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# Book Review: Richard Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order*

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**Richard Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 362 pp. US\$84.99. ISBN: 978-1-316-61351-1 (Paperback).**

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Richard Sakwa, one of the prolific writers on post-Soviet politics, in his latest book advances a refreshing perspective to understand the events in the aftermath of the Cold War. He highlights the failure of the post-Cold War international system to establish an inclusive and peaceful order in Europe. As a result, the world witnessed a period (1989–2014) of, what Sakwa describes, ‘Cold Peace’ between Russia and the West, which culminated with the Ukrainian imbroglio in 2014. The Ukrainian crisis was a watershed moment in global politics which led to the emergence of, what many scholars loosely dub, a phase of ‘New Cold War’. Sakwa is not very fond of the phrase ‘New Cold War’, which he feels can be deceptive in grasping the broader shift that has taken place since 2014. This book is an endeavour to describe how the strained relationship between Russia and the Atlantic community is paving the way for a global realignment. The author challenges the prevalent notion that events which took place since the Ukrainian impasse is a mere repetition of the erstwhile Cold War rivalry.

Sakwa provides a succinct account of how the inability/unwillingness of the Atlantic alliance system to overcome the Cold War institutions and ideas led to present acrimony between Russia and the West. The author gives credit to the transformative outlook of last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, for helping to end the Cold War with his New Political Thinking (NPT). This approach to politics, which was based on consensus, would make the end of Cold War a common victory for all. However, in reality, what happened was just the opposite. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), the ‘Historical West’, claimed victory and sought to lay the foundation for an expanded liberal international order with dominant Western values. This was in sharp contrast to Russian aspirations of being a founding and equal member of a transformed ‘Greater West’, eventually leading to ‘Greater Europe’. Gorbachev’s ‘common

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