

# South Asia Analysis Group

Published on *South Asia Analysis Group* (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>)

[Home](#) > United States can Ill-Afford Two Concurrent Cold Wars

---

## United States can Ill-Afford Two Concurrent Cold Wars

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Thu, 02/25/2016 - 05:06

**Paper No. 6079**

**Dated 25-Feb-2016**

By Dr Subhash Kapila

China foisted Cold War II on the United States in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and which has in 2015 assumed clearer contours and that leads to the crucial question whether the United States can afford a concurrent revival of Cold War I with Russia in support of Saudi Arabia's and Turkey's regional power-play with Iran.

It would be strategically erroneous to attach linkages of China's ongoing Cold War II with the United States to fears of United States revival of Cold War I with Russia. Undoubtedly a semblance of a strategic nexus exists currently between China and Russia, but the stirring impulses of both the Cold Wars under discussion are entirely different in scale and magnitude. But before examining the foregoing the moot point at this stage is to determine what is pushing the United States and Russia into a revival of Cold War I?

Fundamentally, at the root of United States-Russia strategic tensions and rivalries lies in the United States policy formulations which impel the United States proclivities to impart a virtual strategic pre-eminence to China over Russia in its strategic calculus. This, as I have reflected in many of my SAAG Papers of the last decade, arises from United States obsession that an overwhelming strategic investment on China is an American insurance policy to cater for enlisting China once again as a quasi-strategically against Russia's strategic resurgence.

Possibly, deep down in American calculations a realisation exists that Russia is a more powerful strategic competitor than China, and that China would be open to American overtures. This is where the United States policy premises are seemingly misperceived and misplaced by viewing Russia today through the American prism and templates of the Soviet Union.

The United States is destined by all available strategic indicators to continue as the unipolar global Superpower, politically, economically

and militarily by virtue of the unchallengeable commanding heights it sits on advanced technologies, which Russia and China even put together, can ill-match. This reality itself should induce confidence in the United States policy establishment that the United States does not need China as strategic ballast in any possible showdown with Russia.

The United States has deep and substantial strategic stakes in the stability and security of the Middle East and in Indo Pacific Asia. In both these vital regions, China by any stretch of imagination cannot be a contributory and cooperative ally of the United States. In the Middle East, China while not directly challenging the United States has left no stone unturned to subtly undermine United States standings in Saudi Arabia and Turkey. China's close linkages with Iran are at best a hedging strategy of tactical value only.

China is United States foremost challenger of the United States in Indo Pacific Asia and with pointed reference to the immediate Chinese objective of prompting United States exit from the Western Pacific. China can never be expected to cooperate with the United States in the stability of Indo Pacific Asia, simply because that would negate its national aspirations.

Comparatively, Russia has not challenged United States military predominance and United States security architecture in Indo Pacific Asia. On the contrary, Russia has attempted to strike close relationships with major US allies like Japan. Russia can be counted upon to cooperate with the United States when the United States adopts Russia as a 'co-optive equal partner' in security management of Indo Pacific Asia notwithstanding its tactical nexus with China.

In the Middle East scope exists for the United States to be accommodative stances towards Russia in respecting its strategic sensitivities on Iran and Syria, primarily. In fact the United States for its own good should concede the Northern Tier of the Middle East comprising Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Iran as the Russian 'sphere of influence'.

The only impediment in this direction is that the United States would have to dispense with its obsessive support for Saudi Arabia and Turkey in their regional confrontation with Iran manifesting sharply in Saudi and Turkish interventions in Syria currently. The United States needs to recall that in United States military intervention in Gulf War II both Saudi Arabia and Turkey had adopted virtual 'hands-off' stances.

United States policy establishment goes horribly wrong when it adopts policies of 'Balancing of Naturally Predominant Regional Powers'. The United States went wrong in the Indian Subcontinent in attempting to balance India's natural predominance by building up Pakistan Army's military strengths. The United States is going horribly wrong in the Middle East where it is likely to get sucked-in in regional rivalries of Saudi Arabia and Turkey with Iran as the naturally predominant power in the region.

Concluding, one would like to assert in the context of the foregoing analysis that the United States cannot afford two concurrent Cold Wars in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; China intends to challenge the United States to gain strategic equivalence as a prelude to emerge as a Superpower whereas Russia has had a history of shared global security management with the United States even at the height of Cold War I.

**Tags:**

[US-China relations](#) [1]

[Middle East](#) [2]

[Russia](#) [3]

**Category:**

[Papers](#) [4]

**Countries:**

[United States](#) [5]

[Russia](#) [6]

[China](#) [7]

[MiddleEast](#) [8]

**Topics:**

[Strategic Affairs & Security](#) [9]

Copyright ©2012. All Rights are Reserved.

---

**Source URL:** <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/1950>

**Links**

[1] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/301>

[2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/1357>

[3] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/275>

[4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>

[5] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/united-states>

[6] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/russia>

[7] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/china>

[8] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/middle-east>

[9] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/strategic-affairs-and-security>