

Analyzing the U.S-China Cold War

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Abstract:

The U.S and China are two of the world's top-most competitive economies that are striving to maintain their positions as world powers. The contest has turned both nations into rivals, causing them to engage in diplomatic and economic aggressions against each other. The two have also begun to gather allies on each's side to mark a note on the opposition. Therefore, concerning the escalating enmity among the U.S and China, this paper aims to address some significant factors which associate with the rivalry.

Theoretical Explanation to Understanding the Rivalry Between the U.S and China:

The U.S and China have been the top two contenders to compete for securing first place in the world order. Both the countries have emphasized improving their defense, economic and diplomatic sectors to play against one another. This contention for becoming the superior power has led to a thriving rivalry between the U.S and China in recent times. Therefore, the most suitable theory of international relations fit to describe the rivalry between the U.S and China is Neorealism introduced by Kenneth Waltz. Neorealism treats world politics as an anarchic arena where great sovereign powers struggle for the apex position through economic means and military technologies. Under the concept of neorealism, the U.S and China have engaged themselves in following identical approaches to their goal of becoming number one.

The U.S China trade war that started in 2018 is one of the prime examples of how the two powers are competing economically. The then Trump administration had imposed tariffs on China to question them for following illiberal trade practices. On the other hand, China is on its way to becoming the largest economy in the nearing time. China's transition projects in several

developing countries, including the Belt and Road Initiative, are a great way to mark Chinese presence in faraway parts of the world. Besides bringing China economic benefits, these projects also ensure strong diplomatic relations with the beneficiary nations.

Both the United States and China have greatly enhanced their military forces. While the chances of the two powers fighting each other directly are very slim, they may engage in proxy wars. China's expansionist attitude in South Asia is of worry for a few of the U.S allies in the region. Hence, there stands a chance of China being involved in a war over the contestation which, may invite U.S assistance for the South Asian rival nations to China.

In addition to economic and military progress, diplomacy also plays an important part. The U.S has already been on good diplomatic terms with most of the nations around the globe but, China has schemed to pull in U. S's former enemy, the ex-Soviet Union, now known as Russia, as a strategic partner. As well, China has imposed debt traps on some vulnerable nations who are now forced to support China on the international stage.

Comparing the U.S Foreign Policy Towards China Under Obama, Trump, and Biden's Presidencies:

Obama administration (2009-17): The U.S-China relations during the Obama presidency had bloomed excellently given that there was a strong emphasis on the bilateral affinity between the two countries, hence sustaining the balance of power. President Obama had also chimed that "the United States welcomes the rise of China." During those eight years of the Obama presidency, the U.S focused on increasing constructive cooperation with China. There was an intense increase in U.S-China economic integration through Economic and Strategic Dialogue.

The U.S was keen to adjust its foreign policies in the interests of its allies. But the Obama administration's emerging ties with Japan were perceived as intimidation to China as a response to China's growing relations with Russia (Li, 2016). There have been several other brief misunderstandings and misinterpretations between the two countries during Obama's presidency.

Trump administration (2017-21): Trump had always had a cold stance towards China. He has referred to China as an "enemy" in several instances. In contrast to the Obama administration, Trump was very harsh on deciding trade policies on China. He imposed a 45% tariff on Chinese products, calling China a 'currency manipulator' (Singh, 2018).

Second, there was a shift in security policies. The Trump administration condemned the human rights abuse in Xinjiang, China, and also, China's decision to discharge self-rule in Hong Kong was denounced by inflicting sanctions (Lowsen, 2021). The U.S. also had to cut down on its diplomatic interactions with Taiwan to remain in good standing with the Chinese.

The third turn in the U.S foreign policy towards China during the Trump administration was over the issue of the South China Sea dispute. The QUAD alliance formed by the U.S with Australia, Japan, and India to maintain a presence in the Asian naval space is an indirect response to China's growing aggression in South Asia.

Biden administration (2021- present): The current U.S President, Biden, is known for having a tough stance on foreign policies towards China. It is a presumption that Biden is assembling allies to ally against China. The administration aims to catch up with China in all aspects, such as the military, economic, and technological sectors. In continuation with Trump's stand on condemning human rights abuse in Hong Kong, the Biden administration has imposed sanctions on twenty-four Chinese officials over the same (Sanger, Crowley, 2021). As far as foreign policy

goes, President Biden appears to be concerned about securing America's place in the world order as well as pursuing economic independence and minimizing our dependence on China. The Biden administration is quite aggressive in its policies and actions against China, so the prediction of a confrontation between the U.S. and China could come true.

A Threat to the U.S Led Liberal Democratic Order by China?

The U.S is an attractive model to inspire a trend of democracy around the globe. There is a very strong tradition of constitutional justice in the nation, which is considered an essential element of the liberal international order. Conversely, China has gained a negative reputation because of its communist government system, constant human rights abuses, and expansionist ideology. Despite China's negative image in the international sphere, China's ability to establish itself as a top economy and its flourishing technological advancements has attracted several nations to build economic relations. Hence, developing ties through economic exchanges risks foreign countries shifting their stance in favor of China.

In addition to the prospect of intense economic dependency on China, the international order may also fall prey to the concept of growth through communism. China sets an example as a booming economy by practicing communist ideologies. Consequently, if other countries around the globe start believing that communism can be a way to bring about development and prosperity, it will only undermine democracy. As it is already evident that China has been very discriminate towards ethnic and religious minorities in its homeland, the emergence of communism will inspire these sorts of human rights violations to gain traction.

Also, China's expansionist attitude is of much worry to the U.S led liberal international order. China is trying to attract underdeveloped/developing nations through its BRI project, which promises infrastructural development along with several economic benefits and

international business opportunities. The project is aimed to bring China enormous economic returns and allow itself to mark its presence in the foreign. Here, what China is doing through these projects is creating a debt trap for exposed countries that will not be able to pay the loaned money/remuneration for the project back to China. Therefore, China will also have the ability to influence the voices of the respective nations in international forums and, possibly, meddle in their domestic affairs.

The Contrast Between the New U.S-China Rivalry v/s the U.S-Soviet Union Cold War:

The conflict between the U.S and the Soviet Union was heavy in terms of risking an actual war breaking out. Back then, both nations were concerned with securing hegemonic dominance over the world. The U.S, on the one hand, wanted to become a promoter of democracy and reject the Soviet's model of the communist governmental system, and on the other hand, the Soviets wanted to spread communist ideologies throughout the globe to make their mark.

Drawing a comparison, the recent U.S-China tensions are slightly focused on different concerns than the previous Cold War between the U.S and the Soviet Union. Despite being a communist nation, China is open to functioning in a capitalist form to support the national economy, unlike the Soviets. This very feature of the Chinese economy has allowed it to become an intensively successful market with an increased bilateral economic tie with several foreign nations. The success enjoyed by China becomes a point of conflict with the U.S as it threatens America's position in the international market. Moreover, both the U.S and China have expressed their infinitesimal interest in worrying if the other becomes a superior power. While both countries state otherwise, they have the same goal of reaching the top and shooting the other

down. Unlike the competition between the Soviets and the United States, where the goal was to become a hegemon, China and the United States are trying to push themselves economically, technologically, and militarily, which will automatically grant them leverage over each other, if not canceling each other out.

As a result of globalization, there is a tendency towards interdependence between nations. A lot of the foreign nations incline to either China or the United States, depending on which will satisfy their needs. Given China's ability to advance itself immediately in any assigned field, it is likely to become the majority's favorite. Through this process, China might be able to gather a huge alliance leaving the U.S with lesser support from the international community. Therefore, the strategic competition between the U.S and China, also labeled as the new Cold War, differs in features from the old Cold War involving the Soviet Union.

India as a Promising Ally to the U.S Against China:

India has positively expressed its interest to counter China. The increasing border tensions between India and China and Pakistan's growing relations with China have made India pretty anxious. In attachment to China's border aggression with India, other countries in South Asia also feel annoyed by unwanted Chinese interference in their domestic affairs (Myanmar, Nepal) and by the attempts of involuntary occupation of the South China Sea and neighboring islands (Senkaku Islands) in the said region. Similarly, China is resentful of India's emerging relationship with the U.S, both in economic and military terms. After China, India seems to be the most favorable developing nation in the South Asian area. Therefore, many developing nations in South Asia look to India as a way out of China's rising influence (Roy, 2020).

In light of the situation, India and the United States are both threatened by China, and the two have a historical bond of cooperation through economic, military, and diplomatic trade-offs. Therefore, India is confident to be an ally of the U.S when it comes to confronting China. If the military aspect is to be considered, the U.S and India rank top on the charts of the largest military forces. Over the years, America and India have participated in several joint military exercises and brought Japan into the Malabar for naval drills (Choudhury, 2021). The recent addition to the trilateral partnership is Australia, which has created the QUAD, which covertly aims to reduce Chinese dominance in the Indian Ocean region and limit the restrictions in the South China Sea by China.

As stated in an article, "Biden administration officials, for now, are carefully treading as they try to assemble a coordinated international strategy against China. They say India, as a democracy with a rapidly growing economy, offers opportunities to work on a range of issues like climate and energy and to boost competition with China by cooperating on technology and defense" (Mauldin, Siddiqui, Roy, 2021). The U. S's strengthened alliance with India will allow Washington to keep a close eye on China, given the adversary of geographical distance that the U.S and China have between them.

Findings:

America and China have been facing tensions in their relationship throughout history. What started as a political/ideological difference has now advanced into a rivalry concentrating on gaining international acknowledgment seeking power. Focusing on the fact that both America and China are well-established countries soliciting for their interests, it is fascinating to learn how sternly the two nations shift their foreign policies towards each other. Furthermore, China's

rise is imposing an unleashed threat to democracy. Reaching the rank as the strongest country will allow China to inspire foreign nations to adapt communist systems. Apart from that, unlike the previous Cold War between the U.S and the Soviet Union, China does not necessarily aspire to become a global power which is unique to the Soviet ambition. China rather wants to become a regional power. But, considering China's ability to ace in all the major sectors (military, economic, diplomatic, and technological), it is quite likely for China to succeed as a global power, too. Ultimately, India's role in the rivalry is much appealing to note. The U.S-India partnership to deal against China has a positive fascination about it and is anticipated to be a significant bane for China.

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