given Russia's enormous military capabilities, particularly its nuclear arsenal, as well as its economic potential, as well as its abundant and diverse natural resources, particularly energy (Larsson, Deborah-Welch et al. pp.77-78) ; realists believe that a state's position in the international system is determined by its military power, and that this contributes significantly to the definition and formulation of its foreign policy. Countries have recognized this prestige and are satisfied with it among themselves on this basis, gaining acceptance and respect among countries in the international system as a great country (Larsson, Deborah-Welch et al. p.69); and the great country, according to Robert

Gilpin, is the state that is able to impose the basic rules governing the international system, whereas Paul Kennedy considers the great country to be the state that can compete with other countries on the international stage (Kireeva, Anna. p.51).

5.3. The relationship of the Russian discourse on multi-polarity and the search for great-power status:

As previously stated, a state's possession of a military force is insufficient for it to obtain the status of Major State; it also requires the recognition of other major states in order to achieve the status of General Staff, and the state's quest for this status may be more symbolic than anything else in most cases (Kireeva, Anna. p.51) ; however, its status as a large country sometimes prevents it from using a large portion of its national resources, material or immaterial, to achieve its objectives in the international system; Russia believes that accession to this status can only be achieved within the framework of a multipolar international system in which it achieves the status of polar actor, which confers rights and duties in this system, all the more so because it has capacities and capacities. Thus, Russia's rhetoric demanding the establishment of a Multi-Polar International System is inextricably linked to its search for the restoration of its position as a great power at the global level, which would allow it to achieve its national interests and to protect its national security from all conventional and unconventional risks ; in order to obtain the international status they desire, States, generally, resort to one of the following strategies:

- Social mobility strategy: This strategy is accomplished by adopting the values of a

group of States that dominate the international system.

- Social competition strategy: this strategy is obtained by achieving superiority in areas where dominant States monopolize superiority.
- Creativity and Excellence Strategy: this strategy is accomplished by achieving creativity and excellence in areas of social activity at the international level ; in general, depending on the circumstances and situations, the State employs a combination of different elements from these three strategies in varying proportions (Kireeva. pp.69-73).

Russia has attempted to reclaim its position as a great power by working with other countries that are dissatisfied with the current international situation to establish a Multi-Polar International System through an active and multi-directional foreign policy, most notably during the reign of Andrei Primakov, former Russian foreign minister (1996/1999), by forming alliances with other States which oppose the USA's activity to impose the Uni-Polarism at the global level (Kireeva. p.80) ; then, Russia resorted to a foreign policy that combined a strategy of creativity and distinction, particularly by emphasizing its civilized character distinct from Western civilization, with a strategy of social competition, particularly in matters affecting its national security ; and, we emphasize here, Russia's foreign policy in this regard, linked to the nature of the strategy followed in order to achieve the position of great power.

6. Chinese discourse on Multi-Polarity of the international system:

We will address the following points in order to understand the Chinese discourse

on Multi-Polarity in the International System: * the contexts of this discourse, * its objectives, * and the nature of its relationship with China's pursuit of its position as a great power at the global level:

6.1. Contexts of the chinese discourse on multipolarity in the international system:

Unlike the Russian effort to establish a multipolar international system following the demise of the former Soviet Union and the loss of Russia's position as the Bi-Polar system's second superpower, which vanished with the end of the cold war, the Chinese speech on multipolarity came earlier, on October 5, 1985 ; in a speech commemorating the United Nations' fortieth anniversary, the then-Chinese Prime Minister stated that "the time for a small group of great powers to dominate world affairs is over" (Xiao, Ren. p.02) ; as Huan Xiang predicted in an article titled "Prospecting For The 1986 International Situation" in January 1986, predicting the imminent collapse of the bipolar international system and the emergence of a new international system dominated by five world poles; justifying his position, Xiang stated that China must have the status of a great power (Womack, Bratly. pp.254-256) ; thus, since the mid-eighties of the twentieth century, the Chinese have believed that the international situation was heading toward the establishment of a multipolar world in which countries would be more interdependent; and in their analyses, they justify their position by the relative scarcity of the two superpowers at the time ; in addition to the rise of new powers in Europe and Asia, which will result in the emergence of new international poles

where a single power will find it difficult to impose its will on other countries, the emergence of multiple poles reduces the ability of developed countries like the United States to impose their control on weak countries (Burles. p.29) ; the same viewpoint was held by the Chinese in the 1990s, as stated in an article in one of the most famous Chinese newspapers dealing with international affairs, which described the international situation at the time as witnessing structural changes that accelerated the trend toward the establishment of a multipolar world characterized by growing interdependence among its countries (Burles. p. 28) ; indeed, Chinese discourse on international relations has continued to center on the need to establish a multipolar international system; at the turn of the third millennium, former Chinese President Hu Jintao stated in one of his most important foreign policy speeches in 2001 that establishing a multipolar international system was essential: "Multipolarity is an important pillar in the formulation of Chinese foreign policy," and official Chinese rhetoric continued in the same vein in the years that followed, for example, President Hu Jintao asserted on June 8, 2007, during a multilateral meeting with the leaders of Brazil, Mexico, India, and South Africa ; the necessity of establishing a Multi-Polar International System ; on the other hand, Chinese official discourse insists on emphasizing that China's efforts to promote and develop the world in order to achieve the establishment of a Multi-Polar International System are not directed against any party in particular (this is understood here to be particularly the United States of America) (Scott. p.37).

6.2. The objectives of China's discourse on Multi-Polarity of the international system:

As we have seen, the Chinese discourse on the need to establish a Multi-Polar international system began during the Cold War period, and it was a discourse directed against the Bi-Polar International System that was controlled solely by the two superpowers at the time: the Soviet Union and the United States ; the United States of America ; due to the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Bi-Polar System, the extent and frequency of the presence of this subject in Chinese discourse on international relations has increased since the early 1990s ; Chinese discourse in the post-Cold War era became directed against the Uni-Lateralism perpetuated by American hegemony over world affairs.

Deng Xiaoping, the former Chinese leader, was very clear on this subject and on China's opportunity to earn its place as a great power in the international system known as a Multi - Polar World, of which China will also be one of its poles (Scott. p.36) ; and because one of China's foreign policy objectives is to create an international environment conducive to the achievement of its economic development, and it considers regional and global stability to be necessary to achieve this goal (...), and this can only be accomplished by establishing a new international system (new World Order) (Billette. p.18) ; in terms of the nature of this new world, the former Chinese president goes on to say that: Multi-Polarity is the main pillar of a lasting international system of peace (...), and the same logic was expressed by former

Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in September 1999 in the occasion of his country's celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Chinese diplomacy, where he declared that the global trend toward Multi-Polarity is irreversible (Bratly. p.254).

6.3. The relationship of the Chinese discourse on multi-polarity and the search for great-power status:

As we have seen above, the possession of the military power by the State is not enough for it to obtain the status of Great Power ; it needs, in addition to that, the recognition of other Great Powers for obtaining this status ; and the State's quest to obtain this status may, in itself, be most often symbolic more than anything else ; but at other times, its status as a Great Power exempts it from resorting to a large part of its national resources, material or immaterial, in the pursuit of its objectives at the global level ; and, China believes that obtaining this status can only be done within the framework of a Multi-Polar International System in which it obtains the status of a Polar Actor ; here, Chinese scholars recognize the importance of "Multi-Polarity" in their country's foreign policy strategy ; they even go, like Wang Jisi and Ren Xio, to consider it as the most important concept of the Chinese foreign policy doctrine (Scott. p.37) ; which gives it rights, and imposes duties on, it in this system ; especially, since it has the necessary capacities for this: great economic renaissance, including military capabilities, which qualify it to attain this international status ; thus, China's discourse, like that of Russia and the group of emerging countries, necessitates the establishment of a multi-polar international system closely linked to

its quest for a position as a major country at the international level, allowing it to pursue its national interests in the Cold War-era international environment ; in its pursuit of great power status, China is moving as far away from the strategy of competition as possible, so we see that it is more inclined to follow the strategy of social mobility, but with a selectivity justified by the need to respect the world's cultural diversity, while mixing it with elements of the strategy of social creativity, such as : emphasizing the peaceful character of its global renaissance, its call for peaceful coexistence among different civilizations within the framework of its theory of peace, development and cooperation among all countries on an equal footing and mutual benefit, but without refraining from using certain elements of the competitive strategy each whenever circumstances require it to do so, in particular with regard to its national security.

7. Conclusion:

The common interests of Russia and China in their pursuit of a Multi-Polar system have contributed to the unification of their efforts in this field, but their competing interests and divergent points of view on the nature of "Multi-Polarity" of the international system have hampered their efforts to achieve this goal, reducing the margin of consensus around this "Multi-Polarity" of the international system ; and, because Russia and China are the two most powerful countries advocating for the establishment of a Multi-Polar international system, the concept of "Multi-Polarism" has lost much of its political traction, while also opening the

door to further consolidating what this concept has come to oppose and combat the concept of "Uni-Polarism" in the world.

Despite this, we live in a world with overlapping characteristics that is neither Uni-Polar nor Bi-Polar, on the one hand; on the other hand, our world is not explicitly and truly multi-polar, as de Aguiar Patriota asks in his article "Cooperative Multipolarity: Is The World Ready?": *Do we already live in a multipolar world?* , then he answered: diplomats and world leaders frequently use the term "Multi-Polarity" in everyday conversations; for example, support for "a more democratic and just Multi-Polar World Order" was expressed at the inaugural BRICS summit in June 2009 ; Comments from the Non-Aligned Movement and the members of the BRICS' group have both struck a nerve ; in the same way, we find, in 2010, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a declaration about this issue(**de Aguiar Patriota**) and mentioned an evolution towards 'a Multi-Polar world and towards a Multi-Partner world(De Keersmaecker, Goedele. p. 01) ; as opposed to the Cold War model of a Bi-Polar World", during an official visit to New Zealand ; the Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated, at Stanford University, in 2013 that: the world has begun to "move more and more, and irreversibly, into a Multi-Polar model"; all these indices reveal a widespread recognition that Multi-Polarity has become an essential concept to take in our analyzing of the international relations in order to understand the

contemporary dynamics which influence the world today (de Aguiar Patriota).

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