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SHARED HUMAN VALUES AND THE GREAT POWERS' COMPETITION: TRENDS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SYSTEM

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Preface

This Research Study was initially presented upon invitation as a conference paper on 11 November 2021, alongside with a 10-minutes long written and video-recorded presentation to the organisers from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Beijing, China of the International Forum on Democracy: the Shared Human Values (4th-5th, 9th-10th, 14th-15th December, 2021). The short 10-minutes video-recorded version was to be presented according to the agenda at the phase of the conference devoted to the Democratisation of International Relations on 14th December 2021 – all via the Zoom Online Meeting System. The 10-minutes written presentation is attached at the end of this Study.

On 9 December 2021 the author of the present study received from the CASS an invitation as Director of the Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS) to be a co-initiating organisation of the Global Think Tank Network for Democracy Studies, supposed to hold forums to discuss democracy every two years. 34 foreign and 12 Chinese think-tanks shaped the network at the final day of the international forum.

The invitation was not accepted by ISIS as it is a research and not an activist think-tank. According to its founding Charter the Institute does not rally behind ideological entities. This was kindly communicated to the organisers in Beijing.

The video-recorded presentation of the author was pulled out of the agenda on 14 December 2021. Without speculating whether the reason was an organisers' timing problem or a reaction to not accepting the invitation to join the network initiating group, the issue in this situation

was there was no clarification and communication why this is happening. What became clear at the wrap-up session was that this forum on democracy was a counterpoint or rather a countermeasure to the Biden organised on 9-10 December 2021 Democracy Summit.

ISIS is a non-governmental independent think-tank that has worked for decades to bring Bulgaria to NATO and EU membership, to add to the capacity of the two institutions in implementing their policies of turning the Balkans into a regional security community and to strengthen transatlantic relations. ISIS has participated in hundreds of academic seminars, workshops, conferences and brain-storming exercises in Bulgaria, Europe, the USA and Asia. The author of this study sincerely shares the principles of democracy as provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and is also well aware of the meaning and practice of academic freedom.

Keeping for the record this feature of the academic ethos and style of colleagues from the PR China, my expectation and hope is that the exchange of views on academic issues in the field of international relations and security should take place and continue. The political decisions on complicated issues between the West and China deserve to have solid research basis and academic support. It is a different effort from trying to augment the ideological component of the national power, which is a normal activity among the competing on the global arena states. The Institute for Security and International Studies, not linked to any ideological and religious denomination, understands well its mission as provided by its Charter in the context of the Bulgarian democratic civil society and will continue to work for academic cooperation around the world.

I Introduction

Unless we change and improve the quality of the international relations system (IRS) – the political toolbox for building a community with a shared future for *mankind*, for more effective global governance and for a more balanced global partnership for development, we shall miss the historic chance and still open window of opportunity to reach these lofty goals. How to shape such a better functioning IRS? What are its invariant characteristics in the second decade of the 21st century?

The objective reality is that the IRS functions and develops in an interdependent, globalised and closely interconnected world, characterised by its single economic space, single ecological space, single information space, single humanitarian space, and, yes – single military-strategic space. These five characteristics of the present world constitute a constructive prerequisite for turning gradually human beings into a ***single planetary civilization***, deserving and able to pretend of extending its creative and peaceful capacity beyond the Earth. *This is how I conceive the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.* This is a future that deserves to be educated to our children and grandchildren¹.

This study aims at analysing the influence of the values, to which the leading powers of the IRS stick to in their performance on the world stage and at outlining the possible trends in the evolution of the international relations. The focus on the great powers – the United States of America (USA), as a superpower, the People's Republic of China (PRC), as a

¹ Plamen Pantev, Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind: Is There a Blueprint?, Research Studies 21, ISIS, Sofia, December 2019, 21 pp.

would-be-soon superpower, the European Union (EU) as a global centre of economic, regulatory, politico-diplomatic and rising military power, and the Russian Federation (RF), as one of the two military nuclear strategic superpowers, naturally stems from the decisive influence the relations at the centers-of-power structural level of the IRS has on the developments of the other invariant structural relationships, on the functioning and development of the whole global system. We also bear in mind the role of two other powerful states as India and Japan. The study aims to prove that the new stage of the development of the international relations, characterised by the return of Great (Major) Power rivalry – the rivalry between the USA and the PRC, is a fact of life, bearing both negative and positive potential and *not necessarily* portending a destabilised international system. The Cold War we are in for objective structural reasons is not producing only negative scenarios for the future.

II Values and Their Impact on International Relations

Considering the category “values” from the point of view of the international relations theory (IRT) one cannot but agree with the consensus among the scholars researching the topic from the 1950s on about the meaning of the term: values are beliefs tied to emotion; a motivational construct and desirable abstract goals; they serve as standards or criteria, and they are prioritised in a hierarchical order². From an IRT point of view we can add how influential the respective value system is on the decision-making process on foreign and international political issues, alongside with the needs, interests,

² Introduction to the Value Theory, in Human Values, Chapter 1, European Social Survey EduNet, at: www.europeansocialsurvey.org, last visited on 15 October 2021.

objectives, concepts and means of reaching the goals. This holds true for all state actors. There is a broad agreement that “values” influence the governance effect on the international system in general too.

A fair analysis requires also to include the factor of varying perceptions. Linking perceptions to different conceptual backgrounds bears the potential to generate opposing views of the values of “the other”. Contradicting values lead to formulating the notion that “my values” are ‘weapons’ in the fight with the opponent’s values and state. “Weaponizing” values is one of the most negative characteristics of the Cold War as we know it from 1945 till 1991.

What difference do the adjective “shared” introduce in the search for appropriate role of values in the competition of the actual superpower, the USA and the one, preparing for this status – China? “Shared” means used, experienced or occupied with others, but also having in common³. So using the term “*common*” instead of “shared” is adequate to the realities of the concept of shared human values in the international political discourse. One can register this logic of thinking in both Chinese and Western sources. The President of China, Xi Jinping, in his speech at the General Debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly on 28 September 2015, said that “peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom are common values of humanity and also lofty goals of the United Nations”⁴. A similar thinking is characteristic of the social science circles in China. Zhang Guoqi, a professor of Marxism at South China University of Technology, commented that Xi’s proposal on

³ See for example Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

⁴ Xi Jinping, A New Partnership of Mutual Benefit and a Community of Shared Future, Speech at the General Debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly at the UN Headquarters in New York, in: Xi Jinping, The Governance of China, Vol. II, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 2017, p. 570.

the common values of humanity is based on the fact that all people share our planet and live in a global village, and in the meantime, it demonstrates the basic values and norms governing the development and progress of human society⁵.

Hardly a US or other Western theoretician or politician would not agree with the validity of the values, outlined by the President of China at the UN. I doubt anyone in China would be critical of the often quoted typical American values as liberty, independence, faith, tolerance, human dignity and democracy. It would also be rather hypocritical to claim the US values or the Chinese values dominate over the other country's values as we can find deficits in both cases – human rights deficiencies in the demographic giant, China, and shortcomings of democracy in the democratic leader, the USA (for example the 6th January 2021 insurrection at the Capitol). Both superpowers face the need of perfecting the vision and practice of the values they cherish and identify with.

What matters for the international relations, however, is that: First, both the USA and China integrate the value or ideological component of power into their countries' concept of national influence, trying to prove that the gravitation towards the respective states' value systems is greater. It is normal to expect any country to try to integrate the ideological power component into the integral national power. But in the case of the US-China global competition this unnecessarily intensifies the polarisation of attitudes and solidifies the perception the IRS is already in a bipolar Cold War mode of functioning and development while not yet possessing stabilising common denominators of the two

⁵ Cao Desheng, Shared values help to build consensus, ChinaDaily, at: www.chinadailyhk.com, August 10, 2021.

superpowers. We face a great country like China claiming it does not export revolution or ideology, it does not expand hegemonically despite its economic strength and does not develop spheres of influence. At the same time we see a USA that reconsiders its experience of nation-building in far away areas, like Afghanistan and the Middle East. So overstating the ideological attraction of any of the superpowers is counterproductive to prioritising other aspects of their significant for the global community power, common values and cooperation. Neither the USA, nor China will seize to build relationships and alliances with like-minded and sharing mutual interests states. Mixing the diplomatic component of power with some “unacceptable” values prevents the work on and solution of really meaningful issues the world faces today. Second, both superpowers are key participants in the UN system of organisations and norms. The common denominator in the value aspect of their relations is undisputably the UN Charter, its principles and norms. More concretely, at the UN World Conference on Human Rights, convened in Vienna on 14-25 June 1993, both great powers agreed, with certain differences in interpretation of a few articles, upon the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action⁶. Almost 30 years later this Declaration reminds these major powers, permanent members of the UN Security Council, about their responsibility in the humanitarian sphere, despite the mutual accusations that China is an authoritarian state and that the USA pretends to monopolize truth. An objective observer would find similarities in the accusations that China is a “surveillance state” and that the USA have created “surveillance capitalism”. In both cases we notice how *realpolitik* has led to utilising the IT technology achievements for political and ideological purposes.

⁶ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, A/CONF. 157/23, 12 July 1993.

To be fair in the already developing competition – the shared values continue to be the ones that cristalized in the norms and principles of the UN Charter and in other universal international legal acts since 1945. And it is a matter of a sovereign and independent individual choice which values to prefer and identify with. It is a question of wisdom and will of the sovereign nation states how to provide and guarantee this democratic choice to its citizens. A special responsibility of both states would be to prevent in their developing rivalry prioritising nationalism, especially destructive nationalism.

III The Great Powers' Competition

Exaggerating the ideological component of the bipolarity that has emerged on the world scene between the USA and China provides probably better ways of domestically mobilising societies of the two superpowers. This was the case with the start of the Cold War after the end of the Second World War between the non-existing today Soviet Union and the United States. And it was not the ideological polarity that led to this level of rationality that guaranteed the soberness of the decision-making processes in the two military superpowers on nuclear arms issues. The responsibility of both states to the future generations helped prevent the world from a hot nuclear war. And it was not the ideological deficiencies that led to the collapse of the USSR, but deficiencies in the economic and the human rights and freedoms spheres.

How to deal with the newly born great power competition and preserve the hopes for a bright and peaceful future for mankind? Definitely, this

will not be any of the two superpowers' efforts to adapt the world to their individual ideological preferences. This effort would be time and financially consuming with no significant effect. The history of great power rivalries in the last 25 centuries points that there is not always a direct proportional dependence between great powers' successes and their preferred state ideologies⁷. Rather knowledge of, patience and respect to each others' rise to superpower status may generate clues to formulating approaches how to apply in the most economic and effective way the respective national power in realising the interests of their own countries and in providing solutions to the global issues pressing humankind. It is no news at all to remind that in such kinds of competitions the actor that improves its domestic social and institutional performance and proves more innovative preserves better chances for success. Innovations, surely, are needed in all components of national power, including ideas, science and technology. And we are witnessing efforts in this respect in both superpowers today. We also remember that one of the two military nuclear superpowers, the USSR, ended its existence due to internal economic, social, political, governance, conceptual and moral deficiencies, and not because of an outside invasion and military victory by the antagonistic opponent.

What is the state of affairs with the competing superpowers – the United States and China?

First, the US-China competition stems from the inevitable contradiction of a hegemonistic power, the USA, and a power, China, fastly narrowing

⁷ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, in Robert B. Strassler (Ed.), *The Landmark Thucydides*, New York, Free Press, 1996. See also: Victor Davis Hanson, *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War*, New York, Random House, 2006, etc.

the national capabilities gap and giving an example how to alleviate extreme poverty. This competition can be traced back to the administrations of Obama and Trump, but it evolves since 1949 – first, on the basis of China’s revolutionary and ideological claims, and later – as an evolutionary actor, accumulating national economic, social and political power. It would be an overexaggeration to define as an objective social trend and norm that the East rises and the West declines. Presently the term “strategic rivalry” most adequately reflects the contents of the actual US-PRC relationship. That means simultaneously working for the realisation of the national interests, exerting efforts to possible cooperation, rivaling and seeking advantages in the military, economic and technological spheres. For the time being this rivalry is not aimed at the Cold War end-result – the disappearance of one of the two competing powers. Conflictual interests in these spheres are present, as well as conflict situations, but neither the United States, nor China conceive a nuclear war endgame. The speeches of both President Biden and President Xi Jinping at the 2021 UN General Assembly session prove it. The variety of regional conflicts in which the geopolitical interests vary or are opposite should generate ambitions of jointly dealing and satisfying both sides – a superpower attitude that would provide an example for the rest of the world. It is important to add that despite the many conflicting economic interests of the USA, its friends and allies from the EU, NATO and elsewhere, on one side, and those of China, on the other, especially on trade and technology, the economies of all these actors are not just interdependent, they are so closely connected that it will be impossible to separate them without tremendous and, most probably, unacceptable losses for all.

Second, an inevitable ingredient to this structurally-based competition is the way the two powers view and perceive each other. The mutual perceptions between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War were producing images that easily filled the ideological pictures and stereotypes that were convenient for the management of the systemic competition of the opposing powers. We face a similar situation today in the US-Chinese perceptual systems. The mutual perceptions may easily escalate to military confrontations, but if the psychological effort is accompanied by a purposeful mutual lessons-learning and knowledge-based approach, it bears the potential to position the images and motivations on a constructive competitive basis. We should not forget that both superpowers have huge domestic problems and agendas that bring additional perspectives to their perceptual lenses. Preventing easy explanations with the “outside-enemy” formula would be a responsibility of global significance. That would prevent from further polarising the rest of the states in the IRS and push them to choose and take sides. In this way the bipolarity will not be turned into a rigid and hard to manage Cold War structure that would risk political and military escalation. On the contrary, both superpowers would preserve strong arguments in involving the state-actors into the tasks of guaranteeing the sustainability of the planet – a responsibility both the USA and China have often declared and practically demonstrated. Furthermore, Washington, D. C. has a clear understanding that EU and NATO allies do not perceive China as an existential threat for now. So constructive coordination with Beijing and allies is of vital importance for the United States, the IRS and for each country.

It is not easy to position in the complex equation of superpower competition the role of the Russian Federation. On one side, China has

declared “ a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination with Russia”⁸. At the same time the Chinese President has been mentioning on various occasions that the strong countries should not abuse the small and the weak. On 21 September 2021 in his pre-recorded message to the UN General Assembly, Xi Jinping repeated that “China has never and will never invade or bully others, or seek hegemony”⁹. But Beijing tolerates its strategic partner in Moscow to do just that in Eastern Europe.

The bilateral Russian-Chinese relations are, for sure, much more than that. However, these “little” facts of life of the great powers and the superpowers are everything for the small Baltic and Black Sea states, neighbouring the Russian Federation. Russia is a great military power and a nuclear superpower, despite various deficiencies in its economy and demography. This is a structural systemic factor, motivating these small countries to be part of the NATO Alliance – their protective shield, and of the EU – the integration community that brought new peaceful political sense for a European continent, known for its hundreds of wars in the last 20 centuries.

IV The Prospects Ahead Or What To Do

The **economic competition** among the great powers – some even call it hyper-competitiveness, cannot be revoked in any way. The global project of the PRC, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the US global Build Back

⁸ Xi Jinping, Towards a Community of Shared Future for Mankind, January 18, 2017, Speech at the United Nations Office at Geneva, in: Xi Jinping, The Governance of China, Vol. II, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 2017, p. 599.

⁹ Xi Jinping, Statement by H. E. Xi Jinping, President of the PRC at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, 21 September 2021, at: www.ecns.cn/news/politics/2021-09-22 , last visited on 22 October 2021.

Better World (B3W)¹⁰ and the EU Global Gateway Partnerships¹¹, though at different stages of implementation, are in progress. These global projects have the potential to promote common development in as cooperative and transparent way as they have capacity for that. The competition is capable of becoming a driving force of human progress.

However, it would be needed to join forces on other global projects too:

- In space. First, the great space powers USA, Russia, China and EU should not abandon the possibility of jointly constructing international space stations while focusing on national space stations. Second, in implementation of the Outer Space Treaty in conjunction with the UN Charter they have to agree to prohibit installation of antisatellite, though conventional, weapons in outer space.
- In saving the planet's environment and in dealing with climate change.
- In dealing with the present and future pandemics, creating more efficient universal institutions.
- In the fight with extreme poverty.
- In finding the best possible approaches and formulae for cooperation in the Arctic, the Antarctic and the deep sea.

The **security dimension** of the relations of the superpowers and the other great power centers should become more cooperative.

- Borrowing from the conceptual achievements of all great powers and through collaboration and consultation they have the

¹⁰ Fact Sheet: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership, at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov>, June 12, 2021, Statements and Releases.

¹¹ 2021 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen, Strengthening the Soul of Our Union, 15 September 2021, Strasbourg, at: https://ec.europa.eu/Commission/index_en.

opportunity to set the high objective of building a global security community. The smallest possible common denominator of this community would be never to use military violence in solving conflicting interests. The experience of the EU and NATO could be of special importance in this respect. It would require collaborative work to jump from the regional security communities' achievements to a global one, but it deserves the effort.

- Preventing interstate military polarisation as on the eve of the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War. Establishing military-to-military relations between the USA and the PRC in a similar way as the US-Russia communication channels would be a very important confidence-building measure.
- A highly actual issue is also preventing the weaponization of Artificial Intelligence developments.

With good will all that seems a doable job.

On the **political level** – the lofty objective of building a community of shared future for mankind would require realising that the common values are at close hand – in the UN Charter. The special efforts by the individual great powers would be to put under control destructive nationalism in their countries, get used to respecting and learning from the experience of the opponents and rivals and try to apply the most appropriate language in communicating with each other. While it is not possible to stop the superpower rivalry, there are good chances of its wise and responsible management. Constructing a planetary civilization deserves the effort. At least this is the perspective from a small EU and NATO country in South East Europe – Bulgaria.

The short 10-minutes video-recorded version of the longer paper:

International Forum on Democracy: the Shared Human Values

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Beijing, China

4th-5th, 9th-10th, 14th-15th December, 2021

Democratization of International Relations”, 14th-15th December, 2021

(via Zoom Online Meeting System)

**SHARED HUMAN VALUES AND THE GREAT POWERS’
COMPETITION: TRENDS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SYSTEM**

Prof. Dr. Plamen Pantev, Founder&Director

Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS), Sofia, Bulgaria

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

I Introduction

The new stage of the development of the international relations, characterised by the return of Great (Major) Power rivalry – the rivalry between the USA and the PRC, is a fact of life. The Cold War we are in for objective structural reasons is *not necessarily* producing only negative scenarios for the future.

II Values and Their Impact on International Relations

“Weaponizing” values is one of the most negative characteristics of the Cold War as we know it from 1945 till 1991.

To be fair in the already developing competition – the shared values continue to be the ones that cristalized in the norms and principles of the UN Charter and in other universal international legal acts since 1945. A special responsibility would be to prevent both states in their developing rivalry from prioritising nationalism, especially destructive nationalism.

III The Great Powers’ Competition

Exaggerating the ideological component of the bipolarity that has emerged on the world scene between the USA and China probably provides better ways of domestically mobilising societies of the two superpowers. This was the case with the start of the Cold War after the end of the Second World War between the non-existing today Soviet Union and the United States.

How to deal with the newly born great power competition and preserve the hopes for a bright and peaceful future for mankind? Definitely, this will not be any of the two superpowers' efforts to adapt the world to their individual ideological preferences. The history of great power rivalries in the last 25 centuries points that there is not always a direct proportional dependence between great powers' successes and their preferred state ideologies¹². Rather knowledge of, patience and respect to each others' rise to superpower status may generate clues to formulating approaches how to apply in the most economic and effective way the respective national power in realising the interests of their own countries and in providing solutions to the global issues pressing humankind.

What is the state of affairs with the competing superpowers – the United States and China?

First, the US-China competition stems from the inevitable contradiction of a hegemonistic power, the USA, and a power, China, fastly narrowing the national capabilities gap and giving an example how to alleviate extreme poverty. Presently the term “strategic rivalry” most adequately reflects the contents of the actual US-China relationship. For the time being this rivalry is not aimed at the old Cold War end-result – the disappearance of one of the two competing powers. Conflictual interests in these spheres are present, as well as conflict situations, but neither the United States, nor China conceive a nuclear war endgame. The speeches of both President Biden and President Xi Jinping at the 2021 UN General Assembly session prove it. It is important to add that despite the many conflicting economic interests of the USA, its friends and allies from the EU and NATO, on one side, and those of China, on the other, especially on trade and technology, the economies of all these actors are not just interdependent, they are so closely connected that it will be impossible to separate them without tremendous and, most probably, unacceptable losses for all.

Second, an inevitable ingredient to this structurally-based competition is the way the two powers view and perceive each other. The mutual perceptions may easily escalate to military confrontations, but if the psychological effort is accompanied by a purposeful mutual lesson-learning and knowledge-based approach, it bears the potential to position the images and motivations on a constructive competitive basis. We should not forget that both superpowers have huge domestic problems and agendas that add to the perceptual lens of each actor. Preventing easy explanations with the “outside-enemy” formula would be a responsibility of global significance. That would prevent from further polarising the rest of the states in the IRS and

¹² Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, in Robert B. Strassler (Ed.), *The Landmark Thucydides*, New York, Free Press, 1996. See also: Victor Davis Hanson, *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War*, New York, Random House, 2006, etc.

pushing them to choose and take sides, from turning the bipolarity into a rigid and hard to manage Cold War structure without risking political and military escalation.

It is not easy to position in the complex equation of superpower competition the role of the Russian Federation. On one side, China has declared “ a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination with Russia”¹³. At the same time the Chinese President has been mentioning on various occasions that the strong countries should not abuse the small and the weak. But Beijing tolerates its strategic partner in Moscow to do just that in Eastern Europe.

The bilateral Russian-Chinese relations are, for sure, much more than that. However, these little facts of life of the great powers or the superpowers are everything for the small Baltic and Black Sea states, neighbouring the Russian Federation. Russia is a great military power and a nuclear superpower. This is a structural systemic factor, developing into a fundamental motive for these small countries to be part of the NATO Alliance, their protective shield, and of the EU – the integration community that brought new peaceful political sense for a European continent, known for its many wars in the last 20 centuries.

IV The Prospects Ahead Or What To Do

The **economic competition** among the great powers – some even call it hyper-competitiveness, cannot be revoked in any way, including by developing their own global projects. The competition is capable of becoming a driving force of human progress.

However, it would be needed to join forces on other global projects too:

- In space. The great space powers should not abandon the possibility of jointly constructing international space stations. It would be obligatory from the perspective of the Outer Space Treaty in conjunction with the UN Charter to prohibit installation of antisatellite, though conventional, weapons in outer space.
- In saving the planet’s environment and in dealing with climate change.
- In dealing with the present and future pandemics.
- In the fight with extreme poverty.
- Finding the best possible approaches and formulae for cooperation in the Arctic, the Antarctic and deep sea.

The **security dimension** of the relations of the superpowers and the other great power centers in the IRS should become more cooperative.

¹³ Xi Jinping, Towards a Community of Shared Future for Mankind, January 18, 2017, Speech at the United Nations Office at Geneva, in: Xi Jinping, The Governance of China, Vol. II, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 2017, p. 599.

- Borrowing from the conceptual achievements of all great powers and through collaboration and consultation they have the opportunity to set the high objective of building a global security community. The smallest possible common denominator of this community would be never to use military violence in solving conflicting interests.
- Preventing the kind of IRS's polarisation on military terms as on the eve of the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War. Establishing military-to-military relations between the USA and the PRC in a similar way as the US-Russia communication channels would be a very important confidence-building measure.
- A highly actual issue is also preventing the weaponization of AI developments.

With good will all that seems a doable job.

On the **political level** – the lofty objective of a community of shared future would require realising that the common values are at close hand – in the UN Charter. The special efforts by the individual great powers would be to put under control destructive nationalism in their countries, get used to respecting and learning from the experience of the opponents and rivals and exert efforts in applying the most appropriate language in communicating with each other. While it is not possible to stop the superpower rivalry, there are good chances of its wise and responsible management. Constructing a planetary civilization deserves the hard work. At least this is the perspective from a small EU and NATO country in South East Europe – Bulgaria.

Thank you for your attention!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Plamen Pantev is graduate of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", Law School. Ph. D. in International Relations and International Law. Founder and Director of the Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS), Sofia, 1994, www.isis-bg.org . Guest Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", lecturing Political Science students. Founder and Head of the International Security M. A. Program, Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridsky" (2005-2021), Law School. Doctoral Mentor in International Relations and Security Studies. Graduate of the SEC of G.C.Marshall Center for European Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen (September 2001). Co-Chairman of the Study Group on Regional Stability in South East Europe of the NATO/PfP Consortium of the Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes (2002-2010) and of the Euro-Atlantic Security Study Group of the PfP Consortium (1999-2003). Author of 40 books and more than 160 academic publications – in Bulgarian, English, German, Italian, French, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and Bahasa (the official Indonesian language). Member of the International Advisory Boards of the '*Journal of International Negotiation*' (1996-2011) and '*Europe's World*'. Vice Dean of the Law School of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky" (2006-2011). Member of the International Studies Association (ISA), 1997 - , the Academy of Poitical Science, New York, 2013 - . Member of the IISS, London, 2015 - . Member of Vanga Foundation. Married, one daughter, one granddaughter.

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The Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS) is a non-governmental non-profit organization, established legally in November 1994. It organizes and supports research in the field of security and international relations. Fields of research interest are: national security and foreign policy of Bulgaria; civil-military relations, democratic control of the armed forces and security sector reform; European Integration, Euro-Atlantic security and institutions; Balkan and Black Sea regional security; global and regional studies; policy of the USA, Russia and the other centers of power in international relations; information aspects of security and information warfare; quantitative methods and computer simulation of security studies; theory and practice of international negotiations. ISIS organizes individual and team studies; publishes research studies and research reports; organizes conferences, seminars, lectures and courses; develops an information bank and virtual library through the Internet; supports younger researchers of international relations and security, and develops independent expertise in security and international relations for the Bulgarian civil society. The institute networks internationally and establishes links with academic organizations and official institutions in the country and abroad on a cooperative and on a contract basis. ISIS is an independent think-tank, not linked to any political party, movement, organization, religious or ideological denomination. The institute has a flexible group of voluntary associates – five senior research fellows, five PhD holders, two Mas and one junior associate – eight altogether.

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- member of the **Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes of the NATO/PfP countries** (www.pfpconsortium.org)
- member of *Europe's World* Journal Advisory Board of think-tanks
- member of the **EU Non-Proliferation Consortium Network of think-tanks** (<https://www.nonproliferation.eu>)
- ISIS online publications are part of the **Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO)** database, Columbia University Press, New York (www.ciaonet.org).
- collaborates with the Bulgarian Hub for United Balkans (BHUB), <https://bhub-ngo.org>

PUBLICATIONS OF ISIS

Research Studies:

"Bulgaria and the Balkans in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union" (Plamen Pantev, Valeri Rachev, Venelin Tsachevsky), 44 pp., July, 1995. Research Study 1. In Bulgarian and English.

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