

THE THUCYDIDES

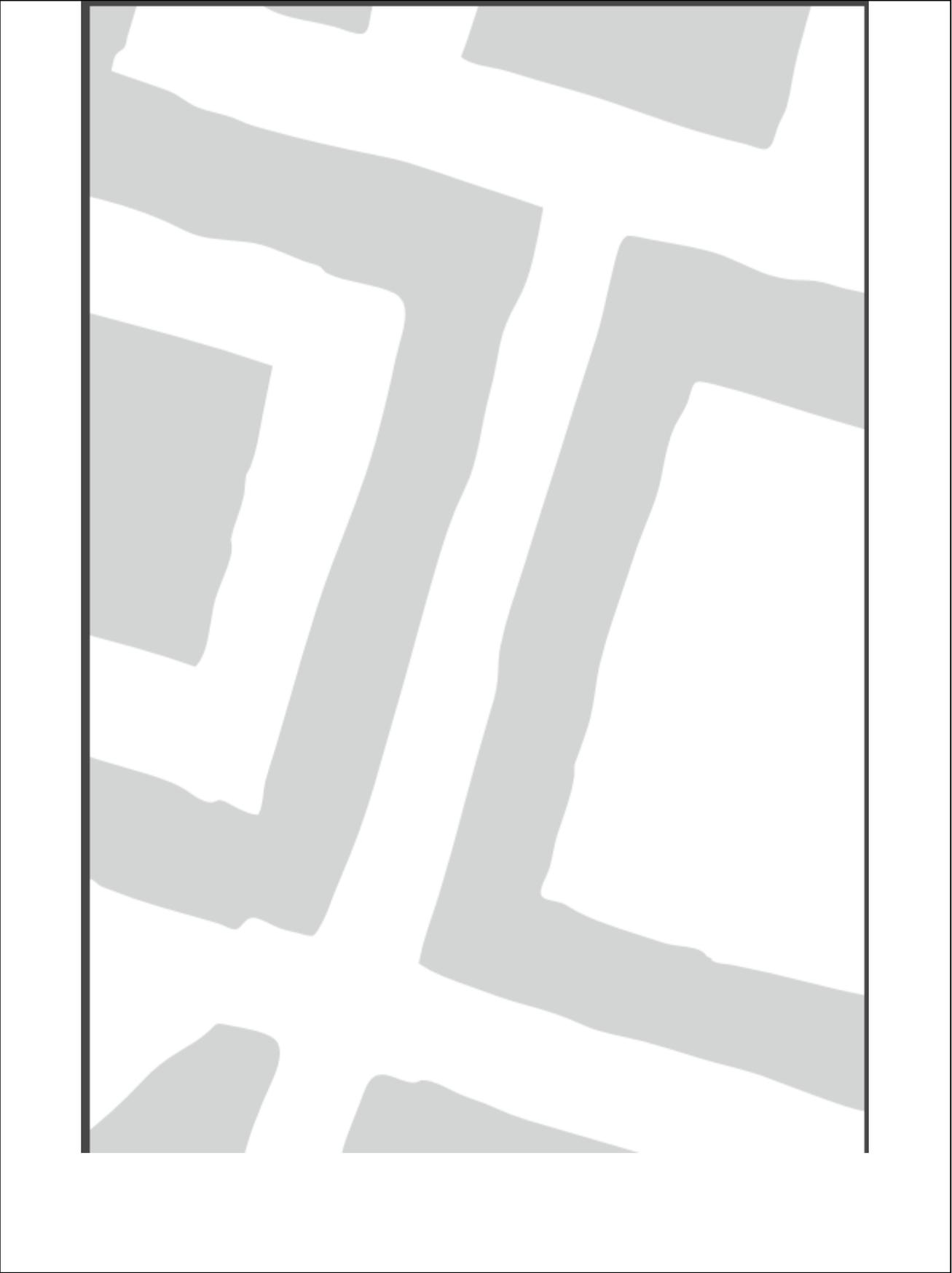
RAMP UP

TOWARDS A TRIPLE POLARITY



VLADIMIR PADRINO LÓPEZ

**ELPERRO
yLARANA**







THE THUCYDIDES RAMP UP TOWARDS A TRIPLE POLARITY

Vladimir Padrino López General in Chief

THE THUCYDIDES RAMP UP TOWARDS A TRIPLE POLARITY

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Who are your enemies?

*Who are your friends? This is the most important question
for the revolution.*

Mao Zedong

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INTRODUCTION

Before the beginning of World War I, the eminent English geographer Halford Mackinder (1910, p. 25) explained that the great warlike conflicts of humanity had been caused by "the unequal growth of nations". This statement takes on greater force when that growth makes a power feel threatened and leads to the situation explained by Thucydides - more than two millennia ago - when he described in detail the events that led to the Peloponnesian wars. Such a situation is conceptualized by Graham Allison (2015, p. 64) as a "trap" caused by "the severe structural stress caused when a rising power threatens the established power," further warning that "unexpected events" can trigger large-scale conflicts.

Such a scenario seems to be the one humanity is going through at the present juncture, when some nations tend to slide into such a dystopian reality. Once the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has subsided, the struggle between China and the US (in the scenario known as the Thucydid Trap) will be followed by an escalation of what they have called a commercial war, which we prefer to call a market war. China, in order to conquer that market, will try to conclude its two Silk Roads by putting special emphasis on the second one. The latter being the most costly, takes all its effort into making it a reality by 2025.

The ambitious project they have called Made in China 2025 (MIC 2025)¹ is a strategy announced by the Chinese State Council in May 2015 which objective is to increase, consolidate and balance the manufacturing industry to become a world power with the capacity to influence international standards and lead supply chains, by implementing new Silk Roads² (see map 1).

Map 1

Silk Roads



Fuente: <https://www.mirarchina.com/la-nueva-ruta-de-la-seda/>

For its side, the United States will play its rest to avoid at all costs the project objectives are achieved. Otherwise, this would represent its immediate defeat by being replaced as the first world economic power, which would lead to reordering, given the geopolitical circumstances, a multipolarity that in our opinion will inevitably be of three. Such a confrontation would leave half the planet on tenterhooks in both the north and the south and would have inevitable impacts on human rights, as unconventional weapons would be used in this contest without regard to any principle. Seen in this light, the event would reaffirm Halford Mackinder's old theorem and his vision of the World Island, which is still valid today. And would come with the obligatory complementing of Nicholas Spykman and Alfred Mahan by engaging in a new approach to how to access the *heart region*.³

The Heartland theory, which has been translated into Spanish in many ways as the theory of the pivot area, published in his essay *The Geographical Pivot of History* in 1904, would correspond to Central Asia and Eastern Europe, and would be surrounded by an intermediate strip where the terrestrial and maritime environments converge. Mackinder states that the nation that would dominate that region would become a world power. In 1919 he stoned his theory in the work *Democratic's Ideal and Reality* with the following sentence: "Whoever rules in Eastern Europe will rule the Heartland; whoever rules the Heartland will rule the World Island; whoever rules the World Island will control the world".

The theory states that in that region the terrestrial power would have a greater advantage before the sea domain, since its inaccessibility by sea would take advantage of fast terrestrial means of transport, especially railroads. However, according to Yale University professor Nicholas Spykman, with his theory of Rimland (see map 2), as expressed in his publication *Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy* (1939), he presents a broader geopolitical vision where he privileged the control of the seas in the face of the probable and fatal scenario of losing the strategy known as Global Containment⁴.

Thus, the Cold War⁵ became a zero-sum game between the USSR and the United States in that specific area. On the one hand, the Soviets were conquering land to gain access to hot seas (the Arctic zone is only moderately transitable three months of the year), while the West avoided it at all costs. This strategy of containment served as a basis for justifying the foreign policy of the British-American partnership throughout the 20th century, through the Atlantic organization (NATO) to prevent any alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union.

Since we are not going to address in depth the Third Silk Road proposed by China, as an alternative to the second, it is prudent to mention the following: the Arctic zone that is right around the entire northern coast of Russia makes this country a fundamental actor, whose

catalytic role makes it indispensable to conclude any future projection. Of course, the flowering of a route through this area is frozen. A word never better used because the project would have to wait for the thaw, given the effect of climate change.

Map 2 Heartland and Rimland



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Fuente: <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DQ6UijDXcAAdEla.jpg>

In this parenthesis, Russia announced the fifth vessel of the new nuclear icebreaker fleet to be put on keel as soon as possible. They are the largest and most powerful in the world⁶. These ships can drive naval caravans in arctic conditions, as they are capable of breaking up ice sheets up to three meters thick to ensure navigation on the northern sea route 365 days a year. A clear commitment to take up a position on this route immediately.

This represents the moment to make less expensive the development of a *shipping line* with cargo ships equipped with icebreakers and the building of deep water ports, whose multimillionaire investment is

waiting its turn to emerge as a cheaper transport alternative, if the investment costs justify shortening the times of dispatch and supplies.

However, today the Russian project Nord Stream 2⁷ that would supply gas to Europe through Germany (see map 3) is a turning point that takes away important doses of harmony within NATO and the European Union. The constant impasse between Angela Merkel and Trump, product of the sanctions against the project in the face of evident sabotage, is already undeniable. These specific circumstances corroborate Russia's role in the escalation that makes it a fundamental actor in the conflict that is being announced.

Map 3
Nord Stream 2



Fuente: <https://www.dw.com>

Many years later, the collapse and disintegration of the USSR lulled the Heartland and Rimland theories as the imposition of single governance allowed the Mahan Naval Power thesis to lead the US to fortify over 700 military bases⁸ in seven overseas territories. Enough power to safeguard the world order imposed by the single polarity.

A century later, Mackinder's predictions seem to be coming true and still lead to the struggle for control of the area. Only that History maintains the unknown variable to be cleared in the middle of the construction of a New World Order (NWO)⁹ : Who and how will dominate the island that covers three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa, without being able to overcome or avoid potential conflicts? Will it be the United States? Or perhaps China? And above all, what role will Russia play in the conflict? It would only be necessary to replace the objective of governance in the area with the control of the markets when succeeds in placing its technological products is achieved. Then, the old slogan of the English geographer coined for a century would be rewritten as follows: "he who manages to control the markets on the World Island will control the world".

This freehand, free-drawing scenario would be ideal. However, geopolitical interests in the game of *realpolitik*¹⁰ threaten to destroy all the universal principles proclaimed and propagated by capitalism in its wildest version: neoliberalism. On the other hand, we see how the Asian giant has not found it easy to successfully implement its "two systems, one country" model (the case of Hong Kong). It seems that now, when China knows the answer of the market, they want to change the question and there is no other way out but to confront it.

A trend imposed by the United States after the fall of the Berlin Wall¹¹ has left the track pointing than socialism has failed in the world. However, we can ask ourselves by inverting the equation: And. Where has capitalism succeeded? Has it solved hunger, housing, health...or on the contrary, what it has strengthened is the banking system, the stock exchange and everything related to the speculative world?

The pandemic caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID19), by itself, has achieved a profound reflection in relation to both paradigms and has given us a brutal lesson in life: the virus does not discriminate. Nevertheless, we humans continue to be shaped by the immanent powers. Racism and xenophobia are intertwined in the breeding ground for the struggle between capitalism vs. socialism. It is impressive how much false news, explosions of chauvinism, novels and conspiracy theories highlight the worst of the dominant countries, blaming each other for creating a lethal microorganism to sicken the world and take advantage in the midst of a fight for hegemonic supremacy.

It is essential to make a remark in this introduction on the black swan¹² of the pandemic as an illustrative example of the type of war we are going to witness, as well as its derivatives. The overlapping struggle between East and West over who will be the first to discover the vaccine against the virus shows how low the powers could fall to use it in favor of their allies and against their adversaries. In this sense, it is imperative not to trivialize the issue.

The coronavirus has dislocated all the mega powers, but at the same time it has unleashed a great disease in the ideologies that lead to ask humanity what the philosophical and political conceptions of the State are for if, in fact, the existing models have not been able to avoid the pandemic and, even more, the predominant model has become a breeding ground for its propagation. It requires a society that activates itself by empowering itself under the social forms of solidarity and global cooperation, instead of global exploitation. It is a matter of prioritizing life above all else, and not pushing it around as a formula of ordered sequences that only organize death.

We can't avoid the astonishment generated by the main headlines of the mainstream press. The most aberrant concern is centered on emphasizing that "the markets reflected in the stock trade are nervous" and that "the economy is going down". The thousands of people who have already died and the others who will die are second-rate news.

All this clearly indicates the need to urgently reorganize the global economy so that it is no longer at the mercy of the markets but at the service of human beings. But it is not a question of changing the mechanisms of supply and demand that regulate it because it is not convenient now (USA) or vice versa, leaving them because they give me an advantage (China). The incubated economic recession is provoking triggering conflicts, because we are not culturally prepared to think about stagnation or long-term immobilization. We are designed for consumption, never for moderation or abstention. We are not prepared to separate pleasure and comfort from consumption.

But now the virus is bursting the bubble of consumerism and constricting the markets. Despite the fact that capitalism has been in intensive care for a long time, the inertia of the monster continues to encourage shopping to force us to run after the latest model of cell phone. In this insatiable appetite for consumption, China seeks to satisfy it by conquering the best markets in the world. That's why the Silk Road 2 is the Asian leader's unwavering commitment.

In the course of these events, the discovery of the anti-viral vaccine could be an event of greater significance than the conquest of the moon. You will say that it looks irrational and that such foolishness is not possible. But is it not the case that the rationality of the market that Mr. Trump tried to use when he wanted to buy all the production of the supposed cure from Germany, is not in accordance with that supremacist speech that leaves the fear, not unfounded, of what the United States will do to reach the goal of the antiviral first?

Trump acts with the intention of securing all the initial *stock* of possible doses against COVID-19. Operation Warp Speed¹³ could leave the rest of the world without it. That's why he denies multilateralism and, after making official his intention to leave the World Health Organization (WHO), operates according to the cynicism of his electoral platform America First.

It would be worth asking if this is not a flagrant violation of human rights. Isn't medical coverage a right that every human being has when they require care for the simple right to life? In other words, we would have to accept a social and economic world in which it is radically unacceptable that some have access to life-saving medicine, while others must be denied access because they cannot afford it. This diatribe does not rely on ideological conceptions, but puts its concern in the uncertainty that the market imposes.

Let us look, as a preface to events, at the time when the US accused China of having manufactured the virus and of having colluded with the WHO. Consequently, it will sue them to collect the "aggression". First, it leaves the global organization and second, it threatens not to pay the debt of the treasury bonds that China has bought. The Chinese currently have \$1.13 trillion in US debt securities, 17% of the total owned by foreign hands. It is the largest international lender to the US (ahead of Japan) and ranks third, just after the US Federal Reserve.

China knows that this threat is a very unlikely deterrent. If it did, the US would throw stones at its glass ceiling. However, it goes on to declare in response that if they were the pioneers of the vaccine they would offer it to humanity. Nevertheless, in the face of the logic of the conspiracy theory, it is not easy for China to dissociate itself from the US accusations, as it has been less harmed than the country of North America.

The pandemic will change the world forever when the crisis is over. Many countries will be reluctant to accept the impositions of the dominant powers, once they have demonstrated their incompetent leadership in guaranteeing the lives of the people. A corollary that will reassert what has been said when the vaccine is discovered and used as an instrument of war. As long as the economic mechanism of the market regulates commercial exchanges between companies based on free competition (supply vs. demand) and does not pair with the objectives of the Western world, these postulates, in the escalation of the conflict, will literally be thrown into the sea while they hold the strategy against China by accusing it of human rights violations. On May 28, the Beijing Legislative Assembly decreed to include in the legislation of Hong Kong (Special Autonomous Region) the National Security Law that criminalizes acts of subversion, terrorism, secession, foreign conspiracy and others that threaten the security of the territory.

The bill drew criticism in Western circles led by the United States, pointing out that the document underlies Beijing's desire to tighten control over the autonomous region, as well as the violation of the "one country, two systems" principle. China rejected any criticism of this and declared that all issues relating to Hong Kong are a domestic matter.

Immediately, U.S. sanctions were in place. The US Department of Commerce reported on the suspension, since 29 June, of preferential treatment of relations with Hong Kong, including the application of exceptions to export restrictions. The chaos in Hong Kong has been going on for more than a year, but the Army was not sent to take part. In contrast, in the US, after just three tumultuous days of protest against the assassination of African-American George Floyd¹⁴, Trump threatened publicly with the use of firearms, implying that military forces could be deployed.

China sarcastically states that after encouraging the protests in Hong Kong by describing them as "a beautiful image of democracy", the US is reaping what it has planted. The protests in Washington are also widely discussed on Weibo, a Twitter-like platform controlled by the Chinese government. And, in those cases that are often criticized by Trump for his "weak democratic credentials," the Chinese media, ironically, do not miss the opportunity to highlight that the anti-racism protests "reversed roles".

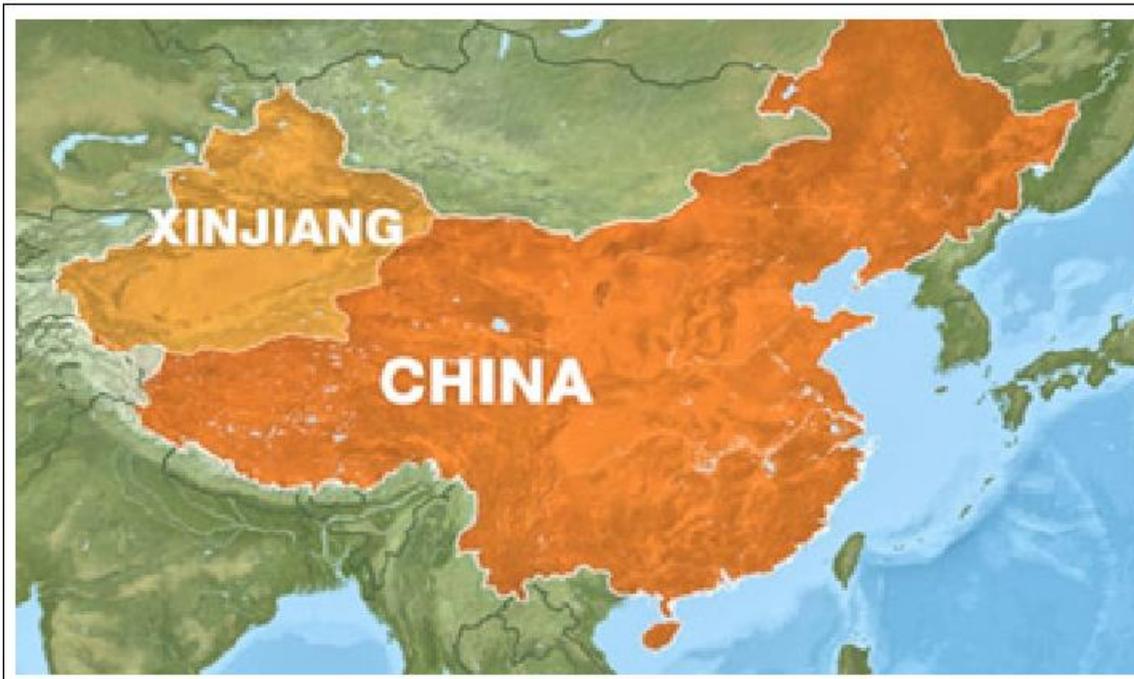
Subsequently, Washington enacted the Uighur law that provides for more sanctions against China (see map 4). It condemns the violations of the human rights of Muslim minority groups in the Sinkiang region, for allegedly keeping one million people of this ethnic group and other Muslims of Turkish origin in re-education camps, under the pretext of combating terrorism and religious extremism. And for other purposes, they are inciting a jihad or holy war whose violent struggle would bring serious conflicts to China, while the outrages against illegal immigrants, especially children, who manage to cross the shameful wall on the border with Mexico are not sanctioned by anyone.

In the thread of this quid quo pro, President Trump described as one of the main objectives of his foreign policy "to ensure religious freedom" in those countries that in his opinion violate it, indicating that they will be punished with sanctions, a new tool of double standards to blackmail and pressure other countries. So very soon we will see a list of states and organizations that cause "special concern". Of course, that selection will never include Israel, one of the countries with the greatest restrictions on religious freedom. Beijing, in response, has paid with the same currency of exchange. It has issued sanctions against the Congressional Executive Committee on China, the State

Department's Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, Samuel Brownback, along with Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz.

Map 4

Region occupied by the Uyghur people (Xinjiang)



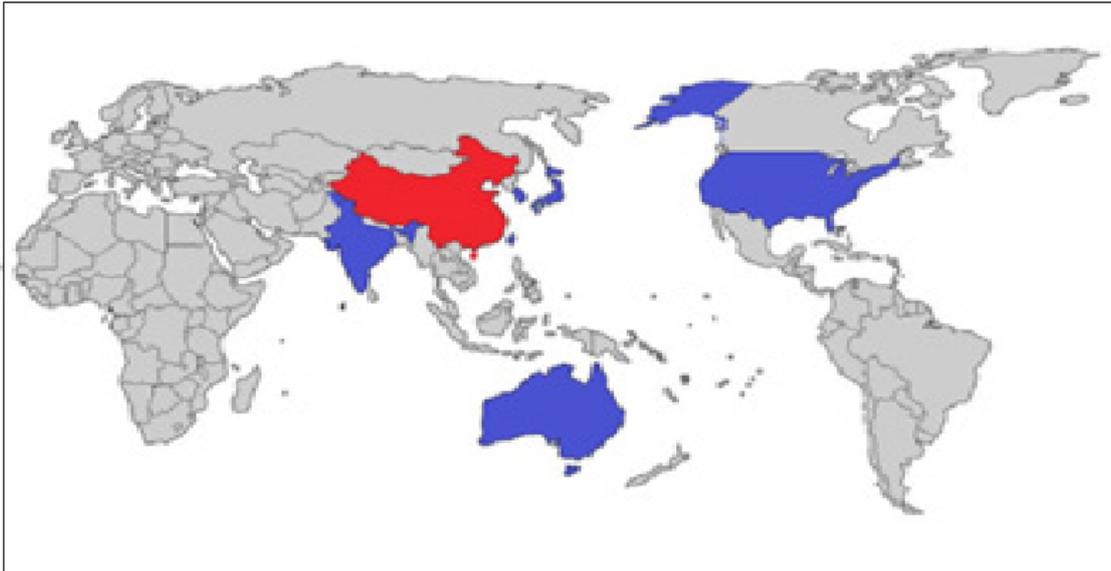
Fuente: <https://diario-octubre.com/2020/04/11/china-encuentra-petroleo-en-la-region-de-xinjiang-poblada-por-los-uigures/>

The examples cited show the conflictive situation *in crescendo* that, although they will be cooked in their sauce, the main course of what we have titled in this work as the THUCYDID RAMP-UP will be confined to a new space that is opening up the imagination of world geopolitics. The old Asia-Pacific concept, founded by the QUAD countries (see map 5) - The United States, Australia, Japan and India¹⁶, which are trying to corner China, have been gradually shifting in diplomatic forums and think tanks to expand the area in light of the second Silk Road that covers the region between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, conceived as the Indo-Pacific, currently nowadays the hottest

spot in the planet. It is there where a war between the two mega powers can arise at any moment.

Map 5

QUAD (USA, Australia, Japan and India, in blue)



Fuente: <https://eurasianimes.com/anti-china-quad-alliance-between-us-india-australia-japan-could-soon-be-a-reality>

PROLEGOMENON

The Vietnam War, between 1964 and 1975, caused the United States great disruptions at the time, as is the case today with the occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The expense of maintenance in all its military bases scattered throughout the world also weighed heavily. As a result of this situation, two strategic movements of a political-economic nature were conceived during the period of Richard Nixon's government. The simultaneous, daring and decisive action was undoubtedly brilliant. These ideas led to the rescue and saving of the misfortune that the war in Southeast Asia represented for the United States, whose militaristic policies increased their costs over time, generating a strong fiscal deficit.

As if this weren't enough, the wasteful spending was joined by the decision of General Charles De Gaulle, who launched the proposal to re-establish the gold standard based on a warning by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who referred to this system as an "exorbitant privilege". While it is understood that the US had to make the dollars available to the market to make things work, no one suspected the massive increases in the printing of money that would be needed to finance the Vietnam War.

By the end of 1960, it became quite evident that the volume of dollars circulating around the world was far greater than the amount of gold available in the US security vaults. In February 1965, De Gaulle gave his famous speech entitled The Dollar Crisis. There he induced France to exchange all its monetary reserves for the precious metal, punishing the US holdings in Fort Knox¹⁷. Thus, the gold reserves in its vaults fell from 20,000 to 8,000 tons, and even this figure was called into

question by some economists who were calling loudly for the devaluation of the dollar.

In the face of the unpayable defeat of the US in Vietnam, two responses emerged from the Oval Office of the White House. Both managed to implement them almost in unison: distension with China and the petrodollar. With it, they could emerge from that historical swamp that would have shortened the propaganda ecstasy of the great victory in the Second World War.

All this began with a unique exercise of *realpolitik*. Henry Kissinger, by the time President Nixon's security advisor, convinced him to resolve the Vietnamese situation, because if he did not, the stability of his government would be threatened. It was the Gordian knot to be dissolved. If he did not do so, he would end his reelection aspirations, as had happened with his predecessor Lyndon B. Johnson.

In this sense, he urged him to admit to ideological disparities between his country and China. However, he insisted that the urgency of the dialogue should manifest the desire for a timely (rather opportunistic) distension despite the marked differences. The appropriate reading of the two sides in the game of geopolitics made them coincide in the tacit area of mutual convenience, where the situation favoured the entente between East and West. The partial direct conversation on the red phone between the USSR and the USA was not enough. It was unobjectionable to incorporate China into the communicational globality of the world.

The same was given as a ring to the finger by the recent Sino-Soviet rupture that arose between the years 1960 and 1962. Dissidence had changed the situation in this regard. The People's Republic of China not only rejected Soviet ideological tutelage, but proclaimed itself to be the "true Marxist State," while denying the quality of the socialist model imparted by Moscow. The schism became a struggle, between both republics, for the legitimate ideological representation of Marxism-

Leninism. The struggle had extended to communist movements throughout the world, now divided into pro-Soviet Stalinist or pro-Chinese Maoist tendencies.

Using ideological discord, in July 1971, Henry Kissinger, during a service trip to Pakistan, secretly left for Beijing. There he laid the groundwork for an official visit by Nixon after contacting the then prime minister, Zhou Enlai. When he accepted the possibility of a rapprochement, the option was left open, and it was carried out in 1972. The SinoAmerican openness dealt confidentially with the fundamental objective of US rapprochement. It only required that China make a parenthesis with the support of the Vietcong¹⁸ (Saigon) in arms and ammunition. A halt in logistical support while Nixon managed to withdraw from the war in the shortest possible time, doing damage control for the burden of defeat. But above all, because that would close the leakage of foreign currency that was consuming the endless war that had broken the coffers in Washington.

Once the objective of the secret agenda was achieved, Kissinger reluctantly stated that the US would withdraw its military forces from the island of Taiwan, but without renouncing its military alliance with the regime of the Republic of China, something that it never fulfilled. In the statement, both nations promised to work toward "complete normalization" of their diplomatic relations, which was achieved in 1977.

Afterwards, Nixon and Kissinger, desperate for the weakness of the dollar, went to the advice of Milton Friedman, the famous monetarist, who recommended as a solution to abandon the compromise that forced the gold backing. On August 16, 1971, the US president let the world know that they were not going to continue to hand over their metal reserves according to the Bretton Woods agreement¹⁹. They were not willing to give back their devalued paper, about to become a false currency. In this way, gold-dollar convertibility was cauterized as a "temporary" measure. An incredible situation that has since been held

up with the pins of a suspiciously "solvent" country credibility. Today's evidence puts this endorsement in serious doubt.

As Milton Friedman himself said, "Nothing is as permanent as a temporary government program". And so it was. The dollar, already backed by nothing, became a FÍAT currency whose decree is summarized by the slogan printed on the back of the green bills that reads *In God We Trust*. The condition of counterfeit currency had to mutate in order to circulate strongly in the world financial torrent. And it is here that both strategists devise to shield the dollar with oil. This made it possible to "coin" the petrodollar. That is, a petrodollar currency, obtained through the exclusive sale of oil, in US dollars.

The story goes that in 1973, Nixon sent another mission to Saudi Arabia to Mr. Kissinger for a series of high-level talks. An agreement was reached a year later. Surprisingly, the newly devised system licensed the Americans to operate the currency printing machines without any flanges or restrictions.

In 1975, all members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)²⁰ agreed to sell their oil only in USD. There were two powerful reasons for this. The first had to do with the nature of the cartels. The only way this could work in the long term was to ensure that individual members did not cheat. With a single, traceable currency for the international oil trade, the reliability of the cartel was assured.

The second reason was that the US promised protection to OPEC leaders, especially Saudi Arabia, against foreign invasions or domestic uprisings. It negotiated every barrel of oil in exchange for weapons and military protection of the oil fields. A pattern to which the other Arab countries reluctantly subordinated themselves as members of the organization. They had no better choice, as the Saudi leadership could open and close the tap for barrel production and play with prices.

Of course, the clever maneuver was circumstantial. It could not last a lifetime. However, the lesson was not learned. Today, when the United

States is the most indebted country in the world, a product of war spending and consumerism generated by the commercial exchange of negative balances, it is joined by Chinese competition. The overwhelming Asian economic strength, cruelly, today cannot be its ally but its contender. This critical financial situation in the U.S. for further derision has been sustained by a contingency actions strategy by issuing treasury securities that are now largely held by China.

SUPER POWERS

Behind all these aspects there is, in fact, the great shadow that even transcends the commercial, technological and geopolitical warfare, but which ultimately has to do with the construction in process of a New World Order. There are two positions between a power in ascent and another in descent. They are totally different and opposite when confronting projects that, without being ideological, are part of political traditions. The rise and fall between them simulates a waterwheel whose rise and fall is propitiated by the dynamics of geopolitics.

On the one hand, the American logic of the private sector as the engine of development in the still first world power; and on the other, that of Beijing, which has total support from the State. That is, the capitalist logic of the United States uses private companies to penetrate the world surreptitiously in the name of freedom of enterprise, hiding behind the transnationals to avoid confrontation with governments of another nation-state. China imitates the model, but is accused that behind its companies is the Central Committee of the Communist Party directly controlling them. Then the unsuspected question arises, what is the difference when the problem is suddenly identified as a matter of security and defense? In fact, the Pentagon has already taken over Silicon Valley.

CHINA

The main issue that set the agenda for China, after the communist victory in the civil war, was the recovery of its economy ruined by decades of war and leading to a massive famine. Forty years ago (1978-2018), the People's Republic of China, after the death of the great Leader of the Revolution, Mao Zedong, began a process of reforms that would allow them to evolve their model. In order to make this leap toward modernization, it was necessary to revise the so-called Great Leap Forward²¹ which, although it rooted the sovereignty of the Asian giant, had not achieved internal economic consolidation.

Mao, with the plan initiated in 1958, tried to make the popular commune²² the epicenter of the State, having as its ultimate goal to eliminate money and private property. Mao created 45,000 communes, with 5,000 families in each one of them. The heads of communes sent him reports saying that everything was excellent; however, the results did not reflect the reality of the information received, generating critical and serious problems in the supply and distribution of food for the population. There was a strong contradiction between the relationship of production and the satisfaction of the needs of the Chinese people. Later, in the mid-sixties, another attempt was made to move forward by proposing the Cultural Revolution²³ led by Mao's fourth and last woman, Jiang Qing, with the so-called "gang of four"²⁴. Zhou Enlai, of proven loyalty to Mao, survived both the economic policies of the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution.

In 1975, when the ideological momentum of the Cultural Revolution was waning, Zhou Enlai, in his last public address, called for a number of modernizations as a road map for putting China back on the path of economic growth: agricultural development; the development of a large industrial complex; and the development of science and technology. These reforms essentially outlined the economic self-sufficiency. This is how they decided to accelerate the modernization process by increasing the volume of foreign trade, for which they opened

their markets, highlighting especially the acquisition of machinery from Japan and the Western world. These were the bases for making China aim to be the great economic power at the beginning of the 21st century. It also was the start of the boom in which the reformers, led by Deng Xiaoping, known as the "General Architect of Reform and Opening," took to such flags.

In early 1979, Deng Xiaoping made an official visit to the United States, during which he met in Washington with President Jimmy Carter and several congressmen. He visited the NASA space center in Houston, as well as the headquarters of Boeing and Coca-Cola in Seattle and Atlanta, respectively. There they explained to him the supposed benefits of the nascent neoliberalism, created in 1970, which was trying to find a "third way" in the dispute that was being fought at that time between classical liberalism, as the birth certificate of capitalism, and the economic planning of the State, as an inherent part of the socialist model.

Deng Xiaoping made very clear the point in the Coca-Cola factory that having a population of 1.3 billion, they were the market. What had to be done was to start the machinery by lighting the chimneys of industrialization until the surpluses were produced. From there, China redirected its political model and its form of government. It decided to open up to the market economy outside its borders and to preserve communist ideology at home. He presented himself to the world under the aegis of "Two systems, one government" and for the internal critics, Deng Xiaoping closed the debate with his famous phrase: "it doesn't matter what color the cat is if it catches the mouse".

The strategy to follow was marked by the following advice from Deng Xiaoping to his successors: "Hide your own strengths and gain time". That is to say, to maintain the discretion and the low profile not to generate antagonisms while advancing on all fronts "until the time comes to see how we become a cat and stop being a mouse tail". On December 11, 2001, after 15 years of arduous negotiations, China finally

joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the 143rd member.²⁵ It was no longer smuggling, it was in.

In 2008, China's external objectives, with particular reference to its relationship with the US, became challenging. Since the financial crisis, we would understand better what is to come. What happened in 2008 that determined that change? A convergence of events made the Chinese leadership understand that their country was stronger and their rival weaker than previously thought.

Among these events was the greatest global economic crisis since 1929, resulting from U.S. financial excesses that imposed multiple difficulties in overcoming the crisis. While the speed with which China was able to avoid the risk of contagion, it led to the fact that its economic growth was a key factor in avoiding an international economic meltdown.

Added to this was the US military's flooding into two peripheral wars, the Middle East and Vietnam. The year 2008 set in motion an upward line of Chinese assertiveness, which was to accelerate with the arrival of Xi Jinping to power. From that last moment on, China made explicit its ambition to overtake the US. War had been declared in the secrecy of their respective war rooms²⁶.

USA

After the Second World War an agreement was reached where the powers that defeated Nazism, with a view to achieving a new order and rebuilding peace, divided the world up. This agreement was very short lived, as between the USSR and the US they started what became known as the Cold War, fighting conflicts to conquer countries that would convert to the ideological cause that confronted capitalism vs. communism. Korea and Vietnam, divided into North and South, were clear examples of the post-war tailspin. On the night of November 9th,

1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down, dividing the German capital for almost three decades, which made possible its reunification and was a precursor to the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The dissolution of the USSR was the disintegration of the federal political structures and the central government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which culminated in the independence of the 15 republics between March 1990 and December 1991.

The cause of the collapse was multifactorial. There are still social, political and economic reasons coming into light that were part of the cocktail that liquidated this pole of power. There is no need to be very bright to clear the equation: if the balance was sustained by bombs, it means that the balance was broken. The fact imposed the US to be the absolute hegemon of the planet, turning the world order into UNIPOLAR²⁷. But the US slept a long sleep, neglecting the production of goods and services, supplying its shelves with Asian products, mostly Chinese. In general, it devoted itself to the financial world of stock market and banking speculation, which is the birth certificate of financial globalization. While Russia licked its wounds, it rethought strategies in the face of new realities. With the appearance of Vladimir Putin, an accelerated arms race starts, from 2002, which he supported with his energetic potential, being able to overcome the atomic and nuclear power of the United States. The evidence was revealed when Putin himself, on March 1st, 2018, announced the creation of the Kinzhal ("the dagger"), a ballistic missile with nuclear air-launching capacity, whose range passes 2000 kilometers, with a hypersonic speed capable of evasive maneuvering at every stage of its flight. It had tumbled the US Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)²⁸. US acknowledgement of the existence of the missile marks the transition from skepticism to acceptance of Russia's considerable technological and military capabilities, which undermine the Pentagon's atomic superiority by fracturing the unipolarity. In fact, the United States has a five-year delay in building hypersonic weapons at Mach 20²⁹ speed.

The adoption of neoliberal policies and the acceptance of their economic theory, since the 1970s, makes most developed countries conclude with many post-Keynesian economists that this was the cause of the collapse of the international financial system in 2008. This situation later manifested itself in the so-called Great Recession³⁰ and from which China emerged unscathed due to the strength of its economy. The State policy that was supposed to mediate between ideologies and the needs and aspirations of human beings, gave up this function. On the one hand, it had imposed itself as the only mediator between the needs and aspirations of the market. A sort of Leviathan³¹ whose monstrous trail corners the weakest citizens.

The outbreak of the banking and financial crisis unleashed a global catastrophe due to the collapse of the housing bubble. It dragged down the international financial system, as well as the global stock market movement whose consequences led to a deep liquidity and food crisis in the West. Since then, the US disaster has not made peace with misery. This is the beginning of the fall of the American colossus. Its economic trend, in spite of growing by 3 %, paradoxically decreases in comparison with China which averages 7 %. This meant that China would soon be in first place. The millennial patience and hard work undertaken the reforms of liberalization of the socialist economy that allowed impressive quotas of economic growth to be reached. In doing so, it has led, in recent decades, the greatest economic revolution in human history. It is the second largest economy in the world in terms of Gross

Domestic Product (GDP)³² and the largest economy in the world in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)³³, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Today the coronavirus pandemic is raging, threatening another global economic crisis that has stopped the wheel, postponing events. While China and the US are facing the viral challenge in their own way, they are not slackening off in a competition for world supremacy. They are countries with leaders forged in the old school of geopolitics, which are debated in that axiom it establishes: "power is neither ceded nor shared, it is imposed by force of the cannons or negotiated". They compete in common domains and each seeks to design its own systems, its own standards and its own supply chains.

STAGING

We have no doubt that we are already in the presence of the scenario contemplated by the THUCYDIDES TRAP. The stage is set. The conjugation of the elements that make up the image and the representation of the climbing in the theater of operations, suffice it to describe them as evidence. The loss of the hegemonic power of the United States, both from the atomic and economic point of view; and the Chinese decision to take advantage of its evident increasing weakness, set the no return point. It is about a simple ancestral notion according to which processes must adapt to the appearance of opportunities. The Made in China 2025 project is designed to conquer the world's most desirable markets via the Silk Road. Of course, the product to be placed is not the prized fabric that produces the silkworm, much less the trinkets of the "All for One Dollar" stores. We are talking about technological products and their parts, which point to the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI)³⁴.

In fact, most geostrategic thinkers agree with Putin's dictum when he stated: "The country that manages to lead artificial intelligence will own the world". Robotics and the universe of computers, cell phones and the speed of the Internet, to program any device that governs our lives from daily tasks to driving a plane without a pilot, are the determining technologies that will shape the immediate future. Everything indicates then that the world is going towards a struggle for technological supremacy whose spearhead is AI. But for a super power to impose it, it has to conquer the markets of developed countries, and this is the war that is brewing.

At the close of today's inventory, the U.S. is leading the way in AI, thanks to the technology emporium called Silicon Valley. This location is also known as Silicon Valley because it is the chemical element and metalloid essential for the elaboration of chips that are implanted in transistors, solar batteries and the immense variety of electronic circuits in cell phones and computers. This valley has been the cradle of what is known by the acronym GAFAT³⁵ (Google-Amazon-Facebook-Apple-Twitter). All of them are developed by browsing the Internet.

The Chinese have long implemented favorable policies that have inspired innovations in the field. There are thousands of companies and platforms working in this direction, but let's talk about a couple in particular: Huawei³⁶ and its ally ZTE³⁷.

China, at this time, managed to catch up with the US, overtaking France, Japan and Britain. Its goal for 2025 is to lead some aspects of AI worldwide when it declares itself totally independent, thanks to its already advanced fifth generation (5G) technology³⁸. 5G technology outpaces GAFAT's technological perspective in speed, by surfing faster on the Internet platform, while the Western bloc is doing its best to prevent China's victory in the race for supremacy in 5G technology, the most recent example being the UK's veto of Huawei³⁹.

The Silk Road 2 in question is designed with the image of a pearl necklace by sea between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This project passes through areas of reclamation which potential conflicts make these areas unsafe. The most fragil one is the South China Sea where China defends the so-called "nine-point line".⁴⁰ It also confronts the Great Sand Wall,⁴¹ the Spratly Islands⁴² and the Philippine occupation of the islands in the South China Sea⁴³ (**see maps 6 and 7**).

Map 6

Line of the nine points

South China Sea



38

Fuente: <https://geopolitico.es/pekin-prepara-nueva-zona-de-defensa-aerea-mar-del-sur-china/>

Map 7

The Spratly Islands



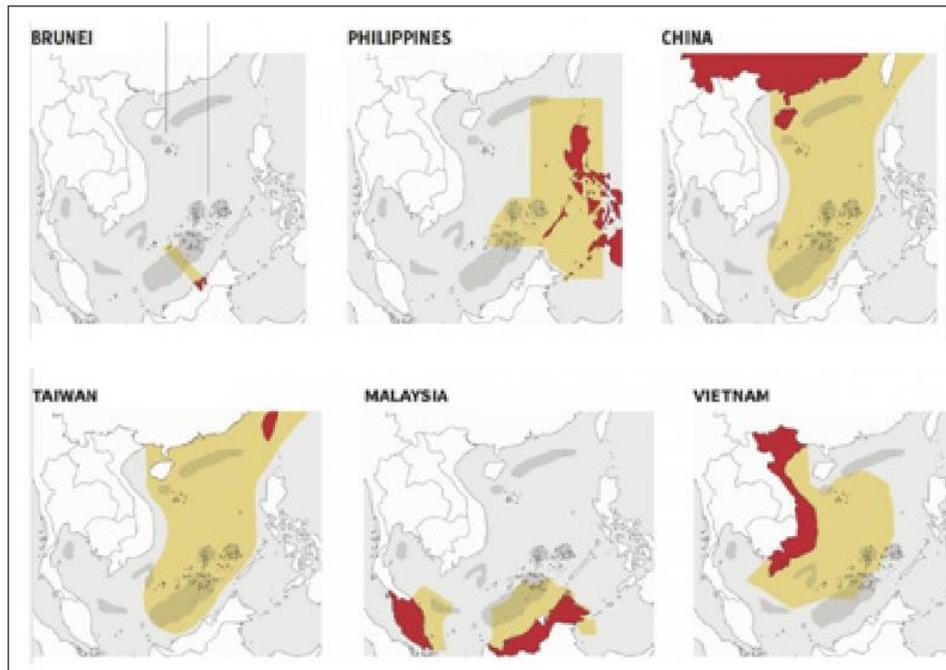
Source:

https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2015/04/150409_china_construccion_islas_mar_meridional_ng

The claim of the territorial conflict is about the claim of islands and archipelagos by the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. These last four are located in the forced and unique passage of the Strait of Malacca.

Map 8

Six maps to understand what is coming



Source: <https://www.vilaweb.cat/noticies/sis-mapes-per-entendre-perque-el-conflicte-del-mar-dela-xina-pot-ser-la-mes-gran-crisi-mundial-en-poc-temps/>

For Washington, the claim is tantamount to China's disregard for the agreement they reached in 1972 in the negotiations with Nixon. Through it, Beijing recognized the primacy of the United States in the region in exchange for the recognition given by them to the communist regime. But the disagreement is the response to the unfulfilled promise to leave Taiwan. These islands and archipelagos are not inhabited, despite the presence of military bases which, on the other hand, along with trade, are the central axis of the conflict in question. China claims

the line that in the 1940s the former Chinese nationalist government drew, but which all the neighboring countries reject. Within this line are the islands of Paracelsus and Spratly. Most of them are rock atolls that today are in the hands of several countries with even warlike confrontations. The importance of this claim is that if it were accepted internationally it would turn the South China Sea into Chinese territorial waters.

If this were to happen, China would control the navigation of the ships. This would imply having dominion over half of the cargo tonnage moving in the world. The other countries in the area are completely opposed to this claim which, until February 17, 2016, was strictly diplomatic. For example, the zone claimed by China clashes with Singapore in its commercial mood. China, in particular, maintains 61 open conflicts with neighboring states. A few of them are with the United States over some islets that they own there, and this fact determines one aspect of the seriousness of the conflict. The Americans have given themselves the role of defending the free circulation of ships in the area. Half of the world's commercial traffic passes through this corridor, as does most of the oil consumed by Asian countries. If China were to achieve international recognition of these waters as jurisdictional, its power over trade worldwide would be immense. For this reason, the moral strength of Chinese nationalism does not admit pausing. Its maps show almost the entire South China Sea as its own. Hence the military capacity to impose its own will on that of others, without the need to go to war or prevail in it, should it become inevitable, is overriding.

China has been preparing to ensure the success of the project. On the one hand, it is fortifying contingents of soldiers with bases on the mainland at strategic points to plant a presence in the Horn of Africa, and at the same time making muscle in the face of possible confrontations.

The opening of installations in Djibouti (see **map 9**), at the gateway to the Red Sea, points to Beijing's strategy of increasing maritime power by installing the first naval base outside its territory, causing an impact in the US, France and Japan, that also have military bases in this small African country.

The authorities in Beijing describe these facilities as a "logistic center" that will serve the troops deployed in the continent, but it also obeys the will to develop a fleet capable of operating in deep waters to defend the numerous interests that the Asian Dragon has far from home, and that transit daily through the mouth of the wolf.

Map 9 Djibouti (geographical location)



Source: Google Maps

This installation will allow China to gain presence in a strategic enclave. Djibouti borders Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea; it is located between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, on one of the most important maritime and energy supply routes on the planet, and essential for Chinese trade, which is also already the first commercial partner of the African continent and has invested billions of Euros in infrastructures. One of these is the railway line that connects Djibouti with Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

However, the real message that the drums of war are announcing is the construction of sophisticated ships and artilled submarines with state-of-the-art technology. In a few years, the country will have 75 submarines and by 2021, three aircraft carriers. Since 2014, China has produced more submarines, warships and support vessels than the total number of ships currently in the navies of Germany, India, Spain, Taiwan and the United Kingdom. At the same time, it has increased tenfold the fifty fourth-generation fighter planes it owned a decade ago. In the meantime, it develops land and cruise ballistic missiles, building and militarizing in parallel numerous artificial islands that not only occupy them, but also generate maritime spaces in the disputed areas.

This arrangement leads to the conclusion that they are coming for their own and that in the escalation of the conflict they will try to keep as much as possible in terms of markets and marine spaces. In this *tour de force* that both super powers are showing, two alternating sides will be the opening act to tip the balance and define with which of the sides they will align themselves. On the one hand, there is Russia, whose scope of the strategic alliance with China is not really known; but on the other hand, there is India, which has strengthened its relations with the United States by receiving an official visit from Trump in February of this year. Many futurists think that this quadrature is circumstantial insofar as they know that sooner or later China is their geopolitical contender.

Therefore, the relationship between India and China has always been unstable. A recent outbreak of tension on the border between the two countries became the most violent in the last 50 years, since China and India fought a war to establish where precisely the border in Kashmir⁴⁴ that both countries claim along with Pakistan would pass (**see map 10**).

Without a doubt, the country with the largest population in the world, with 1.2 billion people, after China with 1.4 billion, is one of the most desirable markets. However, it also has its aspirations to enter the game of hegemonic thrones. We are just watching the trailer of the serious differences that the biggest oil importers are projecting into the future when India displaces China as the biggest oil consumer in the world by 2024, in order to satisfy its new refineries.

A situation that would be aggravated when OPEC, faced with the game of supply and demand, clamps throat over production in order to raise prices by promoting artificial scarcity. The threats to oil transportation routes are nothing new to the energy market. The Ormuz Strait and the Suez Canal are the throats that are closed every time the historical conflicts of the Middle East become more and more frenzied. Once they congest the free transit of tankers, oil prices are distorted. In addition to these two bottlenecks there is another threat: the Malacca Straits⁴⁵ (**see map 11**).

This vital strait connecting the Indian Ocean to the Pacific through the South China Sea has never been problematic despite the tense situation it creates. It is the shortest oil route from Middle Eastern suppliers to the Asian markets of China, Japan and South Korea.

Map 10

Kashmir. Zone in claim



44

Fuente: <https://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20190227/cachemira-india-pakistan-conflicto-7327299>

Map 11

Strait of Malacca



Source: University of Navarra. Available at:
<https://www.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/detalle/-/blogs/china-e-india-la-lucha-por-las-puertas-del-estrecho-de-malaca>

To get a rough idea of the catastrophic caliber of this dreaded scenario, in recent years, between 85 and 90% of the total annual oil flows of more than 16 million barrels per day pass through this point. But could India potentially strangle the oil route to China? India's position in the Indian Ocean and the presence of its Navy in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands⁴⁶, which are a stone's throw from Malacca, could theoretically allow India to do so (see **map 12**). Therefore, it is a scenario that cannot be discarded in the equation.

In this sense, China's plans to avoid Malacca are twofold. Both would eliminate their dependence on the strait for two-way trade when they go with their products to market and come with the oil. We have already talked about the North Sea route. China intends to build a Polar Silk Road, and facilitate connectivity and sustainable economic and social development across the Arctic to the Atlantic. We will not go into detail on this route, based on previous explanations.

The alternative option would literally involve jumping rope, creating a land route from China through Pakistan to reach the port of Gwadar⁴⁷ with an exit to the Arabian Sea, ready to enter the Red Sea (see **map 13**). The alternative, initially, was intended as part of the *One Belt, One Road* (OBOR) initiative, "*One Belt, One Route*". The plan only foresaw plans to transport the oil from the Pakistani port to the interior of China. Today, in view of the multiple hostilities that Southeast Asia would present, Kashmir is only one point to negotiate, since Pakistan is an ally of China, which would make it more feasible.

As for the Indian government and its disagreements with Beijing, these can help consolidate the population, increase the military budget and have an ace up their sleeve in the negotiations with the Americans. The State Department has already expressed solidarity with India in response to the recent border skirmish. This indicates, without half-measures, that it will aggressively influence to exacerbate the area by fuelling the conflict.

Map 12

Andaman and Nicobar Islands



Source: Google Maps

Map 13

Gwadar Port



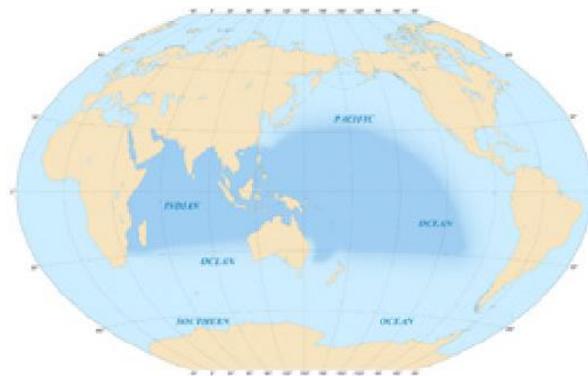
Source: <https://www.swwlogistics.net/es/news/qingdao-port-and-gwadar-port-logistics-information-sharing.html>

The geostrategic plan that the United States is designing to confront and contain China in the Pacific is called the Indo-Pacific Security Initiative. It is a complementary response to two previously proposed

existing plans, each called the Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative. The objective is clear: the security-deterrence symbiosis sends a clear signal to both its partners and allies in the region and to its adversaries, who will abort the full spectrum of threats to security in the area. The three plans are competing to fine-tune Pentagon spending in the Indo-Pacific region,⁴⁸ whose geopolitical concept replaces the Asia-Pacific⁴⁹ (see map 14).

Map 14

Indo-Pacific Region and Asia-Pacific Region



Indo-Pacific Region



Source: <https://www.sketchbubble.com/en/powerpoint-asia-pacific-map.html>

THEATER OF THE CONFLICT

After all these basic points to specify an approach to the proposed scenario, we will make an attempt to outline the key points of the escalation of the conflict. It is a matter of showing strategies, agreements and weapons (conventional or not) once diplomacy is drowned in the midst of the implosion of multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and its derivatives (WTO, WHO, IAEA, ICAO, among others).⁵⁰ It is the UN, the world forum called to avoid this type of conflict and where it is hoped that this situation will not decline in a powerless role, as in other contemporary events, in the face of the inevitable fate that leads us to the THUCYDIDES TRAP.

The war that we are witnessing is multidimensional, in the sense of the multiple edges involved: economic, financial, monetary, energy, territorial, technological, geopolitical, spatial and stop counting. However, for the purposes of this thesis, our concept is BIFRONTE, in the sense of the myth of Janus as the god of beginnings, portals, transitions and endings. The two faces of the Roman god are presented as Janus Patulsius, who stood watchful in front of the door in case someone wanted to pass through it; and the face of Janus Clusivius who stands friendly to welcome. According to the legend, when the Sabines tried to take the Capitol, Janus Patulsius made boiling water sprout on the enemies. The two faces represent the behavior of very dissimilar aspects: falsehood and truth or hypocrisy and clarity, signs of the confrontation that shows the conflict.

The theater of this two-front confrontation is carried out on two parallel fields that at some point will converge producing the outbreak of the worst of the scenarios. We have called these fields: Soft and Hard. Of the Soft (cold) field, we will say that it is a fifth generation war of which we are already eyewitnesses, and that we can say that it is mostly carried out on dry land. Framed in the fight for the conquest of the markets, amongst the actors to manage to place their products like flag in conquered territory. The aggressive declarations combat takes place in the constant clash of microphones throwing insults with junk news and fake news⁵¹, with a view to discredit them. We have already shed light on some of the facts narrated in the course of this essay. However, below we will describe with some extended examples, the sample and scope of mental alchemy in dirty war laboratories. These can irritate and make one lose the patience of balance that can take the door off, welcoming the HARD (hot) field of actions.

Based on what has been written, we will present a summary in the form of an argumentative synopsis that gives an informative account of the main actors, as well as the scale substitutes that will participate in the facts projected in the narrative. What are the objectives they pursue to justify the facts? Above all, to analyze the obstacles that are presented to avoid their achievement. Where does it happen, when will it happen and how long will it last?

SYNOPSIS CARD

GENERAL STRATEGY

Generate commercial conflicts by discrediting products due to the struggle of the markets and thus jump over multilateral organizations to form geostrategic alliances that guarantee allied countries in the face of a possible war conflagration.

MAIN ACTORS

United States / China

BALANCE SUBSTITUTES

Russia / India

INFLUENTIAL ACTORS

European Union, Pakistan, Iran, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, DPRK, Japan, Taiwan and Malaysia.

TIME OF CONFLICT 2021-2025:

This is the time China has given itself to complete its Indo-Pacific Silk Road project.

CONFLICT AREAS (Bifront)

TERRESTRIAL FIELD: Euroasia⁵².

MARITIME FIELD: Indo-Pacific

OBJECTIVES

Soft (cold) objectives: Conquer and defend markets with fifth generation (5G) technology products with a view to controlling Artificial Intelligence (AI).

WEAPONS TO USE (Fifth Generation warfare)⁵³.

Fake news / PSYOP⁵⁴ / ME. LE. SA.⁵⁵.

Issues on the agenda:

- Theft of intellectual property.
- Cyber security laws.
- Human rights.
- Religious freedom.
- Protests: ethnic, religious and ideological.
- Hard (hot): Conquest or defend maritime territories in the areas in claim.

WEAPONS TO USE

All the military power of each power proportional to the dimension of the conflict that is raised.

Issues on the agenda:

Manoeuvres, military exercises in conflict zones.

GENERAL STRATEGY

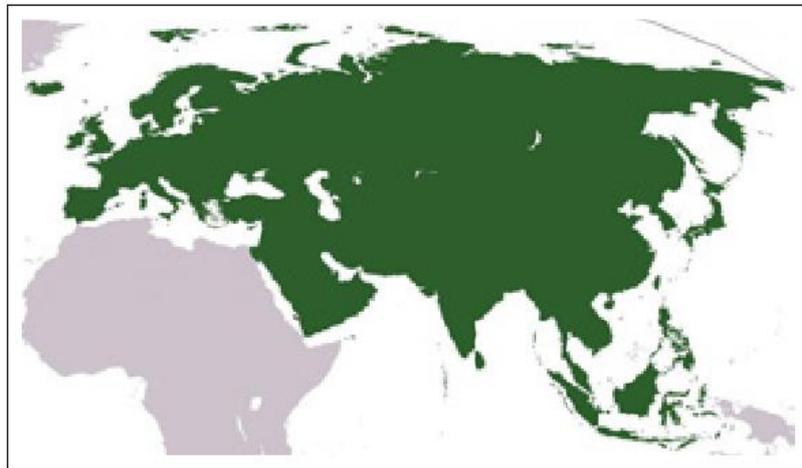
Ignoring multilateral organizations and forming associations or geostrategic groups of allied countries, as pointed out by the reorientation that the United States wants to give to the Group of Seven (G7) by trying to take it to a G11. China, on its side, is trying to form the axis of the Eurasian Dragon ⁵⁶. The two blocs are seducing Russia to gain its endorsement, while the Siberian bear winters by playing at being the loyal one of the balance. A doubt that weighs more than reason.

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AREAS OF THE CONFLICT

Map 15

Eurasia



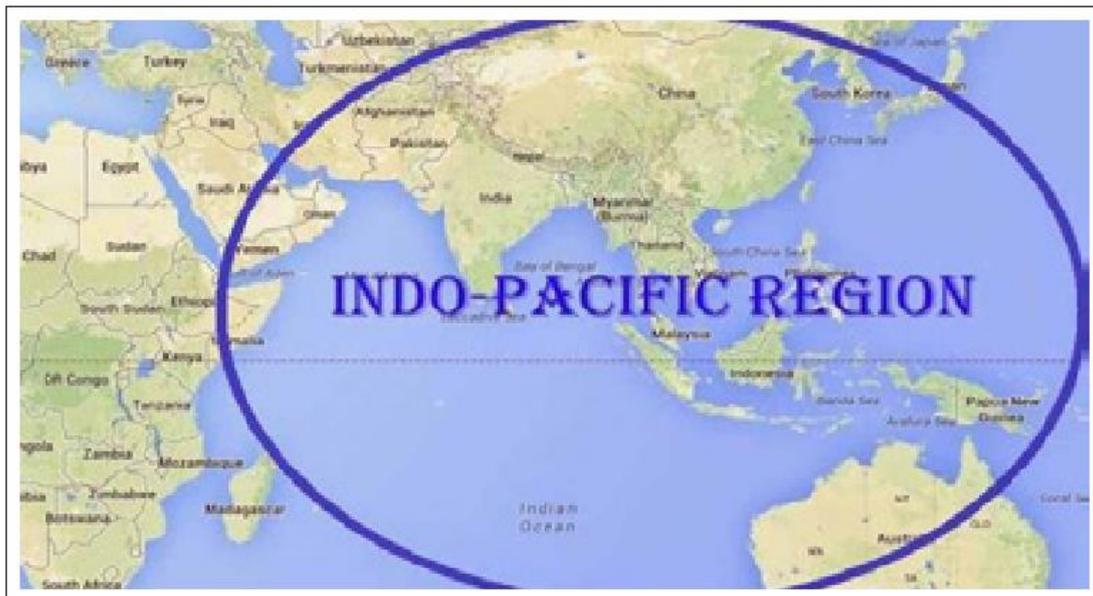
Fuente: <https://eurasianet.es/que-es-eurasia-y-por-que-surge/>

Eurasia or Eurasian (see map 15) is a term that defines a geographic area or continent that comprises Europe and Asia together.

It can be considered the largest continent in the world or as a "supercontinent", since Europe and Asia actually form one single continental mass. Eurasia can be considered as a real continent from the physiogeographic, geological and cultural point of view, since they share the Indo-European linguistic branch of many countries. At present it is the expansive wave that fuses in concept the Heartland and the Rimland.

Indo-Pacific (see map 16): is the new geostrategic concept of the biogeographic region in the southern seas. It includes the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, the Western Pacific Ocean and the area known as the central Indo-Pacific, due in part to its location that connects and brings together the two oceans. Currently, it is the hottest area in the world because of the many areas I complaint are there, and because it is the most important maritime transit area for commercial and energy transportation.

Map 16 Indo-Pacific Region



Source: <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/india-at-loss-as-indo-pacific-strategy-collapses/>

THE GROUP OF SEVEN (G7)

The Group of Eight (G8) began with countries with industrialized economies: Russia, Canada, USA, France, Italy, Germany, UK and Japan. The European Union assists with political representation. Russia was expelled from what was then the G8 in 2014, a decision promoted by the Obama administration regarding the crisis in the Crimea. Russia still holds the territory, and several governments, now becoming G7, have rejected Trump's calls to readmit Moscow in a strategy that most consider unacceptable.

This situation comes about by virtue of a G7 call that Trump has aired in an attempt to turn the page and show international leadership that seems to die at his hands. There are two objectives of the meeting. On the one hand, he is trying to win back the popular vote to restore the breath taken away by George Floyd and the pandemic. On the other, it aims to consolidate the strategy to isolate China as a challenging power. The G7 summit was scheduled for August of this year. Trump decided to postpone it for September, making electoral calculations, although it may happen after the elections. In this announcement, he says he wants to invite, with the intention of adding more countries to the list, Australia, South Korea, India and Russia, whose contradiction generates noise.

It was not clear whether the desire to invite the additional countries is an attempt to permanently expand the G7 into a G11, alluding, as he does, to the fact that it currently brings together a very "old-fashioned" group of countries in its format. In this sense, he argues that his proposal represents "what is happening in the world". Angela Merkel's refusal to attend has raised a powder keg that has been joined by most of the 27 countries that make up the European Union. They make the correct reading of the political situation when they protest against a tacit expansion of the group, by virtue of the fact that this is not a privilege of the US.

A *sotto voce* they proclaim that the time has come to bill the uncomfortable turn the US has taken in just three years, from being the protective arm of the old continent to becoming the bullfighter that threatens to overthrow the multilateral order in which the EU has grown and prospered. They want to take advantage of the weakness that the US hierarchy leader is going through by seeking a review of peer and negotiated relations in the face of the abusive imposition of sanctions and political pressures of subordination.

Washington wants to change the nature of the G7, since the basic issue here is not Russia, but China. What it wants is to build a common front with other countries to go against China. Let us remember that during the Cold War, Nixon and Kissinger succeeded in transforming China into an enemy of the Soviets. Now, they intend to involve Russia as an ally in a coalition against the growing dominance of China. This geopolitical logic does not necessarily come from the president, but from the Pentagon.

Meanwhile, this G7 remains *sine die*, that is, without a specific deadline or date. For the moment, Chancellor Merkel's *nein* has frustrated the picture that would have allowed Trump's international leadership to be vindicated when he knocks down China's segregationist strategy in the process. Of course, Russia is thinking about attending the forum. It separates the wheat from the chaff, since the invitation alone is a change of attitude in the face of the outcome in the Crimean Peninsula, where the claims and their respective penances would be set aside. Its attendance could divide the monolithic position of the EU. The most capricious thing is that such a move on the geopolitical chessboard would reveal the size and commitment of the supposed strategic alliance with China.

THE EURASIAN DRAGON

(IRAN, PAKISTAN, NORTH KOREA (DPRK), CHINA AND RUSSIA)

One needs only look at the map to understand that the Silk Road has infinite strategic importance, since it is about the integration of Eurasia. On the one hand, it crosses Iran interconnecting the main cities. On the other, it is a gateway to the key region of great geopolitical interest to both U.S. supremacy and China's expansion. The extensive military, naval and air siege being built by the Pentagon in the arc from Japan to India, from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean, is leading China to close continental ties with Russia, Iran, DPRK and Pakistan. His goal is to find an alternative route to the long, narrow Strait of Malacca.

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Map 17

The Eurasian Dragon



Source: elaborated by the author.

Mackinder and Spykman founded, with their theories, the Eurasian apothegm. It was the basis for controlling the world whose dominance was held for many years by the United States and the United Kingdom. The current administration of the Anglo-Saxon binomial decided to launch two torpedoes well in the middle of the theorem.

In July 2015, Iran and six international mediators, Russia, the US, the UK, China, France and Germany signed JCPOA ⁵⁷, which imposed a series of limitations on the Iranian nuclear program with the aim of excluding its possible military dimension, in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions. In May 2018, the US broke the agreement and began to impose sanctions against Iran on the grounds that the country was continuing to develop nuclear weapons. A year later, Iran, in response, began to gradually reduce its commitments under the JCPOA. When, on January 3, 2020, Trump ordered the assassination of General Qasem Soleimani by drone, Tehran completed sealing the final details of its strategic pact with China. An agreement that will facilitate the circumvention of the Indo-Pacific fence that seeks to cage the Asian Dragon.

The relationship between the People's Republic of China and Pakistan has clear implications both for the two actors and for the region itself. It is a question of a balance of power within a regional system made up of India, Pakistan, China and the United States. Since both Indian countries managed to become independent from the British in 1947, and at the same time divided, there is an insurmountable gap between the two nations. The population, economic and technological superiority of India is the hard data that make see Pakistan as a lesser influence actor, but be careful, that in nuclear warheads one could say they are from "toe to toe".

The Sino-Pakistani alliance has brought about a rebalancing in the area that is now threatened by the growing US presence. We could say that the geostrategic link that prevails in this relationship is the common adversary that constitutes India. Both nations have active conflicts with India based on a territorial dispute in the area of Kashmir. At the same time, their relationship is based on mutual interest although that does not mean it is without problems. But Pakistan embraces the Chinese colossus for economic, financial and security reasons.

DPRK depends on China for its internal stability and external security. For its part, China maintains this alliance as a priority element of geopolitical security and stability for its economic development. The DPRK 's continued threat to regional stability in Northeast Asia is due to its atomic weapons programs and its harassment and bullying to Japan and South Korea, affecting the balance of power. Under this threat, no one has been able to resolve the offensive.

In this context, the relationship between China and the DPRK is closely linked to their geographical proximity and shared history, but also for more than half a century, as a geostrategic alliance. In short, China is the survival factor for DPRK, giving priority to its interests over a possible reunification of the whole peninsula.

In such a way that the concretion of the Dragon that draws the axis described by the geostrategic alliance of Iran, Pakistan, North Korea, China and Russia, would conform an Eastern pole, that, once obtained, the stars and the satellites will end up being aligned. Everything adjusted to the gravitational convenience offered by both sides in order to achieve the proposed objectives. We have classified these objectives as SOFT (cold), meaning that in their achievement the blood does not reach the river, no matter how much economic damage is caused; and HARD (hot) in terms of *casus belli*.⁵⁸

SOFT (COLD)

The struggle to conquer and defend markets with 5G platform technology products, with a view to controlling AI, will be endless and inexhaustible because, as we said before, it is a race to control the world of the future. The cycle generates a loop for the weapons to be used in this type of war. It starts with the *fake news* as psychological operations (PSYOP) to enter the terrain that we have abbreviated ME. LE. SA, which is nothing more than the declarations battle for the microphones, reflected through the media that in the face of the "scandal" generate arbitrary laws and then, with the authority that no one has given them, penalize those who violate these laws with sanctions.

The U.S. government uses lies and distorted information manipulation as a tool of foreign policy. Just read any page of the recent controversial book *The Room Where It Happened*, published by John Bolton, Trump's former National Security Advisor. In this way, they build the post-truth⁵⁹ thus destroying the credibility of governments and leaderships, but in this opportunity also that of the products.

Among the issues on this agenda, we can mention several that are already part of the great debates and headlines in the press, for example: intellectual property theft, cyber-security laws, Human Rights, religious freedom, and protests, be they ethnic, religious, or ideological. We would have liked to discern the confrontation between the GAFAT and Huawei but the mere study and monitoring of the conflict merits a thesis. Having said that, to refer to the method, we are going to air only one quite illustrative example that will give us an approximate idea of where the shots are going.

The sample of it is TikTok⁶⁰. This application (App) is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese-American Internet technology company based in Beijing. It was founded in 2012. To date, the company is considered one of the world's most valuable unicorns⁶¹ with an estimated value of \$78 billion. The application was launched under the name Douyin in China in September 2016 and was introduced to the overseas market a year later. In 2018 it gained popularity and became the most downloaded in the U.S. in October of that year. Available in over 150 markets and in 75 languages, it already has over 500 million users worldwide.

India has just banned the application, citing national security and privacy concerns. The measure loses arguments, as it was taken by chance after a clash between military groups from the two nuclear powers on the Himalayan border in Kashmir. Of course, it is spiced up by several allegations of the Soft Agenda such as data theft and violations of privacy rules.

Chinese cell phones account for 65% of the Indian market, and video applications such as TikTok are very popular with children. The number of users in India is around 120 million, making it the largest international market for this application. The commercial damage of the ban is estimated in multi millions. However, the moral damage that is evolving makes it the most delicate accusation, as the application has a very high demand from children and they have already released the perverse suspicion of pedophilia. Without evidence, they vent the infamous possibility of being storing and selling the data with the profile and preferential taste of children.

HARD (HOT)

Usurping or defending maritime territories from areas in claim and carrying out maneuvers with naval and military exercises, definitely form part of the escalation that begins in a dissuasive manner, but one never knows where it may lead. The weapons to be used in this type of objective are no more than the entire military power that each of the powers with their allies would apply proportionally according to the dimension of the conflict that is posed. The illustrative example would then be to describe as an agenda item one of the maneuvers to be executed in the conflict zones. In fact, the two largest navies in the world, China and the United States, have simultaneously carried out military exercises in the same space, with large deployments of ships, aircraft carriers and submarines.

THE JUGGLING MANEUVERS

Annually, India conducts these maneuvers leading to naval exercises to reinforce the QUAD in the Gulf of Bengal. Australia will be invited for the first time to put more pressure on China. One could argue with the naïve pose that the military exercises themselves are not directly related to China. But, by coincidence, Japan, India, and Australia are at the center of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. As such, Beijing may have to respond strategically by showing its teeth to these quadrilateral maneuvers. It will spare no effort with joint exercises involving Pakistan, and now Iran, as China's security interests in other areas, such as the Gulf of Aden, would be affected.

The maneuvers will take place in the Gulf of Bengal. The planning meeting of the maneuvers will be held soon in the United States, where the military of the four parties will agree on the exact schedule of the exercises and will determine the list of ships and other combat equipment that will participate in the practices. Subsequently, a final meeting will be held in India where the plan for the maneuvers will be drawn up. The exact composition of the forces that will participate will only be known after the final planning conference, but these maneuvers will be more complex than the previous ones.

The idea of forming an alliance of the four is clearly directed against China. In this context, the response that diplomacy will build in Beijing at the bilateral level and how it will react to the military cooperation of the QUAD is important in order to prevent these countries from forming a strong strategic alliance, now that Trump is inventing a reformulation of the G7. The biggest difficulty will be with the small countries involved in the territorial conflict in the South China Sea: Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and the Philippines. The latter two have improved their relations with Washington and are more distant from Beijing. But the five are fighting for the disputed islands and archipelagos, and will certainly not compromise by following the old doctrine that Thucydides set out in the script of the "Dialogues of the Melanesians"⁶².

The Pentagon decided to send two aircraft carriers, the Ronald Reagan and the Nimitz, to the area where China usually carries out its naval exercises around the Paracelsus Islands, also in claim. There, China has not missed an opportunity to show that it is in control of those seas.

EPILOGUE

The hegemonic confrontation between the United States and China slides seamlessly into the scenario known as the THUCYDID TRAP. There is a determined and manifest will to go to the very end, once the pandemic crisis has abated. The conflict is two-faced in that the escalation is taking place simultaneously on two war fields. One, the unconventional and fifth generation that is called commercial, where China will try to impose its two new Silk Roads (the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific), without neglecting the objective of being the first; at the same time, the United States fights to avoid at all costs that it achieves it, at the risk of being displaced as the first world power. On the other hand, in this investigation, we have predicted that the struggle will be staged with all certainty from 2021 on, given that the actors in the struggle already show their military power in the scenario we have called THE THUCYDIDES RAMP UP.

To address the issue, it was essential for us, before reaching the kernel of the conflict, to connect historical links which atavistic determinants require those powders that brought these muds, absolutely and categorically necessary to understand how it was possible the *rise and fall* of both powers. Such a confrontation will have half the planet on tenterhooks, both in the north and the south. These areas have been the geopolitical frame of reference for the first theories on which the geostrategy of powers and/or empires are based, since the beginning of the last century. Heartland, Rimland and the Naval Power, are the theories whose authors, respectively Mackinder, Spykman and Mahan, are bound in that neuralgic region establishing correlation of forces to determine the Eurasian fusion that defines it without questioning as the true cardinal region.

Of course, the trade war will not be about controlling the area from a governance perspective, but from a market perspective. Therefore, at the beginning it will be a declarations war in the *mass media*, without ruling out possible low-intensity confrontations that will exponentially multiply keeping humanity on edge. It is not for less if we take into account the arsenal of nuclear warheads that the countries involved in the theater of conflict store. Blowing the coals to stoke the fire will be the media advisors developing their communication strategies, as well as the platforms and social networks to spread disinformation and news definesgarbage, exercising censorship and control, to cancel the truth and impose the post-truth.

Undoubtedly, unconventional weapons are to be used in new battlefields as we are evidencing today. The attacks will be massive and immediate against transnational corporations. They will be victims of ideological smuggling that passes smoothly through the customs of honesty under the blackmail of freedom of information. The most titled are the violation of human rights and terrorism. Flags raised as an emotional resource of attack, in the midst of the 5G technological revolution that poses the struggle for the Artificial Intelligence leadership.

CONCLUSIONS -

The final confrontation between China and the US is inevitable, as long as all the objective conditions are in place for the outbreak of World War III, except that it has been postponed as a result of the pandemic and the US presidential elections, with the only sensible possibility of a negotiated solution.

- The fight is to conquer mainly the supercontinent that makes up Eurasia, the Heartland and Rimland as a pivotal zone to control the planet. But this time it is not about governance, but about monopolizing the markets.

- The objective is to place 5G technology products that aim to control artificial intelligence by means of robotics and computers, navigating at "real time" speed through the platform of wide and better highways of the Internet.

- The fight for the markets is led by two companies that correspond to the political and economic models of both powers: the GAFAT of North America (private ownership) and Huawei of China (employee-owned).

- In order to achieve this conquest, China has designed new projects under the conceptual framework of the original Silk Road, highlighting what it has called Made in China 2025, a date it has set as the goal for obtaining and achieving this goal.

- The route itself is the most aggressive and costly of them all. Due to its double purpose of carrying merchandise and bringing oil (*One Belt, One Road*) it is the one that goes from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean.

- The US, on its side, is putting all its efforts into a counter-offensive of containment to prevent the giant Eurasian Dragon from achieving this, at the risk of losing its long imperial hegemony in the world.
- In such a way that the escalation of this conflict is twofold in that it confronts two fields: one multidimensional, non-conventional of the fifth generation, developed mainly in the continental space of Eurasia; and the other, with military preponderance in the maritime zone conceptualized as Indian-Pacific.
- The chess pieces are ready to play. India is the pawn that can only move vertically to achieve growth, and when its turn comes to challenge China, which does so horizontally. Russia is the bishop, which moves diagonally and to both sides according to its interests. That is why it is the key piece in this game.
- The equation is very simple and we can solve it colloquially. Neither China nor the US can fully advance their plans without Russia. So when the table is served, there will have to be three plates and three sets of cutlery.
- Faced with the scenario of a hecatomb, the circumspect will be required in the negotiated exit where the resolution of the conflict will be given by a division into three. In this sense, the New World Order will be three-fold: China, USA, Russia.

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FOOT NOTES

1 **MADE IN CHINA 2025.** It is a strategic plan of the People's Republic of China announced by Prime Minister Li Keqiang in May 2015. With it, China intends to stop being the cheap and poor quality factory of the world and to start producing higher value products and services, such as aerospace and semiconductors. It aims to achieve independence from foreign suppliers for these products and services. In essence, it is a plan to improve the manufacturing capacity of Chinese industries and turn them into a more technology-intensive nerve center.

2 **THE SILK ROAD.** It was a network of trade routes organized from the Chinese silk business from the first century BC, which extended across the entire Asian continent, connecting China to Mongolia, the Indian subcontinent, Persia, Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Europe and Africa.

3 **THE HEARTLAND REGION.** It refers to the concept of Heartland explained by the English geographer Halford Mackinder, in his works *The Geographic Pivot of History* (1904) and *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1910) in which he explains the importance of the region delimited between Eastern Europe and Central Asia for the control of the "World Island", which included the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa.

4 **GLOBAL CONTAINMENT.** This was a policy adopted by the US towards the USSR during the years of the Cold War. The purpose of this policy was to defeat the Soviet Union by preventing the expansion of territory under the control of communist regimes and other types of expansion of their influence

5 THE COLD WAR. It was a political, economic, social, military and information confrontation initiated after the end of World War II between the capitalist Western Bloc led by the US, and the communist Eastern Bloc led by the USSR. The first phase of the Cold War began immediately after the end of World War II, in 1945. The United States created the NATO military alliance in 1949 with the aim of curbing down the Soviet influence in Europe. The Soviet Union responded to the creation of this alliance by establishing the Warsaw Pact in 1955. The main crises of this phase included the 1948-49 Berlin blockade, the second phase of the Chinese civil war (1946-1949), the Korean war (1950-1953), the 1956 Suez crisis, the 1961 Berlin crisis and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

6 For information concerning the Russian investment in the icebreaker fleet, see https://mundo.sputniknews.com/tags/keyword_rocket/

7 NORD STREAM 2. (Old names: North Transgas and North European Gas Pipeline) Also known as the Russian-German gas pipeline or Baltic Sea pipeline, it is a natural gas pipeline that is being built offshore from Viborg in Russia to Greifswald in Germany.

8 According to official data provided by the Pentagon, in 2005, the US had 737 bases abroad. With those of the national territory and those of their own territories they would cover a total area of 2 202 735 hectares, which would make the Pentagon one of the largest land owners on the planet (Gelman, J., 2007).

9 **NEW WORLD ORDER.** It has been used to refer to a new period in history where drastic changes in political ideologies and the balance of power are being attempted.

10 **REALPOLITIK.** It was a term coined by Otto von Bismarck, fulfilling the request of Prince Klemens von Metternich to find a method to balance power among European empires in order to achieve peace. Today, the practice is often confused with political realism that always goes in the opposite direction.

11 **THE BERLIN WALL.** It was part of the inter-German border that separated, from August 13, 1961 to November 9, 1989, the city of Berlin, in the economic area of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), East Berlin, from the capital of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) all those years. It was the best known "monument" of the Cold War.

12 **THE BLACK SWAN.** Also called the theory of the events of the black swan, is a metaphor that describes a surprising event of great socioeconomic impact and that, once the event is over, is rationalized by retrospection (making it seem predictable or explainable and giving the impression that it was expected to happen). It was developed by the Lebanese philosopher and researcher Nassim Taleb.

13 **WARP SPEED OPERATION.** Plan by which the USA is to be the first country in the world to use that wants to procure enough vaccines and treatments to address COVID-19 in 2021, but could leave other countries without access.

14 **GEORGE FLOYD.** African-American US citizen, killed by a policeman who strangled him by placing his knee in the back of his neck, 25 May 2020, in the city of Minneapolis

15 UYGUR ETHNICITY. Group living in the northwest regions of the People's Republic of China, mainly in the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Members of this people are also found in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Another group lives in the Hunan area. They are one of the 56 ethnic groups officially recognized by the Chinese government.

16 QUAD (Quadrilateral of Security in Asia), is formed by the USA, Australia, Japan and India. Its purpose is to box or corner China into the Pacific.

17 FORT KNOX. It is a military base of the U.S. Army located in the state of Kentucky. The 44,000-hectare facility has officially stored, since 1937, a large part of the gold reserves of that country and of others that have entrusted their gold to that facility.

18 VIET CONG OR VIETCONG. Guerrilla front that fought against the former regime of South Vietnam and against the US in the Vietnam War. It was founded in 1960 by communist, nationalist and Buddhist groups. Taiwan, also known in the past as Formosa, is an island controlled since 1945 by the Republic of China off the coast of mainland China. The two territories have been separated since the end of the civil war between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China, when the latter took power in mainland China.

19 BRETTON WOODS. It is a hotel complex in the city of New Hampshire where the agreements and resolutions of the monetary and financial conference of the United Nations, held between the 1st and 22nd of July 1944, were carried out.

It was there that the new world economic order was established, which was in effect until the early 1970s. It is called The Bretton Woods Agreements where, among other things, the value of the world's gold-backed currencies was fixed.

20 ORGANIZATION OF OIL EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC). Organization recognized since November 6, 1962 by the UN, thanks to resolution number 6,363. It is made up of countries in Africa, Asia and South America. Currently, it is made up of 14 countries of which five are founding members (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq and Venezuela), the rest are Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Gabon, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates.

21 THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD. It was a campaign of economic, social and political measures implemented in the People's Republic of China between 1958 and 1961, during the presidency of Mao Zedong, with the aim of transforming the traditional Chinese agrarian economy through rapid industrialization and collectivization

22 POPULAR COMMUNE (1949 to 1956). China's individual agricultural economy, based on private ownership, was transformed into a cooperative agricultural economy, based on public ownership. First there was the "communist commune," then the "collective farm," and finally the "people's commune.

23 THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. Also known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a socio-political movement that took place in China from 1966 to 1976. Initiated by Mao Zedong, its aim was to preserve communism by eliminating the remnants of capitalist and traditional elements in Chinese society, and to re-impose Maoist thought as the dominant ideology within the Party, after the failures of its Great Leap Forward

which killed approximately 30 million people in the Great Chinese Famine.

24 THE GANG OF FOUR. This is the name given to a group of senior leaders of the Communist Party of China who were expelled from the Party and placed under arrest after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, being found guilty of crimes and abuses committed during the Cultural Revolution and marking, in fact, the end of this mixture of social experiment and factional struggle that Mao launched in 1966 as part of his confrontation with other leaders.

25 WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) It is an organization for liberalizing trade. Most of its current work stems from the negotiations held in 1986-1994 - the so-called Uruguay Round - and earlier negotiations held under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The pillars on which it rests are the WTO agreements, which have been negotiated and signed by the vast majority of countries participating in world trade.

26 WAR ROOM. It is conceived as a team of political communication specialists whose function is to develop tactics that execute a defined communication strategy.

27 UNIPOLAR. This is the form of world order that was imposed at the end of the bipolar era. Hegemony is the domain exercised by a given world power that is capable of organizing, articulating and enforcing the general rules of the system.

28 STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE (SID). Popularly known as Star Wars, it is the military program of the Department of Defense to build a defensive system

with space weapons, capable of preventing a nuclear attack on American territory using intercontinental ballistic missiles launched from submarines. The concept was first publicly announced on March 23, 1983, by President Ronald Reagan. Many analysts think that it was the beginning of the Soviet collapse.

29 MATCH 20. The Mach (M) number. It is a measure of relative speed that is defined as the quotient between the speed of an object and the speed of sound. It is a dimensionless number usually used to describe the speed of airplanes. Mach 1 is equivalent to the speed of sound (1,234.8 km/h), Mach 20 is twenty times the speed of sound (24,696 km/h).

30 THE GREAT RECESSION. It is known to the world economic crisis that began in 2008 and had its origin in the U.S. Among the main factors that are attributed to it as causes are failures in economic regulation, overvaluation of products, global food and energy crisis, and the threat of a worldwide recession. The spark started with the bursting of the mortgage credit bubble.

31 LEVIATAN. Fabulous sea monster described in the Bible as inhumane and destructive. It is considered as a representation of the devil.

32 GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP). It is a macroeconomic magnitude that expresses the monetary value of the production of goods and services of final demand of a country, normally one year. Nominal GDP: is the monetary value of all goods and services produced by a country or an economy at current prices in the year the goods are produced. Real GDP: is defined as the monetary value of

all goods and services produced by a country valued at constant prices, that is, according to the prices of the year taken as a basis.

33 PURCHASING POWER PARITY (PPP). It is the final sum of quantities of goods and services purchased in a country, to the monetary value of a any given country in reference. The US economy is used as its Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), which is defined as real GDP per capita, the most widely used measure of an economy's size.

34 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI). This is the combination of algorithms designed to create machines with the same capabilities as human beings. A technology that is still distant and mysterious, but that for some years is present in our daily lives and at all times

35 GAFAT, the acronym was coined by Dr. Alfredo Jalife Hamed and refers to the acronym formed with the initials of five of the seven technological giants of the modern world: Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Twitter; companies of American origin.

36 HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES. It is a Chinese multinational technology company. It was founded in 1987. It provides telecommunication equipment and sells consumer electronics (smart phones, etc). Its headquarters are located in Shenzhen (Guangdong). Initially focused on the manufacture of telephone switches, it has expanded its business to include the construction of telecommunication networks, providing operational and consulting services and equipment to companies inside and outside China, as well as the manufacture of communication devices for the consumer market. Huawei overtook Ericsson in 2012 and Apple in 2018.

37 ZTE CORPORATION. Is a global provider of telecommunications equipment and network solutions also based in Shenzhen, China. The company was established in 1985. Since 1996, the company has provided products and services in 135 countries and regions in Southeast Asia, South Asia, North America, Latin America, Europe and Africa. ZTE has established business ties with nearly 500 operators worldwide. In addition to cell phones, ZTE develops and manufactures telecommunications equipment for fixed, mobile data, smart optics and next-generation networks.

38 5G. Name of the technology that will be the soul of the new economy. Cars that drive themselves, virtual reality, smart cities and networked robots - all will soon be running on 5G technology. 5G promises to open the door to new surgical procedures, safer transportation and instant communication for emergency and relief services.

39 See the BBC article entitled "Veto of Huawei", available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-53459814>

40 NINE-POINT LINE. It is the U-shaped line drawn by the Government of the People's Republic of China in the territory it claims as its own in the South China Sea. It includes the Paracelsus Islands (occupied by China, but claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan) and the Spratly Islands, in dispute between the Philippines, the People's Republic of China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Republic of China and Vietnam. According to China, it is based on a dotted line that appears on the map of the Qing Dynasty of the Chinese Empire, which also includes on the same map the island of Formosa, that is, the current Republic of China (Taiwan).

41 GREAT WALL OF SAND. It is the common name given to a series of land reclamation projects carried out by the Chinese government since 2014, in the China Sea - particularly in the Paracelsus Islands and Spratly Island groups - in order to strengthen Chinese land claims to the region delimited by the "nine-point line" in the territorial conflict in the South China Sea.

42 SPRATLY ISLANDS. They are an archipelago in the South China Sea, located between the Philippines and Vietnam. It consists of a group of approximately 100 reefs and islets, surrounded by oil and natural gas deposits. These islands are known to be part of a disputed territory (Taiwan and Vietnam claim the whole archipelago, while Malaysia and the Philippines claim a part). These five nations have militarily occupied various islands as a testimony to their sovereignty in the area. Brunei has also occupied some reefs in the south of the archipelago, but has not made a formal claim to them.

43 THE PHILIPPINE OCCUPATION OF THE ISLANDS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA It began on April 6, 2017 to the islands of the South China Sea, where the Philippines has interests with five other countries, and it is the People's Republic of China and Vietnam that control most of the islands.

44 KASHMIR. This is a region located in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. Historically, the valley located south of the westernmost part of the Himalayan mountain range, along with the surrounding areas that have been part of its historical process has been called Kashmir. It is a disputed area, with a population of approximately 13 million people. When India became independent from the United Kingdom in 1947, its territories with a majority Muslim population were

segregated to form the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The exception was the principality of Kashmir: in order to face an internal rebellion, its maharajah asked for help from India, which agreed on condition that the territory became part of its jurisdiction.

45 STRAIT OF MALACCA. It is a long strait of sea of Southeast Asia located between the western coast of the Malayan peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It's an important maritime corridor that joins, to the north, the Andaman Sea, a marginal sea of the Indian Ocean, and to the south the South China Sea. It has acquired an important strategic role, being the main route for the supply of oil to two of the main world consumers, Japan and China.

46 ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS. They are part of the territories of the Republic of India. They are located in the Indian Ocean, in the southern part of the 10° N, being the Andaman to the north and Nicobar to the south. The capital of the territory is Port Blair.

47 PORT OF GWADAR. It is a deep sea port located in the Arabian Sea in Gwadar, in the province of Baluchistan in Pakistan. It is located at the apex of the Arabian Sea and at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, west of Karachi, east of Pakistan's border with Iran, and northeast of the nearest point in Oman, across the Arabian Sea.

48 INDO-PACIFIC. It is a biogeographic region of the Earth's seas, comprising the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, the western and central Pacific Ocean, and the sea connecting the two in the general area of Indonesia.

49 ASIA-PACIFIC. It is the part of the world in or near the western Pacific Ocean. The region varies in

size, depending on the context, but usually includes much of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania.

50 World Trade Organization (WTO). World Health Organization (WHO). International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

51 FAKE NEWS. There has always been misleading news, but since the emergence of the Internet and new communication and information technologies, fake news has proliferated across the planet. This term is used to conceptualize the dissemination of false news that leads to a dangerous circle of misinformation.

52 EURASIA. This is a term that defines a geographical area or continent that comprises Europe and Asia together. It can be considered the largest continent in the world or as a "supercontinent", since the traditional continents of Europe and Asia actually form one single landmass. Eurasia can be considered as a real continent from the physiogeographic, geological and cultural point of view, as they share the Indo-European linguistic branch of many countries.

53 FIFTH GENERATION WAR. The conquest of minds through the *mass media*.

54 PSYOP. Type of psychological operations called psychological warfare. They are used as a "credible threat" and can interrupt, confuse and prolong the decision-making process of the adversary, undermining command and control. Other terms are also used such as political warfare, "winning minds and hearts,". It is sometimes confused with propaganda.

55 **ME. LE. SA.** (Means, Laws, Sanctions). The cycle that follows the war of microphones when it is open in declarations to the press, which serves as a basis for regulating with laws and decrees the conflicts with the arbitrary punishment of sanctions.

56 **EURASIAN DRAGON.** It is the geopolitical axis that draws the head of a dragon swallowing the world map, in a Western direction. The image represents the border correlation of Iran, Pakistan, North Korea, China and Russia.

57 **JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION (JCPOA).** It is an international agreement on Iran's nuclear program established in Vienna, on July 14th, 2015, between Iran, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States - plus Germany) and the European Union.

58 **CASUS BELLI.** It is a Latin expression, translatable into English as "reason for war", which refers to the circumstance that implies a cause or pretext for establishing a warlike action. The term emerged in the context of late-nineteenth-century international law as a consequence of the political doctrine of jus in or "law of war".

59 **POST-TRUTH.** Also known as an emotional lie, it is a new word that describes the deliberate distortion of a reality in which objective facts have less influence than appeals to personal emotions and beliefs, in order to create and shape public opinion and influence social attitudes

60 **TIKTOK.** It is a Chinese application in social networks where users upload selfies videos with

sound filters. Its main attraction is the performance with these audios; the content is intended to be entertaining, funny and emotional.

61 **UNICORN**. In business terms, it refers to those companies that achieve a value of more than 1 billion dollars in their initial stage.

62 **MELIOS DIALOGUE**. Also known as the "Dialogue of the Melians" is a passage from Book V (85-113) of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, written by the Greek historian Thucydides. It is an unusual text because it is written as a theatrical dialogue and not as a record of discursive confrontation, as Thucydides usually wrote. The inhabitants of Melos were Dorians and descended from the Spartans, but were independent of any of the empires on the mainland. Big state, in front of the small one, supporting the logic of their weakness at the request of the "Melios Dialogue". In short, the small ones can strike far above their weight while the big ones wear themselves out fighting

THE THUCYDIDES RAMP UP. TOWARDS A TRIPLE POLARITY
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The hegemonic confrontation between the United States and China slides seamlessly into the scenario known as the THUCYDID TRAP. There is a determined and manifest will to go to the very end, once the pandemic crisis has abated. The conflict is two-faced in that the escalation is taking place simultaneously on two war fields. One, the unconventional and fifth generation that is called commercial, where China will try to impose its two new Silk Roads (the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific), without neglecting the objective of being the first; at the same time, the United States fights to avoid at all costs that it achieves it, at the risk of being displaced as the first world power. On the other hand, in this investigation, we have predicted that the struggle will be staged with all certainty from 2021 on, given that the actors in the struggle already show their military power in the scenario we have called THE THUCYDIDES RAMP UP.

Vladimir Padrino López (Caracas, 1963)

Venezuelan military, currently Vice President of Sovereignty, Security and Peace, and Minister of People's Power for Defense of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. He graduated from the Venezuelan Military Academy (currently the Bolivarian Military University of Venezuela) on July 5, 1984, member of the "Brigadier General Juan Gómez Mireles" class. His teaching vocation has led him to teach in various military and civilian institutes. He has occupied the first place in the order of merit in all the courses corresponding to his career standard. This publication corresponds to his Postdoctoral Work consigned to the Simón Rodríguez University.