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- ❖ **UN & COVID-19**
- ❖ **India's Economic Diplomacy**
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New Cold War!

Amidst media reports pouring in daily about almost ubiquitous spread of COVID-19 that has made the world awfully staggering from the shattering effects of this global pandemic by the closing part of April this year, reports are also pouring in about the commencement of a new Cold War with United States, China and Russia as leading protagonists of this new game. While Russia and the US are engaged in a mad race for acquiring nuclear superiority over each other, especially in the aftermath of unilateral withdrawal of Trump Administration from INF Treaty and American accusations against Moscow for the possibility of Russian interference in the ensuing presidential elections in November 2020.

For over past couple of years, trade war has been gathering momentum between the US and China and over decision of Trump Administration to ban operations of Huawei within the United States. Interestingly, at a time when tensions between US and Russia are mounting on one hand and Sino-US relations have witnessed a new low, military cooperation between Beijing and Moscow is getting impetus. This scenario along with regional hotspots like Syria, Libya and other places where these great powers are confronting each other indirectly has given rise to speculations, especially in the media, about the commencement of a new Cold War. According to media reports, Washington has been engaged in the rebuilding and extension of the Campia Turzii air base in Romania for use by US strike aircraft, reportedly under the Pentagon's European Deterrence Initiative, which was initiated in June 2014. Some experts have observed that the build-up of US-NATO forces has continued unabated around the Black Sea and along the length of Russia's borders. Some American military leaders have often declared that China and Russia pose 'overt challenges to the free and open international order.'

The US is also said to have stationed 50,000 troops in Japan and half of these troops are stationed in the bases on the island of Okinawa, and according to defence experts, it provides a pivotal foothold for Washington, both to protect Asian allies including Japan, South Korea and Taiwan and as a ploy to project American power. America is also reported to have been carrying out huge military maneuvers comprising two aircraft carrier strike groups and nuclear bombers in order to continue warning China against its misadventures in South China Sea. Besides, according to media reports, Washington is also deploying B-1 nuclear bombers in its territory of Guam in the western Pacific what Pentagon calls to carry out "strategic missions to reinforce the rule-based international order in the region." In the wake of escalating trade war between the US and China, Trump Administration put a squeeze on the Chinese telecommunication s giant Huawei and also gradually adding more of Huawei's subsidiaries to its trade blacklist and also warned US companies doing business with Huawei. According to media reports, the US Commerce Department has placed Huawei and 70 of its subsidiary companies on its 'Entry List' that is primarily a trade blacklist that bars anyone on it from buying parts and components from American companies without the official approval.

The Trump Administration has seemingly embarked on launching an all-out war against Huawei and it is also persuading its allies to ban Huawei activities in their respective territories. And Canada, France and UK are seemingly falling in line. Canadian authorities arrested Huawei's chief financial officer in late 2019. In January this year, US federal prosecutors slapped Wanzhou and Huawei with 23 indictments for a variety of alleged crimes including bank and wire frauds and stealing trade secrets. Various US agencies like the FBI, the National Security Agency etc., have expressed suspicions about close ties between Huawei and the Chinese Communist Party. Some US intelligence officials are reported to have expressed the view that Huawei and ZTE, another Chinese tech company posing potential national security risks to the US. The rift is seemingly widening between Washington and Beijing with each passing day and things have come to such a stage that Trump Administration has ordered closure of one of the Chinese consulates in US with Beijing also resorting to similar measure by ordering the closure of an American consulates in China. By adhering to such measures and countermeasures, both are inching towards a new type of Cold War.

— BK