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Abstracts

BRUNO PIERRI, *The Multilateral Challenge to the American Post-Cold War Hegemony. The Origins of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it seemed the United States was the only global Power able to influence the geo-political outlook and aimed at exporting the values of democracy and free market. However, Moscow and Beijing did not accept what they called hegemonism, since both claimed a first-class role in the global scenario; therefore, they started working together for a multilateral world, establishing quite a close relationship within the frame of the so-called Shanghai Five, involving also four former Soviet republics of Central Asia. This area had become pivotal for access to energy sources and saw conflicting interests at stake. While the Russians wanted to safeguard their monopoly market and pipeline facility network, the Chinese pursued diversification of their oil and gas supplies. On the other hand, Washington aimed at keeping the door open to American companies. The scenario closing the millennium was very different from what had occurred ten years previously. Apart from economic contrasts, there was the ideological challenge dominating the international debate. The White House spoke about democracy and human rights, thus making such values one of its foreign policy aims. On the other side of the Pacific, China and Russia promoted stability, territorial integrity and national sovereignty as main pillars of the new XXI century challenges, to which the struggle against separatism and terrorism was added. In a few words, though not described as an alliance oriented against any country, the 2001 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation seemed to portray a world once again divided into two blocs.

Keywords:

Multilateralism

Human rights

Balance of power

American Post-Cold War Hegemony