

BEHIND THE SCENES

West versus the rest: boomerang effect of the Biden line

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Until recently, the enthusiastic supporters of the line of frontal confrontation with Russia held by the Biden administration, NATO, the G7, and the EU with respect to the Ukrainian crisis continued to sneer mockingly, with an air of superiority and

commiseration, at observers who were less enthusiastic and demonstrated more worry than they did. Concerned because they were pointing out how this line (unreserved and uncompromising military support for Ukraine, extremely harsh sanctions on Moscow) was not only not gaining any support from non-allied countries, but on the contrary was increasingly alienating from the West many countries of the “global South” - including some important ones that were formerly onside, such as India, South Africa, Brazil, and other Latin American countries - and was increasingly strengthening China's position of power. Not only that, the process saw an embryo of a multinational coalition potentially alternative and hostile to the liberal market democracies of the NATO and G7 area forming around the BRICS organisation (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).

Those bold ultra-Atlanticist observers argued that the impression of Western isolation was wrong, the result of Russian propaganda and a distorted assessment of the situation. In reality, according to them, Chinese support for Moscow was only a façade, because Beijing absolutely needed Western markets and would soon force Putin to become more amenable; India would sooner or later join Western positions by loosening ties with Russia so as not to favour China, its main geopolitical rival; the BRICS would continue to be a political dwarf, internally undermined by insurmountable divisions.

Now, undoubtedly we are not yet at the birth of something akin to the Warsaw Pact, or even the Non-Aligned Movement. And the new cold war born with the bipolarisation between the United States and China remains at a very low level, between peaks of tension (over Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific) and diplomatic consultations, decoupling aspirations, and persistent economic and technological interdependence. However, almost one and a half years after the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the signs of the consolidation of a situation that could be described as “West versus the rest of the world” are increasingly numerous, evident and interrelated, with hardly any indicators that go in the opposite direction discernible.

In the last few weeks alone, there have been many of them, on which, as has been the case regularly since the beginning of the war, the Western media system, with limited exceptions now calibrated to a propaganda on the unified networks, has allowed an embarrassed silence to fall. We list some of them below. At the end of June, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, meeting with President Joe Biden in Washington, while signing important cooperation agreements with the United States in the technological and military fields, once again refused (as he had done at the meeting of the Quad forum, which unites Washington, New Delhi, Australia, and Japan) to condemn the

Russian invasion or to adhere to the sanctions against Putin. The member countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in preparation for the summit between the organisation and EU leaders to be held today and tomorrow (17 and 18 July) in Brussels rejected the preparatory draft sent by the Europeans, demanded that any unilateral stance on the war be expunged from it, and decisively vetoed the invitation to the meeting of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

In view of the important BRICS summit to be held in Johannesburg from 22 to 24 August, the South African government led by Cyril Ramaphosa, while adhering to the UN Convention on the International War Crimes Tribunal, has refused to comply with the arrest warrant pending against Vladimir Putin if he decides to attend the conference. In the meantime, in the last few months the requests to join the organisation, which is increasingly characterised by an openly political profile which challenges Western policies, have multiplied: as many as 20 countries from the Middle East, Africa, Maghreb, and South America aspire to be part of the forum, including Argentina, Indonesia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Iran, and above all Saudi Arabia: A country traditionally close to the West, which after the “Abraham Agreements” signed under Trump’s leadership with Israel, last March signed an understanding with Iran, previously its number one enemy, with the mediation of China.

Finally - news of the last few days - Beijing has announced that Russian troops will also participate in the forthcoming military exercises that its army will hold in the Sea of Japan (with the explicitly intimidating intention against possible attempts by the United States and its allies, Japan primarily, to curb its hegemonic ambitions on the Pacific coast). This is a concrete and, for the Americans, very worrying follow-up to that “never-ending alliance” that has so far not been denied anywhere, despite the expectations of many Western observers.

All this in a framework characterised by the now evident total failure of the anti-Russian sanctions, which have produced a veritable explosion of crude oil exports from Moscow to China, India, and Latin American countries, with relative total circumvention of the bans through triangulations by other nations. In short, there is not yet an “iron curtain” between the West and the “global South” following Beijing, with the annexation of the Russian “satellite”, but we are certainly already facing a real “wall of indifference”, off which the attempts of the United States, its allies, and the European Union to attract the rest of the world into their orbit and direct its political and economic choices now regularly bounce.

And it is precisely the aggressive strategy launched by the West against Russia as of February 2022

that has had a resounding boomerang effect, providing a big push for aggregation and collaboration among all countries that do not intend to conform to Western hegemony. A “world against” was born, as a geopolitical scholar who is certainly not anti-Western like Dario Fabbri called it in the valuable monographic issue recently dedicated to the phenomenon by his magazine Domino. An array still largely virtual, but already solidly existing in the minds, thoughts, and feelings of those attracted to it: animated by a latent, and now resurgent, spirit of anti-colonialist revenge, sustained by the conviction that they have time, numbers, and forces on their side.

There would be many elements to seriously question the outcome of the anabolic “hyper-Atlanticism” incessantly peddled by the entire Western establishment for the past 15 months. But we suspect that once again this will not happen, and that we will continue with the ideological watchwords to the bitter end, until reality knocks at the door with such strong blows as to break through.