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BOOK REVIEW

**Robin Niblett. *The New Cold War: How the Contest Between the US and China Will Shape Our Century*.
Atlantic Books, London, 2024**

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Sir Robin Niblett is a prominent British expert on international affairs, acknowledged for his global policy analysis and research. He served as a Director and Chief Executive at Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs), presiding over a period of tremendous growth and impact for the organization. Before joining Chatham House, Dr. Niblett was appointed as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. His scholarly work and insights have praised by top publications like *Foreign Affairs*, *The Financial Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Guardian*. Some of his acclaimed research papers include “Global Britain in a Divided World”, “Britain, EU and the Sovereignty Myth”, and “Britain, Europe and the World: Rethinking the UK’s Circles of Influence”. They give an insight into the world of geopolitics, transatlantic relations, and the shifting political and economic dynamics among the great powers of the world.

The book, *The New Cold War: How the Contest Between the US and China Will Shape Our Century*, focuses on the ongoing competition between the US and China which isn't just a rerun of Cold War tensions, instead, it's a unique geopolitical rivalry marked by strategic complexity and economic interdependence. This book is based on the idea of international politics played by the US (super power) and China (emerging economic power) followed by the analysis of the capabilities of both sides and the positions that budding powers, international institutions, and ideologies have been taking in this new era of superpower competition. He suggests that the

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world is essentially divided into two competing governance models: on one side, we have countries that endorse individual rights, maintain checks and balances, support press freedoms, and ensure judicial independence; on the other, there are regimes that are cautious of democratic freedoms, prioritizing state power and national sovereignty over human rights and the rule of law.

In his book, Niblett begins by shedding light on the current geopolitical dispute between the US and China which is fundamentally different from the Cold War with the Soviet Union. He lists China's integration into the global economy, its technological development, and its strategic leveraging of projects like the 'Belt and Road Initiative' as central distinguishing features of this new Cold War. The author explains how the US and China have potentially got into a new Cold War. In contrast to the previous ideological face-off, this one is surrounded by economic interdependence and technological and strategic maneuvering. However, keeping in view the domestic issues of the United States, such as political instability, economic inequality, and change in international role, Washington may find it difficult effectively respond to China's emergence as a powerful global actor.

The author beautifully addresses Russia's tactics in the context of US-China competition. Although not a primary actor, Russian foreign engagements, including invading Ukraine, shape global alignments and affect the US-China relationship. In the ideological battle between liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes, China is pushing its governance model as a viable alternative to Western liberalism. It is shaking up the global consensus on democracy and human rights. The author sheds light on the revival of transatlantic relations, stressing how crucial it is for the West to stand united in tackling global challenges and pushing back against China's growing influence.

Niblett highlights how US alliances are coming together in both the Atlantic and Pacific regions. Nations like Japan, South Korea, and different European countries are significantly aligning with the US as a response to China's assertiveness.

The book explores the significance of non-aligned nations, especially in the Global South, which are stepping up to assert their influence and trying to navigate the US-China rivalry without fully committing to either side. The

US-China contest is causing hinderance to global efforts to tackle critical issues like climate change. For real progress to happen, cooperation between these two powers is essential. However, geopolitical tensions often get in the way of collaborative efforts.

The author contends that the increase in nationalism and bilateralism is diminishing the effectiveness of multilateral institutions. The US and China repeatedly evade international organizations, resulting in uneven global governance and weakened collective action. In the end of the book, Niblett offers strategies for navigating the new Cold War. He emphasizes the strengthening of democratic institutions, encouraging economic resilience, and engaging in selective cooperation with China on global issues like climate change and public health.

The New Cold War: How the Contest Between the US and China Will Shape Our Century is a timely and understandable lead to the ins and outs of US–China rivalry. Niblett's concise writing and judicious analysis make it a must-read for policymakers, scholars, and anyone concerned with the future of international geopolitics. According to the author, the US and China are highly economically interdependent. Almost the whole world relies on Chinese-made components. In turn, Beijing sees the United States as an export market. Likewise, many American firms view China as the center of their growth and development strategies. Niblett highlights how important it is to analyze this dispute not just through a geopolitical lens but also by taking into account economic, technological, and ideological factors. He warns that if this rivalry is mishandled it could cause unsteadiness on a global level. To navigate this intricate landscape, he advocates for strategic engagement, collaboration on worldwide challenges, and bolstering democratic institutions. In addition to that, Niblett offers a thoughtful take on the US-China relationship, encouraging both policymakers and readers to reflect on the wider implications of this rivalry for global peace and prosperity.