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Titolo Tesi:

Cold War without Ideology? Russia among the West Appeal, the Struggle for Sovereignty and Imperial Ambitions

Abstract

References to a "new Cold War" between Russia and "the West" have become recurring in the political arena, especially after 2014. Notwithstanding increasing voices supporting this interpretation of the current state of affairs, we will argue that the harsh geopolitical confrontation lacks one of the main characteristics of the "first" Cold War: the ideological struggle. Nowadays, both the Russian Federation and "the West" formally adopt the language and rhetoric of liberal democracies, with the first having been looking for status and legitimation from the "club" of the latter for more than two decades. To some extent, this is valid still nowadays despite an increasing anti-Western rhetoric, which grows at the same pace of anti-Kremlin stances in Europe and the Us.

Focusing on Russia's internal political debate, we will argue that no State ideology contributes to shape and set the public agenda. Strong disagreement marks not only the relations between a fragmented opposition and United Russia. It is hard to detect a clear-cut ideological directive even inside the Administration and Putin's inner circle. In order to prove that the current confrontation between Russia and Us/Eu/Nato has not (yet) taken the shape of a re-edition of the Cold War, we will focus on these internal contrasts. We will single out the main ideological currents: liberal, neo-conservative ("sovereign-democrat") and eurasian views coexist inside the Administration. As a result, stances and policies are rarely homogeneous and coordinated, as they follow these three directives, which are hardly adaptable to each other. We will conclude that Moscow's critical approach towards the so-called "liberal order" does not imply the existence of a "block" which is characterised by a radically opposed Weltanschauung, coherently organised inside an ideological framework and with hegemonic ambitions on a global scale.

The thesis will provide a range of cases and examples supporting these assertions, taken from Russian press and TV programs, local publications and pamphlets and a set of interviews to Russian qualified observers.