

## Call for Papers for the European Workshops on International Studies 2025

### The International Political Economy of the 'Second Cold War'

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Heightened geopolitical confrontation between the West and China/ Russia is now widely said to constitute a 'new' or 'second' Cold War. Notwithstanding armed conflict over Ukraine, this primarily manifests as intensifying 'geoeconomic' competition. Its forms include restrictions on trade, investment and technology transfer; efforts to 'reshore' or 'friendshore' industries and secure supply chains; and great-power competition for developing countries' loyalty, manifesting in new trade, investment and development partnerships.

This growing securitisation of global economic exchange is co-evolving with apparent shifts away from neoliberal economic governance within Western states. Industrial policy is back, with governments directing state and private capital towards strategic and frontier industries, a 'green' industrial transition, military-industrial production, and domestic infrastructure. Many commentators hail the 'return of the state' or 'state capitalism'. These changes seem driven not merely by geopolitics but by the wider breakdown of the neoliberal order, expressed in collapsing support for mainstream parties and populist eruptions.

Yet if the post-Cold War neoliberal order is 'definitively over', as the 2022 US National Security Strategy declared, it is far from obvious what comes next. We may have reached the end of the End of History, but 'History' hardly seems to have restarted, and no new 'definitive' order is apparent. Indeed, substantial continuities from the neoliberal period exist, hampering Western efforts to resuscitate a 'Cold War' and limiting any transition to a clear alternative, including:

- State weaknesses and incapacity arising from neoliberal hollowing-out, undermining strategic planning and implementation and limiting serious fiscal commitment, particularly outside of the US.
- Deep and extensive inter-bloc trade, investment and technological ties, which often continue to develop despite hostile government rhetoric and policies.
- Deep reluctance to collaborate with new 'confrontational' or 'competitive' policies among important fractions of Western capitalism, e.g. creative circumvention of restrictions on semiconductor trade by manufacturers, and finance capital's refusal to support infrastructure development in the global south.

This workshop invites reflections on the political economy aspects of this 'Second Cold War'. Topics might include, but need not be limited to:

- Theoretical or conceptual papers exploring the current crisis, e.g. contributions to theorising the breakdown of neoliberal order, the current interregnum, etc. within a political economy tradition (broadly defined).
- Empirical studies of the policies adopted by both sides in the 'Second Cold War' and their effects, e.g. studies of the limits and constraints of such policies, of the extent of (non)compliance by important socio-political and economic forces, of 'success' and 'failure'.
- Studies of reactions to the emerging political economy of the 'Second Cold War', including by forces and governments outside of the rival blocs, e.g. developing country governments and firms' attempts to resist or exploit restrictions by continuing relations with both sides.