

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS A CATALYST FOR TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD ORDER IN THE DIRECTION OF BI-MULTIPOLARITY

Radovan Spiridonov<sup>21</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper's intention is to provoke the inquiry of what form of world order would inherit the post-COVID-19 reality. The author goes to make evident how the American unipolar moment was just an interregnum, during which new subjects in the global arena were established, particularly on the Euro-Asian mainland. Then, it is demonstrate how our current understanding of polarity is not convenient for the upcoming challenges, so we should accept some innovative vantage points towards polarity. To be precise, the system of bi-multipolarity with two dominant actors i.e. super powers that take active part in the creation of the global international relations, but in which along with them there are some other big actors, which even though without immense global impact, do play significant role in shaping the international relations. Global area is to witness the insurgence of two leading axis in geopolitical contest: Naval axis (Washington-London-Brussels-Paris-Berlin) and Mainland axis (Beijing-Moscow-Tehran-New Delhi-Global South). This experimental classifications of hybrid bi-multipolarism opens the question also for its stability, and perseverance in managing the upcoming challenges. Besides, the paper deals with the query of what category of philosophical worldview would be established as a prevailing condition, and can we see an emergence of a new-fangled philosophy of transnational conduct centered on non-occidental ethical and ontological doctrines.

In Mandarin the word crisis (weiji) is made of two characters, danger (wei) and opportunity (ji).

### Introduction

The opening words of this paper are being written in spring of 2021, while humanity is still plagued by the menace of COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>22</sup> Consequences of the pandemic have given rise to a worldwide social and economic disorder culminating in the largest global recession since the Great Depression. (Gopinath, 2020) Within each country existing societal arrangements were put on a 'stress test', as well as the theoretically effective system of global relations prescribed round the philosophy of Washington, D.C. policymakers.

The proverbial Free World dealt with the challenges of the pandemic unexpectedly dismal, thus failing the 'stress test'. (Bearman et al., 2020) The exact antithesis was the

<sup>21</sup> Contact address: radovan.spiridonov@outlook.com

<sup>22</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, PR China. As of 23 May 2021, more than 166 million cases have been confirmed, with more than 3.45 million confirmed deaths attributed to COVID-19, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in history.

country where the virus originated – China. (Jennings, 2020) Beijing regime executed a swift, but draconian response which wipe out the contagion in the first half of 2020. Roughly speaking, a similar pattern of response to the pandemic can be observed in most of the Asian countries, some of which are described as adversaries of the Free world. (Zhang et al, 2020)

Either way, COVID-19 pandemic would witness its last days, just like other global calamities.<sup>23</sup> However, the repercussions over the global system would remain for the years to come. It is a recognized fact that every society undergoes a drastic transformation, after a collective calamity on a large scale. (Scheidel, 2018)

The implications of these drastic social transformation in post-COVID-19 world would be translated from the nation state into the global arena. The query of polarity is a primary facet in our efforts to understand the laws which govern the world order. Polarity describes the characteristics of power distribution at any given epoch. History teaches us that a restructuring of the global order and the system of polarity is inevitable, due to the gravity of the recent social and political deviations.

The aim of this paper is to explicate my expectation for the post-COVID-19 world order in correspondence to polarity. I will precede to explain how the current three major classes of polarity cannot provide a sufficient enough understanding of the world order. Recalling the work done by other academics, this paper is trying to offer a speculative foundation of a different post-COVID-19 system of bi-multipolarity as the best approach in which the new international relationships could be understood. COVID-19 pandemic is to be treated as the (un) invited catalyst for these global shifts, not as their prime driver.

Subsequently, I would deal with the challenges awoken from the reordering or in the international systems, evaluating American Unipolar moment as an interregnum. Next, I would present the two possible axis of alignment of the global actors – Naval axis versus Mainland axis. These alignments were named in a neutral geopolitical vocabulary, recalling Morgenthau realism, in hopes to avoid any ideological coloring.<sup>24</sup> Would this new system be a culmination of the steadily built culture war between the Naval (so-called globalist) civilizations against the Mainland (so-called nativist) civilizations? Perhaps, after the interregnum, this new power balance would unleash a different philosophy in the political expanse, bring about a long awaited stability amongst the global powers, and other global actors?

---

<sup>23</sup> A COVID-19 vaccine is a final solution intended to provide the much needed acquired immunity against COVID-19. As of 22 May 2021, 1.65 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered worldwide based on official reports from national health agencies. In-depth referring to the political aspect of the global vaccination campaign would be provided in following chapters of the paper.

<sup>24</sup> Morgenthau's six principles of political realism can be paraphrased in this manner. International politics is governed by the laws derived from human nature. Realism analyses power and power allows the pursuit of national interest meaning that the national interest is defined as a power. Realism acknowledges the moral significance of political action but recognizes the necessity for immorality in successful politics. Political realism doesn't identify the morals of a particular nation with universal morals. The significance of Hans Morgenthau to international relations and classical realism was described by Thompson in 1959 as: "much of the literature in international politics is a dialogue, explicit or not, between Morgenthau and his critics". In more detail: Thompson K, 1959. American Approaches to International Politics, The Year Book of World Affairs. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, pp. 205-235

## The insufficiency of the certain philosophies of world order

This segment of the paper provides a brief outline of the correctly most actualized philosophies of understanding the world order.<sup>25</sup> The liberal philosophy actualized thought the representatives of the American unipolar moment is understood as the preeminent spirit of the time, at least in the preceding few decades, but has proven futile. Bipolarity is viewed through its underlining insistence on philosophical or ideological discrepancies, which in authors estimation are dated and cannot be applied to present-day scenery. Likewise, some imaginative attempts like the G-Zero world are presented, who still cannot be our operative lenses, due to the inherent inclination for power possession of all global actors. Last but not least, this section would tackle the question of standard multipolarity.

*"My happiness is not the means to any end. It is the end. It is its own goal. It is its own purpose."* are the words of the most audacious critic of communal attachment. (Rand, 2005) Ayn Rand, the outmost radical proponent of Objectivism, egoism, individualism and laissez faire capitalism, echoed the sentiment of a whole intellectual spectrum opposed to any recognition of power relations as a meaningful and just mechanism of societal organizations.<sup>26</sup>

It seemed like post-Cold War world was center round the philosophy of Ayn Rand, even though the key policymakers strained to avoid connections with her 'heartless' societal arrangements. Alan Greenspan, the long serving chairman of the Federal Reserve, is sometimes idly referred to as "the second most powerful man in America." He brought his personal admiration for this philosophy into the mainstream, by encouraging the spread of neoliberal political thinking, from one of the most powerful positions in the world. (Burns, 2009)

The readers might be surprised to meet themselves with a whole paragraph set aside for a philosopher-novelist and neoliberal heroine in a paper dedicated to global politics, but then again we would be in omission if we did not understand first the primal philosophy of today's world shapers. ( Kefeli, 2006)

Ayn Rand was the no-sugar-coated voice of the ideology which sought to catch the Unipolar moment of the USA dominance in the world after the downfall of the Soviet experiment (Krauthammer, 1990), and utilizing D.C.'s strength in the service of the global capital, under the above mentioned auspices. (Klein, 2007) It would be academic dishonesty, if we do not seek to find the basis of USA political philosophy, but rather focus on the apologetics sugarcoated as a liberal ideology. Frankly said, the Unipolar Moment of USA was utilized in hopes to achieve a hegemony of global capital.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The author of the paper opts for usage of the term 'philosophy' to describe the features of a certain school of thought as the most overarching and comprehensive term which also validates ontological, epistemological and ethical aspects of the theory.

<sup>26</sup> Objectivism is a philosophical system developed by Russian-American writer Ayn Rand. Rand described Objectivism as "the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute". One of Objectivism's main tenets is that that the only social system consistent with this morality is one that displays full respect for individual rights embodied in laissez-faire capitalism. Objectivism has been of a significant influence among American ruling class. In more detail: Burns, J., 2009. Goddess of the market: Ayn Rand and the American right. Oxford University Press.

<sup>27</sup> The author of the paper abstracts himself from any ethical and/or utilitarian valorization of the governing political ideology streamed from these philosophies.

We won't dwell on this particular ideology intrinsic worth, but it must be acknowledged that the system collapse under the weight of its own contradictions during the Great Recession. Subsequently the Unipolar moment of USA began gradually to wane both in strength and popularity.<sup>28</sup> The military interferences in Afghanistan and then in Iraq proved that this was a defected worldview, by ingenuously failing to achieve even the basic objectives of USA. They failed to impose a world order they desired, and the conclusion was that they were not as prevailing as their philosophy and worldview spoke to them.

The clichéd last nail in the coffin of Unipolarity came after the US unilateral attract against Syria in 2013. D.C. referred to the doctrine responsibility to protect in order to assertion that in a case of humanitarian calamity the Security Council's permission is not necessary. On the other hand, Russia was unyielding and did not remain a passive observer. Accompanied by China, Moscow stood in defense of state sovereignty. Putin's statement was clear: military attack against Syria will be considered as military attack against Russia and China. It was a clear demonstration of intention to protect not only sovereignty of Syria but also of the Westphalian foundations of the international order against the post-Westphalian ideas. This event has become the important turning point which indicated the end of the Unipolar moment. (Kirkova, 2015)

When the unipolarity is dead, classical distinctions of polarity would mention bipolarity i.e. distribution of power in which two states have the majority of economic, military, and cultural influence internationally or regionally, accompanied by spheres of influence. The textbook example is the Cold War. Most Western and capitalist states would fall under the influence of the US, while most Communist states would fall under the influence of the USSR. After this, the two powers will normally maneuver for the support of the unclaimed areas. Which in the case of the Cold War meant the Unaligned movement. This customary worldview is also impractical for understand today's world. Namely, two block division presupposes that those alignments would share the same philosophical, or at least the same ideological bases on which they could built their nation states, but also global alliances.

As it turned out, after 1991 people's cultural and religious identities and affiliations will be the main source of alignments and international arrangements. The concept of different civilizations, as the highest rank of cultural identity, will become more and more suitable in evaluating the potential for conflicts. (Huntington, 2000) In such conditions, it is difficult to establish two blocks system. Bipolarity is forthrightly impossible to sustain, and therefore it cannot be taken as a suitable instrument through which we could built our worldview.

A different concept of polarity which developed in the last decade is the one of non-polarity or G-Zero world. (Bremmer, 2013) Simply put, in 2021 none of old powers' governments has the time, resources, or domestic political capital needed for a new bout of international reordering. Bremmer points that, in the G-Zero world, no country or group of countries has the political and economic leverage to drive an international agenda or provide global public goods. (Bremmer, 2018) G-Zero is a reference to a perceived shift away from the preeminence of the Group of Seven industrialized countries and the expanded Group of Twenty, which includes major emerging powers like China, India, Brazil, Turkey and others. G7 has become obsolete, that the G20 offers too many competing visions of the proper role of government in an economy to produce well-coordinated policies that China has no

---

<sup>28</sup> In more detail: <https://fortune.com/2015/07/20/united-states-decline-statistics-economic/>

attentiveness in responsibilities that come with a G2, and that America, Europe and Japan are caught up in-house difficulties to forge a joint approach to global policy.

The concept of the G-Zero has been criticized by some who argue that it overstates the decline in America's political and economic power and underestimates the willingness of developing countries to play a larger role on the international stage. As positioned by Rothkopf, the reality is we live in a G-X world with x being a variable that is filled in to suit the occasion and the national interests of the major powers involved. The coalitions will change but the fact that a few nations will continue to lead the world as has always been the case will not. (Rothkopf, 2011)

Multipolarity is a sharing of power in which more than two nation-states have approximately equal extents of influence across the globe. Classical realism holds that multipolar systems are more stable than other systems. (Waltz, 1964) The 'Concert of Europe,' a period from after the Napoleonic Wars to the Crimean War, was an example of peaceful multipolarity, when the great powers of Europe assembled regularly to discuss international and domestic issues. Multipolarity is futile for the contemporary world because of two primal factors. Firstly, nowadays the world is inevitably more complicated and diversified than 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, and therefore actors could not align their basic position on the same civilizational underpinning. Secondly, and perhaps more important we do not have the same relations from strength – power discrepancy between global actor (both traditional and nontraditional) are big enough not to allow a peaceful coexistence.

### **Unipolarity as an interregnum and covid-19 pandemic as the catalyst for bimultipolarity**

As we have elaborated in the prior segment, the conclusion that all previous classifications and philosophies of understating the world order have been proven dated, if not futile, for the convoluted and disordered condition of the global political arena in the third decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this segment of the paper the author would first briefly introduce his understanding of the geopolitics, the author would stress the importance of COVID-19 pandemic as a catalyst which would more rapidly bring the unipolar interregnum to the boiling point of a necessary reordering, both in the 'real' world and in the world of academic debate by accepting new terms, concepts and vantage points for better understanding of the new complex environment of anarchic system of global relations, where the sensibilities of classical realism seem to be advantageous once more.<sup>29</sup>

Geopolitics as a discipline and integral part of classical realism, was molded on the British imperial aspirations from the beginning of the 20th century. The true founder of Geopolitics was Sir Halford Mackinder. (Mackinder, 1904) He conceptualized the basic principles of the British imperial strategy on the political geography of Friedrich Ratzel (Ratzel, 2019) and the geostrategy of Alfred Thayer Mahan. (Mahan, 1900) Principal element of his strategy was the so-called 'Great Game' - the idea that the most important adversary of the British Empire (Naval power) was Imperial Russia, which exercised mounting control

---

<sup>29</sup> The upcoming elaboration on these concepts would take the perspective of the so called Euro-Asianist school of thought. The author does not necessarily support or endorse their views. Nevertheless, since their positions have not been articulated in our academic communities, the author sensed the need for affirmations of Euro-Asianist school of thought, in hopes to foster further discussion.

over Mainland Asia and endangered the Western colonies in the Near East and the Indian subcontinent, by striving to expand southwards. (Blouet, 2004)

Back than Russia was the Land power, identified as Mainland, the 'geographical pivot' or axis upon which history comes into being. All history moves around this pivot, this axis, this Heartland. History is a dynamic process, and here is the point of 'no dynamics' the static point, the pivot, around which the wheel moves. That is Land Power. There is Sea Power, back than British Empire, which is precisely history. History, or time, is in fact the nature of Sea Power. Eternity or the unmoved point is the Mainland or Land Power. They represent two kinds of civilization. Land Power is based on constancy and eternity, as Land is fixed, doesn't move, it is fixed space. It is fixedness itself, which is what Mackinder understood by Land Power. Sea Power is something that moves.<sup>30</sup>

If we understand Mackinder's ideas as historical inevitability, we would soon be able to notice there is not only British and Russian confrontation of clash the last centuries that can be rationalized by this historical inevitability. We would comprehend how in all of civilizations history there were naval powers alike Britain or USA: Athens, Carthage, Venice up to the western colonial empires. Cultures of these Sea Powers were based on trade, oligarchies, technical development, and on control over seas, not land - because Sea Power never goes too deep into the continent. They control the continent by controlling the coast. Land Power in antiquity, as well as present days bears quite the opposing philosophy. We can see these contradictions in Sparta struggling against Athens, Rome being persistent in the destruction of Carthage, even in rivalry between continental Berlin and open seas imperialism of London. (Дугин, 1997)

Mackinder teaching supposed that all human history is based on this kind of philosophy, a political mythology of opposite principles fighting against each other and trying to win - every so often a naval power triumphs, from time to time the land power is victorious once more. Mackinder implies the existence of outer equilibrium in this perpetual rivalry between these two forces. (Mackinder, 1904)

According to Alexander Dugin's seminal works, already in Mackinder's works, Sea Power is portrayed as a flagship of trade, liberalism, democracy, progress, technical innovation, oligarchy, science, adventure, the entrepreneur's spirit, and capitalism. All these marks or characteristics supposedly helped in the advancement of capitalism. Land Power, as an opposing factor, represents force, conservatism, hierarchy, order, ascetics as morals, aristocracy, religion, ethics, and stability. A second important notation from Dugin's seminal works is his emphasis on how rimland is a crucially important concept, because it is the coastal zone. In geopolitics, Rimland is precisely the most interesting part of the structure of space, because there is sea space, land space, and Rimland space, which is something "between" land and sea. The coast of Rimland can be controlled from the sea, or from the land. Who controls Rimland, controls everything.

*"Whoever controls Heartland, rules the world."* is another cliché, who nonetheless bears in itself the very essence of the Sea Power political philosophy. If Mainland is organized from outside, the world is ruled by Sea Power. That means an implementation of the 'organizers' ideas: democracy, progress, modernity, and capitalism on a global scale. If Heartland is

<sup>30</sup> Detailed elaboration of the mythological and historical aspect of the Euro-Asian perspective at: Дугин, А.Г., 1996. Мистерии Евразии. Арктогея.

ruled by itself, by Land Power, we would witness the implementation of the opposing values: eternity, tradition, order, hierarchy, conservatism. (Дугин, 1997)

The prevailing reality of 21st century geopolitics is still the same. It is still good old Mackinder's judgment. Despite the academic attempts to soften the reality which is nearest to the Nietzschean 'will to power' - Mackinder's perceptiveness has stood the test of time and has proven to us as an effective vantage point from where we can observe the ongoing shifts in the global arena. Political responses to COVID-19 have not only proven these trends, but have also exacerbated the standoff. COVID-19 pandemic erupted into crises of change: even before the pandemic unfolded, 'uncertainty' became the defining marker of our times. This perception of the unknown was the result of several changes occurring simultaneously in the international system. Even before the pandemic the world has slowly approaching the alignment in almost two parallel universes.

The state of affairs in the first months of 2020, even before the pandemic, was alarming. A slowdown in the growth rates of the global economy and all of its major engines, the OPEC + agreements collapsed, Britain left, the European Union the impeachment procedure of former President Donald Trump reached its climax. In 2019, United States withdrew from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Short-Range Missiles with Russia. In addition, the sanctions pressured Russia to act more hostile and the trade war between Washington and Beijing grew to the point where analysts were seriously debating military confrontation. The remilitarization momentum was gaining everywhere around the globe. The situation was aggravated after the US withdrawn to 2018 from the "nuclear deal" with Iran. Hostilities continued in many countries and regions. Large areas of the planet were suffering the consequences of climate change and environmental destruction.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made its own amendments to international political processes. Comparisons have already been made to the 2008 Great Recession which led to the emergence of the BRICS bloc, the creation of IMF after the Second World War, or the G7 after the 1973 oil shock. Therefore, this crisis will certainly lead to the emergence of some new configuration in the global arena. Proponents of the American led world order are expression concerns that a new wave of nationalization is circulating around the world, with autocratic regimes seizing the opportunity to consolidate their power. The US policymakers predicted that the aftershocks economic crisis will be even worse than the previous one and will increase the unemployment rate in the country to 20%. At the beginning of March 2020, according to official data, only one percent of the number of medical masks required for the USA medical system were available in the State. As for the ventilation systems, they were 10% of the amount that is needed in an epidemic. At the same time, 95% of antibiotics on the US market are of Chinese origin and most of the ingredients cannot be produced locally. In total, in the United States, 80% of all base ingredients for drugs come from China and India. COVID-19 exposed to what extent the real sector of US has been hooked on the Chinese economic output.

In order to get out of this situation as a victor the United States needs to solve its domestic problems as quick as possible, begin the supply of vital goods and services at the global level, and coordinate (ideally lead) a global campaign to combat the pandemic and mitigate the consequences of the coming economic crisis. Finally, USA needs to lead the global vaccination campaign and supply the world with the needed shots. Obviously, this did not happen. America failed dismally in containing the virus at home, all the way in 2020. The

global leadership of Washington was nowhere to be found, up to the point when even now USA is pursuing a policy of vaccination nationalism.

Across the 'pond' EU's leadership failed to see the gravity of this crisis with no end in sight. EU nations, despite their pledge to an ever-closer union, reacted selfishly and chaotically once the threat became evident. Governments misled Brussels about their preparedness, then hoarded essential equipment and haphazardly shut their borders, disrupting commerce and stranding citizens. Now, in spring of 2021 European Union leaders are struggling to speed up vaccinations, behind their Western allies and facing supply delays.

It is noteworthy that the trend towards 'isolationism', which became catalyzed after the election of Donald Trump and the victory of Brexit supporters, matured just in time for 2020 pandemic. The gradual withdrawal of American troops from various regions is also continuing: Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and from African states. Despite the narrative of the Biden administration, and the vocal support for American involvement in the global affairs, so far we have only seen involvements on terms and conditions which are of absolute necessity for the American domestic peace and keeping up the economical routes of exchanges. Biden administration, as it appears, would silently but steadily continue the course of isolationism, but with much less 'flashy' announcements compared to his predecessor, and definitely with friendly PR.

So, to sum up - the Free World, was not only not-free (due to the authoritative restrictions of civil rights), but failed almost in every step on the way to be the global leader in the fight against the contagion. The shifting perspective in the centers of power - Washington, London, Paris, Berlin and Brussels also proved to be even larger gaps than it was thought. Solidarity was lacking inside and outside the block, and the Free World was left to suffer under the consequences of the pandemic, rather than controlling the outcomes of this calamity.

On the other side of the Euro-Asian continent the disease put China at its strategic epicenter from the outset: the fact that it was there that COVID-19 first emerged gave it both an advantage as well as a disadvantage. Being the first in line meant that it was already through the first wave when others were still struggling with it, giving it an opportunity to position itself as a helper and as a crisis management role model. Russia - the second key player in the Eurasian Mainland proved to be the victor of the second stage of the pandemic - being the first country to develop an effective vaccine against the virus. In February 2021, the medical journal *The Lancet* published a study that said the Sputnik V vaccine was 91.6 percent effective. It also concluded that the vaccine was safe and could protect against hospitalization and death. Determined to pullout the Sputnik vaccine into as many countries as possible, the Russian government has chosen to not work together with the COVAX initiative. Russia give the impression that it seeks to build its own mechanism of global influence, offering up a lifesaving good—an effective vaccine, where the Free World doesn't want or cannot deliver.

In the age of Cold War, the Space Race was contents between the dominant nations using technology to compete with one another. Now in 2021, the COVID-19 vaccine race is based on countries competing in the same manner. And again, the technological success can be taken as a valid benchmark for the international developments. Put in layman's terms: Easterner seemed to ride the wave, while the Westerners suffocated due to the unpredictability of the streams. The world is already so different compared to the years of the Unipolar prominence, so the question is not whatever, but how the global arena would be reordered?



What precisely hides behind the expression bi-multipolarity?

As a pure theoretical form it is a system of international politics where there are two great axes of power or two centers that are in open opposition to each other. Unlike the pure bipolarity, in this hybrid system –even though the global policy is led by the two leading powers - the other centers of power are not firmly tied to either of the leaders and have freedom of choice on whether or not to follow them. As in bipolarism, in bi-multipolarism there are alliances or blocks for establishing closer cooperation and partnership, but in bi-multipolarism the membership in one organization does not exclude the freedom of choice in deciding to join an organization from the opposite flank. (Kirkova, 2015)

In bi-multipolarism the proxy wars of various classes amongst the two centers of powers are among the typical features, but in current situation the other strong regional powers could play specific roles regardless whether it is all about following the policy of the leader from the own flank of about meeting one's own national interests. (Kirkova, 2015) In certain instances, depending on their national interests, the regional powers can shift sides and support the superpower. In bimultipolarity balancing is all about equalizing the odds in a contest between the stronger and the weaker superpowers.

Translated into 2021 this paradigm of international relations and world order can be summarized as follows. What is now known as the Free World comprised of the leading Western European countries in close cooperation with USA and other strategic partners (Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand etc.) is slowly losing its strong ties and joint ventures. A fact catalyzed but President Donald Trump's administration, thou not caused.<sup>31</sup>

Still, this block is to remain connected in an allied manner, mutually sharing certain interests like the furthering of open market enterprises, followed by putting into practice of liberal democracy thought the world and adoption of more internationalist sovereignty in the light of de-etatisation of politics. The actors of this axes as previously mentioned, would carry on to deviate and each would carry out its own national strategic interests. Washington DC, Brussels, London and other capitals were tied together by the necessity of communist expansionism, but there is no longer such a great danger to put aside its own domestic interests for the sake of expansion in the Atlantic partnership. In spite of everything, as COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent recession is expected to protract its disturbing effect over these economies, while at the same time the ruling elite faces a shared counterattack from the anti-establishment left and right wing organizations centered around antiglobalist and illiberal sentiments, and the real vulnerability of rising Euro-Asian global powers, the block is to be expected to remain as one axes which would try to promote its political interests.

On the other side of the Euro-Asian landmass, what is to be named Mainland axes has much looser connectivity. Due to the historical and geographical circumstances there has been no common religion, not even one splintered into different branches as is Christianity in the West. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity all thrive in different parts of Asia. There is no memory of a common empire comparable to that of Rome. Across Northeast, East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia, prevailing major ethnic, linguistic, religious, social, and cultural differences have been deepened, often bitterly, by the wars of modern history. (Kissinger, 2014) With an exception of Russia, Asia was a victim of the international order

<sup>31</sup> In more detail at: Riddervold, Marianne, and Akasemi Newsome. "EU-US Relations in Times of Crises." *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021. 603-618.

obligatory by Western expansionism, not an acknowledged actor in it. Another difference is that in almost all parts of Euro-Asia, the monarchy was considered an expression of divinity, and autocratic rule is still venerated either through open acceptance or through the expression of values system of its people. At this point it is important to distinguish a number of key players, and those should be named with the word civilization since they also underneath incorporate smaller or larger communities. The hypothetical Euro-Asian axes is a system of cooperation between the Russian, Chinese, Hindu and Muslim civilization. Going even further, Alexander Dugin has theorized the foundation of a "Euro-Asian empire" capable of fighting the US-led Western world.

If we circle back to our first assumption – COVID-19 as an archetypal catalyst for fundamental shifts after a calamity we might end up with some of these phenomena to observe. The pandemic exposes the reality of world politics – that no world government exists to impose consistent, proportionate and uniform public health measures. The world's states, with their distinct national territories, are reacting individually rather than collectively to this pandemic. Border closures and travel bans create tensions as countries label others, but resent being labelled themselves, as unsafe or risky places to travel. (Nossem, 2021)

The pandemic is leaving virtually every country in the world with significant burdens of economic debt that are likely to disadvantage long-term plans for climate change mitigation, jeopardize sustainable transport plans and complicate energy transition. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed more pressure on national governments to protect their national economies and supply chains. By prioritizing strategies to address the immediate concerns of public health, climate change mitigation may be harder in the future. (Cole and Dodds, 2021)

COVID-19, to be sure, has thrown down the gauntlet the US's ability to lead and govern the globe on its own accord. Beijing claims that it is striving to be the leader of global "community with a shared future for mankind". But its COVID-19 response has shown that CPP is more observant on building its own international infrastructure, based on Euro-Asian principles. The pandemic has reinforced the power of the state in its most traditional role as protector of society from outside threats. We see an intensification in the state's ability to exercise power in a style that even the nations with most advanced democracies consider legitimate – therefore beginning the process of dismantling the globalists post-state system.

### **Philosophies of world order - opportunities and risks**

The practice of reestablishing the world order via consensus on a 'green table' after every calamity<sup>32</sup> was established in the European continent since the Westphalian peace. (Eyffinger, 1998) A practice which was fairly respected in the upcoming centuries, up until the

---

<sup>32</sup> The illustrative example of this practice was the so called The Concert of Europe which describes the geopolitical order in Europe from 1814–1914, during which the Great Powers tended to act in concert to avoid wars and revolutions and generally maintain the territorial and political status quo. Particularly in the early years of the Concert, the Concert was maintained through the Congress System – sometimes called the Vienna System – which was a series of Congresses among the Great Powers to resolve disputes or respond to new issues. Schroeder, Paul W. "The 19th-century international system: changes in the structure." *World Pol.* 39 (1986): 1.

dismantlement of the Warsaw pack and silent expansion the Atlantic dominion over Central and Eastern Europe. Colloquially said, there was not another Yalta<sup>33</sup> in 1991.

Having all the empirical indicators on its side, DC acknowledged its worldwide sway in the Unipolar moment. Few theoretical outputs have garnered so much attention and have been exploited to the status of cliché as the works focusing on the 'End of History'<sup>34</sup> creed spread through a number of channels from the academic to the mass media. In recent years Fukuyamaists have been systematically criticized particularly from the alter-globalist intellectuals. (Burns, 1994) Thou certainly those critics carry its merit, it is hard to recognize a practical alternative set of policies which would come to replace the neoliberal consensus.

Perhaps until now.

As it was elaborated in the previous section, it is a truism of geopolitics that Euro-Asian mainland is the playground of empires form spheres of influence and control over weaker dominions. The following passage written by Hans J. Morgenthau in "Politics among Nations" goes to recap the assertiveness of all global empires in the direction of the control of Euro-Asian landmass.

*The struggle for power is universal in time and space and is an undeniable fact of experience. It cannot be denied that throughout historic time, regardless of social, economic and political conditions, states have met each other in contests for power. Even though anthropologists have shown that certain primitive peoples seem to be free from the desire for power, nobody has yet shown how their state of mind can be re-created on a worldwide scale so as to eliminate the struggle for power from the international scene ... International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim.*

It could be taken as a quite grim outlook on the state of global politics, but heuristically view over the history of mankind proves that every empire enacted out the very same principles of politics in spite of the well-meant propositions from the schools of thought

---

<sup>33</sup> The Yalta Conference, also known as the Crimea Conference, held February 4–11, 1945, was the World War II meeting of the heads of government of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union to discuss the postwar reorganization of Germany and Europe. The aim of the conference was to shape a post-war peace that represented not just a collective security order but a plan to give self-determination to the liberated people of post-Nazi Europe. The meeting was intended mainly to discuss the re-establishment of the nations of war-torn Europe.

<sup>34</sup> Francis Fukuyama brought the term 'End of History' to the forefront with his essay "The End of History" that was published months before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In this essay, which he later expanded upon in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* in 1992, Fukuyama builds on the knowledge of Hegel, Marx and Kojève. The essay centers around the idea that now that its two most important competitors, fascism and communism, have been defeated, there should no longer be any serious competition for liberal democracy and the market economy. In his theory, Fukuyama distinguishes between the material or real world, and the world of ideas or consciousness. He believes that in the realm of ideas liberalism has proven to be triumphant, meaning that even though a successful liberal democracy and market economy have not yet been established everywhere, there are no longer any ideological competitors for these systems. This would mean that any fundamental contradiction in human life can be worked out within the context of modern liberalism and would not need an alternative political-economic structure to be resolved. Now that the end of history is reached, Fukuyama believes that international relations would be primarily concerned with economic matters and no longer with politics or strategy, thus reducing the chances of a large scale international violent conflict.

in IR. United States of America, without a doubt one of the freest and most prosperous country to enable individual thriving with the assistance of the prospects accessible by the open market of free enterprise has the values of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness into its political credo.

Imbued with the conviction that its course would shape the destiny of mankind, America has, over its history, played a paradoxical role in world order:

*... It expanded across a continent in the name of Manifest Destiny while abjuring any imperial designs; exerted a decisive influence on momentous events while disclaiming any motivation of national interest; and became a superpower while disavowing any intention to conduct power politics. America's foreign policy has reflected the conviction that its domestic principles were self-evidently universal and their application at all times salutary; that the real challenge of American engagement abroad was not foreign policy in the traditional sense but a project of spreading values that it believed all other people aspired to replicate.*

Observations made by the Henry Kissinger arguably can be used for an argument that unlike all other global empires, Washington's officials tended to reshape the global order in a more human form, so the Wilsonian ideals might take root across the world.<sup>35</sup> However, when US political and economic dominance culminated in the unipolar moment, all these values were not implemented in the desired fashion, and America herself became a violator on international law, most obviously with leading NATO aggression towards Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, during the 1999 clashes between Serbian armed forces and Albanian terrorist groups.<sup>36</sup> Comparable, unilateral violations of the international law were conducted by the politicians from neo-conservative doctrine in the coming years in many parts of the Euro-Asian landmass.<sup>37</sup>

The possibilities of long-lasting stability under the leadership of American values charted in its founding documents<sup>38</sup>, and reviled to the world by its diplomacy, were soon to be met with the realities of Euro-Asian vastness. The military interventions in Afghanistan and then in Iraq proved that this was poor strategy of the USA. They failed to impose a world

<sup>35</sup> American president Woodrow Wilson is widely considered one of the codifying figures of idealism in the foreign policy context. Wilson's views were based on the future welfare of humankind. He called for a world made safe democracy, this was organized around political, economic and social standards. These principles were stated in his 14-point peace program. Wilson thought of this program as an American commitment to show mankind the way of liberty. The core of Wilson's program was a league of nations committed to peace, and bringing down tyranny which was thought to be the root of war. The idea was that if democracy could be widespread peace and prosperity would prevail. Hunt, Michael H. *The World Transformed: 1945 to the Present: a Documentary Reader*. Macmillan, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Krivokapić, Boris. *Agresija NATO-a na Jugoslaviju-sila iznad prava*. Čigoja štampa, 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Little, Douglas. *American orientalism: the United States and the Middle East since 1945*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2008.

<sup>38</sup> The concept of American values is so diverse in its interpretations as the social landscape of the country. But, to understand the essence of American foreign, it is crucial to understand its underlining values inscribed in its founding documents since nearly every country on Earth is defined by race or ethnicity, but not America. What makes the United States different? So, to understand America, you have to understand American values.

order they desired, and the conclusion was that they were not as dominant as they thought they were. Furthermore, when USA tried to instigate a regime change in Syria, in the wake of Arab Spring, accompanied by China, Russia stood in defense of state sovereignty. This event has become a significant turning point that indicated the end of the unipolar domination of the US. Putin's statement was clear: military attack against Syria will be considered as military action against Russia. China, soon to be the largest global economy, also opposes American meddling into Asian affairs.

It seems like the Unipolar moment which was hailed as a final victory on the both sides of the Atlantic, was meeting its last days in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unambiguously, countries and peoples of Euro-Asian mainland are slowly becoming subjects, rather than objects of international politics and power struggle.<sup>39</sup> A particular vision of Euro-Asian identity and circle of cultures began to take shape. This movement, even though fringe and still not as popularized as the Atlantic perspective, is an indicator that the American assessments of unipolarity under its banner was just a passing phase into an ever revolving reordering of the global scheme. A power balance which was violated, now begins to reconfigure itself in a new setting.

The ideas of distinct Euro-Asian realm are not novel, and as its origins in the Russian émigré community in the 1920s. Its central idea is that Russian civilization does not belong to European or Asian categories or civilizations, but to the geopolitical concept of Eurasia. The school of thought evolved throughout the decades to encompass not just the Russian ethnic nation, but the whole continent as such.<sup>40</sup> Neo-Euroasianism centers around the idea of amalgamation and alliance between the various peoples of Euro-Asian mainland, which embraces an eclectic combination of nationalism, religiosity, anti-modernism, illiberalism and even some Bolshevik ideas. The fundamental reasoning behind this positions is in fact ontological and traces its origin into the distinct philosophical worldviews and philosophical traditions of the people of Euro-Asia whom they claim to be under globalist attack.<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

This paper aim has been to incite the inquiry of what type of international order would inherit the post-COVID-19 world. I attempted to make evident how the America unipolar moment was just an interregnum, during which new actors in the global arena were established, both traditional and nontraditional, for the most part in Euro-Asian mainland. Then, I tried to demonstrate how the current understanding of polarity is not useful for our time, so we should accept some unconventional classifications of polarity. To be precise, the

---

<sup>39</sup> They are: 1. "E Pluribus Unum" 2. "Liberty" 3. "In God We Trust." The concept developed by the American conservative public intellectual Denis Prager, describes how American's see The American Trinity as the reason America which made their homeland the world's freest and most prosperous country, and therefore explicate the need for proselytization. [https://assets.ctfassets.net/qnesrjod-f80/2cjudH4WtGg4OqWekEmowO/a91827469ac530faebc1303dc973064f/prager-the\\_american\\_trinity-transcript\\_0.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/qnesrjod-f80/2cjudH4WtGg4OqWekEmowO/a91827469ac530faebc1303dc973064f/prager-the_american_trinity-transcript_0.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Although Euro-Asianism in some spheres still is understood strictly from an ethnocentric Russian perspective, the concept has left its origins and has been a subject of interests in other cultural public forums as well policy makers from different regions of Asia such as China, Iran or Kazakhstan.

<sup>41</sup> Дугин, Александар. "Мистерије Евроазије." Превод: Зоран Буљугић. Београд: Логос (2008).

system of bi-multipolarity with two dominant actors i.e. super powers that take active part in the creation of the global international relations, but in which along with them there are some other big actors, which even though without immense global impact, do play significant role in shaping the international relations.

This experimental classifications of hybrid bi-multipolarism opens the question also for its stability. So far, it is too early to say, since an initial decline of any of the two global axes is at least several decades ahead of our time. One possibility is for naval axis to suffer the fate of empires prophesied by Oswald Spangled, or on the other hand we could witness an early dissolution of the Euro-Asian integration due to the intensification of present internal quarrels in the so far still inconsistent developments in establishing the Mainland Axis.

Regardless of the forthcoming developments in respect to 'ultimate' victor, the author derives the conclusion the socio-economic developments as a results of managing the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic would catalyze further alienation between the two axis, and in due course bring the global actors in two opposite axis - Naval and Mainland. Unlike the pure bipolarity, in this hybrid system –even though the global policy is led by the two leading powers - the other centers of power are not firmly tied to either of the leaders and have freedom of choice on whether or not to follow them. The reality of bi-multipolarism is steered by the exact presuppositions of culture-dominated international politics inscribed by Samuel Huntington. However, as we previously stressed in our introductory of the pure modality of bi-multipolarity the internal quarrels would continue to live through the experiences of the cultures, even though they undergo a pragmatic routes of integration.

However, the above mentioned elaborations rest on the presupposition that the philosophical principles of zero-sum game would continue to dominate the mindset of both sides, as it did in the past. This paper would give its last words to a daring statement the we may perhaps see an emergence of a new-fangled philosophy of transnational conduct centered on different ethical and ontological doctrines. As such, it would lay down a much higher emphasis of outer balance and harmony between the people and therefore provide the philosophical matrix for a more peaceful world order compared to the contemporary occidental philosophy.

## References

1. Bearman, G., Pryor, R., Vokes, R., Cooper, K., Doll, M., Godbout, E. and Stevens, M., 2020. Reflections on the COVID-19 pandemic in the USA: Will we be better prepared next time?. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 96, pp.610-613.
2. Blouet, B.W., 2004. The imperial vision of Halford Mackinder. *Geographical Journal*, 170(4), pp.322-329.
3. Bremmer, I., 2013. *Every Nation for Itself*. New York City, New York, USA: Penguin Random House.
4. Bremmer, I., 2018. *Us vs. them: The failure of globalism*. New York City, New York, USA: Penguin Random House.

5. Burns, J., 2009. *Goddess of the market: Ayn Rand and the American right*. Oxford University Press.
6. Burns, T. ed., 1994. *After history?: Francis Fukuyama and his critics*. Rowman & Littlefield Pub Incorporated.
7. Cole, J. and Dodds, K., 2021. *Unhealthy geopolitics: can the response to COVID-19 reform climate change policy?*.
8. Eyffinger, A., 1998. *Europe in the Balance: An appraisal of the Westphalian System*. *Netherlands International Law Review*, 45(2), pp.161-187.
9. Gopinath, G., 2020. *The Great Lockdown: Worst Economic Downturn Since the Great Depression*. [online] IMF Blog. Available at: <<https://blogs.imf.org/2020/04/14/the-great-lockdown-worst-economic-downturn-since-the-great-depression/>> [Accessed 23 May 2021].
10. Huntington, S.P., 2000. *The clash of civilizations?*. In *Culture and politics* (pp. 99-118). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
11. Jennings, R., 2020. *How Cultural Differences Help Asian Countries Beat COVID-19, While US Struggles*. [online] Voice of America. Available at: <<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/how-cultural-differences-help-asian-countries-beat-covid-19-while-us-struggles>> [Accessed 23 May 2021].
12. Kirkova, R., 2015. *The Second Global Bipolarity or Bi-Multipolarity*. *Security Dialogues / Безбедносни дијалози*, 2.1, pp.351-361.
13. Kissinger, H., 2014. *World order*. Penguin Books.
14. Klein, N., 2007. *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. Macmillan.
15. Krauthammer, C., 1990. *The unipolar moment*. *Foreign Aff*, 70, p.23.
16. Mackinder, H.J., 1904. *The geographical pivot of history*. Royal Geographical Society.
17. Mahan, A.T., 1900. *The problem of Asia and its effect upon international policies*. Boston: Little, Brown.
18. Nossem, E., *Linguistic rebordering: Constructing COVID-19 as an external threat*. *Bord. Perspect*, 4, pp.77-80.
19. Rand, A., 2005. *Anthem*. Penguin.
20. Rapp-Hooper, M., 2020. *Saving America's Alliances*. [online] Foreign Affairs. Available at: <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-02-10/saving-americas-alliances>> [Accessed 27 May 2021].
21. Ratzel, F., 2019. *Politische geographie*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.

22. Rothkopf, D., 2011. G-Zero: gee, another idea with zero to support it. [online] Foreign Policy. Available at: <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/28/g-zero-gee-another-idea-with-zero-to-support-it/>> [Accessed 24 May 2021].
23. Scheidel, W., 2018. The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century. Princeton, New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press.
24. Thompson K, 1959. American Approaches to International Politics, The Year Book of World Affairs. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, pp. 205-235
25. Waltz, K.N., 1964. The stability of a bipolar world. Daedalus, pp.881-909.
26. Zhang, Shuxian, Zezhou Wang, Ruijie Chang, Huwen Wang, Chen Xu, Xiaoyue Yu, Lhakpa Tsamlag, Yinqiao Dong, Hui Wang, and Yong Cai. "COVID-19 containment: China provides important lessons for global response." *Frontiers of Medicine* (2020): 1-5.
27. Дугин, А.Г., 1997. Основы геополитики. М.: Арктогея, 12, р.482
28. Кефели, И.Ф., 2006. Философия геополитики в контексте современного теоретического знания. Политическая экспертиза: ПОЛИТЭК, 2(1).