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Highlights

GEOPOLITICS AND STRATEGIC SECTORS

- REFLECTIONS ON THE REORGANIZATION OF THE POST-COVID 19 INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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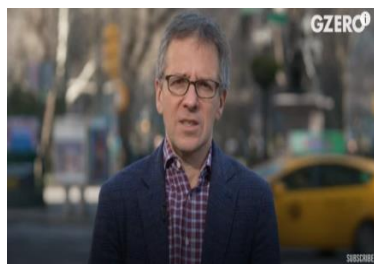


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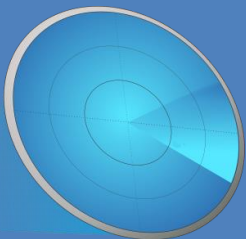
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GEPOLITICS AND STRATEGIC SECTORS

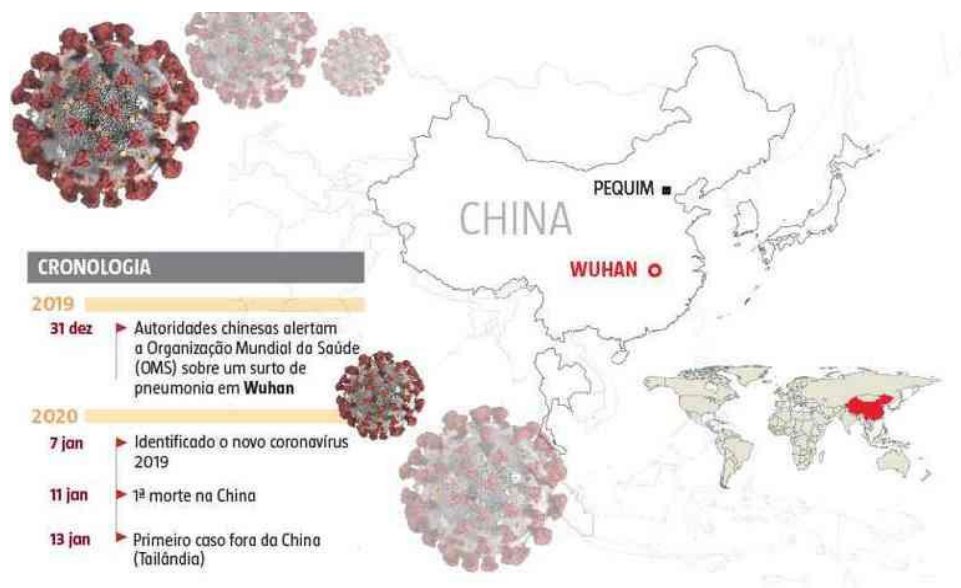
ANALYSIS 1

Reflections on the reorganization of the post-Covid 19 International Order

Authors: Antonio dos Santos and Fábio Albergaria de Queiroz

In December 2019, the Chinese identified in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province, an unknown disease in human beings, which was spreading at an impressive rate, and which would become one of the greatest challenges faced by humanity in a long time. Weeks after the first cases were notified, what was a local problem became a national calamity and mobilized all sectors of society in the face of an invisible and relentless opponent: the coronavirus or Covid-19. While China, on a larger scale, and its closest neighbors undertook/waged war efforts to combat the emerging threat, in a subtle way, the coronavirus arrived in countries of the Middle East, of Europe, of the Americas materializing in what everyone feared: a pandemic, the seventh since the fateful Spanish flu of 1918.

Chronology of the COVID-19 Epidemic in China

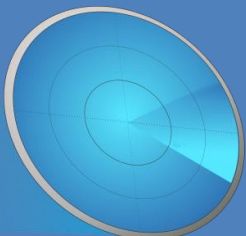


Source: Estado de Minas

As in other previous situations, marked by moments of great apprehension and tension, in this complex scenario where the destinies of its actors are inevitably intertwined, many paradigmatic questions also arise, among which: what power rearrangements are designed for the post-Covid-19 international order in times when uncertainties abound?

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This effort to understand the ontology of new times, now translated in the following pages, proves to be opportune since, as Oliver Stuenkel, professor of International Relations at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation reminds us, moments of great geopolitical instability, historically, usually mark the end or beginning of an era. Not necessarily because of the crisis itself, but because of its power to reveal realities that, in everyday situations, are not easily visible.

However, before presenting our first considerations, we must point out that, although more substantive analyses regarding the externalities resulting from this crisis come up against methodological limitations and, consequently, risks of inaccuracies, given that this is an unfinished phenomenon, our intention is to bring the reader reflections, duly supported by the State of the Art of academic production, on possible scenarios that reflect the geopolitical transformations underway.

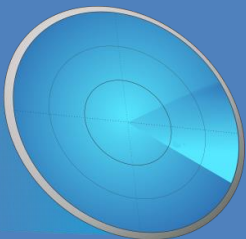
Thus, starting at the systemic level of analysis, we observe that, in International Relations, the main readings about the possible nature of the post-Covid order diverge in many aspects, as it is natural that it occurs - as Thomas Kuhn suggests - in contexts where the current paradigms no longer offer satisfactory answers to the challenges posed by the anomalies that arise leading, then, to the profusion of new ideas that point out alternative paths for the interpretation of the reality that presents itself.

Thus, while Henry Kissinger (2020) understands that the coronavirus pandemic will permanently transform the international order - notably dependent on global trade and the free movement of people - by fostering the resurgence of "walled cities," the perception of Alain Badiou (2020; p.70), skeptical of any possible structural transformation arising from Covid-19 is that the epidemic is nothing more than the dissolution of the intrinsic activity of reason.

In an intermediate line of thought, Richard Haass (2020) asserts that what we will witness is the acceleration of changes already underway, that is, the pandemic would play a catalytic role. After all, not every crisis translates into a turning point. Yuval Noah Harari (2020), in turn, emphasizes that we will live in a different world, but the main changes will occur in the patterns of social organization that will result from the choices we make between: 1) living with a state of totalitarian vigilance or using the tools to combat the pandemic as a means of empowering individuals and; 2) nationalist isolationism or global solidarity. As in other situations throughout history where exceptional measures have been taken to contain equally exceptional threats, Harari warns that the temporary - with its risks and/or benefits - may become permanent, thus establishing a "new normal".

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Regarding the level of analysis of agents, or actors, in the possible configurations of the international structure, considering that the emerging technologies will have a great impact in the global disputes between the United States and China - among them the fifth generation of mobile telephony (or 5G) - since they will define the conditions of a new systemic cycle of accumulation of assets that will allow the projection of power on a global scale of those who dominate them, the overlap between these two global disruptions - the epidemiological and the technological - emerges with great capacity to shape the next years of our history. And, in the order that awaits us, the future of the relations between the United States and China and, consequently, the clarity about the purposes of each side, puts the world in a time of waiting and apprehension and, certainly, stands out as another great issue capable of causing important changes.

In this sense, Yan Xuetong, one of the most prominent Chinese theoreticians of International Relations today, argues that the world is moving towards a new configuration of power. However, what calls our attention in his analysis is that, in opposition to the common sense that the International System of the 21st century will be inexorably multipolar, Xuetong maintains that a new bipolarity is drawn with clear outlines, but that, contrary to what prevailed during the Cold War, in this developing configuration, headed by Washington and Beijing, the alliances formed will be specific, conjunctural and fluid.

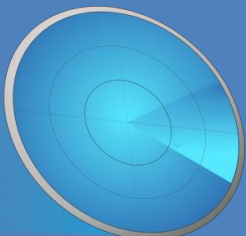
It means that, instead of taking part in clearly defined and ideologically antagonistic economic-military blocs, most states will adopt a commuting foreign policy, relying on the United States on some issues and China on others. Would we then be facing a new manifestation of Realpolitik redefined by the externalities of the crisis?

It is important to note that the escalation of the dispute between the United States and China took on a new nuance in 2011 when, in redefining the Grand American Strategy for the 21st century under Barack Obama, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the reorientation of the United States' strategic priorities for Asia-Pacific in what became known as the "Asian pivot".

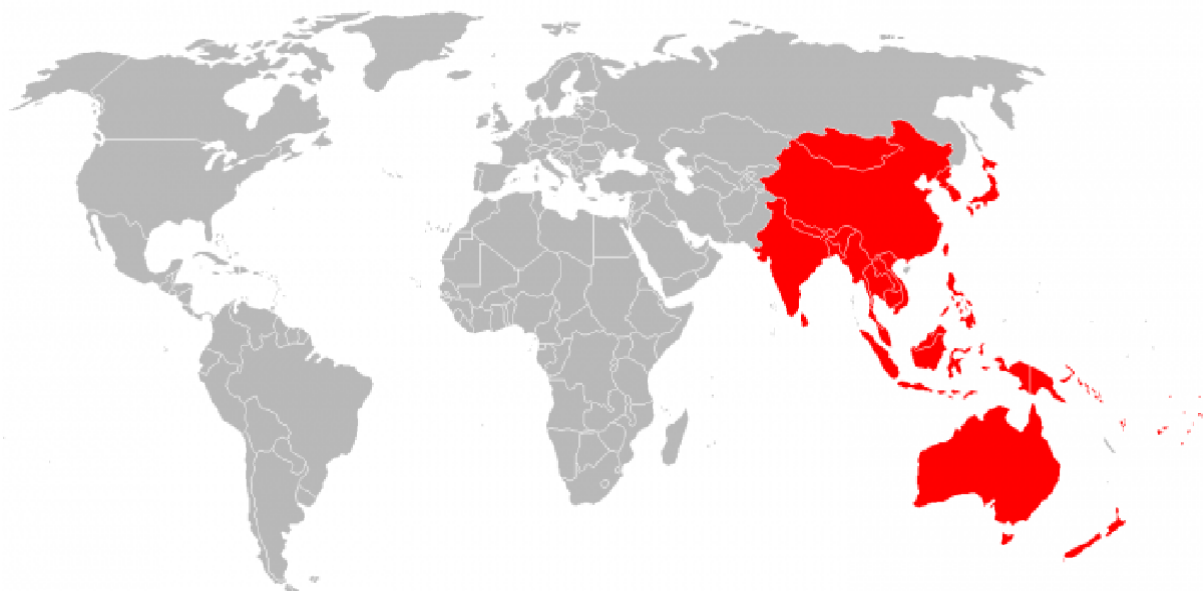
This change of course presupposed the use of broad instruments - from the political-military to the economic-diplomatic sphere - in response to predictions made in various geopolitical analyses that in the event of inaction by Washington, a double reality could define the power game between the great powers: 1) the relative decline of American power and; 2) the displacement of the epicenter of the world economy to the Asia-Pacific region.

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Coverage área of the "Asian Pivot" Policy



Source: [Semantic Scholar](#)

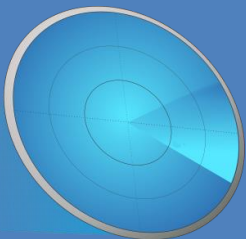
In a continuing effort, Donald Trump, still in the first year of his presidency in 2017, announced the [new U.S. National Security Strategy \(NSS\)](#), which reaffirms and deepens the U.S. focus on Asia. Among the objectives identified in the NSS is the need to prepare for a potential conflict against revisionist powers, including China, thereby outlining a policy of containment.

For its part, China, with the inauguration of Xi Jinping in 2013, adopted a new model to guide the relationship with the United States. From the central premise that China's rise should not be accompanied by conflict and war - as occurred at many times in history when the established power and the emerging power collide inexorably, a situation that became known as the Thucydides Trap - Xi Jinping advocated the search for a positive sum game where essentially everyone wins.

In other words, Beijing promised not to challenge US global domination which, in return, should respect China's central interests, a proposal which, to a large extent, met Washington's long-standing efforts to integrate a rising China into the established international system.

However, beyond the traditional aspects inherent in the power game between the great powers, the disputes between China and the United States occur, let us not forget, in times when the speed in the flow of information brings us closer to what the Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan called, still in the 1960s, a "global village".





In this context, "wars of narratives" in which words, rather than semantic symbols, are instruments of foreign policy action capable of "building" threats and generating immediate instabilities have become (more) common and intense. And, exacerbated by mutual accusations as to responsibility for the coronavirus outbreak, this has been the recurring tone in the tumultuous relations between Washington and Beijing at a time that coincides with the exponential growth of Chinese protagonism, often putting the two giants on a collision course.

Another equally important change underway is the restructuring of global production chains, mainly as a result of the heavy dependence of significant part of the world on inputs from China. The difficulties of access to products considered essential, as evidenced by the epidemic, have caused countries such as Japan and India to invest large resources in the repatriation of companies installed in China, demonstrating, therefore, the option for the security of producing in loco instead of access at the lowest price.

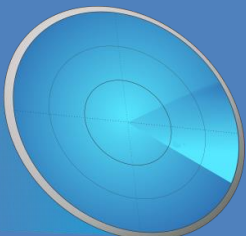
Thus, in efforts to recover and adapt the economy to the new times, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced an unprecedented financial contribution of almost US\$1 trillion in stimulus, of which US\$2.2 billion are destined for companies that want to return to Japan. Similarly, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a package equivalent to about 10% of GDP, something around US\$ 265 billion, with the aim of strengthening local supply chains and, at the same time, positioning India as an alternative hub to China by creating a favorable environment for investment in strategic sectors.

Dear reader, we have come to the end of this brief reflection, and our analysis, although limited in its ability to offer answers to the questions posed, shows that a reconfiguration of the international power architecture is underway. However, there are still many uncertainties that prevent an adequate understanding of ontology and of the nature of the changes that are taking place in the post-Covid 19 world in terms of their impacts.

This is a global crisis in its scope, perhaps the greatest of our generation, however, among the interpretations cited here, the one that emerges more clearly, at least as regards the evidence observed so far, is that the pandemic will be an accelerating agent of the changes of recent years - , patent in the erosion of an anachronistic order -, and not a primary disruptive force.

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The correct evaluation of the geopolitical consequences of the pandemic will still take time, however, based on the facts narrated, among the possible configurations that are presented to us, we suggest some trends with potential to shape the post-Covid-19 international order: 1) structural rearrangements in production chains; 2) revision of multilateral governance instruments; 3) fierce competition for market domination of disruptive technologies; 4) new patterns of control and monitoring, especially of social behavior; 5) Chinese rise in more assertive tones, although Beijing emphasizes in the current version of its White Paper on National Defense, released in July 2019, that does not seek hegemony, expansion or spheres of influence and; 6) relative decline of the North American protagonism once prevailing unilateral actions contest the existence of an order marked by the rise of a myriad of relevant actors in terms of power.

News published by OMNIDEF

Modern Diplomacy – 07/05/2020

Welcome to the World of New Age Geopolitics

2020 is turning out to be one of the most challenging years since the end of the Second World War. A coming disruption for Pankaj Mishra, a 'portal' in Arundhati Roy's radical description, 'figment of neoliberal capitalism' for Noam Chomsky in his unique expository stance and 'Medical Katrina' for Mike Davis, the coronavirus has evinced the global discussion from the leading public intellectuals to confined individuals as how this overnight nerve-racking catastrophe stalled the world and froze the living spaces to a pause mode.

For complete news, [CLICK HERE](#)

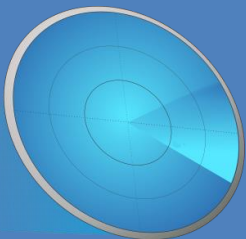
The Atlantic – 18/05/2020

The Pandemic's Geopolitical Aftershocks Are Coming

With most European countries confident that they are past the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, their attention is turning to the chance of its resurgence once society returns to some semblance of normal. But beyond the epidemiological challenges lies a slowly amassing threat that is not pathological in nature, but economic, political, and military. This is the geopolitical second wave, and its power is already starting to concern Western leaders.

For complete news, [CLICK HERE](#)





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