

Post Cold War Multi-polarity and the New Scramble for Africa

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The resources that Africa has to offer the rest of the world have always acted as a strong magnetic pull for the global economic powers. The classic scramble for Africa that occurred in the 19th century led to its colonization and its eventual vertical integration into the global economic system. A similar scenario is being played out, albeit with more subtlety in the current post Cold war era. The emergence of new global economic powers in Asia and in Latin America has been associated with renewed interests in Africa as the supplier of raw materials and consumer of finished products. The new global powers as China, India, Brazil and Russia have joined the ranks of the old powers in Europe and North America to engage in veritable struggles for Africa's economic space. The contests between these powers have been accentuated by Africa's own chronic weakness, and its status as the global panhandler. However, there is noticeable change in political discourse and rhetoric about the post Cold war relationships. Even though the relations continue to be asymmetrical, antagonistic concepts like imperialism and neocolonialism have generally disappeared. The parties now adopt innocuous concepts like 'partnership' to describe the relations. In the wake of these developments, the problematique of this paper is set on examining the Africa's place in the globalized economic system. This is done by interrogating the nature and outcomes of the post Cold war relationships that Africa has entered with the global powers. And as the ranks of the global powers expand, the challenge from Asia and Latin America on the stakes they should hold in Africa have become very conspicuous; and so has been the responses from the traditional powers. It is concluded that in the midst of these developments Africa is again at the center of a new scramble..