

Allegiance to which New World Order? 21st Century Engagement of China and India in Africa

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Abstract

This article is an interrogation of the concept of ‘the new world order’. Retracing the concept from the early 20th century and its uses during this period, filtering into the 21st century, the paper argues that China and India’s engagement with Africa, is a testament to the ever-changing dynamics of power plays and the re-ordering of the pecking order from the most globally powerful economies, downwards. The rise of China, India, and Russia are indications of the waning influence of the USA and its European counterparts. For its resources, Africa could very well return to its status of ‘testing ground’ of the economically and militarily more powerful nations.

Keywords: world order, power, Africa, China, India, ‘testing ground’

Introduction

A common definition of the idea of a ‘*new world order*’ dates back to more than a 100-years, when Woodrow Wilson, America’s 28th President (1913 to 1921), spoke on 9 September 1919 at an election campaign at the University of Minnesota, Armory, Minneapolis. In neutral terms the concept refers to a new period of history evidencing dramatic change in world political thought

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and the balance of power in international relations. Despite varied interpretations of this idea of a '*new world order*', it is primarily associated with the ideological notion of world governance only in the sense of new collective efforts to identify, understand, or address global problems that go beyond the capacity of individual nation states to solve. The Latin phrase *novus ordo seclorum*, appearing on the reverse side of the Great Seal since 1782 and later on the back of the United States one-dollar bill since 1935, translates to '*New Order of the Age*' and alludes to the beginning of an era where the United States of America went through a four-year civil war (12 April 1861 to 9 April 1865) to become an independent nation-state. Perceptions and theories abounded after its introduction to the world, with conspiracy theorists having claimed that this was the USA's allusion to the *New World Order*, marking the beginning of American hegemony in the global economy. However, the mid-nineteenth century was too early to view the USA as a global hegemonic power, especially since inter-state acrimony forced the Americans to settle their internal problems before looking outwards. The concept was preceded by numerous synonyms before it consolidated, but more as rhetoric than as a concretised phenomenon amidst a world divided by two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century. A greater divide emerged after WWII between capitalist United States of America (USA) and socialist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as each competed for a following to create a world based upon their respective ideologies. In the USA numerous academics have viewed the '*New World Order*' theory as a populist right-wing theory, amplifying their analyses against this rise through the prism of concepts such as '*survivalism*', '*militarism*', '*apocalypse*' and millenarian scenario building (Camp 1997; Goldberg 2001; Fenster 2008).

Former American President Harry Truman's speeches (1945-1953: 33rd President) had phrases such as, '*better world order*', '*peaceful world order*', '*moral world order*' and '*world order based on law*' but not so much as the oft used contemporary notion of '*new world order*'. The two major World Wars fought in the first half of the twentieth century forced the world's most industrialised countries to recognise the need for a regulatory body that would act in preventative ways to control and end conflictual situations. Two years after World War I, the *The League of Nations* was introduced to the world. It ran from 10 January 1920 to 9 April 1946, setting itself off through a catch phrase that intended to legitimize its existence: '*the war to end all wars*'. Although Roosevelt, the 32nd President of the United States, from 1933 to 1945, and Truman may have been hesitant to use the phrase, commentators applied the term retroactively to the order put in place by the World War II

victors, the USA – who dominated through their leading roles in the creation of the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods Order as a ‘new world order’. While the Bretton Woods Order negotiated a monetary system for independent states in 1944, the UN Charter was first discussed on 25 April 1945, had it adopted by 25 June 1945 and operationalised it by 24 October 1945 – within a period of six months. Its main aim was five-fold, to maintain: international peace and security; human rights; delivering humanitarian aid; engaging in sustainable development; and getting countries to recognise and respect international law and order. As the UN was being ushered in The League of Nations was being ushered out, finally closing its doors on 19 April 1946.

The post WWII era witnessed another type of non-military ‘combat’ through the Cold War between two super-powers: the USA and USSR. The differences were fierce but largely ideological: with the USA labelling itself as the ‘leader of the free world’ and the USSR presenting itself as the saviour of the world’s majority working class: the proletariat. While the former promoted capitalism through individualism, the latter promoted collectivisation and communal ownership of productive resources, including land, machines, tools.

Into the Twenty-First Century

Since the 1980s political turmoil gave way to one of history’s unprecedented ideological upsets – the demise of socialism and its failure to accomplish the communist order that it touted as its longer-term goal. While this brought an abrupt end to the Post World War II cliché of ‘Cold War’, it ushered in another disruptive force to the world. Labelled by Samuel Huntington (2011) as the *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order*, fundamentalist cum radical Islam set into motion what Huntington rightfully labeled as a cultural war dominated by the fight among the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Christian narratives replaced the cold-war era of capitalism against communism. The most widely discussed application of the ‘new world order’ phrase of recent times came at the end of the Cold War, beginning around 1991. The entire East European block of socialist states, those of the USSR, and in the Balkans folded almost simultaneously in favour of a radical shift away from Marxist ideology. Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev (USSR) and the senior George H.W. Bush (USA) used the term to try to redefine the nature of the post-Cold War era and the spirit of their great power cooperation that they hoped might materialize. Gorbachev’s initial formulation was iconoclastic and

radically divergent to the romanticism of the socialist utopia of a singular class structure for the entire world. But his ability to press for it was severely hampered by the internal crisis of the Soviet system.

In comparison to Gorbachev, Bush's vision was not less circumscribed. He asserted:

A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavour. Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we've known².

However, given the new unipolar status of the United States immediately after the collapse of socialism, Bush egregiously stated that 'there is no substitute for American leadership'. The Gulf War of 1991 was regarded as the first test of the new world order:

Now, we can see a new world coming into view. A world in which there is the very real prospect of a new world order. ... The Gulf War put this new world to its first test.

Hua Hsu (2013), in his account of: 'A Global Government is Waiting on the Wings', stated that:

The New World Order is not so much a single plot as a way of reading history. At its most basic level: A cabal, working in secret as well as through official-seeming, above ground means, seeks to establish an all-powerful, possibly Luciferian, one-world government. Suspicions surrounding a shadow Establishment date back at least to the 1700s, with the birth of the Freemasons and the Illuminati.

In his attempt to understand the contemporary conundrum of constantly changing geo-political dynamics, Hsu placed emphasis on the past century's global wars, the political realignments, and media innovations that provide a fresh insight into this age-old paranoia. He affirmed that in contemporary scenario building, the gerrymandering processes to create 'the New World Order' is an insidious case of concealment. It rests upon a hideous rhetoric about how the 'free people' of the West have begun to somewhat blindly

² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_world_order_\(politics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_world_order_(politics))

surrender themselves to an imminent totalitarian regime. Hsu rightly raises a common anxiety ridden concern about their real intentions: *'What they want to do to us is never exactly clear – the anxiety tends to be more about the “new” part than the “older” part'*. Part of the answer certainly lies in the man-made laboratory hatched corona virus unleashed unto the world in 2019, bringing the entire world to a shutdown by March 2020, and henceforth lasting around 30 months.

In *The Guardian* (12 April 2020; 26 March 2023), challenges and conspiracies abounded about the future impact of the virus and how and where the virus began (respectively).

Coronavirus: Who will be Winners and Losers in New World Order?³

The World Health Organization concluded from its initial investigation that a lab leak was 'extremely unlikely' to have caused the pandemic, but the second phase of its inquiries has stalled as Beijing has failed to share more data. China has a history of cover-ups, including over the deadly Sars outbreak; officials in Wuhan attempted to hide early Covid cases, arresting people who posted about the mysterious new disease; the top leadership in Beijing reportedly waited six days to warn the public after determining that a pandemic was likely; and officials have promoted disinformation, implying that the virus might have come from a US lab⁴.

Americans and Chinese traded insults and suspicions at each other with a ferociousness that tended to negate the death tolls as a result of the virus's impact upon their populations. Political leadership in European countries joined the blame-game as well, but with a drab 'assertiveness' that was unconvincing about wanting to find the culprits of the virus leak. For instance, the response from Germany through their former Social Democratic party foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel, lamented that 'we talked the state down for 30 years, anticipating that the next generation will be less naive about globalisation. In Italy, the first European Union country that recorded abominable figures of deaths through coronavirus attacks, the former prime minister Matteo Renzi called for a commission into the future. However, the will to get to the root cause of the pandemic did not arise. In Hong Kong,

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2020/apr/12>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2023/mar/26>

graffiti reads: ‘There can be no return to normal because normal was the problem in the first place’.

In Europe⁵, the US and Asia the discussion has broadened out. Public life might have been at a standstill, but public debate has accelerated. Henry Kissinger, former US secretary of state under Richard Nixon, stated that rulers must prepare to transition to a post-coronavirus world order. With the global economy and international air and sea travel being placed on hold, the world receded into a most uncertain phase in modern history. Incisive questions began emerging everywhere about a trashed global economy and public health, the relative virtues of centralised or regionalised health systems, the exposed fragilities of globalisation, the future of the EU, populism, and the alleged inherent advantage of authoritarianism.

It is as if the pandemic had turned into a competition for a new global leadership. A veiled insinuation emerged that it will be the countries that most effectively respond to the coronavirus crisis that will gain traction. With the world at a standstill and American pharmaceutical manufacturers such as Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson trying to capitalise, with brutal greed on the pandemic, diplomats found themselves operating out of emptied embassies and severely constrained to budgets. They were busy defending their governments’ handling of the crisis, and often took serious offence to criticism. While national pride and health were at stake each country looked at their neighbour to view how badly affected they were or how quickly they were ‘flattening the curve’. A Crisis Group think tank, in assessing how the virus will permanently change international politics, suggested:

For now, we can discern two competing narratives gaining currency – one in which the lesson is that countries ought to come together to better defeat Covid-19, and one in which the lesson is that countries need to stand apart in order to better protect themselves from it.

India and the West

While the coronavirus brought an abrupt halt to the world economy like an athlete with a severely stubbed toe, the Russian attack against Ukraine served as an important diversion from the USA and China’s roles as culprits of a global experiment to cull the human population. Ukraine was setting itself up for entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), much against

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/europe-news>

the Russian appeal to refrain from that. Rising cost of living fuelled by rising oil prices infused a helpful diversion away from alleged culpability of a man-made pandemic by China and the USA. As the world was preparing for a thorough investigation into the genesis and responsibility of the coronavirus the Russia - Ukraine war led to an almost unannounced exoneration of these countries' role in the creation of the virus in their labs in Wuhan and California. In a *Firstpost Opinion*, Hassan Suroor (2022) in an article titled: 'How a new world order is emerging from the ruins of Ukraine — and India is at the heart of it', wrote about a rapidly emerging new world order, to which the world has yet to realise, with India at the centre of it. With a claim that the iron-clad western world is teetering, Suroor accusingly wrote:

There's a long list of Western foreign policy disasters and each new disaster looks worse than the previous one. But thanks to a skewed world order, the West has got away with it each time. That is, until now. With the Ukraine conflict, it appears, finally, to have run out of luck as it struggles to canvass support for its proxy war with Russia. Whatever the ultimate outcome of this crisis, it is shaping up into a watershed moment in post-War European history.

Suroor (2002) viewed the situation with western leaders as seriously miscalculating the rise of a country such as India because of its misguided assumptions about its leadership. He found fault with the brave public rhetoric of American President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron, of failing to build a broad coalition against Russia. Western countries appeared to have lost its momentum in appreciating the anti-West sentiment across large swathes of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. His analysis is suggestive of them being Machiavellian in their approach to the world, that even the most trusted traditional Western allies like Israel, Saudi Arabia and UAE, among others, have refused to fall in line with the USA and NATO countries.

India's adoption of a neutral stand has prompted a movement towards an 'anti-Western coalition', especially as seen in the increasing interest in the BRICS alliance (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). By 2022 at least 23 more countries from four continents have shown interest in BRICS. An Editorial in *The Times* (London) noted that the shift towards an alternative competing world leadership formation will serve as a formidable challenge to NATO: including USA, Canada and 29 European countries. *The Times* noted that high-profile American and European leaders have been lining up in Delhi

as the post-Covid era began settling in to persuade the county's leadership to harden its stance towards Russia. However, to date India has remained steadfast in its principles of neutrality towards Russia, citing its dilemma in their 1971 war against Pakistan and reminding the Americans that they chose to assist their enemy when it really mattered.

Without detracting from Russian atrocities against civilian life in Ukraine, which India has publicly condemned, there remains a real possibility that the USA could face diplomatic isolation for its clandestine role in Ukraine. There is, at this juncture in early 2024, questions about how the war will end in Ukraine, what would be the costs to redevelopment there, and to what extent will Ukraine be isolated by NATO if there might be a level of dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian state's unwillingness to do as its supporters in the role as funders and suppliers of military equipment wanted them to do.

Numerous American intellectuals and politicians have accused the American political establishment of stoking Ukraine's war with Russia. Those in charge, under the Joe Biden Administration, kept an ongoing blame-game against the Russians as the sole initiators of the war. Despite the Minsk Agreement of 2015, that Ukraine will not join NATO and they will not allow NATO military troops and equipment on their border with Russia, there were moves afoot early 2022 that broke this trust. Russia and Ukraine signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership in 1997, pledging to respect the territorial integrity of each nation. The agreement was signed on 21 February 2014 by the then-President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, a pro-Russian leader, and the leaders of the parliamentary opposition in Ukraine, through the mediation of the European Union and Russia.

However, in the Donbas region of Ukraine, differences between Russian speakers and 'ethnic' Ukrainians flared up to a point of an armed insurrection by both sides. Russian separatists were assisted by regular Russian forces when the Armed Forces of Ukraine took sides with their Ukrainian fellow citizens. According to a 2001 census, ethnic Ukrainians formed 58% of the population of Luhansk Oblast and 56.9% of Donetsk Oblast areas. Ethnic Russians formed the largest minority, accounting for 39% and 38.2% of the two Oblasts respectively. In the present day, the Donbas is a predominately Russophone region⁶. However, as Ukrainians fled the Russians dominated and claimed the territory as their own since it was allegedly turned into a majority

6

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Is+the+Donbas+region+majority+Russian+%3F&client=firefox->

Russian population. The Minsk Agreement were signed after extensive discussion in Minsk, Belarus, on 5 September 2014 by which time leaders the by-then self-proclaimed leaders claimed autonomy for their two regions: Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). The real cause of the ethnic conflicts and the status of those who lost property were not addressed. Against this background, once stand-up Ukrainian comedian Volodymyr Zelenskyy, propped up by the USA, served as the 6th President of Ukraine from 2019, after the breakup of the USSR in 1991. Zelensky allegedly complained to then German Chancellor and French President Macron in 2019 that he is unable to uphold the Minsk Agreement, paving the way for Russian confrontation with NATO's military build up on the Ukraine-Russian border. In a Chatham House research paper, Duncan Allan (2020) attempts to address the contradiction of the Ukraine status in the form of a question:

The Minsk agreements rest on two irreconcilable interpretations of Ukraine's sovereignty: is Ukraine sovereign, as Ukrainians insist, or should its sovereignty be limited, as Russia demands?

Allan (2020) asserted that instead of trying to resolve an unresolvable contradiction, Western policymakers should acknowledge the starkness of the Minsk conundrum – somewhat tilting towards Russia's favour in their capture of territories, for the sake of world peace and stability.

Against this background, second time Presidential candidate Donald Trump for instance, pledged to end the Russo-Ukraine war overnight if re-elected as President in 2024, while the likes of Jeffrey Sachs, Seymour Hirsch and Naomi Chompski have been highly critical of Joe Biden's role, as USA President, in supporting the war⁷. Was this, in a manner of speaking, an attempt by the 'deep state' in the USA to divert attention in its role in shutting down the world economy in March 2020, by using Covid-19 as their smokescreen.

The West and Africa

By the second decade of the 21st century Europe and the North Americas showed a reduced investment interest in the African continent. Since the peak in investments in 2014, foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa from the United States dropped from just under 70 billion US dollars to 47.5 billion U.S. dollars in 2020. Despite its mineral rich resource base, Africa now receives

⁷ Each of these individuals appeared in YouTube discussions.

lower FDI inflows than any other region in the world. This decline is by more than US\$20 billion (4 August 2021). China viewed this as an opportunity in Africa and has entered the continent with determination to replace the fledgling investments by the collective West. German Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa is lagging behind China, France, the Netherlands, the UK, the USA. It represented only 1 percent of the German total FDI stock abroad in 2018 and is concentrated in no more than a few African countries. That share has not changed in the last several decades. The focus of German enterprises is on Asia as well as Central and Eastern Europe. The remaining major industrialised nations such as France, the United Kingdom and the US jointly invest four to seven times more in Africa, around 850 German firms have roughly 200,000 employees on the entire African continent (as of 2017). Compared with other countries, German FDI is more concentrated in manufacturing as opposed to the natural resources sector.⁸

China and India in Africa

As rising economic powers China (Brandt 1997; Spence 2013; Wahed 2016) and India (Tharoor 2017; Malhotra 2018; Deepak 2021) have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the ways in which they survived colonial invasions from the eighteenth to first half of the twentieth centuries, and are rising like phoenixes from severe abject poverty caused by these invasions. Both China and India are venturing towards Africa in ways that represent distinctive diversions from the European colonization which dominated the world between the seventeenth to the latter era of the twentieth centuries. China however, with a head start advantage that began 12 years earlier than India, having begun in 1978, now has an economy that exceeds the size of India by at least four-and-half times. While India's economy is operated, as of January 2024, at a level of 4 trillion US dollars per annum, China's is operating at around 18 trillion US dollars, making the latter the second largest in the world (Zhou 2014). Their roles and presence in the African continent must be viewed against at least 3 factors:

⁸ <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/experts/ifw/frauke-steglich/lagging-behind-german-foreign-direct-investment-in-africa-14622/>
<https://www.kfw.de/PDF/Download-Center/Konzernthemen/Research/PDF-Dokumente-Fokus-Volkswirtschaft/Fokus-englische-Dateien/Fokus-2020-EN/Fokus-No.-299-September-2020-Investment-Promotion-Schemes.pdf>

- Their rapid rise in economic strength and increased potential for outward investments.
- The reduced interest in investing in Africa by the previous European and American investors; and
- Their need to find more employment niches for significant labour capital, which in turn adds to their much-needed foreign reserves through remittances. Both China and India earn significant amounts in remittances from their citizens working overseas, including Africa.

Within a span of less than fifty years China and India have disrupted the hegemonic aims of the USA and the USSR (the latter now defunct). On its own however, Russia is growing steadily economically to add to the multi-polar world that is emerging in early 21st century. In 2019, India's foreign employed citizens sent USD83.3 billion in remittances. In 2020, according to a World Bank report, India received over USD83 billion in remittances, a drop of a mere 0.2 per cent from the previous year, despite the coronavirus pandemic that devastated the entire world economy. In 2021 India was the world's largest recipient of remittances, having received \$87 billion⁹.

China however remained a distant second with a USD60 billion collection of remittances¹⁰. However, as Zhou discussed, the trajectories that each country is following is distinctly different. The synopses below for each country captures some of the unfolding scenarios by both countries in Africa.

China's Recent History with Africa

China's recent history in Africa can be traced back to the early 1960s. The African continent's relations with China were strained in the early 1960s as a result of its 'Cultural Revolution' programme, but improved in the late 1970s. As China's financial buoyancy improved their relationships with African countries consolidated by undercutting the West through their: (i) demand of fewer conditions for lending; (ii) granting assistance at very low rates, and repayable over much longer periods than what was being offered by the West; and (iii) they offered training to professional and technical personnel to African

⁹ http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/87772872.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

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<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=CN>

citizens. At the level of rhetoric, China's position in Africa appears more accommodating than what is offered by the West.

Imposed conditionalities by the West, merely the latest in the decades of humiliating experiences at the hands of former colonial powers and the United States, echoes the humiliations of the 'unequal treaties' foisted on China by the west in the nineteenth century. Indeed, China's ability to recognize this is 'part of the genius of its foreign policy endeavours toward Africa' (Mary-Francoise Renard 2011, quoting Alden 2008: 20). The choice of terms with which countries operationalise their engagements are almost always intended to signify the positive between two nations or among the many that may group together in emerging relations. Whether they are noted as geopolitical alliances, strategic partnerships or as cooperative relationships, history over the last two centuries has shown that one country is generally the hegemonic force over however many may enter into that relationship. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the imperialist tendencies of British and French over much of Africa, the Spanish in most of South America, and to a lesser extent the Portuguese, Belgians and Germans in Africa and other parts of the world.

China's relations with African countries, and indeed its global economic strategy, have been shaped by the need to obtain energy resources to support their economic development. However, political considerations have also played an important role. In 1971, African countries were instrumental in preventing Taiwan from obtaining a seat at the United Nations Security Council. And while Taipei had until recently retained the support of numerous African countries, China's diplomatic interventions, financial incentives, aid proposals, and military assistance to Africa have been premised on receiving countries' abandoning diplomatic relations with Taiwan. This strategy has proven successful (Mary-Francoise Renard 2011: 13; Drummond & Liu 2013).

From an impoverished lingering economic nation (Spence 2013), China has become Africa's largest investor since 2010, followed by the US as the second-largest investor in Africa, with France in the third place. In 2019 China's FDI stock in Africa totalled \$110 billion, constituting over 20% of Africa's economic growth. Chinese FDIs have accelerated African supply to satisfy the continent's rapidly rising middle-class demand. Apart from the volume of its productivity and their extent of trade with countries throughout the world, China needed to create a convincing image for itself. African countries have become major trading partners to China's global economic strategy, to the point that its trade in the continent has surpassed that of the USA. China's forays into Africa since the early 2000's remains unprecedented.

For instance, the USA's FDI in Africa has been stagnant at one per cent, while China's FDI stands at three to four per cent. In 2013 the real terms of USA's trade in Africa stood at 85 billion American dollars while China's trade with African countries in 2012 stood at 200 billion American dollars (Gadzala 2015).

There are at least 5 major Chinese patterns of investments: capital Investments, Chinese technology and material, Chinese labour – minimal engagement of local level employment, cheaply made consumer goods that are not durable, and a reputation for destroying local entrepreneurship – both manufacturing and retail. Several case studies in Southern Africa attest to these patterns. In South Africa I covered the impact of Chinese investments in a mid-town industrial cum commercial hub in the city of Durban. Through the illustration of case studies covered in a qualitative study, entrepreneurs, mainly of 3rd and 4th generation people of Indian origin in South Africa, relayed their stories of humble beginnings, significant successes and sudden downward spirals towards liquidation through cheap Chinese investments covered by state protection. The industries were especially in fabric imports and cheaper manufactured goods of fabric from China that out-priced local industrialists and retailers that served workers and managerial classes (Singh 2022). The Economist (20 April 2011) has brought to our attention similar situations in neighbouring provinces and Southern African countries. It covered the darkened alleys of the Soweto market in Gauteng Province, South Africa and in Lusaka, Zambia, where the arrival of Chinese traders brought about an immediate steep drop in prices in at least two staple food items. Chicken prices were literally halved and the price of cabbages dropped by 65 per cent. Frustrated livestock dealers marched with their wire mesh cages to the Competition Commission in Lusaka, to protest the Chinese presence in their territory. One of the sellers was quoted as declaring: *'How dare the Chinese disturb our market?'* In the same article of *The Economist* it was reported that in Dar-es-Salaam, the commercial capital of Tanzania, Chinese entrepreneurs were stopped from selling in their markets. The government had declared prior to April 2011 that the Chinese were welcome as investors but not as 'vendors or shoe-shiners'.

Chinese loans to Africa presently (2024) exceeds US\$140 billion, but with questions being raised in each country for increased accountability by the politicians as well as what the implications would be in the event of non-repayments. China presently is a leading bilateral lender in 32 African countries and the top lender to the continent as a whole. The list includes: Angola (\$21.5 billion in 2017), Ethiopia (\$13.7 billion), Kenya (\$9.8 billion),

Republic of Congo (\$7.42 billion), Zambia (\$6.38 billion) and Cameroon (\$5.57 billion).

As the third most indebted nation to China, Kenya's political establishment had to engage in introspection. Most of these lessons were learnt during President Uhuru Kenyatta's regime amid reports a huge chunk of it was lost to corruption. Further reports suggest the country, considered an economic giant in East Africa, has in recent times struggled to pay off their debts. In the Republic of Congo it is reported that corruption has played a major role in the escalation of the debt to such egregious levels. Sudan - Makes to the list in fifth place. The conflict-torn country has an estimated debt of over \$6.4 billion (\$640 billion).

In the *Nairobi News* (2 May 2021) China's business dealings in Africa are the cause of serious consternation. China has in the past decade or so been involved in several multi-billion shillings projects, amid reports of kickbacks, a lack of accountability to a certain level, and high interest rates. This has left many African countries in debt. Kenya has not been spared, following a recent debate on whether the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project which was facilitated by the Chinese has been value for money thus far. In a YouTube report George Downs stated that the Chinese-built Standard SGR connecting Nairobi and Mombasa created much expectation about boosting the country's economic performance. Instead, it has become an important case study of how China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under Xi Jinping's leadership is more problematic than useful. Suspicions are raised about China's intentions in Kenya and the population at large remain sceptical with a condescending view about whether China can be trusted as a more viable alternative to the West in their quest for upward mobility in economic performance, technology transfers and overall social and economic upliftment of the general population.

In terms of the broader outlook in global strategies, the African-China relationship within the context of the 'New World Order' is that China will surge ahead while African politicians continue to constrain their populations upliftment.

India in Africa

India's approach to economic and political cooperation with Africa remains significantly different from China's. There is a lot of room for India in Africa: For example, Africa accounted for just 15 percent of India's outward total investment stock between 2017 and 2019.

The India - Africa bilateral trade has grown substantially over the last

decade, with the trade volume touching US\$ 55.9 billion in 2020-21. India is the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investments of US\$ 54 billion since 26 Jul 2021. In 2022 alone Indian overseas investors announced a record high of 22.2 billion US dollars foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa. A special report on investments in Africa showed such promise that it urged Indian investors to take their 74 billion American dollar investment in the continent to a new height of 150 billion dollars by 2030. Indian FDI to Africa is concentrated in oil, gas and mining in the primary commodities market. In the manufacturing sector, a dominance of automobile and pharmaceutical firms is seen¹¹.

India's list of more than 200 companies are spread across the continent, especially in Southern and Eastern Africa. Their trade and investment interests are rapidly rising. Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General of India's premier business association: the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) – spoke to *Global* about why the African continent, with its growing and dynamic economy, has become the 'destination of choice' for many of their enterprises. He justified this statement with the explanation as Africa is increasingly embracing democratic practices, the suitability for investment is improving with it. Africa is investment-hungry and Indian companies are working across sectors. Major companies such as Tata Group, Godrej Group, Bharti, Kirloskar, Mahindra & Mahindra, Escorts, Apollo and Essar among a range of others, are doing business in Africa. The Tata Group, a saviour to British steel and motor manufacturing in Britain, is present in many manufacturing and services sectors in Africa as well, while Bharti has entered the telecommunications market. Other companies are active in FMCG, automotives, IT, power and energy, as well as mining and minerals, banking. Infrastructure such as railways, construction, roads and bridges, is also an area of great interest, but not as yet, since China's lead over India also serves as a chalkboard full of lessons about what not to do in Africa to ensure long term amenability and sustainability in the continent. Since achieving independence, India has consistently supported anti-colonial and anti-racist liberation struggles in Africa. While the earlier relationship was built on the legacy of colonialism, a wave of liberalization and privatization in India in the 1990s led to a decisive shift in its Africa engagement policies. However, despite robust

¹¹https://www.google.com/search?q=What+is+India%27s+FDI+in+Africa%3F&rlz=1C1CHBD_enZA782ZA782&oq=What+is+India%27s+FDI+in+Africa%3F&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160l4j33i22i29i30l3.12194j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

engagement for over 70 years, India's CII is still developing its longer investment framework for Africa.

An important milestone in their relationship with Africa is the elaboration of [10 Guiding Principles for India's Africa Engagement](#)¹² during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the Ugandan Parliament on 25 July 2018 (Ministry of External Affairs). These pillars reflect a change in the nuances of India's priorities. For instance, both Indian private and government representatives consistently emphasize India's desire for its partnerships to be inclusive, people-centric, sustainable, transparent, and guided by African needs and priorities. These principles form the basis of a coherent and comprehensive strategy. Adding to it are security concerns that have been and will continue to be costly against supremacist ideologies. India considers African countries, especially those with coasts on the Indian Ocean, to be a critical part of its Indo-Pacific strategy. India shares a rich history of maritime trade with these nations in particular, and it has signed defence and shipping agreements with many of them.

For the path-breaking message that Modi's pronouncements incorporate, it will be useful to repeat them here:

One, Africa will be at the top of our priorities. We will continue to intensify and deepen our engagement with Africa. As we have shown, it will be sustained and regular.

Two, our development partnership will be guided by your priorities. It will be on terms that will be comfortable for you, that will liberate your potential and not constrain your future. We will rely on African talent and skills. We will build as much local capacity and create as many local opportunities as possible.

Three, we will keep our markets open and make it easier and more attractive to trade with India. We will support our industry to invest in Africa.

Four, we will harness India's experience with digital revolution to support Africa's development; improve delivery of public services;

¹² <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30152/Prime+Ministers+address+at+Parliament+of+Uganda+during+his+State+Visit+to+Uganda>

extend education and health; spread digital literacy; expand financial inclusion; and mainstream the marginalised.

This will not just be our partnership to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals, but also to equip the youth of Africa for their place in the digital age.

Five, Africa has 60 per cent of the world's arable land, but produces just 10 per cent of the global output. We will work with you to improve Africa's agriculture.

Six, our partnership will address the challenges of climate change. We will work with Africa to ensure a just international climate order; to preserve our biodiversity; and, adopt clean and efficient energy sources.

Seven, we will strengthen our cooperation and mutual capabilities in combating terrorism and extremism; keeping our cyberspace safe and secure; and, supporting the UN in advancing and keeping peace;

Eight, we will work with African nations to keep the oceans open and free for the benefit of all nations. The world needs cooperation and not competition in the eastern shores of Africa and the eastern Indian Ocean. That is why India's vision of Indian Ocean Security is cooperative and inclusive, rooted in security and growth for all in the region.

Nine, and, this is especially important to me: as global engagement in Africa increases, we must all work together to ensure that Africa does not once again turn into a theatre of rival ambitions, but becomes a nursery for the aspirations of Africa's youth.

Ten, just as India and Africa fought colonial rule together, we will work together for a just, representative and democratic global order that has a voice and a role for one-third of humanity that lives in Africa and India. India's own quest for reforms in the global institutions is incomplete without an equal place for Africa. That will be a key purpose of our foreign policy.

Modi's commitments to Africa sets a standard against a rampant practice of

domination and exploitation through the continent's post-colonial reliance upon exogenous forms of financial, technological and infrastructural investments. But his commitments are yet to be fully realised. Modi's global agenda remains under constant attack by multiple forces that are threatened by the rise of India as a one-time leader in economic performance. India's economic performance spread over 1800 of the last 2000 years, having been reduced from one of the richest to one of the poorest nations of the world through British colonisation. While Islamism is once again rearing its head against India, Christian missionary forces from the USA, neo liberal capitalism coupled with American populism from both right and left-wing sectors, prevail as counter forces not only to India but to Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa as well, collectively referred to BRICS. Numerous other countries have echoed their intentions to join BRICS in order to break American hegemony over the global economy, especially through an attack against the American 'petrodollar'.

Conclusion

Since the last five years beginning in 2020, a pertinent question lingers over the world with a nagging sense of curiosity: *'Would we ever have a 'NEW WORLD ORDER' EMERGING AFTER Covid-19 and the Russian-Ukraine/ NATO crisis?'* Simultaneous to this crucial question, another more specific one stands side by side with it:

Against the continuous accusation of corruption in African countries, does Chinese engagement not follow the banality of their European and American predecessors?

Will India be able to engage more productively with Africa than the West and China has done so far?

This raises another core question as well: 'If India is prioritizing Africa as its next major destination for its FDI engagements, to what extent can Indians be trusted against the history of abuse by foreign powers in Africa?' Some hope appears in Prime Minister Modi's speech in the Ugandan parliament on 25 July 2018. While Indian investors in Africa do not carry with them the baggage of the West and China, the country will be observed more carefully in the post-Modi era for continuity. Such a promising vision for future Afro-Indo relations must be constantly weighted against the rising resentment against France's role

in West Africa, especially with their currency manipulation and regime control, as well as anti-China sentiments.

One of India's major engagements in Africa that has held it in good positive stead so far is its UN Peace Keeping role in Africa. India has been the largest troop contributor to UN missions since inception. So far India has taken part in 49 Peacekeeping missions with a total contribution exceeding 1,95,000 troops and a significant number of police personnel having been deployed. Affected populations in African countries have shown affection and appreciation for Indian troops wherever they served, especially for the minor-scale development work that they did for the people they served and protected. By the time the after-effects of Covid-19 and Russia - Ukraine debacle settles down a pertinent question about a new world order will rear itself and loom large over our heads: 'Will there ever be a power or powers in the universe that can level the proverbial playing fields without political and economic sabotage, to benefit all of humanity?' Presently, while 'world order' is a word more akin to an oxymoron than a reality, it is achievable - but only until and unless the consequences of a nuclear war does not matter to zealous political warlords.

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