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Is the Ukraine crisis the beginning of a new world order?



Sources: By Wereld Morgen [Photo: Putin and Xi (<http://en.kremlin.ru/>)]

Translated from Dutch by Sven Magnus

The summit between Putin and Xi on the eve of the Winter Olympics was only mentioned in passing in the mainstream media. However, this is a very important meeting, with consequences that can be very transcendent. Are we at the beginning of a new world order? A historical interpretation by China expert Marc Vandepitte.

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Joint Statement

Just before the start of the Winter Olympics in Beijing, Putin and Xi issued a [joint statement](#) on international relations and cooperation between the two countries. It is a ten-page document that comes at a time of great tension with NATO over Ukraine and a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics.

The text can be read as a plea in favor of a new world order in which the United States and its allies are no longer the protagonists, but seek a multipolar world, which respects the sovereignty of countries.

"Both sides oppose a further enlargement of NATO. They call on the North Atlantic Alliance to abandon its ideological conception of the Cold War; to respect the sovereignty, security and interests of other countries, as well as the diversity of their civilisation and their cultural and historical backgrounds; and to adopt an honest and objective attitude towards the peaceful development of other States".

Similar signals have been sent in the past, such as a joint statement [in 1997](#), but it is the first time that both presidents have spoken out so clearly and strengthened their ties so closely. It is also the first time China [has explicitly declared itself](#) against NATO expansion.

To understand the scope of this document, it is helpful to take a look at recent history.

Hegemony

In the first half of the twentieth century there was, on the one hand, the rise of two new superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. On the other hand, there was the relative disappearance of the former colonial powers.

The United States emerged as the great victor of World War II. Both the former superpowers and the Soviet Union were completely bankrupt. In Washington they dreamed of a new world order in which only they would rule.

"To opt for anything less than absolute hegemony would be to choose defeat," said [Paul Nitze](#), a senior adviser to the U.S. government. Unfortunately, these plans were thwarted by the rapid reconstruction of the Soviet Union and the breaking of the nuclear monopoly.

Half a century later that dream did come true with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dismantling of the Soviet Union two years later. From that moment on there were no more barriers to absolute supremacy. The United States finally became the undisputed leader of world politics and wanted to maintain that position.

The [Pentagon](#) left no room for doubt in 1992: "Our first goal is to prevent a new rival from appearing on the world stage. We must prevent potential competitors *from even aspiring to play a greater role on a regional or global scale*" (emphasis added).

At that time they still didn't have China in their sights. China's economy was quite underdeveloped and its GDP was only a third that of the United States. Militarily the country was also worthless. At the time Washington was thinking mainly of Europe as a potential rival and of a possible resurgence of Russia.

No brakes

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States lifted its foot off the brakes. The invasion of Panama in late 1989 was a rehearsal for what [would follow](#). Soon after, it was the turn of Iraq, Yugoslavia and Somalia. Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya and Syria would later follow.

In addition to open military interventions, the United States increasingly waged "hybrid wars" (1) or "color revolutions" (2) to bring about regime change, which did not work everywhere. They tried this in Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon and Belarus. On the other hand, [more than twenty countries](#) were subject to economic sanctions.

NATO, created to militarily entrench U.S. hegemony, also expanded steadily after the dismantling of the Soviet Union. Since the nineties 14 states of the European continent have become members of the treaty organization. Other countries, such as Colombia, became a '[partner](#)' of NATO.



Legend: In purple, countries that joined before 1997; in yellow, since 1997.

The siege of China

Thus, the United States seemed to be the master of the world after the Cold War. But they forgot about China. For the first time in recent history, a poor and underdeveloped country has become an economic superpower in a short time.

Over the past 30 years, China has experienced a remarkable economic expansion. Since its accession to the WTO in 2001, the size of the Chinese economy [has more than quadrupled](#). The leap forward was not only economic, but also technological.

Until recently the West, with the United States at the helm, had an [absolute monopoly](#) on technology, weapons of mass destruction, monetary and financial systems, access to

natural resources, and the mass media. With this monopoly he could control or subjugate countries, especially in the South. The West, where the United States acts as a policeman, now risks losing that monopoly.

That is why the United States identifies the People's Republic of China as its main enemy. In the framework of the budget debates for 2019, [Congress](#) declared that "long-term strategic competition with China is a key priority for the United States." This is a comprehensive strategy that must be pursued on several fronts. The United States is trying to thwart, or as they say, "stifle," China's economic and technological rise.

If necessary, they will also do so by extra-economic means. The military strategy towards China follows two paths: an arms race and a siege of the country., the United States already has more than 30 military bases surrounding China, support bases or training centers (purple points on the map). 60% of the total fleet is stationed in the region. They have been working on this [military siege for](#) years.

In April 2020 the Pentagon released a [new report](#) advocating for further militarization of the region. The plan is to install ballistic missiles on their own military bases or those of their allies (red arrows). If they also install cruise missiles [on submarines](#) later (see map), they can reach mainland China in 15 minutes. These are very dangerous steps.



As part of this lockdown strategy, the Pentagon is also strengthening military ties with countries in the region. For example, in 2021 it concluded a [security pact](#) with Australia and Britain to contain China.

That's enough

Putin and Xi believe that enough is enough. NATO's eastward advance, the increase in military and hybrid warfare around the world, the numerous economic sanctions, and the encirclement of China, all of that must end. The time when NATO, the G7 and the Western-dominated IMF were in charge is over. The unipolar world must give way to a multipolar world.

The growing aggression against China and Russia is leading both countries to throw themselves into each other's arms. China is home to nearly a fifth of the world's population, is a global economic powerhouse, and is the most important trading partner of most countries. Russia is the largest country in the world and is a nuclear superpower.

An alliance between the two countries is an important counterweight to American supremacy. According to [The Guardian](#), "The birth of this Sino-Russian axis, conceived as a resistance to Western democracies led by the United States, is the most important global strategic event since the collapse of the Soviet Union 30 years ago. It will determine the era to come."

However, it's not just about these two countries. Russia is a member of [several regional and multinational alliances](#). One of them, a military alliance, is the [Collective Security Treaty Organization](#) (CSTO), which currently participates in "peacekeeping" operations in Kazakhstan. Another is the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization](#) (SCO), which is a Eurasian alliance in the political, economic and security spheres. In addition to Russia and China, India and Pakistan, among others, are also members.

China has recently joined the world's largest economic partnership, the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership](#) (RCEP). This association in Southeast Asia reaches 30% of the world's population. The new Silk Road means hundreds of investments, loans, trade agreements and dozens of Special Economic Zones worth \$900 billion. They are

spread across 72 countries, with a population of about 5 billion people or [65% of the world's population](#).

New world order?

With his article *The End of History and the Last Man* published shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall Fukuyama heralded a new era based on Western hegemony. The debacles in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya and Yemen, among others, show that this was enormous arrogance.

If the recently concluded alliance between Russia and China is consolidated and other countries join it, it is possible that we are at the beginning of a new era. It is not the end of history, but the beginning of a new stage, in which power in the world is more decentralized; a new world order, in other words. Exciting times are coming, but also dangerous times. Now more than ever we need a strong movement for peace.

See also

[Trump and China: Towards a hot or cold war?](#)

[Centenary of the Communist Party of China](#)

[China will shake the whole world: about farmers and artificial intelligence](#)

Notes:

(1) [Hybrid warfare](#) is a form of covert warfare that uses a whole series of means: fake news, manipulation through social media, diplomatic pressure, legal artifices against political leaders (*lawfare*), manipulation and direction of popular discontent, domestic and foreign pressure on elections, etc.

(2) According to the [color revolutions](#) manual, NGOs, student organizations, and local organizations are funded, trained, and trained to organize street riots as effectively as possible. Street violence must destabilize the country to the point that the government is forced to resign or the army intervenes and removes the government.

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