

The Game to Win the World: Towards the New Yalta?

Summary

This publication is the result of the 25th anniversary of the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and the international conference entitled *The Game to Win the World: Towards the New Yalta?*, which took place on 7–8 December 2015. The conference title is not accidental and refers to the 70th anniversary of the Yalta Conference that took place in Crimea in February 1945. During that conference, the ‘Big Three’ made a number of decisions fundamental to the establishment of the post-war international order, known as the Yalta-Potsdam order. Crimea, which was annexed by Russia in March 2014 against many principles of international law, is not just of historical significance. It is not only the place in which the ‘Big Three’ decided to divide post-war Europe into spheres of influence, but, today, it is also a symbol of a return to violence in international relations, the policy of power, aggression and contempt for all the agreements and principles of international law, and of Vladimir Putin’s attempts to stop the construction of a new, post-Cold War global peace order. Russia

wants to destroy the transatlantic alliance, break its unity, weaken NATO and the European Union, and thus create international chaos and impose a bipolar order on the world where it could play a dominant role. Russia uses increasingly negative developments and trends in Europe and the world, such as financial and economic crises in the United States and many European countries, growing nationalism, politicians' populism, integration problems, lack of self-confidence, divisions and misunderstandings in the European Union and NATO, to undermine the transatlantic community. Russia uses the failures and errors of the West to disseminate the thesis about the weakening and disintegrating European Union and NATO, and proclaims that America has lost its legitimacy to the leadership it gained through its victory in the Cold War and which strengthened in the 1990s.

Vladimir Putin seeks to rebuild the Yalta order and strengthen his influence in Europe, especially in Ukraine and other former USSR states. States of the former Soviet bloc, including Poland, are also part of the Kremlin's interests. The post-Cold War system, which was set up by a series of multilateral international agreements in the early 1990s, is falling down right before our eyes.

Russia is trying to impose a bipolar order in Europe and the world, something like 'Yalta-bis'. Vladimir Putin and his experts openly say that it is important to return to the Yalta-Potsdam order as the only way to secure and stabilise the world. They stand for the position that 'only the division of the world into zones of influence and responsibility will ensure its

stabilisation. If there are no spheres of influence, there are conflicts about no-man's lands.' Russia again feels like a superpower and proposes to the world, and above all to President Donald Trump, a new big deal – an alliance of powers that will set a new order in the world over the heads of weaker states for decades. This is not conducive to the construction of a democratic, multipolar and multilateral international system. This process, which is the result of the breakup of the Yalta-Potsdam order and globalisation, has been slowing down in recent years. Consequently, today it is difficult to develop an accurate forecast for the future of the world, its ultimate shape and international security. However, there is no doubt that in the new world order, which will be formed in the mid-21st century, Germany, Russia and Poland will play an important role next to the great powers. Their cooperation should take place within the European Union and NATO and with the active participation of the United States to serve the security of Europe and the world. Europe cannot be allowed to become either German or Russian, and the world must not be ruled by the USA and Russia tandem.

To sum up, the contemporary, post-Cold War world is evolving towards decentralisation and regionalisation. It is increasingly entering the post-Western international order and will apparently do without a 'global policeman'. The new global order that is emerging before our eyes is becoming increasingly more balanced and multipolar. This time, however, it will not be the bipolar power system or hegemonic stability protected by one or other Great

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Power, Pax Britannica or Pax Americana. History does not repeat itself. Furthermore, the modern world is already too plural and there are too many countries of different ranks to be incapacitated and forced into a rigid and obstructive order. Therefore, the new Yalta will not happen in the 21st century.