

A Foreign Policy Analysis of the Sino-US Rivalry in the 21st Century

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Abstract

At present, China-US rivalry is a dominant debate in academia as well as in the domains of policymaking. The study of China-US Rivalry is also important as it can prove to be a threat to international peace and security, since this competition between two superpowers is turning into an intense animosity. However, this paper tends to shed lights on the nature of divergent foreign policy goals and objectives of the US, the existing global power, and China, the emerging superpower. It also provides a detailed examination of the scope and direction of this rivalry. For that purpose, this paper is divided into five major parts. First part of this paper is the introduction in which a descriptive theoretical framework is presented to understand the China-US rivalry following the realist paradigm. The second part of this paper is the historical background which presents a brief history of the rise and fall of nations in general, and the rise of the US and China in particular. The third part of this paper is a description about the major areas of the China-US competition. The fourth part of this paper is the prime section of this writing which offers a detailed foreign policy analysis of this rivalry. It unveils different strategies in the foreign policy of both superpowers that generates an animosity between them. Furthermore, this section analyses the role of individual decisionmakers, national ideology, and domestic politics in their divergent foreign policies. Moreover, this part examines the existing and future implications of this intense rivalry. The fifth and the last part of this paper is the conclusion which focuses on the findings of this entire academic assessment.

Keywords: China-US Rivalry, Foreign Policy, Indo-Pacific, Trade War, Neorealism, Stimulus Response Model, Nuclear threat



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1. Introduction

History stands as a testimony that the policies and strategies of Great Powers direct and affect international affairs the most. Similarly, the foreign policies of China and the US are turning against each other and shrinking the space of non-alignment for other states. In addition, their strategies and policies pose a potential threat to international peace and security. The scale, speed and implications of this rivalry have made it a dominant subject in the fields of policymaking and in the world of academia. However, the ongoing China-US rivalry can be better understood with the application of neorealist, also known as structural realist, model of international relations. Neorealism explains “patterns of international events in terms of the system structure, the international distribution of power, rather than in terms of the internal makeup of individual states”. (Joshua S. Goldstein, 2018, Pearson) This variant of realism is based on Kenneth Waltz’s conception of world system theory explained in his book *Theory of International Politics* published in 1979. Waltz used system theory to explain how international anarchy, the absence of a central regulative authority in the world, effectively determines the actions of states. In this regard, “neorealists argue that international anarchy necessarily tends towards tension and conflict as it results into a system of self-help, security dilemma, and relative gains among the states.” (Andrew Heywood, 2011). Under anarchical international structure, self-help is due to the existent unreliability of states on each other, a system of security dilemma is due to uncertainty and mutual suspicion, and a struggle to seek relative gains is because of the Darwinian notion of the survival of the fittest. The ultimate outcome of anarchy in international system is that, “great powers are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals, with hegemony as their final goal” (Mearsheimer, 2001). Preceding change in international power structure, the great power politics does not end without paying a heavy cost. “Power transition theory holds that the largest wars result from challenges to the top position in the status hierarchy, when a rising power is surpassing or threatening to surpass the most powerful state.” (Joshua S. Goldstein, 2018, Pearson). In this context, the emergent-power China is now challenging the top position of the US in international power hierarchy. On the other hand, the US is trying to play every card to sustain its position in the international power hierarchy. This entire power struggle at international level has pitted China and the US against each other for attaining global supremacy. What is the scope of this rivalry? What is the nature of the foreign policy of both the superpowers? And what are the impending implications of the rivalry on the world? These are the main questions of our academic analysis.

2. Historical Background

Recorded human history is a tale of Great Power politics. In this way, power has been a dynamic phenomenon in international relations. What makes power a dynamic force is a set of various challenges in different periods of time. Ibn e Khaldun’s *Asabiyyah*, also known as the Cyclical Theory, propounds that “sovereign powers are like living organism, they are born, grow up, mature and die”. (Ulasan, 2018). Historically, the Greeks were dominant in Europe as long as the Romans took the charge as greater power. In this way, Greeks and Romans were superpowers of

their times, but internal problems and external challenges resulted in their fall. Similarly, the Muslims dominated almost half of the then known world but could not escape from troublesome difficulties posed by internal civil wars and the other political actors which resulted into their decline as global power. In the 13th century AD, the Mongols conquered the major part of the world by challenging and defeating the dominant political powers of the Muslims. Later on, with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans emerged as the most influential power in Eurasia for more than four centuries. Prior to the global supremacy of Great Britain in the 19th and the early 20th centuries AD, Portugal, Spain, Netherland, France ruled different parts of the known world. Afterwards, when Britain became global power, it was bragged by the British that “the sun does not set in the British Empire”. However, the Two World Wars weakened its strong hold over its colonies and damaged its global prominence. As a result, the once bragged as Global Power, the Great Britain, turned into a persona non grata after the Second World War.

3. United States ascendance to the throne of global leadership

The American Story of World Supremacy is unique of its kind. Although 13 North American colonies issued the Declaration of Independence on the 4th of July 1776, they won true independence in 1783 after fighting 8 years long War of Independence against their colonial master; the Great Britain. After that, these 13 colonies entered a confederation which was later converted into a federation with the name of the United States of America. The Great Britain recognized its independence in 1783 by signing Paris Treaty. From that day onwards, the US embraced the policy of Isolationism following which she did not participated actively in the political affairs of the world till World War I. During this time, the US attained significant military prowess, developed strong political system and achieved considerable economic growth. However, it was the first time when it abandoned the policy of isolationism when it participated in the First World War on the Allied bloc. After the Great War, American leadership gave the idea of the League of Nations, but the US Congress did not allow it to be its member. Henceforth, the world witnessed a continuity of disagreements, conflicts and instabilities from 1919 to 1939 which E.H. Carr named as *The Twenty Years' Crises*. These Twenty Years of Crises somehow proved to be as Twenty Years of Blessing in disguise for the US. It gained more power and recognition internationally. During these years, harsh sanctions of the Treaty of Versailles, the Great Depression, rise of Nationalism, and many other factors sowed the seed for another system wide war which ultimately erupted in 1939. The participant states in the Second World War were divided into two groups, the Axis Powers and the Allies. The US again sided with the Allies. Both sides fought each other hard but the Allies won the war due to the timely and substantial assistance provided by the US. After World War II, the United States emerged as the sole superpower of the world mainly because of its nuclear capacity, unprecedented military might and economic development. Its Global primacy remained unchallenged until the Soviet Union successfully developed nuclear capacity on 29th August 1949. Following that, the United States and the Soviet Union indulged into protracted conflict known as the Cold War. It was an indirect conflict between the two states and their allies. During this time, the world was divided into three

parts, the Western Bloc, also known as NATO allies, the Eastern Bloc under the Warsaw Pact allies and the Neutral states with a leading Non-Alignment Movement. The US and Soviet Union supported their allies against each other in several proxy wars. Although the Soviet Union never matched the US preponderance, it invariably posed itself as a major competitor against the US. This enmity continued till the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Later on, with a complete disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991, the US emerged as Global Hegemon.

4. Emergence of China as a competitor to the US global primacy

Like the US, China also embraced the policy of isolationism for much of its long history. Regarding this state of Chinese inactivity at international level Napoleon once said that “the world should beware of the sleeping dragon, lest it awake.” (Chan, 2017). In other words, it played no significant role in the 20th century world affairs. The Long-Cycle theory suggests the “rise and fall of the leading global powers as the central process of the modern world system”. (C.W. Kegley, 2001). However, China has emerged as a global competitor to the US in terms of economic, political, military and technological power in the 21st century. Its quick progress and rise in short time are an extraordinary example in the world. Historically, in October 1949, old China became People’s Republic of China under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Chairman of the Communist Party of China. Mao Zedong set up the Great Leap Forward campaign in 1958 to reconstruct the political and economic system of China. During this period supporters of Monarchy, Capitalism and Communist Party of China missed no opportunity to commit atrocities against each other. Riots and clashes were everywhere which resulted in the Great Chinese Famine in which approximately 18 million Chinese perished. Furthermore, in 1966 Mao initiated Cultural Revolution, known as Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, to exclude Capitalism and Traditional Authority from China. Almost as much as 1.5 million people were killed. Finally, the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976 with the death of Mao. After this apocalyptic time-period, Deng Xiaoping came in power in 1978 and introduced an important set of ‘market based economic reforms’ and political agendas. China restored political stability and made exceptional economic development in coming next three decades. The story of China as global competitor to the US starts with Xi Jinping’s assumption of power in the country. After being elected as General Secretary of the communist Party and Chairman of Central Military Commission in 2012, Xi Jinping became the Paramount Leader of China. Later on, in 2013 he became the President of People’s Republic of China. He initiated political, military and especially economic reforms which could pave way for the rise of China at international level. He said that “with agonizing sufferings inflicted by war drenched in our memory, we Chinese cherish peace and stability”. (Jingping, 2014). Under his leadership, China has achieved significant military might, rapid economic growth and considerable political fame. In other words, he aimed at the fulfillment of historical Chinese dream of acquiring global leadership. He took progressive steps in Chinese foreign policy, made China a great power by entering into friendly partnerships with its peripheral countries. As a result, the United States fears China’s growing military force and economic potential. Today, it is considered that China is on its way to

become a global power. Think Tanks across the globe are christening the 21st century as “Chinese Century”.

5. Major Areas of Sino-US Rivalry in the 21st Century

A considerable amount of literature has been produced on the topic of China-US Rivalry throughout the world. However, this paper aims at describing and analyzing the connection between the foreign policies of both superpowers and their rivalry. Aiming at the global supremacy, China-US rivalry is the ongoing struggle for power between the two superpowers; China and the US. Their foreign policies are directed against each other as is indicated by a number of foreign policy goals and objectives. In this way, in order to analyze the nature and direction of their foreign policy, it is pertinent to examine their ongoing rivalry. For that purpose, a brief examination is conducted in the coming section of this paper which focuses on five major areas of their completion.

a. The Arena of Global Politics

The first area of contention between China and the US is the arena of global politics. Both countries have been competing each other internationally and this politics has its roots in their political ideologies. On the one hand, the US has been the torch bearer of liberal democracy and capitalism throughout the world. It left no stone unturned to promote these ideologies in all regions of the world and considers itself the protector of liberal democracy and capitalism. On the other hand, Chinese leadership first focused on nation building by unifying Chinese people and they later tried hard to attain political stability at home under single party rule. After that, China has presented to the world an alternative to the US model of governance based on the ideology of communism. It has provided the world with a successful example of this alternative model in the form of its own development.

In addition, both rivals struggle for more power at international level to subdue each other. For that purpose, they use every means and chances available to them internationally. For example, during Covid-19 pandemic China and the US have been indulged in the politics of vaccination. First, they started a race to make the vaccines, and later, they engaged in a contest to distribute corona virus vaccines to their friends and client states. Similarly, in order to increase their soft power and positive image at international level, China and the US indulged in a severe competition for medals in the Olympic 2020. The ultimate aim of this entire power struggle is to make one’s position stronger for the global leadership.

b. Geo-Strategic Contest

The second most important area of China-US rivalry is the geo-strategy to counter each other. A quote is associated with Napoleon Bonaparte that “If you know a country's geography, you can understand and predict its foreign policy”. With that end in view, both powers contest in winning alliances against each other globally. In this way, one’s enemy

becomes other's friend. As illustration, China has been making allies in the Africa by using the incentives of loans, aids and mega infrastructure projects. On the other hand, the top US diplomats visited several African nations for strategic dialogues in the wake of China's rising influence in the continent. In this regard, the recent visit of Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, from 7th to 12th of August 2022 is of great importance. Similar geo-strategic struggle can be witnessed between both powers in the South America.

Furthermore, the region of Indo-Pacific or more specifically the Southeast Asia has become the central flashpoint of Sino-US rivalry as the tension rises there. To win the strategic influence, China and the US have been making new alliances and drawing new agreement with several Southeast Asian nations in order to surpass each other. For example, Biden Administration has taken an aggressive stance to contain China through political and military alliances. In this respect, USA adopted Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) on 27th October 2020, a geopolitical and strategic alliance with India to counter China in Indo-Pacific. It was an updated form of LEMOA and COMCASA. Along with that, USA adopted another agreement with Australia and United Kingdom on 15th September 2021, known as AUKUS. It was also a geostrategic and security alliance to counter the influence and threat of China in Indo-pacific. On the other hand, in the wake of Ukraine Crisis, "Russia and China Unveiled a pact against America and the West" (Wright, The New Yorker, 2022), after the official opening of the winter Olympic on February 4th -2022. Beside this, China has drawn several multilateral and bilateral agreements with Indo-Pacific Island Countries. Along with that, it has strong geostrategic partnership frameworks especially with Russia, Pakistan, Iran and Sri-Lanka which make its position stronger in the region. Below are mentioned two map charts explaining bilateral and multilateral strategic agreements of China and the US in the Indo-Pacific.

Map 1 The US and the Indo-Pacific Region Agreements



(Kamil Opara, 2022)

Map 2 China and Indo-Pacific Region Agreements



(Kamil Opara, 2022).

c. Economic Competition

The third broader dimension of the China-US rivalry is the economic competition. They compete to make their economies internally sustained and externally expanded. In this regard, both countries have taken a number of steps both at home and abroad. Following Chines Dream, China has launched Belt and Road Initiative having 6 major projects to build maritime and land trade routes starting from China to other parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. These projects are made for making international trade, easy, accessible and cheaper for China. Through these initiatives China is making good use of the string of the pearls. Secondly, China has made itself the world's largest production hub by producing billions of goods and providing millions of services. With world's largest labor market, Chinese goods and services are cheapest in the world due to Comparative Advantage which make it the largest exporter in the world. Furthermore, it has embraced the "export-led growth strategy based on Manufacturing Industry to become workshop of the world" (Andrew Heywood, 2011). Last but not the least, China made a huge investment in the underdeveloped countries all over the world including trillion-dollar investment in Latin America, Middle East, North Africa, south China and South Asia as well.

Since 2018, China and the US have been engaged in economic conflict known as the Trade War. It started when the US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs and other trade barriers for Chinese goods justifying on the China's 'unfair trading practices and intellectual property theft'. These barriers were further expanded by the Biden Administration as it imposed restrictions on several Chinese companies. Whereas China considered these trade barriers an attack on its economic rise in the world. As a reaction to this, China also imposed tariffs and other trade barriers on American goods, and the action-reaction goes on. In short, this trade war has proved to be punitive for China and the US making China-US rivalry more intensified than ever.

d. Military Animosity

The fourth major area of China-US rivalry is the military buildups. In a broader sense, military strategy of a country an integral part of its foreign policy and is used as a mean to achieve foreign policy goals and objectives. Since military activity is conducted both at home and abroad, both affect each other in a number of ways. Both countries have adopted several military and arms related policies and have taken numerous steps to develop their military capabilities unmatched to each other. As far as China is concerned, first it has been increasing its annual defense budget steadily. For 2022, the Chinese government announced its defense budget of almost USD 230 billion. Beside this, it has increased the size of People's Liberation Army with a substantial addition of active-duty soldiers, paramilitary forces and reserve military personnel. In addition to this, China has established an advanced military industry to produce modern weaponry and logistics ranging from tools, accessories, vehicles, missile systems, submarines, fighter jets, helicopters, tanks, aircraft carriers, rocket projectors, tactical and small nuclear weapons domestically. This entire military buildup strategy has made China a militarily mighty state in the world.

On the other hand, the US is not behind China in its military prowess. When it comes to Military might, its position is stronger than of China. It has established an unparalleled military industry long before China's. Beside this, though USA's total military personnel are less than of China, but its per-capita soldier ration is far greater than of China. Similarly, USA's annual defense budget is far larger than China's annual defense budget. According to a press release of the US Department of Defense "On March 28, 2022, the Biden-Harris Administration submitted to Congress a proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget request of \$813.3 billion for national defense, \$773.0 billion of which is for the Department of Defense (DoD). The FY 2023 DoD Budget request of \$773.0 billion is a \$30.7 billion, or 4.1% increase, from the FY 2022 enacted amount" (Defense, 2022). In addition, the US has abundance of military bases across the world.

e. Technological Competition

The fifth major domain of the China-US rivalry is the field of Technology. Since technology has become the engine of superpower machinery in the 21st century, the only country is superior in power which is scientifically and technologically advanced. In this regard, both China and the US have been competing each other in the fields of scientific research, Artificial Intelligence, 5G, quantum information science, semiconductors, biotechnology, green energy, military technology and space technologies. “In some races, it has already become No. 1. In others, on current trajectories, it will overtake the U.S. within the next decade.” (Graham Allison, 2021). “The scale and speed of China’s technological advancements in recent years have raised concerns in Washington and elsewhere over the implications for the United States’ overall economic competitiveness and its national security, as well as the impact on liberal values and good governance globally.” (Brookings, 2021). This China-US technological rivalry got intensified in 2018 when the Trump Administration imposed restrictions on Huawei and its 5G services. Later on, in 2019 and 2020 its products and services were further sanctioned by the US government. Time passed by, in June 2021 the Biden Administration passed the United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021 which further strengthened restrictions on the Chinese technological products and services. In addition to this, the US banned a large number of Hi-tech Chinese Companies.

6. A Foreign Policy Analysis of Sino-US Rivalry

a. Individual leadership in Conflicting the Foreign Policies of China and the US

Leaders play major role in foreign policy decision-making especially when ‘the buck stops in their hands’. Historically, China and the US had neither been mutual friends nor arch enemies in the international arena of politics. The most important leaders in this regard are Xi Jinping who gave China the dream of global power, and Donald Trump who took aggressive stance to check China’s growing power and influence. On the one hand, China started to indulge in international affairs politically and economically by directly investing in Africa, Latin America, Asia and

Eastern Europe under Xi Jinping. In addition to this, China struggled to promote its soft power and positive image in the world through providing economic aid, Covid-19 vaccines and political supports. While, on the other hand, Donald Trump intensified the US relations with China, by taking nationalist stance, resolving to counter China through intense trade-war, defaming its economic agendas and declaring it as the origin of global pandemic, the Coronavirus. In addition to this state of affairs, the Biden administration won as opponent to Donald Trump but worked as the holder of Trump’s legacies aimed against China.

b. Cultural Identity and Domestic Politics in the divergent foreign policies of China and the US

Analysis of a foreign policy cannot be made independent of the role of culture and domestic politics of a nation. These factors have also been involved in the China-US rivalry. First, the cultural identities of both states are different and even opposite to each other. On the one side, the national identity of the US is based on democratic norms, capitalistic values, Christian beliefs, and liberal ideas. On the other hand, the cultural identity of China is based on Confucian moral codes and communist socialism. Therefore, the foreign policies of both the states work under the influence of divergent cultural identities. Secondly, the domestic politics of both the states follows different directions under different domestic actors. In China, the Chinese Communist Party controls the domestic politics. Whereas, in the US, many pressure groups, civil society, media and think tanks influence domestic politics. Domestic politics is considered as one of major determinants of the foreign policy of a country. In other words, “If war is the continuation of politics by other means, then, it is certainly also the case that many times foreign policy is simply the continuation of domestic politics by other means.” (Day, 2014).

c. Stimulus-response Model on foreign policies of China and the US

The stimulus-response model of foreign policy analysis studies how a state behaves on its perception of another state. In other words, it deals with how one state reacts on the acts of another state. This model can aptly be applied on China-US rivalry. China launched its master economic plan of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global infrastructure development strategy. In response, on June 12, 2021, the US announced to initiate Build Back Better World (B3W), a global infrastructure development program to counter China. For that purpose, President Biden met with G7 leaders to discuss “strategic competition with China” and committed to take concrete actions by “introducing Build Back Better World: An Affirmative Initiative for Meeting the Tremendous Infrastructure Needs of Low- and Middle-Income countries.” (The White House, 2021). In the same way, China and the US competed for the making and distribution of Coronavirus Vaccines after the outbreak of global pandemic Covid-19. The story does not end there. China and the US indulged severely in the race for medals in Olympics 2020. In addition, as a reaction to China’s rising influence in the Indo-Pacific, Biden administration took an aggressive stance to contain China through political and military alliances. In this respect, USA adopted Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), a geopolitical and strategic alliance with India to counter China in the Indo-Pacific. It was an updated form of LEMOA and COMCASA. Along with that, the US adopted another agreement with Australia and the United Kingdom, known as AUKUS. It was also a geostrategic and security alliance to counter the influence and threat of China in Indo-pacific. Other than that, it has agreements with Japan on the same issue. On the other hand, in the wake of Ukraine Crisis, “Russia and China Unveiled a pact against America and the West” (Wright, 2022). In this way, both states react on each other’s acts.

d. Different Strategies in the Foreign Policies of China and the US

In order to achieve their foreign policy goals, China and the US have adopted different strategies. These strategies are long term in their direction and broader in their nature which can be inferred from the political moves, economic policies, legislations and official statements of both superpowers. For example, the recent US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's August 2nd, 2022, visit to Taiwan suggests to a foreign policy analyst that the US would go far not only to protect its allies but also to check China's growing influence and rising power in the world. This trip was characterized in *The New Yorker* as provocative politics (Chotiner, 2022), in *The Diplomat* as the US deterrence (Hulme, 2022), and in *The Washington Post* as contentious visit that angered China (Kuo, 2022). Secondly, the Nancy Pelosi's Visit to Taiwan, Anti-China legislation of Biden Administration, and recent involvement of the US in the Indo-Pacific region refer to the speculation that the US has opted offensive mode in its foreign policy towards China. Thirdly, this indicates that the US is hellbent on containing and encircling China. In other words, the US has adopted the policy of Safe Home in its foreign policy. Fourthly, it can also be derived from the scale and speed of the US military activities abroad, that the US is displaying the military solution to the Chinese Problem. Lastly, the realist model suggests that the US is taking preemptive measures to deal with China before it gets uncontrollable and unchallengeable.

Contrarily, a number of speeches of China's President Xi Jinping suggest that China has not only opted for defensive mode in its foreign policy towards the US but has also been preparing to vigorously meet an aggressor. Secondly, Chinese economic investment, provision of loans and strategic partnerships throughout the world signify China's preference to achieve global supremacy through economic development and by maintaining soft power, rather than relying on hard power. Thirdly, China has been indirectly challenging the status quo of international power structure by investing in the low-income countries, fostering the anti-Americanism amongst the Muslim world, and the intensifying the sense of deprivation in the post-colonial states. In addition to this, it has been using media and civil society to maintain its positive image internationally. Fourthly, in realist paradigm China's defensive mode suggests its latent strategy to buy more so that it comes at par with the US power and position.

e. Implications of Conflicting Foreign Policies of China and the US for the World

One amongst the lessons of history is that conflicts and wars have been the outcome of the aggressive behavior of political actors in which perceptions and misperceptions of one's about the other play vital role. In conflicts and wars one political actor might dominate the other but the world suffers a lot in the form of economic recession, political instability, deaths and destruction. Furthermore, in the struggle for power a time comes

when state commit acts which are unfavorable to other state or a group of states. Most of the times, this type of behavior on the part of one state is taken as an aggressive step by other resulting into chain of action and reaction against each other, and this chain does not stop soon until an all-out conflict has erupted. Moreover, two world wars provide us the wisdom that each war was once a rivalry, and that rivalry was once a severe competition. Antonio Gramsci once said that “the old world is dying, and a new one is struggling to be born. Now is the time for monsters”. This is evident in the present world, as the world is haunted by the ‘Frankensteinean monsters’ in the form of atomic bombs. The liberal democratic, capitalist countries believe that a nuclear war ‘cannot be won and therefore, must not be fought’. On the other, it is argued that the communist world believes that a nuclear war ‘can be won and therefore, can be fought’. This division of believe regarding the use of nuclear weapons is a dangerous threat to the world as a whole. Therefore, both superpowers must realize this division and its implications for the world because war must no more be considered as a continuation of politics by other means.

7. A New Cold War?

Through analyzing their foreign policy directions and goals, the current power struggle for global primacy between China and the US can be classified as a new cold war. However this cold war is different from the cold war fought between the US and the USSR in a way that it has not included the military fight rather both super powers are indulged in an extreme economic competition and intense geo-strategic animosity across the world. It is said that, “a cold war is already underway. The question is whether Washington can deter Beijing from initiation a hot one.” (Brands, 2021). Richard Nixon once said that ‘the cold war is not thawing, it is burning with deadly heat, communism is not sleeping, it is as always, plotting, scheming, working, fighting’. The theme of this statement can be seen in the foreign policy of the US to deal with China in the same way it dealt with the USSR but by new means of the time.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, a war is already underway between the communist Russia and the NATO backed Ukraine which might threat international peace and security because of the possibility of misperception and miscalculation in decision-making. In the wake of this, the China-US rivalry is affecting the nature and direction of global affairs and further promoting the division among states. The world again is dividing into two camps led by these superpowers, and in this globalized world, the option of neutrality is none-existent. States will be considered either as with a camp or against it. Following this contest, it is the Global South which would suffer the most, world, which is already poor, deprived and weak. Therefore, not only China and the US, but other influential state actors and especially the global south should realize this precarious situation. Moreover, the world is currently facing many global challenges including Climate Change, terrorism, pandemics, population explosion and resurgent nationalism. However, an

enlarged cooperation between China and the US can help the world to deal with the aforementioned global challenges.

In short, the great power politics has always been a defining feature of international relations. However, this power struggle in an anarchical international state system can lead towards a system-wide war as was the case with Two World Wars. More precisely, when an established power faces a rising one, conflict becomes inevitable. The assessment of foreign policy goals and objectives of China and the US suggests that the idea of Thucydides Trap, popularized by Harvard political scientist Graham Allison, “holds that the danger of war will skyrocket as a surging China overtakes a sagging America”. (Beckley, 2021). In this nuclear age, humanity cannot afford another world war because it would be an Armageddon, wiping out human civilization altogether.

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