

# A NEW COLD WAR OR CONTINUATION OF THE OLD ONE

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After the end of World War II a new era started in international relations. With the defeat of Nazism, fascism and Japanese militarism a decisive role in the creation of this new era played the members of the winning coalition – the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. However, the character of international political relations of the second half of the 20th century was essentially determined by the nature of the relationship between the two super-powers: the USA and the USSR.

The deterioration of relations between these two forces started after the Soviet government had taken certain steps in Poland, Iran, Greece and Turkey. These moves were interpreted by the Americans as an attempt to extend the hitherto mutually recognized sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. Russia today believes that the red line has been crossed in Syria, although some dissatisfaction was also shown by Russia on account of the events taking place in Iraq and Libya.

Due to conflicting conceptions of foreign policy of the USA and the USSR (the former USSR) and contemporary Russia and the measures taken in order to materialize these policies, strictly in accordance with their own interests, there has been a permanent tension on the international political scene. One gets the impression that the current events represent a sort of closing of the circle and return to the starting positions characteristic of the period before the Second World War.

*Key Words: World War II, the Cold War, The New Cold War, International relations*

## Introduction

The first decade of XXI century was marked by disillusionments about the world peace and the establishment of a world system based on liberal capitalism. The results of an applied transitional model had fallen short of the expectations of the people of the former Eastern bloc, and the development of global opportunities had caused dissatisfaction among the majority of people on the planet Earth.

The fall of the Berlin Wall had caused dual expectations: on the one hand, with the humanists, there was hope that the world finally enters the era of peace and stability. On the other hand, the strategy of US policy aimed at demolition of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Eastern bloc was seen as an opportunity to consolidate global

domination and imposition of its model of planning global processes. On the other hand, the strategists of the US policy considered the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Eastern bloc as an opportunity to consolidate global domination and imposition of their model of handling and planning global processes. According to many features the period since the fall of the Berlin Wall until today cannot be compared with the process that took place at the end of the Second World War, which soon led to the allies becoming enemies. In this context, we can talk about the old and the new cold war that have many similarities with certain specificities. Understanding of the contemporary processes requires better knowledge of the part of the history immediately after World War II that is taken by many researchers as a counterpart to contemporary developments.

## Theoretical framework

People from time immemorial join the communities because of the need to protect their interests. Simultaneously with the homogenization within a certain group are also established some relations with other social groups. It goes without saying that the countries with the highest level of institutional forms are of the highest level of the organization of population living in a certain territory. With the development of civilization there has been a complication of relations between different communities so that the need arose for their regulation which also presumes an understanding of the essence of such relations. On this occasion we did not aim to give a historical account of the development of the science of international relations, but we just want to point out the basic concepts of the field of international relations which are essential for the phenomenon we deal with.

The first forms of human organization were focused primarily on the protection of the territory, property and clan members, but there was also a desire to provide better conditions for the life of their own community by conquering new territory and looting enemy's goods. In this context, it is logical that the first theorists who dealt with international relations focused on the phenomenon of force and power to achieve a desired objective. Notwithstanding the long history of civilization, theory and practice of international relations is not far removed from the basic postulates found in theorists who laid the foundations of this science.

Might (power) throughout history, today, and, while looking on the situation now, in the future will probably play also an important part in human relationships. The force and might are especially significant for the analysis of the relationship between the different communities of people where the state represents the commonest modern form of organization. The term *might* usually implies a potential which indicates the possibility of a subject of international relations having influence upon the other one. The possibility that might brings is reflected through force, such as economic potential, political influence, military component, cultural influence whereby the potential becomes the ability of practical application. In practice, power is usually manifested by force, which reflects the level of expression of might. Presumably, as in most real situations we can talk about the positive manifestations of power when it is aimed at creating new values and improving existing relationships, but often the power is used for the sake of imposing one's will on others. In international relations is particularly analyzed the force that stems from the political power by which an attempt is made towards subordination of the interests of others by a holder of power. This situation causes strained and hostile relations between a holder of power and the other side to which is imposed a relationship of subjugation.

In modern conditions the realist theory of international relations is still dominant, and it can best explain current developments on the international scene. The paradox of this theory is that its roots reach far back into history, and that humankind failed to dignify its relations and establish more humane relations among the different actors of international relations. We can here talk about the postulates of the Indian philosopher Kautilya from the fourth century BC or Nicholas Machiavelli but nothing fundamentally different shall we show in relation to Hans Morgenthau whose analysis of the international scene boils down to the relationship between power and national interest. The essence of Morgenthau's concept shows the following quotes: "The international policy, like any policy, is the struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate goals of international politics, the force is still its immediate goal. Statesmen and nations may eventually aspire to freedom, security, prosperity or the force itself. They can define their goals in terms of religious, philosophical, economic or social ideal. They may hope to achieve this ideal through their own power, by a divine intervention or by the natural development of human resources. They may try to facilitate its realization through non-political means, such as technical cooperation with other nations or international organizations. But whenever they seek to achieve their objective by means of international politics, they do it by fighting for power" (Morgenthau 1967, 25). He added that the "struggle for power is universal in time and space" (Morgenthau 1967, 32).

Morgenthau's national interest rises above all the others and it largely covers the ethical side of his theory. Unfortunately, the concept of national interest in terms of globalization has largely been undermined because of the supremacy of the interests of big business over the interests of the nation. Globalization has fundamentally changed the contemporary international scene so that the classical theory of international relations and national interest in this context have largely been brought into question. Accordingly, the analysis of power and force remains current but the right question is posed as to whose power it is and in whose interest is the use of force, considering that it can be linked to lesser and lesser degree to the interests of citizens living in a certain area.

Communication of people within their environment receives various forms, people come together to help realize their interests; usually they come to agreements on the basis of compromise so that the participants would be motivated to adhere to the agreements reached. However, there are situations where the differences in their positions and views are rather large, or when one party wants to impose its own viewpoint as the only acceptable one. In circumstances where there is no room for compromise there occurs an aggravation of the situation and the state of hostility where pressures are imposed based on the threat of force. If the instruments of soft power based on arguments of common cultural values and/or historical assumptions do not provide adequate results, then hard power is being applied. In asymmetric partnership when a weaker partner does not accept the arguments that the proposed arrangement is also in his own interest then certain sanctions are being applied as a form of establishing discipline towards uncooperative parties.

In practice, it is often impossible to separate the described and observed forms of international relations. The acceptance of arguments is brought about by a discrete threat of force and sanctioning of the uncooperative parties. The pressures and actions aimed at acceptance of the imposed models of behavior or furtherance of one's interests can be observed in the practice of international relations. These situations have been recognized as a hostile action even by the so-called friendly countries. Diplomatic games, economic

warfare, ideological clashes have been observed by some theorists as specific forms of warfare without the use of armed force. There is talking of a Special or a cold war that is present in the practice of international relations and is also more present than the so-called hot or real war. We can even say that the Cold War is a constant in international relations and can be recognized even in the relations between some friendly countries. There are periods in history which due to the specific relations were given exclusivity in the use of a term. Thus we have the case that the term a cold war means the period after the end of World War II until the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although it is a specific relationship between two military blocs divided by ideological criteria, we can hardly justify this kind of challenge pointing to the fact that we nowadays live in something qualitatively different that does not deserve the title of the Cold War. The authors of this paper believe that the Cold War did not stop at all but has been conducted in conditions of asymmetrical relationships where the other party did not have the strength or power to repel challenges directed at it. The moment the change of power relations emerged and Russia increased its power to a level that it can respond to its rivals' actions, such a situation has again become an obvious potential of conflicts and the threat of their resolution by means of arms.

## Situation after completion of the Second World War

Because of the circumstances in which it was conducted, the Second World War led to the conclusion of the alliance between the US, UK and USSR. Hitler's Third Reich, due to non-functioning of the then international system, managed to occupy a good part of the European continent. The above-mentioned countries had at some point estimated that the alliance in the fight against the common enemy, regardless of their ideological differences, was useful. But with the end of World War II there is a change of perception of the recent ally from the east that was perceived by the United Kingdom and the United States as a threat to their interests. In this context, it is important to observe changes in the positions of power, primarily from the United States and their friends and countries. Due to the circumstance that the Second World War was not waged on the territory of the USA in the period 1941-1945, the economic potential of the USA was significantly increased. Also due to the development of new technologies and production capacity of the USA this country had become the strongest economic and technological force of that world. Almost all the allied countries were in an inferior position in terms of finance, industry, agriculture, technology ... This fact led to the US to impose itself as the absolute leader of the countries that had come to be known as the Western military-political bloc.

The Soviet Union did not have so good economic position but due to its contribution in the struggle against fascism it had a considerable reputation in the international community. Reputation gained on the battlefield and that of a major military power in the given circumstances promoted the Soviet Union as one of the superpowers of the then world. Thus the former two most powerful countries (USA and USSR) determined the character of the post-war international system.

However, while the existence of a common enemy represented a factor of cooperation, with the capitulation of Germany started divergences in terms of interests and visions of new relationships between yesterday's allies. In what direction moved the relations

between the US and USSR could be seen immediately after the capitulation of Germany when the ships with weapons that were intended for the Soviet Union returned from the ocean to the home ports. The growing impact of the Soviet Union on the countries in its closer and wider environments (Poland, Iran, Greece and Turkey) as well as strengthening of the Red Army, or the development of nuclear technology by the Soviet Union were interpreted as a threat to the interests of the United Kingdom and the United States.

Illustrative is the analysis of the foreign political orientation of the Soviet Union commissioned by the US government that was done by the charge d'affaires of the US Embassy in Moscow, George Kennan (February, 1946). Kennan is firmly convinced of the intention of the Soviet Union to destroy the United States and therefore adequate countermeasures should be taken to curb communism. This analysis could be further related to Churchill's speech (W. Churchill) of March 5, 1946, in which he says that the expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union can be controlled only by uniting the nations of the English-speaking world in the fight against the common threat. Churchill is therefore committed to making a strong ring around the areas that were under Soviet control. The backbone of the ring should be nuclear weapons of the United States that should give particular firmness to the "Iron curtain" between the spheres of influence of the two superpowers.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union continues with the development of socialist dogma that the West regards as a direct attack on their interests. The creation of the world socialist system whose center would be the Soviet Union meant the expansion of the territory of influence by "tearing away" one by one country of the capitalist world. Establishing a system in Poland, which was strongly associated with the Soviet Union as well as delay in withdrawing from Iran were interpreted by the US as an attack on their interests, not the actions aimed at protecting the interests of the Soviet Union. With concern were especially regarded the Soviet - Turkish negotiations on the joint administration of the straits (August 1946.). In the USA, it was considered that, based on the principle of "domino effect", subsequent to establishing Soviet control over Turkey would follow Greece and then Near, and the Middle East.

In the West, there was a special concern about the possibility of linking the West European communist parties with the Soviet Union and the spread of influence over them in Western Europe. At that time, the Italian Communist Party had 1/3 of the electorate while in France the local KP had the support of 1/4 of the electorate. The first practical steps towards limiting Soviet influence the US take after they get a note from the United Kingdom that it is no longer able to provide assistance to Greece and Turkey (Note from February 21, 1947). Fearing the fall of Greece and Turkey under the political influence of the Soviet Union, and this influence further spreading to the Near and Middle East, US President Harry Truman asks Congress for 400 million of the then US dollars so that the US could replace the British presence in Greece and help Turkey (March 12, 1947). President Truman's addressing the American Congress is the first public promotion of the so-called "Truman's Doctrine". Its essence can be seen at the end of his speech: "The seeds of totalitarian regimes are germinated in poverty and deprivation. They expand and strengthen on the poor country of poverty and squabbles. They reach their full form when people's hopes for a better life are gone. We must keep that hope alive. Free nations of the world look to us to help them in maintaining their freedoms" (Vukadinovic 1972, 48). From the above quote can be anticipated the platform upon which is based the implementation of US global interests for decades to come.

By accepting the reasoning that if the US does not take action in Greece there are surely to come to power communists, and that then the isolated Turkey will quickly succumb to Soviet pressures is officially adopted policy of containment of communism. *In the long term, patient but firm and precautionary containment of Soviet tendencies for expansion* represents the essence of the Truman's Doctrine. It is about combating the spread of communist ideology, regardless of whether it concerns territorial and economic interests of the United States. This puts the US in the role of the self-proclaimed protector of *the free world* from the global influence of communism.

The described essence of the Truman's Doctrine and its implementation in practice is directly opposed to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The main objective of the Soviet foreign policy was to strengthen economic, political and military influence of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe in order to protect it from a direct attack from the West. In addition to creating a defensive shield towards the West there was also the aim to parry the foreign policy actions of the Western powers, inter alia, by the impact of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the world communist movement, especially in the former colonies. Bearing in mind the stated situation it was difficult to synchronize realization of interests without confrontation of the two main actors on the world political scene.

Truman's speech is taken as a formal declaration of the Cold War, while the so-called Marshall Plan is the economic support for the realization of the ideological goals. *The Berlin crisis* represents the first Cold War skirmish that had seriously shaken some kind of existing world peace. Western allies use it to speed up the integration processes. In March 1948, the Brussels pact between Great Britain, France and the Benelux countries was signed, and subsequently the same countries also establish the permanent Western Union Defence Organization (Gavranov and Stojković 1972, 55). Upon accession of the United States this organization grows into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on April 4, 1949.

In the Soviet sphere of interest the process was going on somewhat differently. After the Second World War according to the system of bilateral agreements, all socialist countries became interconnected by the signing of the "Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" Agreement. With the constitution of *the Information Bureau of the Communist Parties* in 1947, the ideological relationship between the socialist countries was reinforced. During 1949 the *Council for the mutual economic assistance* was set up as the first multilateral organization of the six socialist countries. Finally in response to the formation of NATO in May 14, 1955, the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed.

Meanwhile began the nuclear arms race between the superpowers. The United States showed the destructive power of the atomic bomb back in 1945 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Soviet Union had its first atomic test conducted in 1949. This race marked the whole Cold War history by the fear of a nuclear holocaust. The Korean crisis (1950-1953) had given a new dimension to the Cold War and it represents the culmination of tensions, and subsequently follows the detente. After the Korean crisis, both sides realize that the risk of the final showdown is too big and they apply the deterrence strategies. To this end, a the new US military strategy is being promoted, the "massive retaliation strategy" based on the interpretation of any aggression, overt or covert, wherever executed by communist forces as being the aggression of the Soviet Union. Therefore, in order to retaliate the US would attack the vital centers of the Soviet Union by all available means. On the other hand, the USSR adapted its behavior, but more on the tactical level while maintaining the basic strategic line.

## International relations after the fall of the Berlin Wall

From this perspective, the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall is more difficult to analyze because of the short historical distance. We can even say that some relationships are not yet fully uncovered. We can say with confidence that the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc for many represented the surprising developments in the decades-long history of the Cold War between the two superpowers trying to outwit each other. Given that the conflict was officially inspired by ideological differences of the two systems its completion was interpreted as a victory for the only remaining superpower (Fukuyama). In this context, the agreement on the unification of Germany and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe caused a lot of controversy. Although it is often heard in the public that NATO, led by the US, failed the agreement on cessation of hostilities and the so-called Cold War, the review of the documents which are available to the public points to the fact that nowhere in the document was signed a binding promise that NATO would not expand eastward. There were verbal promises that the then representatives of the Soviet Union failed to formalize through the binding documents. (Itzkowitz 2014)

The fact that there is no officially signed commitment does not diminish verbally, repeatedly given promises by Western officials that NATO would not expand eastward. The course of events in Eastern Europe and approaching of NATO to Russia's borders have sparked suspicions in Moscow. At the time of Yeltsin Russia was preoccupied with internal problems and did not have the strength to deal with international circumstances. However, with the arrival of Putin at the head of Russia and improvement of economic situation in Russia due to the rise in energy prices also change the approach to international politics. In the case of Iran and Syria, Russia shows that there is no retreat in front of expansionist NATO (read US). Finally, Ukraine is a red line below which Russia does not want and cannot go.

The course of events from 1989 to the present day shows that in international relations nothing has qualitatively changed. We can only conclude that from 1989 to the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1998, there are conditions of asymmetric warfare in which the only remaining world power exploits to the greatest extent its superior position. In this above-mentioned period, there is no adequate capacity on the other side that would lead to proportionate response and restraint of the US geopolitical projects. The economic recovery in Russia is also growing this country's ability to stand up to the realization of projects of NATO at the expense of its own interests. Spokespeople for Moscow have not been seriously taken when they spoke about the 2008 red line regarding its interests in Ukraine (Saradzhyan 2014).

Lack of understanding of the position and interests of Russia by Western strategy is inconceivable having previous experience in relation to the events that led to the worsening of relations between the former USSR and the USA. For the sake of objectivity the analysis of London's Chatham House should be mentioned, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, that in its analysis, entitled: *A New Cold War? Abusing History, Misunderstanding Russia* is indicated a lack of understanding of the position of Russia bearing in mind its historical experience and the need to protect its borders against potential aggressors. In this context, the author analyzes mentioned experience of the USSR and the Third Reich. (Monaghan 2015)

Strategy games aimed at causing instability between the EU and Russia, especially on the issue of Ukraine, but also the construction of alternative pipelines, show that a new cold war (if we can call it bearing in mind the previous notes) accelerates in its dynamics and complexity. The former Euro-Atlantic bloc is no longer a monolithic structure, and in its structure appear various cracks. European countries realize that their unreserved support for US projects brings more harm than good. Many are returning to the study of the old geopolitical study of planetary domination of the early twentieth century that explains the logic of today's global players' moves.

The need to control geostrategic points at all costs led to the so-called velvet revolutions, the Arab Spring and humanitarian interventions that left behind more problems compared to the situation before their implementation. The problem gains in intensity due to inadequate mechanisms of the UN that, instead of calming the situations on the ground, are used to serve as a cover for additional complications of such situations. An example of Iraq and ISIL are drastic confirmation of the thesis; however, no other interventions have solved the problems because of which they were started but they still further aggravated the situation on the ground.

The latest developments in Syria show that as a boomerang return to US those policies which it implemented from 1989 to date. Current events show that the standoff has been reached indirectly through various groups who are the contractors on the ground. The case of Syria shows the whole complexity of the real situation, and at work is a combination of cold and hot war. US and Russia, aware of the consequences of a direct conflict, use local groups to demonstrate the power at their disposal and simultaneously prove their capacity to act on a global scale.

Instead of taking advantage of the reputation that it had on a world scale for the creation of a new world order based on International Law, after the collapse of its rival the US turn to the implementation of geopolitical goals based on the theories of the early twentieth century. The desire to break up the Soviet Union and come as close as possible to its borders represent a more attractive target compared to that of creating a climate of world peace and stability. After the departure of Gorbachev, Russia was thrown on its knees during the Yeltsin's government. The transition model according to which Russia was supposed to transfer from communism to capitalism gave disastrous results on the standard of the citizens and the functioning of institutions. The dissatisfaction of citizens received their articulation through Putin's reform policies that reversed the negative trend and Russia broke loose from the clutches of international creditors and the global financial oligarchy.

In the meantime, the US has taken actions to ensure that all potential allies of Russia be brought in an inferior position by Jeffrey Sachs' transition model based on the Washington consensus of privatization at any cost. The biggest price in resolving geopolitical situation in accordance with the new (old) strategy was paid by the citizens of the former Yugoslavia. A state that has enjoyed the privilege of the West's pet state because of its strategic position in relation to the ideological opponents in the East fell apart in streams of blood with the total destruction of the economic infrastructure. Insisting on the neo-liberal model of solving the economic crisis that has smoldered constantly in the '80s of the last century and due to the inability of local elites, social discontent was switched to the national field. The party oligarchy, previously being a factor of homogenization, suddenly becomes a disintegrating factor. Representatives of

institutions immature in this new situation keep wandering from Moscow to Brussels and Washington without realizing tectonic changes on the international scene. Restraining of institutions in the exercise of their constitutional role and imposing the models inadequate to the situation lead to their complete dysfunctionality.

Instrumentalization of the UN system leads to the stage that it was unable to cope with the problems in Yugoslavia. Encouraged by developments in the case of Yugoslavia war hawks implement the similar scenario in Iraq and with milder option for Iran. Then follow Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria. Everywhere in these cases, the scenario is similar, with minor variations. It creates an atmosphere of threatened human rights and that the only solution is an outside intervention that should facilitate the building of a democratic system. The results of these interventions are such that the situation in all listed countries is far worse than it was before the intervention. Local residents are impoverished, existing institutions are destroyed and new ones are nonexistent, so that the situation is totally chaotic with the strengthening of fundamentalist groups. Instead of getting the better situation the environment is being created in which extremists of various profiles come to the fore. This devastated the economic infrastructure, but oil installations and facilities as well as oil transportation operate extremely well.

## *Conclusion*

The change in the structure of power in the international community without a proper institutional reform of the current system of international institutions leads to fractures that jeopardize the achieved level of stability. The system that was created at the end of the Second World War was designed in accordance with the then circumstances respecting the balance of allied forces' powers. Although relatively quickly emerged open hostilities and conflicts of interests such system managed to ensure, thanks to the balance of power and fear of reprisals from rival parties, the relative stability for almost half a century. However, with the loss of international position of one of the poles, the UN system was being instrumentalized by the second pole for the sake of realization of its geopolitical projects.

Developments after the fall of the Berlin Wall in many ways are largely reminiscent of the situation on the eve of the Second World War. What is important for understanding the situation on the eve of the Second World War is observing the notion of change in the power structure of the then states. Changes in the structure of power after the fall of the Berlin Wall led to the uncontrolled exercise of power by the United States without the ability and willingness of other international actors to oppose it, fearing reprisals.

Only after intervention in Iraq, allied countries do realize that the United States implements its strategy, which is contrary to their interests. Strengthened Russia in "the Syrian case," and to some extent before that, in the "Iranian case", demonstrates that there is no tolerance for the implementation of the project of global dominance. Geopolitical games and the desire to curb the power of Russia bring NATO closer to Russia's borders. Russia at first tolerated this state of affairs because of its internal problems and when it comes to developments on the Balkan Peninsula, but it is obvious now that it is firmly determined not to allow the entry of Ukraine into the military-political bloc under the US control.

In the meantime, China kept on strengthening, showing at the same time that it no longer tolerates an inferior role in the geopolitical arena. A common estimate is that the United States pose a threat to the interests of Russia and China, leading to their getting in closer relations and also both of them connecting with some other countries unwilling to tolerate the behavior of the United States. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) is a new force that seeks to curb the disorderly conduct of NATO (read US). Events on the territory of the EU largely represent the realization of the strategy which Brzezinski earlier explained in his book "Grand Chessboard". Brzezinski says that America agrees to having strong Europe as long as it is in its interest. After disagreements over Iraq, but also subsequent to some dissonant tones in relation to the events in Ukraine, USA shies away from its European allies. There is speculation that the great pressure of refugees on the borders of the EU is actually an attempt to create the conditions for destabilizing the EU.

We can say with certainty that the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the breaking up of the USSR is largely a product of the Cold War logic of the United States, which is governed by such foreign policy after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The conflict among the coalition led by the US and the rest of the world is a product of imposing neo-conservative model as a universal dogma. We are not talking here only about capitalism as an ideological framework. The capitalist system in these circumstances becomes a global model of operation. The problem is that the United States require for itself absolute rights to make decisions and evaluate all the others, while others are obliged to comply with US view of the world. Why has earth become a riskier place to live in after the fall of the Berlin Wall could be stated by presenting the countless reasons. However, most responsible for such a situation is known. That party who had the most power and determined the main courses of events during the nineties and at the beginning of this century is worthy of some recognition, but also bears the greatest responsibility for the current situation.

The former ideological conflict between capitalism and communism has been replaced by a conflict between the hegemonic model of organization of the world and the need to respect the interests of all alike. It seems that the US did not manage to handle best the situation in the role of the exclusive top super-power. The narcissism of its system is reflected on the insistence that all others must accept a model that is offered to them, although it is quite obvious that this is not functional in the new conditions.

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