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# The Future of the World Order in 2050: Probable vs. Preferred

Edited by **Jungmi Cha**



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
FUTURES INSTITUTE





# The Future of the World Order in 2050 : Probable vs. Preferred



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# PROLOGUE

Today's world is witnessing the great changes of international order. The post- Cold War era has been demised and the US-led liberal international order has been challenged by the revival of great power politics and geopolitical instability. With the great changes happening in the international order, there are numerous discussions on the future of international order.

The Center for International Strategies of South Korea's National Assembly Futures Institute has implemented global collaborative research on diverse global issues for the future of international order. This year's global collaborative research aims to navigate the future of international order. There are two focuses of the discussions on the future of international order. One is the probable future and the other is the preferable future. The National Assembly Futures Institute's CIS aims to comprehensively analyze that what is the most likely future and what is the most preferable future based on global scholars' perspectives. Based on the global scholars' discussions, we discuss how to cooperate to make the future international order more preferable.

I would like to express my gratitude to the outstanding scholars from 12 countries around the world and to Jungmi Cha, director of the CIS at the National Assembly Futures Institute, who planned and implemented the entire process of this global research. This study, based on the outstanding expertise and insight of the participating scholars, plays a major role in showing the landscape of diverse perceptions about the changes of international order.

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The continued interest and participation of scholars from all parts of the world will make a great contribution to the development of our global collaborative research for a better future for all. I hope that the results of this study will be a useful reference for the studies and policy discussion on the future of international order and the cooperative ways for building the better future. We look forward to your continued interest and participation in the global collaborative research of the National Assembly Futures Institute's CIS.

Thank you.

December 2022

President of the National Assembly Futures Institute,

**Hyeon Kon Kim**

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His research interests range from democratization in Africa and the politics of Islam in the Sahel to state-building in African contexts, both contemporary and historical.



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## ABSTRACT

The end of the Cold War in 1990s brought about the era of US-led liberal international order with its robust economic integration and globalization. However, the great power politics and geopolitical tensions have been revived and intensified three decades after the Cold War. In the environment of intensifying the great power competition between the US and China, the war in Ukraine has dramatically undermined the post-Cold War order which was already being derailed away from the globalizing and liberal political economic trends. The rise of geopolitical tension and dramatic decline of globalization have brought about various discussions on where the post-Cold War era order is heading. The US national security strategy of 2022 declared that the post-Cold War era is definitively over. Then what will be next the international order in the post-post-Cold War era?

The Center for International Strategies of NAFI (National Assembly Futures Institute of ROK) has been studying the various issues of international affairs in collaboration with global scholars. The theme of this 2022 global collaborative research is ‘The Future of the World Order in 2050: Probable vs. Preferred\*.’ With intensifying great power rivalry and war in Ukraine, the gap between the probable future and the preferred future seems to be getting bigger. Therefore, this global collaborative research discussing and forecasting what is the most likely and what is the most preferable future for the coming international order is very important and a timely issue while we are facing with the numerous changes in the international power structure and global

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\* “Probable future” : Scenarios and possibilities that are likely to happen

“Preferred future” : Vision we have for possibilities we want to see come true

system. We invited 13 scholars from different countries and regions to share and discuss their views on the future of world and region. The 12 countries and regions selected are South Korea, US, China, Japan, India, Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, Turkey, Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa.

The main issues which the authors of this research address are the three following; the future of US and China competition, the future of power structure (bipolar vs. multipolar) and the future of their own states and regions. The final task all the authors describe is to offer suggestions for making the future international order more preferable. With these four questions, each author presents their views and strategies on probable future and preferred future. The 13 scholars from 12 countries presents their own views on the issues. This research compiles their views and presents some key takeaways from their views.

The art of prediction is usually deeply linked to accuracy, but the predictions of this research do not focus on accuracy but on understanding the diverse views on the probable and preferred future of international order they perceive. Based on the mutual and comprehensive understandings on their different views, we want to take some important suggestions for a better future and suggest some solutions to enhance global cooperation for building a better future. This study includes the diverse ambitions and preferences which global states have. We believe that the future will be shaped by a confluence of different forces. The most important point is that we need to figure out how to resolve conflict and make cooperation possible even when we have different views and ways to imagine the future of international order.

Even though this report's title references the future of the international order, this report does not aim to predict the future accurately, but

instead shares the diverse views of possible futures and preferred futures and provides some meaningful implications for the studies and policies regarding the future of the international order. The pieces which the 13 scholars from different countries around the world contributed for this research reflect their personal perspectives on the future of world order. This report can be regarded as an academic discussion of global scholars on the probable and preferred futures of the world order and the regions in order to share diverse views and navigate the major cognitive trends on that what is the most likely future and what is the most preferable future. We hope this study provides a good starting point to have open and constructive discussions on how to narrow the gap between the probable future and the preferred future for all.

\* This report does not reflect the views of any governments and organizations which the authors belong to. All of content included here are personal opinions. Indeed, the 14 authors of this report do not totally agree on each state's and region's perspectives on the future of world order described in this report. This report's intention is to show the diverse and different attitudes and perspectives on the changes of the current international order between the scholars from all over the world and to understand the complicated picture of future world order each scholar has and to navigate the most preferable future of international order from the diverse discussions. By sharing the diverse views on the probable and preferred future of international order and discussing the way to cooperate for building the preferable future, we hope we can make the future world head in a more preferable direction.

## 국문요약

### □ 연구배경 및 목적

- 대전환과 불확실성의 시대, 미래 국제질서 전망 연구 부상
  - 미중 전략경쟁과 코로나 19, 우크라이나 전쟁 등 강대국 경쟁의 부활과 지정학적 불안정성이 확대되면서 탈냉전 질서의 종언과 함께 자유주의 국제질서 쇠퇴 우려 부상
  - 30여년간 지속된 탈냉전 질서 이후 다가올 미래질서에 대한 불확실성 대두
  - 세계질서의 대전환과 불확실성의 증대 속에서 세계질서 예측에 대한 다양한 토론과 연구 확대
- 불확실성 속에서 미래 국제질서 전망의 어려움과 과학적 이론적 접근의 한계 부상. 이에 국회미래연구원은 세계 주요국의 학자들과 함께 가능성 높은 미래(probable future)와 선호하는 미래(preferable future)에 대한 다양한 의견을 공유하고 토론하면서 가능미래와 선호미래의 방향을 종합하고, 선호하는 미래를 함께 열어가기 위한 제안들을 제시하는 글로벌 공동연구 추진

### □ 주요 내용

- 한국, 미국, 중국, 일본, 인도, 브라질, 독일, 인도네시아, 터키, 중동, 중앙아시아, 아프리카 등 12개 국가와 지역의 학자들이 참여, 각국이 인식하는 국제질서의 변화, 가능미래와 선호미래의 내용을 공유하고, 선호미래 구축을 위한 제언을 제시함

- 미래 전망의 3가지 질문은 2050년의 미래를 상정하고, 1) 힘의 이동과 강대국 관계: 미중 강대국간 힘의 이동과 미중 관계의 미래 2) 국제체제 및 국제기구의 미래 : 양극화 vs. 다극화 3) 각 국 혹은 지역의 미래를 분석하는 것으로 각기 가능한 미래(probable)와 선호하는 미래(preferred)를 구분하여 제시함
- 나아가 각국이 선호하는 미래 구축을 위한 국제협력 과제들을 제안함

#### □ 결론 및 함의

- 미중 양대강국의 주요한 역할과 양극질서의 형성에도 불구하고 다른 국가들이 일정하게 중요한 역할을 하는 약한 양극체제, 혹은 다극체제의 부상 가능성
- 미중 갈등의 심화 가능성이 높은 상황에서 기타 국가들이 미중 양국과의 진영화된 협력보다는 이슈별 다자연대 전략을 취한다는 점에서 탈진영화된 힘 또한 동시에 부상
- 기후변화, 사이버안보, 팬데믹 공동대응 등 글로벌 협력이 필요한 다양한 초국적 과제의 부상 속에서 글로벌 협력의 필요성 확대. 탈진영화와 실리를 추구하는 기타 국가들의 선호미래 속에서 미중 경쟁과 충돌의 가능미래가 초래할 수 있는 부정적 영향을 억지하기 위한 다자연대와 이슈별 소다자 협력 확대 필요
- 다수 국가들이 선호하는 협력적, 민주적 자유주의 국제질서의 미래를 위해서는 한국 등 중견국의 역할이 부상하고 중견국들이 주도하는 글로벌 협력의 공간들이 확대되는 것이 중요



# PART I

## INTRODUCTION

*Jungmi Cha*

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1. The End of the Post-Cold War Order: What Order Will be Next?
2. The Great Transformation: Seven Trends Changing the World Order
3. Forecasting the Future in the Age of Uncertainty



# 1. The End of the Post-Cold War Order: What Order Will be Next?

The end of Cold War in 1990s brought about the era of US-led liberal international order with its robust economic integration and globalization. The expectations and prospects for more a integrated and globalized world had been pervasive for the three decades since 1990. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a dominant mind-set existed in the West based on the belief that economic development through globalization would lead to a convergence towards liberal, political and economic values.<sup>1)</sup> After the Cold War, the eagerness for the economic regionalism and free trade agreements grew among the states despite their regime differences. Economic concerns and interests are the center for national strategies and the dominant factors for constituting the international relations.

However, the great power politics and geopolitical tensions of the Cold War have been revived and intensified three decades after the Cold War. The global power structure has been changing with the rise of China. China has stood up as a global power in terms of its economy and technologies and now invests a great deal into becoming a “world-class” military power. With the change of global power distribution, great power competition has been revived and the US-led liberal international order has been challenged. China has presented their own narrative on the current international order, which is the “big changes unseen in 100 years(百年未有之大变局).”<sup>2)</sup> The topic of “Big

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1) Dani Rodrik and Stephen M. Walt, “How to Build a Better Order : Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022.

2) “Big Changes unseen in 100 years” is the discourse president Xi Jinping delivered at a work conference meeting with diplomatic envoys abroad in 2017. Xi said that today’s world is facing a big change unseen in a century.

changes unseen in 100 years” is emphasizing that the developing countries represented by China have become emerging powers, which have had a significant impact on changes in future world order.

Amid the intensifying great power competition between the US and China, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has dramatically undermined the post-Cold War order which was already being derailed from its globalizing and liberal political economic trends. The Ukraine war is beginning to reshape the global order and bringing a more bounded order than before. The Ukraine war caused worldwide disruptions to supply chains and trade as well as energy security challenges. The war also caused an increase in geopolitical instability which may lead to competitive defense buildups and the acceleration of a bifurcated world order. With the great power rivalry, COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine war, the world has seen an unprecedented decline in the order that featured and promoted globalization.

The rise of geopolitical tension and dramatic decline of globalization have brought about various discussions on whether the post-Cold War era is at a turning point. The Biden administration declared in a new national security strategy 2022 that “the post-Cold War era is definitively over.” However, while previewing the strategy, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan stated that “we will not try to divide the world into rigid blocks. We are not seeking to have competition tip over into confrontation or a new Cold War.” Two different messages from the US national security apparatus may preview the unclear and undecided future of the post-Cold War era. One consensus opinion among experts and scholars is that the world is hardly able to go back to the era that existed before the Ukraine war.

The failure of liberal International order, argues the former Indian diplomat Shivshankar Menon, stems from the fact that fewer and fewer countries, including the ones that built the previous international order, seem

committed to maintaining it.<sup>3)</sup> Some argue that the international order is created by the great powers. If we accept that premise that international order is made by great powers, the current international order may be undergoing a dramatically transformative period stemming from the changes of great powers' strategies. However, there may be some forces to maintain the liberal international order in the rest of the world which we sometimes hardly pay attention to.

If we are in the era of significant changes in liberal international order, we need to discuss whether we just let it go or we should do our best for reversing the direction and how to revive the liberal international order. It is time to discuss what is the preferable future international order and what we need to do for the preferable future order to be more probable.

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3) Shivshankar Menon, "Nobody Wants the Current World Order," *Foreign Affairs*, August 3, 2022.  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/nobody-wants-current-world-order> (accessed Oct. 25, 2022).

## 2. The Great Transformation: Seven Trends Changing the World Order

The US-China strategic competition was the engine for the great changes of international order. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine War have been the driving forces to accelerate the great changes of international order started by the US-China strategic competition; a move away from the U.S.-led liberal international order to a more competitive and bounded order. Before reviewing several states' perspectives and strategies on the future world order, we need to analyze what are the significant changes we are facing in today's world. Here are seven trends which have transformed the world order:

### 1) Power Shift and Power Distribution

The most important trend facilitating the new world order is the power distribution between the great powers. The wide range of arguments on the change of international order is mainly based on the controversy about whether the Chinese national power can surpass the US and become a global dominant power. The dominant view among the future reports is that the power transition between China and the US will take place before 2050. According to PWC, China is already the largest economy in the world in PPP terms and China should overtake the US to take first place on MER basis before 2030 (see Figure 2-1). Development Research Center of the State Council of China(国务院发展研究中心) published the report on the changes in the international economic landscape and China's strategic choices in the next 15 years. According to the report, the next 15 years will be a critical period for China's rise as a great power.<sup>4)</sup>

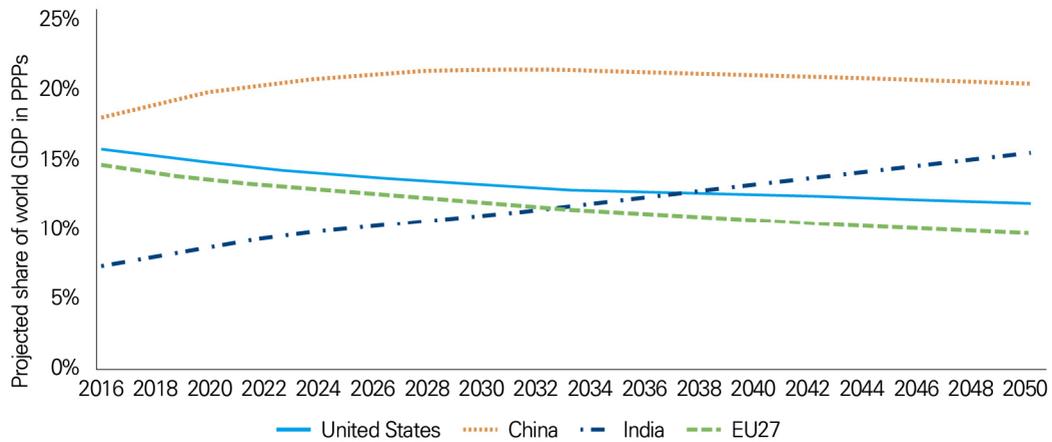


Figure 2-1. Projected GDP growth paths of China and US

\* PWC (2017), *The Long View : How will the Global Economic Order Change by 2050*. p.19.

The power shift between the Developed and the Developing is also the important factor for constituting the changes of global order. Hu Angang (胡鞍钢), a prominent Chinese economist, also emphasizes the rise of developing countries as the core of the great change of the century. Based on the Figure 2-2 below projection of the change in the global share of GDP in terms of purchasing power parity by 2050 shows that the developing countries' share will be dominant compared to the developed countries. Development Research Center of the State Council of China's report also emphasizes that the developing countries will play a more important role in the global economy. It says that the GDP of developing countries will exceed that of developed economies, accounting for nearly 60% of the global economy and investment by 2035.<sup>5)</sup>

4) “国务院发展研究中心报告未来15年国际经济格局变化和中国战略选择,” 2019.01.02. [https://www.sohu.com/a/286219328\\_825056](https://www.sohu.com/a/286219328_825056)

5) “国务院发展研究中心报告未来15年国际经济格局变化和中国战略选择,” 2019.01.02. [https://www.sohu.com/a/286219328\\_825056](https://www.sohu.com/a/286219328_825056)

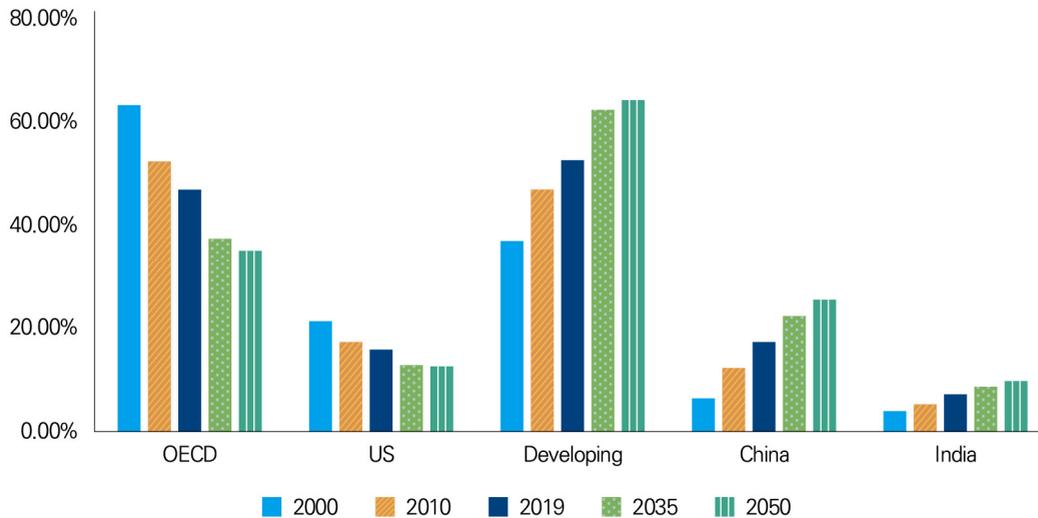


Figure 2-2. Projected Global Share of GDP (based on PPP)

\* Angang Hu (胡鞍钢, 2021), “Major changes unseen in a century between China and the world: basic trends and future trends(中国与世界百年未有之大变局：基本走向与未来趋势),” *Journal of Xinjiang Normal University* 『新疆师范大学学报』, p.11.

Despite these studies on power transition, there are still many scholars who believe the US dominant power and global leadership can be maintained for a long time.<sup>6)</sup> Recently there seems to be a modification in the analysis of China’s rise. There are some arguments that the China as a rising power has reached its peak. Brands and Beckley argue that the conventional wisdom about China’s ascendance is flawed, and the China may be in the age of “peak China” looking at a hard future of stagnation and repression.<sup>7)</sup> The various factors such as zero-Covid policy, the demographic crisis, and the more hostile geopolitical environment will possibly be the driving forces to

<sup>6)</sup> Michael Beckley (2020), “US-China relations: A Challenge to Conventional Wisdom,” in Donette Murray and David Brown ed. *Power Relations in the Twenty-First Century : Mapping a Multipolar World?* (London and NewYork: Routledge).

<sup>7)</sup> Hal Brands and Michael Beckley (2022), *Danger Zone: The Coming Conflict with China*, NewYork: Norton&Company, pp. 25-51.

slow down the China’s growth. Japan Center for Economic Research’s 2022 report forecasts that the China’s GDP will not surpass that of the U.S., unlike the previous JCER survey of 2021 and 2020 in which China’s nominal GDP was expected to surpass that of U.S. in 2033 and 2028 (see figure 2-3).<sup>8)</sup>

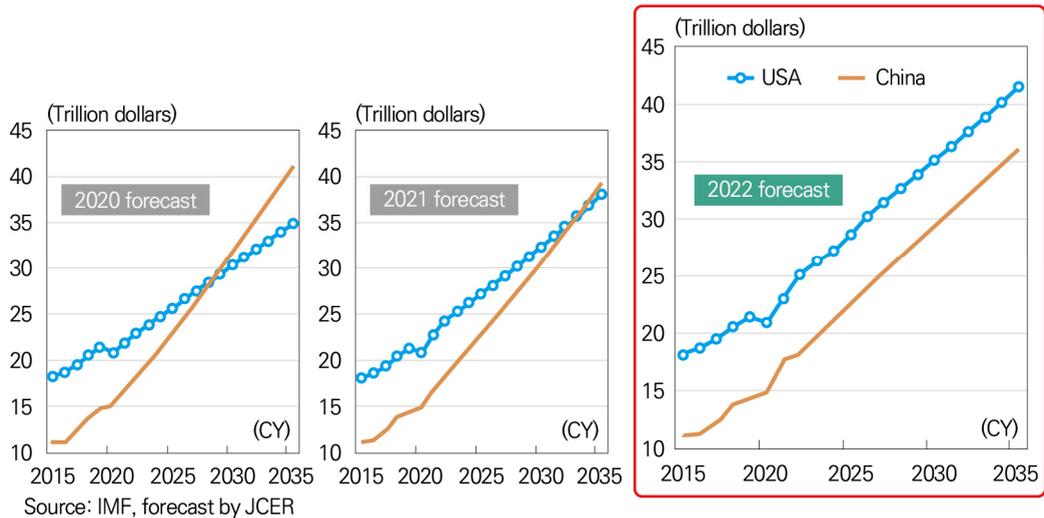


Figure 2-3. China’s GDP will not Overtake that of U.S.

\* JCER, “Medium-Term Forecast of Asian Economies-Summary,” December 15, 2022.

Beckley argues that China will remain far weaker than the US for the foreseeable future, thereby undermining the predictions of a post-American multi-polar world.<sup>9)</sup> It is not certain that China will replace the hegemonic power of the US, but it is rational for us to predict the power diffusion among the great powers. It is just as dangerous to overestimate Chinese power as it is to underestimate it. Both underestimation and overestimation can lead to miscalculations. A good strategy requires a careful net assessment.<sup>10)</sup>

8) Japan Center for Economic Research Asian Research Team, “Medium-Term Forecast of Asian Economies-Summary,” December 15, 2022.

9) Ibid., p.29-30.

10) Joseph S. Nye, “Peak China?” *Project Syndicate*, Jan. 3, 2023.

## 2) The Demise of Liberal International Order and Rise of the Bounded Order

There is a general consensus that the liberal international order is in crisis.<sup>11)</sup> The international order is the body of rules, norms, and institutions that govern relations among the key players in the international environment. The representative institutions supporting the international order since World War II are UN, IMF, and World Bank.<sup>12)</sup> The liberal international order led by the United States has prevailed and been dominant after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. However, the challenges the liberal international order has faced are very multifaceted with the rise of great power rivalry. Ikenberry argues that the hallmarks of liberal internationalism—openness and rule-based relations enshrined in institutions such as the United Nations and norms such as multilateralism—could give way to a more contested and fragmented system of blocs, spheres of influence, mercantilist networks, and regional rivalries.<sup>13)</sup> Mearsheimer argues that the United States and China will lead bounded orders that will compete with each other in both the economic and military realms in the new international order.<sup>14)</sup>

The Ukraine war has also ushered the global economic and political order into a more fragmented era. Russia's invasion of Ukraine may have revitalized NATO, but it has also deepened the divide between East and West and North and South. Meanwhile, shifting domestic priorities in many countries and increasingly competitive geopolitics have halted the drive for greater

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11) John J. Mearsheimer (Spring 2019), "Bounded to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," *International Security*, 43 (4) ; G. John Ikenberry, "The end of liberal international order?" *International Affairs* 94: I (2018) p.7-23.

12) Hal Brands (2016), "American Grand Strategy and the Liberal Order: Continuity, Change, and Options for the Future." RAND, p.2.

13) G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism After America," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011.  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/future-liberal-world-order> (Accessed 2022.09.23.)

14) John J. Mearsheimer (Spring 2019), "Bounded to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," *International Security*, 43 (4), p.8.

economic integration and blocked collective efforts to address looming global dangers.<sup>15)</sup> The international institution which has been represented as a liberal international order faces a profound crisis. Security considerations have been prioritized over market interests while the great power rivalry is intensifying, and the Ukraine war has provoked and exacerbated this. The US-China strategic competition, COVID-19 Pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have deepened the divide of the world.

### 3) The Rise of the Weak Bipolar and Multi-polar World

With the power transition and the power redistribution, the world is heading to a different international system from the previous US-led unipolar world. There are various arguments concerning the post-Unipolar World: bipolar or multipolar. Some argue that it is not a unipolar nor multipolar but instead a G-Zero world. A G-Zero world is one where no power or group of powers is willing and able to provide the consistent global leadership needed to meet the transnational challenges.<sup>16)</sup> Acharya argues that the future of world order will be a multiplex world, a world without a hegemon, culturally and politically diverse yet economically interconnected, where security challenges are increasingly transnational but the power to break and make order is dispersed and fragmented.<sup>17)</sup>

Rodrik and Walt argue that the future order will most likely be either bipolar or highly uneven multipolar, with Russia, Japan, India, Germany and possibly some other states occupying significantly weaker positions among the major powers. Although there is little consensus on whether the United

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15) Dani Rodrik and Stephen M. Walt, "How to Build a Better Order : Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022.

16) Ian Bremmer, "The Centenary of the Great War and Today's G-Zero World," *Horizons* No. 1 (AUTUMN 2014), p. 64.

17) Amitav Acharya (2014), *The End of American World Order*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press)

States or China will be stronger in the decades ahead, there is broad agreement that these two countries will be significantly stronger than any other states in the system.<sup>18)</sup> Even though there are many different predictions on the future world order after the US-led unipolar world, there may be relatively powerful states, which can be regarded as poles of the global power. While the US and China's strategic competition continues to intensify, these powerful states regarded as poles, compete to attract the rest to expand their sphere of influence.

#### 4) The Growing Skepticism and Doubt regarding Global Institutions

Along with the controversy concerning the demise of the liberal international order, there has been a certain degree of skepticism and doubt on the role of international institutions such as the UN, WTO, World Bank, and IMF. The growing influence of China and the growing difficulties of reaching agreements on global issues in the international institutions have increased the skepticism regarding international institutions. Deterioration of the legitimacy and effectiveness of international institutions has been challenging the future of their role and leadership.

On April 13, 2022, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen admitted that “the war between Russia and Ukraine has redrawn the contours of the world economic outlook.” She argues that the Russian aggression caps a long period of deterioration in the effectiveness of and confidence in the global post-World War II economic order and this decline is compounded by the waning ability of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to mediate disputes and develop new rules for the modern economy.<sup>19)</sup> The Financial Times

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18) Dani Rodrik and Stephen Walt, “How to Construct a New Global Order,” Faculty Research Working Paper Series of Harvard Kennedy School, May 2021. p.7.

19) Thomas Duesterber, “The potential role of the US-EU Trade and Technology Council in a rapidly

published an article supporting Yellen’s proposal for a new Bretton Woods arrangement. US-based think tank Atlantic Council has recently launched a Bretton Woods 2.0 Project.<sup>20)</sup> Li Xiangyang (李向阳), dean of the Institute of Asia-Pacific and Global Strategy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, also argues that the role of the United Nations is being called into question after the Ukrainian war broke out. He argues that limiting the one-vote veto mechanism will become the direction of the future reform of the United Nations.<sup>21)</sup>

With the rise of decision-making complexity in larger organizations, efforts at mini-lateralism situated between bilateralism and multilateralism are becoming more significant.<sup>22)</sup> With the rise of bifurcation in the formal international institutions, middle powers as well as great powers are pursuing small, interest-based partnerships such as QUAD, AUKUS, I2U2 (India, Israel, the UAE, and the US) Group and IFA(India-France-Australia).

## 5) The Majority Minority Dilemma: The Rise of Non-Western World

Demographic changes of world population can be presented as the important factor for future of global order. As the figure below demonstrates, there will be significant changes in the demographic map. In the next three decades, the regions of the world will experience different growth rates of

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changing global economic order,” ASPENIA, Jun 16, 2022

<https://aspeniaonline.it/the-potential-role-of-the-us-eu-trade-and-technology-council-in-a-rapidly-changing-global-economic-order/> (Accessed 2022.09.19.)

20) Bretton Woods Project, “A new Bretton Woods for whom? Civil society calls for democratisation of global governance,” 21 July, 2022.

<https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2022/07/a-new-bretton-woods-for-whom-civil-society-calls-for-democratisation-of-global-governance/>

21) “李向阳：俄乌战争的前景与对中国的影响 | 中财龙马企投家课堂,” 和讯网, 2022.04.28.

<http://news.hexun.com/2022-04-28/205840135.html> (Accessed 2022.10.08)

22) Husain Haqqani, Narayanappa Janardhan, “The Minilateral Era,” January 10, 2023.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/10/minilateral-diplomacy-middle-power-india-israel-uae>

their populations. Consequently, the regional distribution of the population in 2050 will significantly differ from that of today. Central and Southern Asia are expected to become the most populous parts of the world by 2037. Europe and North America is projected to reach its peak population size and to begin experiencing population decline in the late 2030s due to sustained low levels of fertility.<sup>23)</sup>

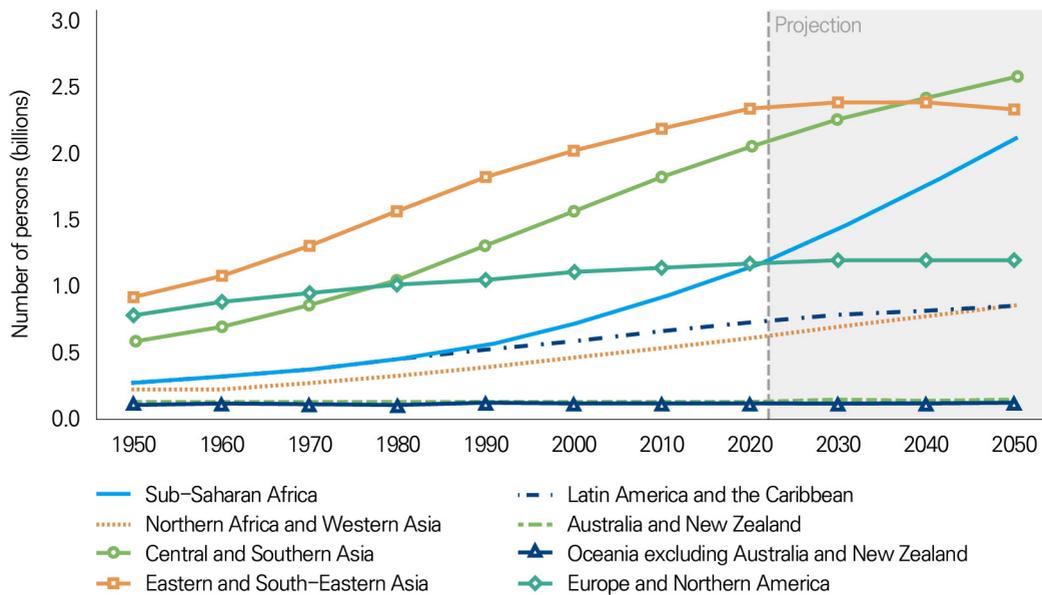


Figure 2-4. Population estimates, 1950-2022, and projections with 95 per cent prediction intervals, 2022-2050, by region<sup>24)</sup>

23) United Nations (2022), “World Population Prospects 2022 Summary of Results,” 4-5  
 file:///C:/Users/admin/Downloads/undesa\_pd\_2022\_WPP\_summary\_of\_results.pdf (Accessed 2022.10.04)

24) United Nations (2022), “World Population Prospects 2022 Summary of Results,” p.4.  
 file:///C:/Users/admin/Downloads/undesa\_pd\_2022\_WPP\_summary\_of\_results.pdf (Accessed 2022.10.04)

According to the IMF's definition, there are 152 developing countries with a current population of around 6.69 billion. At 85.33%, this is a considerable proportion of the world's population. It includes the whole of Central and South America, the whole of Africa, almost all Asian countries and numerous other island states.<sup>25)</sup> This demographic future shows the rise of non-Western states. Bradford argues that the way to manage the global agenda in a multivalent world order is to accept complexities, contradictions, and contrariness as realities.<sup>26)</sup> There is no longer any question: wealth and power are moving from the North and the West to the East and the South, and the old order dominated by the United States and Europe is giving way to one increasingly shared with non-Western rising states.<sup>27)</sup> With the rise of the non-Western and contested norms of democracy, debates have arisen concerning the future of the Western democracy as well as the Western-led liberal international order.

## 6) The Rise of Multivalent Perspectives and Ideological Competition

With the rise of bounded order, we are much more likely to witness double standards or multivalent perceptions of global issues and agendas. In two votes, namely the United Nations General Assembly on condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine in March and on suspending Russia from the U.N. Human Rights Council in April, a total of 77 countries demurred on the condemnation of Russia, 40 percent of the total 193 members of the UN.<sup>28)</sup> It is hard to find

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25) World Data. "Developing Countries"

<https://www.worlddata.info/developing-countries.php> (accessed 2022.07.23)

26) Colin I. Bradford, "Perspectives on the future of the global order: Beyond singular visions to multivalent forcefields," Brookings, May 4, 2022.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2022/05/04/perspectives-on-the-future-of-the-global-order/> (accessed Sept. 16, 2022)

27) G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism After America," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/future-liberal-world-order> (Accessed: 2022.09.23.)

consensus on the issues in large international institutions such as the UN.

In the 20th Party Congress work report, Chinese President Xi Jinping mentioned the word “Marxism” thirty times. Xi emphasized that Marxism is the fundamental guiding ideology upon which CCP, and China are founded and thrive. China has adopted a two-step strategic plan—basically realizing the socialist modernization from 2020 through 2035 and building China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful from 2035 through the middle of this century. China released a white paper titled “China: Democracy that Works” in December 2021. China has released white papers on human rights since the 1990s. This white paper has an articulated Chinese version of common values.

China has the will to expand Chinese Socialist culture and the Chinese Model. China has developed Chinese characteristic democracy and human rights. There are also many developing countries that share little consensus on Western-led global norms and values. This is an important point for China to engage actively with developing countries. With the rise of developing countries, Chinese foreign policy’s priorities have been focusing more on strengthening relationships with the developing countries.<sup>29)</sup> China can serve as the non-Western center to construct the post-liberal international order and norms.

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28) Colin I. Bradford, “Perspectives on the future of the global order: Beyond singular visions to multivalent forcefields,” Brookings, May 4, 2022.  
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2022/05/04/perspectives-on-the-future-of-the-global-order/>  
(accessed Sept. 16, 2022)

29) The definition of a developing country is not always clear. According to the UNCTAD, all target economies are categorized into developing or developed. In the composition applied by UNCTAD, the Republic of Korea is part of the developed country group. The developing economies broadly comprise Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia without Israel, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, and Oceania without Australia and New Zealand. The developed economies broadly comprise Northern America and Europe, Israel, Japan and the Republic of Korea, as well as Australia and New Zealand. (UNCTADSTAT, “Country Classification”  
<https://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Classifications.html>)

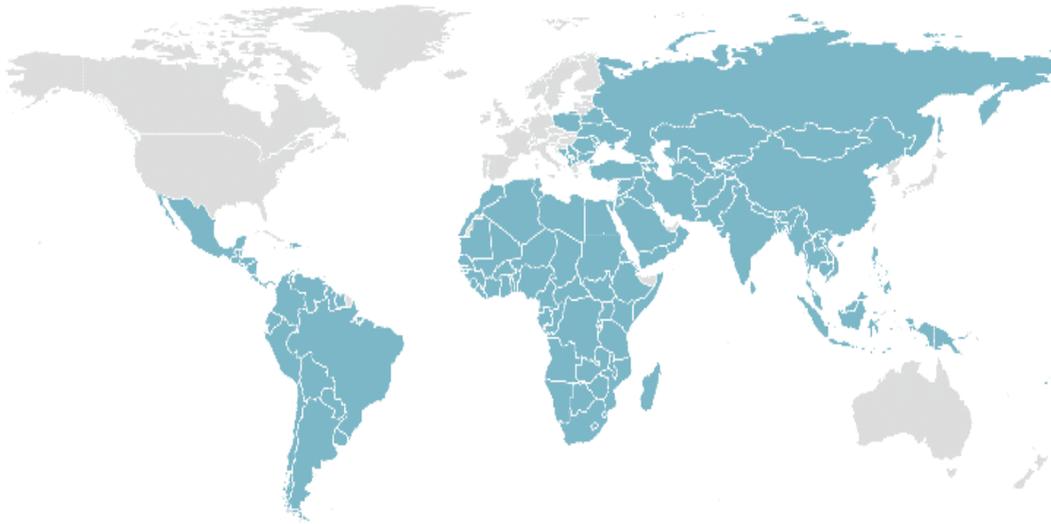


Figure 2-5: The map of developing countries<sup>30)</sup>

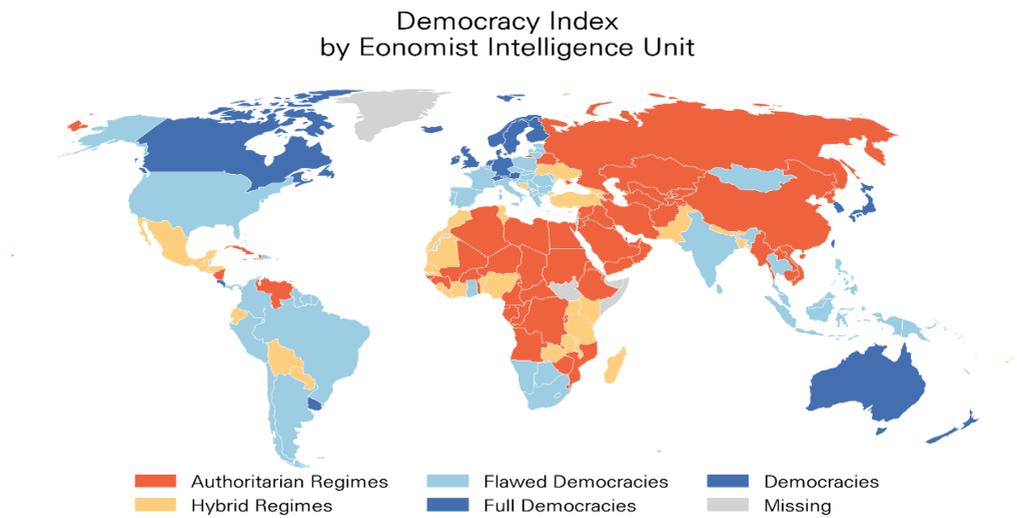


Figure 2-6. The map of democracy index (EIU 2021)

30) <https://www.worlddata.info/developing-countries.php>

The above map shows that developing countries and non-democratic countries are the majority. According to the EIU's 2021 measure of democracy, less than half (45.7%) of the world's population now live in a democracy of some sort, which is a significant decline from 2020 (49.4%).<sup>31)</sup> It can be another important feature of the future world, the construction of a future world order will occur in a world where Western-led norms and values are challenged by the diversity of regime types and ideologies. There will be wide variation between liberal democracies and non-liberal democracies. It may be difficult to identify the states with a 'democracy vs. autocracy' frame.

## 7) The Deepening and Widening of Nationalism and Protectionism

The other main trend of today's world is the rise of nationalism and protectionism. Rodrik and Walt argue that geopolitical trends such as growing nationalism (i.e. support for a nation's own interests, often to the exclusion of others); protectionism (i.e. policies restricting imports through tariffs, quotas and/or regulations to help domestic industry); and 'great power' competition are dominant.<sup>32)</sup> Walt said that the COVID-19 pandemic would strengthen the state and reinforce nationalism and would create a world that is less open.<sup>33)</sup> Economic patriotism is also an emerging trend in the 21st century world. Economic Patriotism offers a framework for understanding differentiated, multi-faceted and multi-leveled economic interventions in pursuit of the interests of domestic insiders.<sup>34)</sup>

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31) The 2021 edition of the EIU's Democracy Index. 10, Feb, 2021.

<https://www.eiu.com/n/democracy-index-2021-less-than-half-the-world-lives-in-a-democracy/>

32) Dani Rodrik and Stephen M. Walt, "How to Build a Better Order : Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022.

33) Stephen M. Walt (2020), "Predictions For the Global Order After the Pandemic," Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union, 04/08/2020.

<http://www.aalep.eu/predictions-global-order-after-pandemic> (access: 15/09/2022)

34) Ben Clift (2022), "Economic patriotism: the transformation of economic governance in 21st century capitalism," in Andreas Pickel, *Handbook of Economic Nationalism* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022)

These seven rising trends in international order may be strengthened by the great power competition, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. These trends have heightened the unpredictability and instability of international politics. The states do still matter in changing these trends. Rodrik and Walt argue that there are four aspects of global politics and economics unlikely to change in the short-to-medium term- states, polarity, interdependence, and ideological diversity.<sup>35)</sup> The states, as Rodrik and Walt argued, will remain the critical factor in the future of global politics and economics. Therefore, we need to look at the states' ambition and will for making a future different from the potentially negative and pessimistic future.

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35) Dani Rodrik and Stephen M. Walt, "How to Build a Better Order : Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022.

### 3. Forecasting the Future in the Age of Uncertainty

#### The Rise of an Uncertain and Unpredictable Future

We are all concerned that the liberal international order has been declining and the post-Cold War era has entered a transformative era. However, we are not sure what the next order will be that follows these changes. There are a lot of discussions engaged in trying to predict the future of the international order. With US-China strategic competition and the Ukraine war, scholars and experts are trying to assess the prospects for the future of global order. Some predictions are based on the quantitative approaches using data analysis, and some are based on the qualitative approaches using narrative analysis. Despite the various approaches to prediction, it is more difficult than ever to predict the future of the international order because of the complexity of the numerous variables.

With the rise of great power competition and disruptive technologies, the future of the global order seems to be more uncertain and unpredictable than ever before. The title of *Foreign Affairs* of September/October 2022 was “The Age of Uncertainty.” Haass argues that the world is witnessing the revival of some of the worst aspects of traditional geopolitics: great-power competition, imperial ambitions, fights over resources and heightened geopolitical competition that makes it even more difficult to produce the kind of cooperation demanded by new global problems. He warns that today’s world is in the most dangerous situation since World War II.<sup>36)</sup>

What has been making the world more unpredictable and uncertain? First of all, the revival of great power geopolitics is a decisive factor which has

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36) Richard Haass, “The Dangerous Decade :A Foreign Policy for a World in Crisis,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022.

made the future of world order much more uncertain. The post-Cold War principles that accelerated globalization and integration have deteriorated because of the great power rivalry. Second, the rise of emerging and disruptive technologies has been a critical factor in the uncertainty of the future international order. NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept put emphasis on the fact that emerging and disruptive technologies bring both opportunities and risks. The US and China's competitions for technological primacy increasingly influence the uncertainty and unpredictability of the future of international order. Last but not least, the increasing unpredictability of domestic politics has also made the future international order more uncertain and unpredictable. The nexus between domestic politics and foreign policy has been a significant factor we should consider when we analyze the future of international relations. Therefore, the increasing unpredictability of domestic politics will likely lead to increases in the uncertainty of the future international order.

With all these factors, the future of international order is much more difficult to predict. In the age of uncertainty, scholars and policy makers are eager to forecast the future of international order. The background and motif of this research also stem from two questions; what will the future international order after the great uncertain and transition period be and what is the future international order we want to have? This study is intended to help in navigating the probable future and preferred future of international order.

## The Motivation for Forecasting the Future of International Order

Growing attention on forecasting through academic research accompanies increasing expectations by the policy community that international relations research should be able to provide early warning of conflict and other human disasters and should therefore actively be engaged in forecasting exercises.<sup>37)</sup> Predicting the future of US-China relations and international order is not only a difficult task but also easy to get wrong. Studies on the future of international order have been judged based on the accuracy of the forecast. With this in mind, more studies have tried to adopt the scientific method. However, forecasting the future is hardly a perfect science even when we try to adopt diverse scientific methods and analytical tools to forecast the future.

Therefore, this report focuses on analyzing state perception and preference for the future. With the analyses of each state's perception of the future of international order and its own strategy for the future, we can navigate the probable future international order and preferred future international order the states are perceiving. Perhaps this is not the most scientific and objective way to predict the future. However, the main purpose of making predictions for the future of the world and regions in this report is not to pursue the accuracy of prediction but to navigate the preferred future that states would like to see come to pass. Through sharing the states' preferences for the future order, we believe that we can find the directions and main agendas to cooperate on making the preferable future highly probable.

The gap between the probable and preferable future is getting wider since the US-China great power rivalry, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war. The main reason we are eager to navigate the future international order is to make the future world more likely to be a preferable order. Therefore,

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37) Gerald Schneider, Nils Petter Gleditsch, Sabine Carey (2011), "Forecasting in International Relations," *Conflict Management and Peace Sciece* 28 (1), pp.5-14. p.5

collecting the states' views and strategies for the future world helps inform us what the preferred future of international order actually is. Sharing diverse views on the future world can be effective to begin thinking of the preferable future we'd like the world to have. The reason we are focusing on the preferable future of international order is to find out how to cooperate on making the preferred future highly feasible.

### How to Predict the Future of World Order in the Age of Great Uncertainty

Bradford(2022) argues that there are confrontational narratives and conflicting perspectives on the future of the global order. He emphasizes that today the world, as it is, is fragmented, torn by crosscurrents, contradictions, and multivalent forcefields, not a singular vision.<sup>38)</sup> Then what are the main factors for constituting the future of international order? Three variables are presented below.

The first key variable is the distribution of power among the great powers. The different trends of power distribution can lead to different global systems such as bipolar, multipolar, or unipolar. If it is unipolar, the political ideology of the dominant state also matters in determining the kind of international order that forms. In bipolarity and multipolarity, however, the political ideology of the great powers is largely irrelevant.<sup>39)</sup>

Second, the great powers' perceptions and strategies are important factors for constituting the future international order. The relations between the great powers, based on their perceptions and strategies, are a decisive factor

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38) Colin I. Bradford, "Perspectives on the future of the global order: Beyond singular visions to multivalent forcefields," Brookings, May 4, 2022.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2022/05/04/perspectives-on-the-future-of-the-global-order/> (accessed Sept. 16, 2022)

39) John J. Mearsheimer, "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," *International Security* Vol. 43, No. 4(Spring 2019), pp.7-50,

in constituting the future of the world. With the rise of China, the world is witnessing strategic competition between the US and China that is becoming more severe. The long-term strategies of great powers can be the analytic tools to forecast the future of international relations.

Third, the rest of the world outside of the great powers are important actors in making the future of international order even if they cannot create the international order by themselves. The state is still one of the aspects of global politics and economics which is unlikely to change in the short-to-medium term.<sup>40)</sup> Rodrik and Walt emphasize that what other countries choose to do will matter even in a world order that is heavily shaped by relations between the two most powerful states.<sup>41)</sup> As the new power configuration rises, we need to navigate the states' perceptions and strategies if we want to predict the future of the global order. To predict the future, we need to know not only about the great powers' grand strategies and intentions but also about the other countries' preferences and behaviors which will be the important factors to shape the future global order.

## Global Collaborative Research on the Future of the World

The Center for International Strategies of NAFI (National Assembly Futures Institute of ROK) has been studying the various issues of international affairs in collaboration with global scholars. This global collaborative research focused on forecasting the future of international order is a very important and timely issue while we are facing numerous changes in the international power structure and global system.

This global collaborative research invites 13 scholars from different states

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40) Dani Rodrik and Stephen M. Walt, "How to Build a Better Order : Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022

41) *Ibid.*

and regions to share their views on the future of the world and regions. The 12 states selected are South Korea, The US, China, Japan, India, Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, Turkey, The Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. The US, China, Japan, India, Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, Turkey and Indonesia are included in the research because these states are the Top 11 based on the GDP rankings of 2050 according to the PWC report, *The World in 2050*.<sup>42)</sup> The Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa are included and analyzed from a regional perspective.

This research presents ‘The future of the World Order in 2050: Probable vs. Preferred’ as the main topic. With intensifying great power rivalry and the Ukraine war, the gap between the probable future and the preferred future has been growing. The prediction is usually deeply focused on accuracy, but the predictions of this research are not focusing on accuracy but on the will and ambition toward the future. Through collaboration with scholars of different regions and countries, we can collect and assess the power of will and ambition to constitute a more preferable future. Therefore, this study includes the diverse ambitions and preferences that the global states have.

The main questions which the authors of this research address are three followings; the future of the US and China competition, the Future of power structure (bipolar vs. multipolar) and the strategies for a better future. With these three questions, each author presents their views and strategies on the future of the world and their region.

We believe that the future will be shaped by a confluence of different forces. Therefore, we should look at the emerging forces which the rest of the world wants to have while the great power rivalry intensifies. By discussing the future together, we want to navigate the ways to cooperate for making the future world more preferable.

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<sup>42)</sup> PWC, *The Long View: How will the global economic order change by 2050?* February 2017; Russia and UK which are ranked as number 6th and 10th in PWC 2050 report are omitted in the analysis because we could not reach appropriate scholars.



# PART II

## The New World Order and Great Power Competitions

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4. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A US Perspective
5. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Chinese Perspective



## 4. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A US Perspective

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### Introduction

The future of the United States and its role in the world will undoubtedly be one of the central determinants of the international system over the next quarter century. The transition from the single superpower status that the US enjoyed from the collapse of the Soviet Union until the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack is now indisputably over. That attack led to two decades of US military operations against Afghanistan and Iraq and is widely seen as a turning point in the perception and reality of US power in the international system. Whether unintentional or by design, the “forever wars” caused the American electorate, US presidents and world public opinion to view the US as a less competent power.

Looking out over the next quarter century, a discussion of the US role in the world can focus primarily on the trends and trajectories of distinct aspects of American national power, from traditional military power to industrial and economic vitality, to the domestic political culture and its challenges. Alternatively, this analysis could focus mainly on how the US-China relationship evolves. Will the world be managed by a G-2 leadership, where the Washington and Beijing work together as power centers, or is that a naïve proposition? Will the US be preoccupied by containing or reacting to rising

Chinese power, with the rest of the world nervously balancing its relations with the two superpowers? Or will China be recognized as the preeminent power by 2050, with the size of its economy, and its ability to coerce and constrain the behavior of the middle and smaller powers in Asia and beyond?

This essay will use both the unitary and binary metrics to address American power to mid-century and will attempt to use current trends in key factors and other analytic techniques to explore the most likely and the most desirable (from a US perspective) outcomes.

### Caution about predictions

Grappling with alternative hypotheses and scenarios about the future is a useful mental exercise for analysts, whether in academia, government, or the private sector. But it is important to recognize the limits of projections and predictions, and to be careful to use such work properly, and to avoid treating the judgments of futures work as somehow scientific truths.

The US diplomatic luminary, George Kennan, of *The Long Telegram* fame, expressed his own reservations about trying to predict the future:

"I had no confidence," he later recalled, "in the ability of men to define hypothetically in any useful way, by means of general and legal phraseology, future situations which no one could really imagine or envisage."<sup>43</sup>)

Despite such intellectual humility, Kennan was uniquely insightful about how the Soviet Union would evolve, and the deep cultural and historical

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43) George Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*. (Boston, Atlantic-Little, Brown & Co., 1967) p. 408

factors that shaped its ambitions and its ultimate failures. While US policy towards the USSR in the 1950s moved in a direction that Kennan did not advocate, his understanding about the underlying trends in that culture that would lead to its demise were more prescient than his contemporaries.

The intellectual exercise of imagining most likely and most desirable paths in world politics can be a productive way to support planners and others in government circles. If open to the speculative analysis, officers in key planning departments can try to set parameters around likely developments and better serve decision-makers. The Global Trends quadrennial reports from the US Intelligence Community that began in 1997 have that objective in mind: to help policymakers focus on the more likely range of outcomes, and to identify the drivers that will make some outcomes more likely than others.<sup>44</sup> Global Trends has become an international collaboration with non-US government and academic experts contributing to its research, thus helping insulate the analysis from excessive US bias or self-serving political assumptions.

## The Future of the World: Which countries will lead in 2050?

### Probable

The United States and China are likely to be the preeminent powers in the international system for the next quarter century. Unlike the Cold War, the bipolarity will have a strong element of economic interdependence. Unlike the US-USSR ideological rivalry, the competition between China's authoritarian quasi-capitalist model and the US commitment to democratic capitalism will not be framed in quite the same existentialist terms but will be

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<sup>44</sup> The full series of Global Trends reports can be found at <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/gt2040-home/gt2040-media-and-downloads>.

an often awkward and uneasy competition between two political models that need each other to survive. Their competition will not be framed as a fight to destroy the other or to seek world domination. *In this view, and the view of this author, China and the US will find that they have to at least partly accommodate each other as the world's two strongest powers. It will not be a formally recognized power-sharing arrangement, and it will have elements of uncertainty and instability, but is likely to fall short of leading to a major war between them.*

To be fair, some China watchers see the situation in more dire terms. They see China's leaders as fiercely ambitious, committed to reversing China's historic grievances against the West, and as set on surpassing US power, and reclaiming the dominant position in world politics that it once enjoyed.<sup>45)</sup> And a senior US defense official, Admiral Phil Davidson, has warned of a timeline before 2030 when the showdown between the US and China over Taiwan may occur. So, our analysis may infer a period of maximum danger in the first half of the timeline to 2050, that could taper off in the second half.

The probabilities that the US and China will have fought a major war by 2050 are low, but not nil. The two countries will each remain committed to competing, deterring, and containing the other's war-fighting capabilities. Each will continue to invest in new technologies to counter the diverse military capabilities of the other, and to study in great depth each side's relative advantages and vulnerabilities. The US will remain more powerful in broad spectrum military power, but China will have the advantage in high technology and asymmetric tools to deter and coerce the US and its partners and allies. Along the road from now to 2050, however, prospects for conflict

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45) See, for example, the new book by Hal Brands and Michael Beckley, *Danger Zone: the Coming Conflict with China*. (WWNorton Press, 2022), or the excerpt in *Foreign Policy* <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/13/what-china-wants-us-conflict/#> (Accessed 8/28/22).

between the two powers, particularly over disputes in the East China and South China Seas, will be the preoccupying concern of the US national security community.

At the same time, the middle powers will play an important role in managing tensions between the two great powers. European states that are key players in NATO, as well as Korea, Japan and Australia will be brokers and mediators to prevent open conflict between Washington and Beijing. They will have developed diplomatic capabilities to initiate and lead major international efforts by mid-century, after recognizing the limits, self-imposed or not, of American leadership.

One key metric of American power out to 2050 is the quality (and quantity) of American alliances, partnerships, and sustained commitments to cooperative and collective security. At the end of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had a moment of uncertainty about its continued usefulness and mission. The first decade after the Cold War was a remarkable transition that attempted to integrate Russia into the western security architecture. A decade later, the September 11 attacks and the rise of Vladimir Putin created new demands on NATO. The war on Ukraine further validated the importance of the nearly 75-year-old institution, and one can project with some confidence that it will celebrate its centenary in 2049, as a testament to US and European shared purpose, evolving to meet changing demands. So, this analysis posits that NATO will adapt to the task of managing China as a global rival if not threat, alongside Russia, likely to be a more proximate danger to the European continent.

Many will assume that the US, by mid-century, is the weaker party compared to China, if judged by some economic metrics (not per capita income) and by the capacity of its leaders to promote its interests and to

prevail in international crises.<sup>46)</sup> The erosion of societal cohesiveness and stability, political polarization, and failures to fully recapitalize the infrastructure and public institutions will lead many to conclude that US leadership is a pale shadow of what it was in the second half of the twentieth century, even if its alliance structures and general economic strength remain.

China will have its own set of domestic challenges and will not have achieved many of its ambitions by 2050. Managing its demographic decline of an aging population, and its own economic disappointments and failures will preoccupy China's leaders. Many economists see China as having peaked in terms of industrial capacity, and it must find new strategies for employment and long-term growth. Concern about domestic instability will shape international views about whether a strong and confident China represents the greatest threat to world peace and security, or the obverse. A weak and insecure Chinese leadership, deeply worried about domestic unrest and economic stresses, might be more reckless at the international level than a regime that believes trends are working in its favor.

### **Preferred**

In the US foreign policy community, many might take comfort from signs that China's rise has been tempered by the reality of managing its huge territory and the expectations of continued improved living conditions by its population. The notion that China's leaders might have to refrain from coercive behavior in its neighborhood or be less assertive in trying to change the rules-based order will lead some to believe that the international system remains more reliant on US leadership than Chinese. But should instability in

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46) The National Intelligence Council's *Global Trends 2040*, for example, cites Oxford Economics in projecting that the US share of global GDP will fall from 24% in 2020 to 20.8 in 2040, while China's will rise from 17.9 to 22.8. See [https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends\\_2040.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends_2040.pdf) p.51.

China persist, such schadenfreude would be misplaced. US leadership could be sorely tested if China becomes unstable in ways that spill beyond its borders.

One can conclude that both the US and China are likely to suffer from serious domestic challenges in the decades ahead, but both will also see their international roles and responsibilities as central to regime legitimacy and national identity. *The “preferred” outcome from a mainstream, centrist point of view would be for the two countries to find a modus vivendi that embraces competition and selective cooperation, and finds means to avoid outright conflict. It may fall short of a G-2 world, but will be more stable than a sustained Cold War between the two countries. This outcome correlates to the National Intelligence Council’s scenario “competitive coexistence” in its five alternative projections for global politics to 2040.* <sup>47)</sup>

The likely preferences of other political tendencies in the US must be acknowledged. Should Donald Trump or a Trumpist candidate win the presidential election in 2024, or in 2028, one should expect an America First approach to foreign policy, and a return to more belligerent rhetoric regarding China. This tendency will seek to avoid open military hostilities over various maritime or territorial disputes between the two superpowers but will be provocative enough to raise fears of war by accident or miscalculation. Some conservative intellectuals also favor a containment approach to China that anticipates and seeks to encourage the eventual collapse of the Chinese Communist Party and thereby reducing if not eliminating the threat of peer competition from China.<sup>48)</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, progressives will push hard in Democratic Party policy formulation for a strategy towards China that gives

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<sup>47)</sup> *Global Trends 2040*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>48)</sup> See *The Longer Telegram: Toward a new American China Strategy*, published online February 2021. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/the-longer-telegram/>

primacy to its failures in democracy and human rights. They would favor continued sanctions for China's treatment of its minorities, for its crackdown on democratic practices in Hong Kong, and for other evidence of a very intolerant surveillance regime. They would see China's anti-democratic practices as an essential challenge to US leadership and its projection of universal values and norms and would be willing to forgo some of the economic benefits of interdependence for a clearer stand on China.

This approach would also be provocative and would subject the US to harsh criticism for its own hypocrisy and double standards. China in coming decades will work hard to defend its authoritarian model that prohibits free speech and political contestation as having advantages in terms of control and "stability," and will find support from other major powers that find the chaos and unpredictability of democratic governance to be undesirable.

## Future of the International System

One can assert with some confidence that in mid-century, the international system will be messy and multi-polar, with power distributed among great powers and middle powers, and with formal and informal coalitions of like-minded countries that try to influence the more powerful on issues that affect their stability and security. The US and China will have a disproportionate capacity to influence and shape the policies of others but will not be formally recognized as leading global governance efforts together (G-2 world), or as leading two separate and competing alternative "world" orders.

American political scientist John Mearsheimer<sup>49)</sup> has posited that only in the decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union was there actually a "liberal international order." The US, as the single superpower, was widely

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49) His major writings can be found at [www.mearsheimer.com](http://www.mearsheimer.com)

acknowledged as setting the agenda for international affairs and inter-state relations. Mearsheimer considers the period from the end of World War II to 1990 as two bounded world orders, not a single international system. The world in 2050 could be a repeat of that concept, with two competing orders, one led by an authoritarian China, with like-minded countries intent on preventing liberal interventions from other great powers. The other would be the “rules-based order” that American presidents have championed, with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations working with the US and other advanced democracies to promote liberal values of democracy, human rights, and conflict prevention.

That agenda, preferred by the western democratic world, will not be sufficient for the mid-century challenges. It is not at all clear that the existing architecture for multilateral cooperation, anchored in the UN and its related agencies, will be up to the task of managing climate change and the impact of technology on all manner of social and political interaction.

One specific example is the trend in global, cooperative funding for climate investments to prevent catastrophic outcomes in climate-affected areas. In 2020, climate financing totaled about \$600 billion, but the projection of needs by 2040 and 2050 is \$6 trillion, to maintain a pathway to cap warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius.<sup>50)</sup>

The United Nations will likely celebrate its centenary in 2045, but its weaknesses and shortcomings will be on full display. The wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, from Afghanistan and Iraq and Ukraine to possible hot conflicts in East Asia, or renewed violence in African and Latin American conflicts, will demonstrate that the UN’s core mission, to prevent war and promote peaceful cooperation, is still aspirational. It can be assumed that Russia and China will continue to block peace initiatives in the UN Security Council on the

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50) Stimson Center, *Road to 2023: Our Common Agenda and the Pact for the Future*, June, 2022, p. 49.

principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states.

It is possible that China's Shanghai Cooperation Organization, founded in 2000 and comprising key states from South Asia, Central Asia, and China and Russia, will emerge as a powerful alternative to the UN, or become the secretariat for an Eastern International Order, a bounded order in Mearsheimer's terms. Today, SCO has broad missions that resemble some of the functions of the OSCE, or the EU, but it could evolve into security-related work as well, beyond its counterterrorism and counter-extremism activities.

One can anticipate additional regional organizations that pick up some of the work of the UN, but delegated down to the regional level, rather than attempting to be inclusive of all global constituencies. That trend has been encouraged by the UN itself and is already seen as a useful and productive dimension of global governance.

### **Norms and Values – will capitalism and democracy still prevail as the preferred system?**

From today's perspective, it is difficult to assume that democracy or other forms of liberal, representative government will prevail as the preferred form of government around the world. The forces for more state control, particularly in densely populated countries with severe economic inequality or high rates of poverty, are evident today and could remain powerful forces out to 2050. In the well-established democracies of the western world and in East Asia, have witnessed an erosion of confidence in democratic institutions, due to declining capacity to deal with social and technological change, and to polarization accelerated by the misuse and manipulation of information.

From an official US perspective, the promotion of democratic norms and values is foundational to US identity and to the role the US plays in the world.

But many experts believe that US enthusiasm for democracy promotion has waned. The Arab Spring and its aftermath were a sobering experience for the Department of State and the robust network of democracy-promoting non-governmental organizations. Even in states with a long track record of strong ties to Washington, such NGO work was no longer welcome and US programs have been scaled back to reduce risks to democracy advocates in places where authoritarian behavior is on the rise.

Skeptics would point out that democracy promotion has always been a secondary aspect of US policy, and one that can be sidelined when security interests take precedence. As US credibility as a model democracy has suffered in recent years, US officials and NGOs have also had to take a more humble and self-critical approach.

Out to 2050, one assumes that most democracies will prevail, and weather the challenges of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. But in Europe and in the western hemisphere, it is certainly possible that several states will no longer be ranked as truly democratic, by the metrics that Freedom House and other NGOs use to evaluate political conditions around the world.

## Future of the US and its region

Many Americans are deeply worried about the direction of the country, for reasons already identified. The dysfunction of governing institutions, the rise of domestic extremism, the uncertainties about the trajectory for the US economy have all contributed to a deep angst among educated elites, and a movement to disaffection and alienation by the perceived “have-nots” of US society. These trends will likely persist in some form to mid-century, even if there are serious efforts to address them by new leaders and by the still vibrant civil society.

There are many other indicators to show that the US is not in sharp or irreversible decline. The US, despite its deeply flawed response to Covid-19, rebounded faster than many advanced economies, and many macro indicators suggest that the US economy is and will remain a leader in the world economy. The US private sector, particularly in technology, is still the global trend setter, and many other aspects of American culture are still emulated around the world.

On the foreign policy side, it is possible that the US will enter a period of retrenchment. After major wars in US history, a period of isolationism has sometimes occurred. The inward, nationalist focus of the Trump-dominated Republican Party suggests that it is a possible direction for US national security policy if the voters choose a return of Trump or a Trumpist candidate. At the same time, Americans still poll<sup>51)</sup> with strong majorities in favor of engaging in the world, albeit not for new military entanglements.

The duality of the American character suggests no clear projection for a predominant American future. The coastal cosmopolitans still see virtue in US engagement around the world, for idealistic as well as pragmatic reasons. They support globalization and believe the US can manage the challenges of power shifting to China and the Asian region more broadly.

But the other America, of cowboys and America First, have a darker view of the world these days, and Trump's Republican Party is set on restoring certain aspects of American identity that have been blurred by immigration and globalization. Their world is more inward-focused, mistrustful of global institutions and alliances. By 2050, however, the Trump era may have ended, and a return to more traditional Republican view of America's role in the world may occur.

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51) For longitudinal surveys, see The Chicago Council on Global Affairs,  
[https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research?research\\_type%5B0%5D=22&date=](https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research?research_type%5B0%5D=22&date=)

As a global power, the US is somewhat less focused on its immediate region than other large countries. Its relations with Mexico and Canada are stable and productive in the long run, although the vision of a more integrated North America has eluded the leaders of the three countries. It is possible that that vision will begin to take root by mid-century, but it will depend on an improvement in US-Mexican relations over the acute challenges of the border, labor rights, water scarcity, and violence caused by drugs and guns.

### Suggestions for Global Cooperation

Two areas for improving global cooperation are:

- 1) Expand the capacity and resources for addressing climate change. The UN and the COP process need to ensure sufficient institutional capacity for research, collaboration, and delivery of well-funded programs for communities and countries most affected by climate change
- 2) Establish a process for setting norms on cyber issues. The efforts to date have been inadequate and more work needs to be done to establish basic principles to govern inter-state use of the cyber domain for peaceful uses, and to prevent catastrophic application of cyber tools in conflict.

## 5. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Chinese Perspective

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### Introduction

When considering the future, the fact should be always remembered that the world order is likely to be still shaped, operated, and controlled by nation-states for a long time even in 2050. Although international governmental or non-governmental organizations have never thrived on the international stage since the end of the Second World War, they have been proven to be only supplements, not substitutes of nation-states. The reason is very simple, clear, and deep-rooted: a nation-state is the only political entity which has the legal authority and effective capabilities to manage this world. In comparison, most NGOs only represent one or a small number of people and have weak capabilities, while a few wealthy organizations, such as the Gates Foundation, are unable to obtain legitimate political authorization. Some International Governmental Organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union, have some political authorization, but their powers have been limited by member states. Thus, nation-states will still be in the dominant roles in 2050.

Unfortunately, not every nation-state can play the same role in managing world affairs. For example, according to the UN charter, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council wield veto power, which can deny any proposal they don't agree with in the Security Council, while most

countries don't have their microphones in this core international body. In other words, the world is heterogeneous rather than homogeneous in power distribution and there is a de facto and even stipulated inequality of power among nation-states. Thus, the world order is shaped by a few major powers.

In a multi-polar world, the world order, especially the security order, is usually shaped by five or six big powers. In a bipolar world, just like in the Cold War, two superpowers can determine the direction of the world order. Of course, the capabilities of the major powers may be limited by their economic development, domestic politics, public opinion, and development model and balanced by other international counterparts. In some cases, smaller countries may engage in international affairs by collective action, balancing or taking-sides diplomacy or their special strategic locations in the power competition because, “powerful states need partners—especially when competing against a rival or alternative system to shape the order”.<sup>52)</sup>

Thus, when we predict the world order in 2050, there are two critical tasks. One is to analyze the development trend of the national power of major countries. Generally, a country with more basic resources (population, lands, minerals, etc.), a better governance model, and faster economic growth can develop stronger political, economic, and military power. Another is to investigate the possible coalitions among major countries. According to the logic of power competition, the international players usually judge who is a friend, enemy, or competitor according to the relative power changes and thus change their power coalition.

For example, the Biden administration has considered China as its biggest challenger because it believes that “China is the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order--- and, increasingly, the economic,

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52) Seth Center and Emma Bates eds., *After Disruption: Historical Perspectives on the Future of International Order*, A Report of the CSIS Project on History and Strategy, September, 2020, p.3.

diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it”.<sup>53)</sup> But it is worth noting that ideas will play a very important role in shaping the relations among major powers too. Especially, with the rise of China, values have been addressed again as the guide of foreign policies in some Western countries, especially when the U.S. is reorganizing its coalitions by the dichotomy of so-called freedom and democracy vs. repression and dictatorship.

Of course, the future world order will not be determined by one single power, even the U.S. cannot do this by itself. Every major power will have its preferred version of the future world order. Hence, the world order in the future will be the confluence of competing dynamics of major powers. As an important international player with increasing capabilities, China will be a driving force in shaping the future world too. It is the main task here to forecast the future based on analyzing these competing forces and especially the role of China.

## 2050 Probable Future: Chinese Perspective

It is not an easy task to evaluate power growth and coalition changes in the future world. Especially, after the outbreak of COVID-19, a mood of uncertainty has flooded into the analysis of international affairs and a lot of forecasts may have to be adjusted or even thrown out. But there is a key variable, i.e., China-U.S. competition, which has become clearer and more outstanding. Considering the importance of China and the U.S., it is reasonable to argue that this variable will shape future international politics to a large extent. Based on this belief, I would like to share my analysis of the future world order, especially regarding the following topics.

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53) <https://www.state.gov/the-administrations-approach-to-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>.

### **Probable Future of Great Power Competition: China vs. U.S.**

The China-U.S. competition has become the most important variable in shaping the future world order. Who will win this competition? Many may believe this is a zero-sum game and one side will lose and even collapse in the end, but here I would like to share another possibility whereby both players may turn out as winners.

The fundamental reason is that the two countries still have great potential for development compared with other major powers. On one side, as the second largest economy which has maintained fast economic growth in the last forty years, China has not exhausted its potential for further development. Its urbanization process is still at a relatively early stage, and its service sectors have a lot to catch up with economies like the U.S. in terms of quality, sophistication, and business range, particularly regarding producer services such as logistics, information, financing, and commercial services. Reform of state-owned enterprises, if properly handled, could shatter monopolies, and create new business opportunities worth trillions of dollars.<sup>54</sup> On the other side, the U.S. may be a stagnant power, but not a declining country so far. It will still maintain its superiority in the high-tech and education sectors in the long run. Although there is chaos in its political system and social governance sometimes, the U.S. is still a dynamic state in economy and innovation.

Thus, the result of competition is likely that China's economic power may exceed that of the United States in 2050, but not at the cost of American development. According to the prediction of some Chinese scholars, China will enter a period of stable growth after 2030 with an annual average GDP growth rate of 3.4% and the relative gap between the per capita GDP of China

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54) PWC, *The Long View: How will the global economic order change by 2050?* February 2017, p.22.

and the United States will reduce further.<sup>55)</sup> The PWC report also supports this prediction. But there is a big difference compared with power competition in the past. It is worth noting that China and the U.S. may lastly benefit from such competition if it does not escalate into armed conflicts because competition has forced these two different players in culture, history, and development models to learn about each other while criticizing each other publicly. For example, the U.S. government has carried out its industrial strategies by offering subsidies like China, and China has been forced to invest in some hi-tech industries because of the scientific de-coupling policy of the U.S. Obviously, this competition is helping the two players to improve their future prospects for advancement.

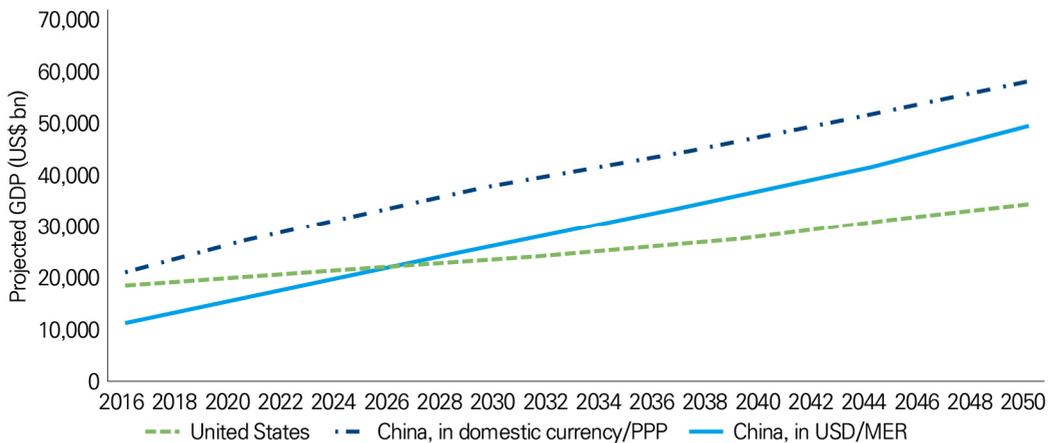


Figure 5-1. Projected GDP growth paths of China and the U.S.<sup>56)</sup>

55) Angang Hu, Yilong Yan, Xiao Tang and Shenglong Liu, *2050 China: Becoming a Great Modern Socialist Country*, Springer, 2021, p.96.

56) PWC, *The Long View: How will the global economic order change by 2050?* February 2017, p.19.

### **Probable Future of International System: Multipolar vs. Bipolar**

According to the World Bank, the GDP of China and the U.S. has grown far ahead of other major countries in the last two decades. In 2021, the GDP of the U.S., China, and Japan are respectively 23 trillion, 17.73 trillion, and 4.94 trillion in the current U.S.\$.<sup>57)</sup> As I have just analyzed, the two powers will maintain their economic development while having different rates of growth. But for other powers, they are unlikely to stand on the same level as China and the U.S. in the future. It seems that the world order will take on a structure of bipolarity rather than multi-polarity, at least economically.

For instance, as the third largest economy, the current GDP of Japan is less than one-third of China's, and its land mass, resources, and population cannot compete with China or the U.S. The European Union is only a group of nations, and its authority and international status have been challenged and weakened by emerging populism and Britain's withdrawal. Russia, on the other hand, has been trapped in a protracted war in Ukraine in 2022, which has damaged its image as a military giant and the unprecedented sanctions imposed by the West may be a big blow to its future economy. On contrary, the U.S. has enhanced its international status by making use of international crises. For example, the result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is that NATO has become better united under the U.S. leadership, which means Europe must further depend on the U.S. and be less independent. The same fate has fallen to Japan. To balance the increasing power of China, it is counting more on its alliance with the U.S.

The only variable is India with a big population, fast economic growth, and a tradition of independent diplomacy. According to the report of PWC in 2017, the GDP of India is projected to overtake the U.S. by 2040 in PPP terms.<sup>58)</sup>

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57) <https://data.worldbank.org.cn/country>.

58) PWC, *The Long View: How will the global economic order change by 2050?* February 2017, p.6.

But considering its development progress, backwardness in infrastructure, education, elementary education, and governance system, are short of efficiency, and it is reasonable to deduce that India may not be comparable with the U.S. and China in 2050, at least in its comprehensive power.

### **Probable Future of China–U.S. bipolarity: New Cold war vs. Coexistence**

Some people are worried about the China–U.S. competition and how it will replicate the high tensions and proxy wars that occurred between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the Cold War. However, China is not a resurrected Soviet Union, and the background of power competition has changed greatly. Although some conflicts may be inevitable, the result of China–U.S. competition can be coexistence rather than a life-or-death scenario because of the following factors.

Firstly, following more than 40 years of the opening-up policy, China's growth has been intimately tied to the global market, discreetly different from the two parallel international systems and marketplaces during the Cold War. Although the U.S. and some of its allies have tried to decouple with China in some critical fields and industries, it is unimaginable to totally separate China again from the rest economically.

Secondly, it is hard to produce two conflicting ideological camps centered respectively on China and the U.S. Although the U.S. has considered China as a valued competitor, China has no intention to respond with the same approach. Since the 1980s, China has maintained its dichotomous approach to an ideology, which is not to spread its political system abroad while maintaining its socialism domestically.

Lastly, the geo-space of the Pacific and the huge costs of armed conflicts may pacify the strategic confrontation between the two giants and induce or force them to seek a compromise in some cases. This potential trend may be

found in some policy orientations of the two countries. President Xi Jinping addressed repeatedly that the vast Pacific Ocean has enough space to accommodate the two great powers of China and the United States.<sup>59)</sup> The Biden administration has tried to construct the guardrails to avoid conflicts with China while pushing the competition.<sup>60)</sup> It is very clear that both sides don't want to be trapped in a new Cold War.

### **Probable Future of Global Governance, Democracy, and Capitalism**

Theoretically, global governance means more collective action, equal negotiations, and increasing roles of smaller countries and non-nation state actors. But future global governance may face more challenges because it must be operated under the increasing shadow of competition among major powers. It is the trend that the world is fragmented into several economic and security blocs of varying size and strength, centered on the United States, China, the EU, Russia, and a few regional powers, and focused on self-sufficiency, resiliency, and defense.<sup>61)</sup> Obviously, China and the U.S. are the two dominant powers in this fragmented world. Under this structure of governance, major powers namely, the U.S. and China, rather than smaller countries would decide how to govern the world.

Fortunately, the China-U.S. bipolarity is likely to be different from the two opposing camps of the U.S.-USSR in the Cold War, which was a more rigid system for smaller countries. In the future bipolarity, because China has no system of allies comparable with the U.S., China could try to play the role of

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59) 中新网 :《习近平再提“宽广太平洋有足够空间容纳中美”》, 2013年6月8日 ,  
<https://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2013/06-08/4909984.shtml>,

60) The White House, Readout of President Biden's Virtual Meeting with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, November 16, 2021,  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/11/16/readout-of-president-bidens-virtual-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>.

61) The National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2040: A more contested world*, March 2021, p.9.

representing developing countries and resort to international organizations that the U.S. cannot monopolize. It is objectively beneficial to maintain the global government dynamic, regardless of what China's intentions are. The smaller countries and developing countries can benefit from this process, and the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China has proved it.

In the fragmented world, there may be a more intense ideological competition initiated by the U.S., which has considered China as a threat to American values. But the Chinese response will only be to stick to its own version of democracy, rather than expand its ideology to the West. The serious challenges to democracy come from within every country. There is a growing disequilibrium between public demands and governments' ability to deliver welfare and security, portending greater political volatility and increasing risks for democracy.<sup>62)</sup> The West is no exception.

As for Western capitalism, China's socialist market economy may be its competitor, but not its enemy. When competing with China economically, the U.S. and other western countries might benefit from China's experiences. For example, the Biden administration is trying to revitalize the American economy through industrial policies. To deal with China's rise, the West may find that they must renew their capitalism while assisting developing countries more, which is good news for the development of global governance, democracy, and capitalism.

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62) The National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2040: A more contested world*, March 2021, p.67.

## 2050 Preferred Future: Chinese Perspective

If the future could be chosen, what are my preferred international politics and the best scenarios for China in 2050? As a scholar self-identified as a warm and positive realist, I would like to see the coming of a world order based on equality, openness, and mutual respect, which will benefit every country including China.

### **Preferred Future of Great Power Competition: win-win-win**

When the China-U.S. competition is analyzed, most scholars and policymakers have considered it a zero-sum game: one wins, another loses, and third parties win or lose depending on which side they choose. This is the traditional international way of thinking in terms of game theories, but new ideas of power competition should be developed in the 21st century as interdependence is more likely. Just as mentioned earlier, China and the U.S. are such different countries that they can benefit from learning from each other. Thus, if the competition is managed effectively, a win-win result can be expected. Correspondingly, future international politics should be based on a structure of co-governance so major international actors including China and the U.S. could work together, rather than solo governance (i.e., hegemony).

The co-governance structure is more beneficial to the smaller countries as well for two reasons. One is that the interests of smaller countries are more likely to be satisfied by the major powers because these powers are likely competing for their favor to have superiority in their power competition. The other is that international rules can be better respected and observed under the structure of co-governance, in which the interests of smaller countries can be protected better. On the contrary, if there is only one dominating power in international politics, the interests of smaller countries are more

likely to be ignored, since the hegemony is less likely to seek approval from smaller countries in international affairs.

### **Preferred Future of International System**

Although the bipolar world is more likely to become a reality than multi-polarity in 2050, I believe that the latter is better for China and the rest of the world. Because of the comprehensive power competition between China and the U.S., bipolarity would be a world with high tensions, intense confrontations, and even possible armed conflicts, which will be certainly a bad scenario for China more than the whole world. Compared with bipolarity in which the rise of China will suffer a long, twisty, and costly process because of the increased pressure and containment policies from the U.S. and its allies, under the multi-polarity, there will be more balance rather than polarized power relations, which can be helpful to decrease the strategic pressures from the U.S. on China.

To achieve multi-polarity, China will have to make more compromises and share more interests with other powers, which is an acceptable future for China. Because of either the changes in international trends or the national characteristics and strategic culture, China cannot follow in the footsteps of neither Japan and Germany which led to the Second World War nor the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Hence the peaceful approach of rising as a superpower is not a slogan and passive choice, but a real priority for China. Under the multi-polarity, a kind of governance of collective leadership rather than China would replace the American hegemony, and a peaceful and co-existent power shift will be possible. In this new international structure, China will play the role of the leading speaker of collective leadership, which is the preferred future for China in my opinion.

### **Preferred Future of Global Governance, Democracy and Capitalism**

For China, a more balanced global governance structure is a goal that is worthy of pursuing in the future. Under such a structure, there are a few diversified centers of governance to replace the hegemony of the U.S. and construct a system of rules reflecting the values and interests of different countries rather than a Western-centric rules-based system. According to the values under the new structure, all parties should be part of the decision-making body and make their consensus through communication and negotiation.

In current international affairs, it is always the U.S. calling the shots. The bodies of world governance, such as the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund are mainly controlled by the U.S. and its western allies. Realistically, it is impossible to have an equal saying for every country in the new structure. However, if the new system accommodates more players from developing countries and emerging economies, world governance will be fairer and better balanced. Every country including China will benefit from its success.

In the Chinese version of global governance, all kinds of democracies and development models including capitalism will have their positions. With regards to the rest of the world, China will expand its ideology like neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union could because its traditional worldview is pluralism rather than universalism. President Xi Jinping addressed that “we need to embrace a global governance philosophy that emphasizes extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, promote the common values of humanity, and advocate exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations”.<sup>63)</sup> Because of this worldview, China has repeatedly reiterated

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63) Xinhua, “Full Text: President Xi Jinping's keynote speech at the opening ceremony of BFA annual conference 2022”, Apr 21, 2022 , [http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202204/21/content\\_WS62616c3bc6d02e5335329c22.html](http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202204/21/content_WS62616c3bc6d02e5335329c22.html).

that it will adhere to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs while developing its own path of socialist democracy and development. Thus, there is no reason to worry whether Western or Korean capitalism will be harmed by the development of Chinese socialism and a socialist market economy.

### Suggestions: Principles and Tasks of global cooperation for a Preferred Future

According to the three-step project planned by Deng Xiaoping and the Two Centenary Goals proposed by Xi Jinping, China will become a moderately developed country in 2050.<sup>64</sup> Some Western officials and public opinion have portrayed concerns that China's rise will overthrow the current international system and rules. However, given that it has been proven in the past that the development of China has been achieved in an open environment and globalized world, the future rise of China is very likely to relate to the rest of the world. Although China has and will continue to stick to its socialist path under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, there is no sign showing the trend that China will stop its opening policy and try to build a separate international camp centered on China from the West. To simply put, China will share common interests with most countries on how to shape a better future for the world. But this future is challenged because of the polarized world and geopolitical competition. To achieve this better side of the future, principles such as diversification of ideology, multi-polarization of powers, and good governance based on the participation of most countries are necessary. Besides that, the following tasks are very critical:

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64) Angang Hu, Yilong Yan, Xiao Tang and Shenglong Liu, *2050 China: Becoming a Great Modern Socialist Country*, Springer, 2021, pp.2-5.

- 1) Stick to and strengthen the UN-centered world governance. Although there has been some criticism about its authority, effectiveness, and representativeness, there are no other institutions more suitable than the UN as the main body of world governance. Given that there are a lot of old and new regional or professional groups, such as NATO, G7, QUAD, and IPEF, centered around the U.S. and its allies, and SCO, AIIB led by Russia and China, it is necessary to strengthen a coordinated system of international bodies centered around the UN. Besides, enhancing the authority and effectiveness by implementing necessary reform should be a critical priority.
- 2) Build a new concert of powers while accommodating the participation of smaller countries. If there are no kinds of concerts of powers, it is impossible to reform the UN and shape an effective system of international governance. Compared with the European concert of powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the future concert of powers should be established worldwide. Besides the traditional powers like China, the U.S., EU, Russia, and Japan, the emerging powers, such as India, Brazil, and South Africa, and the middle powers such as South Korea, Australia, and Saudi Arabia should be part of this body. To operate the new concert of powers, some kinds of mechanisms are critical. In the future, G20 or G20+ should become one of the important platforms for achieving international cooperation.
- 3) Reach a compromise between China and the U.S. Without cooperation between China and the U.S., any kind of future concert of powers cannot be realized. Thus, it is necessary to make some compromises between the two major powers, while the mutual competition continues. As mentioned earlier, two powers can coexist and benefit each other even when engaged in a competition. It is critical to manage this competition

with new ideas. I believe that some compromises are likely to be achieved if both sides realize their responsibilities relating to the peace and development of the world, embrace the idea of power-sharing, and effectively manage their domestic nationalism and party politics.

## PART III

### The Future of the World Order in 2050: From the Rest of the World

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6. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Japanese Perspective
7. The Future of the World Order in 2050: An Indian Perspective
8. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A German Perspective
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11. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Turkish Perspective
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13. The Future of the World Order in 2050: An Arab Perspective
14. The Future of the World Order in 2050: An African Perspective



## 6. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Japanese Perspective

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### Introduction

The year 2050 is 28 years from now, and to imagine the world 28 years from now, we need to examine whether we could have imagined the present 28 years ago. It was 1994, when the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was still ongoing in Europe, regional conflicts were frequent in Africa, such as in Somalia, and Japan was suffering from the collapse of the bubble economy in Asia. In Africa, regional conflicts were still raging in Somalia and elsewhere, and in Asia, Japan was suffering from the collapse of its bubble economy. As the world searched for a post-Cold War international order, it was a time when the U.S., now the lone superpower, was unsure of what kind of relationship to create with the rest of the world. At this point, it could not have been predicted that the U.S. and China would be at loggerheads and that economic instruments, including semiconductors, would be used for political ends, or so-called economic statecraft.

Even 28 years ago, however, there were a few hints about the contemporary world order. One was the possibility that the U.S. might be inclined to adopt an “America First” policy in a world without rivals, putting its own interests ahead of maintaining the world order. At the time, American soldiers were killed or wounded during the intervention in Somalia, and the mood was negative towards international intervention. This resulted in the U.S. regularly

demurring even though regional conflicts were occurring all over the world, instead of using its mighty power for the stabilization of the international order. Subsequent changes in public opinion in the U.S. led the U.S. to intervene in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it succeeded in enforcing peace, and consequently became more active in international intervention. In addition, through the 2001 terrorist attacks, the U.S. once again became involved in the world in the form of its War on Terror, and by taking unilateral military action in the Iraq War, the international order once again became unstable, but the U.S. power as a superpower did not waver, and it remained as the nation that shaped the international order.

However, the U.S. is once again becoming more and more insular, putting America first. While clearly putting its own interests first during the Trump administration, the U.S. downplayed relations with its allies and increasingly tended to deal with the international order as a single country. The U.S., which is losing its former lone superpower status, has come to realize that it is difficult to deal with problems on its own and that it is difficult to formulate effective strategies in an increasingly globalized world unless it acts together with its allies. The Biden administration has shifted toward strengthening relations with allies. However, the U.S. has turned its back on free trade and continues to refuse to return to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) or to appoint members to the WTO's Appellate Body to realize its own interests. In this sense, the Biden administration is also acting in accordance with the domestic "America First" movement and is trying to use alliances effectively to realize its own interests.

The U.S.-China confrontation is further reinforcing this "America First" trend. On the one hand, the U.S. prioritizes its own interests and adopts protectionist policies, while on the other hand, it is becoming increasingly aware that its own hegemonic position is threatened by China's military and

economic rise, which in turn infringes on its fundamental interests. In this chapter, I would like to envision, from Japan's perspective, what kind of world the year 2050 will bring in light of these major trends in the international order.

### 2050 Probable Future: Japanese Perspective

The Probable World Order in 2050 will be based on the U.S. strengthening its “America First” policy more and playing a smaller role in the international community, while strengthening its confrontation with China, a nation that challenges its own interests. As a result of Xi Jinping's concentration of power, the Communist Party dominates Chinese society, but the backlash against the excessive use of power in society will grow stronger, and the Communist Party will try to maintain its power base while adopting a quasi-democratic system in which it maintains power while listening to the opinions of the people. Under these circumstances, China will increasingly seek to strengthen the welfare of its citizens and solve social problems (e.g., declining birthrate and aging society) rather than to strengthen its international hegemony. China will then adopt a policy that prioritizes building a stable society while avoiding U.S. intervention, instead of acting in pursuit of international hegemony.

The most important issue is the Taiwan problem. There may be a high level of military tension in the U.S.-China relationship, but given domestic public opinion on both sides, the situation is such that neither the U.S. nor China is seeking a military confrontation. Therefore, while the U.S. will ultimately adopt a wartime posture to check China, China will also hesitate to use force against Taiwan to avoid a military confrontation and will eventually either give up reunifying Taiwan by using military force or try to create an

established fact that Taiwan is effectively controlled as part of China in some form. In any case, the condition of the U.S.-China relationship is likely to continue even in 2050, with the U.S. committed to the world order by creating a situation where the U.S. and China, through the Taiwan issue, increase military tension but do not directly go to war, and China, as a regional power, continues to build up its military to avoid American intervention.

As a result, the international system in 2050 is likely to take the form of the U.S., which upholds an “America First” policy, committing itself to the China problem but not to the international order, with China maintaining its influence as a regional power but not challenging the hegemony of the U.S., and Japan and Europe struggling to support the international order that the U.S. has abandoned. In addition, Japan and Europe will struggle to support the international order that the U.S. has abandoned. This will be a multipolar situation in terms of the international system, but the system will always have elements of war between the U.S. and China, and it will be an unstable multipolar world in which the hegemonic powers will not maintain the international order, but middle powers such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Europe will continue to support the international order. The world will be an unstable Multipolar world.

Can global governance function in such an unstable international system? The framework of international law through the United Nations, which has existed since the end of World War II, will probably weaken further, and the United States, which pursues its own interests in a “America First” manner, China, which seeks to strengthen its regional influence in opposition to the United States, and Russia, which has lost power after its aggression in Ukraine but continues to have a certain influence in the international system with its two major weapons, natural resources and nuclear weapons, are likely to act in a manner that disregards the international order based on international

law. Russia, for example, which has lost some of its power with its invasion of Ukraine but continues to have a certain influence in the international system with its two major weapons, natural resources, and nuclear weapons, is likely to act without regard for the international order based on international law. Conversely, Japan, Europe, South Korea, and Australia, recognizing the need for an international order based on international law and recognizing that the international legal order protects their interests, will try to maintain a legal order that controls the actions of the major powers to some degree.

Under these circumstances, the environment surrounding of Japan will become even more challenging. While maintaining its alliance with the United States, Japan will seek to protect the international legal order in the region without necessarily aligning itself with the United States, which will act based on its own interests. However, as tensions between the U.S. and China increase over Taiwan, Japan is likely to further strengthen its military capabilities and increase its military presence in Asia to respond to such a security environment. While Japan will say that such moves are only defensive in nature, other countries will see Japan building offensive capabilities, which could worsen Japan's relationship with China or South Korea.

Another major issue in the Asian region is North Korea's nuclear and missile development: by 2050, North Korea will have perfected intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and declare that it has achieved deterrence capability against the United States. From the U.S. perspective, North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is already an established fact, and the U.S. will give up the idea that denuclearization through negotiations is possible and will decide its Korean Peninsula policy with a focus on North Korea's deterrence strategy. In doing so, the U.S. will emphasize the role of South Korea and try to prevent South Korea from negotiating with North Korea and China on its own, while

giving South Korea more autonomous defense capabilities. If North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles are deterred by the U.S., there will be no major conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

## 2050 Preferred Future: Japanese Perspective

The international order in 2050 that is desirable for Japan is, first, for the U.S. to cease its “America First” position and for the U.S. to assume the role of using its capabilities to help stabilize the international order. In relations with China, this means moving toward stabilizing economic relations with China by adhering to the principle of free trade in economic terms, while deterring China's ambitions to reunify Taiwan using force. China should gradually relax the system of one-party Communist Party rule and promote democratization in its domestic politics. In doing so, it should emphasize cooperative relations with the United States and lose its ambition to reunify Taiwan by using military force. It is also important to continue sanctions against Russia over the long term due to the uncertainties and risks it has created since its invasion of Ukraine and to properly contain Russia so that it does not break international rules again.

Such a great power relationship should return the international community to a loose unipolar system and strengthen the role of the US as the guardian of the international order, while at the same time maintaining an international order based on free trade and international law. The international community is likely to be more stable as a Unipolar system as opposed to a Multipolar one. In addition, China, which aspires to become a regional power, should also benefit from a free and liberated international order.

It is desirable for the global governance system to have rules made by a framework of multilateral cooperation, centered on the United Nations after World War II, and for each country to properly abide by those rules. In this way, each country should not aim for short-term relative gains, but pursue the long-term absolute gains that can be obtained by complying with the international order. Although that international order will be difficult to reconcile with domestic interests to be established by democratic nations, the democratic legitimacy of decisions will nevertheless better ensure compliance with international rules. This would result in a more stable international order.

The desired international order in Asia is a state in which the U.S.-China rivalry has eased, a stable international order has been established in Asia, and both the U.S. and China can trade freely. Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asian countries depend on both the U.S. and Chinese markets, and free trade is the basis for all-important international order. A situation in which the two countries are at odds with each other and continue to engage in trade and economic wars is not at all desirable.

Also, as an ultimate matter, the denuclearization of North Korea is essential to the stability of the international order in Asia, but even under the most optimistic scenario, North Korea is unlikely to give in and denuclearize. However, it is desirable for North Korea to participate in an open economy and rejoin the international community to reduce the importance of nuclear weapons. If an environment conducive to international negotiations is created, and if it gradually becomes clear that North Korea and the Kim dynasty regime can survive without nuclear weapons, the possibility of denuclearization in the future will open. However, it is unlikely that this will be realized by 2050.

## The Japan's Visions and Strategies for Preferred Future in 2050

For Japan, the desired future in the region is for the Southeast Asian nations to come together and maintain stable relations, free of influence from either China or the United States. This would allow the Southeast Asian countries to connect to a more open international relationship, rather than to the major powers, and would make it easier for Japan to engage with the Southeast Asian countries. To this end, an important strategy would be for Southeast Asian countries to strengthen international efforts, especially international initiatives such as the East Asia Summit and RCEP, to acquire more independent capabilities and eliminate U.S. and Chinese influence, as well as to promote membership in the CPTPP.

Regarding issues related to the Korean Peninsula, it is desirable to aim for the denuclearization of the DPRK while at the same time opening the DPRK to the international community. This would begin with easing relations with South Korea. Supporting dialogue between North and South Korea should be the starting point for improving North Korea's international relations. However, North Korea will not easily open and proceed with its reintegration into the international community. Therefore, to establish a system to deter North Korea, Japan, the U.S., and South Korea must cooperate closely and develop a difficult strategy to curb North Korea's adventurous behavior while at the same time calling for dialogue. While the goal is for North Korea to become a stable member of international, a step-by-step approach to responding to North Korean behavior with action, rather than simply offering aid, would be preferable.

Regarding the issue of China and Taiwan, an important starting point in strategy is to deter China from using military force against the Taiwan by maintaining pressure on China, with the Japan-U.S. alliance at its core. However, since applying pressure alone will not solve the problem, it will be

necessary to always maintain the possibility of dialogue with China. Through the dialogue with China, it will be necessary to attempt to make it difficult to take adventurous action by force, while at the same time deter China from using military force against Taiwan.

It is also important to strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance to ensure a stable U.S. presence in the region. To this end, it is first important for Japan to acquire the ability to act on its own. To act on its own, Japan must maintain its technological superiority and international competitiveness to keep its economy healthy and to encourage other countries to seek to maintain business with Japan. In addition, militarily, Japan should establish a system that allows for more flexible use of its military capabilities, rather than the defense force development that has been constrained by the Constitution. However, this is not to be used for aggression or attacks against foreign countries, but rather to flexibly deter China from using force against Taiwan and any military ambitions in the region.

### **Suggestions: Principles and Tasks of the global cooperation for the Preferred Future**

To move the Probable Future closer to the Preferred Future, it is first and foremost important to change the attitude of the United States. The U.S. protectionist policies and “America First” mentality that isolate it from the international community are caused by its domestic policies. Therefore, efforts must be made to stabilize American society and to make the United States recognize the importance of its commitment to the international community. That is not an easy task, but it is a matter of getting people to understand that U.S. protectionist policies do not actually benefit U.S. workers economically and that it is in America's interest to maintain free

trade and promote international cooperation. It is important that the U.S. make it known to all that it is in its economic interest to promote cooperation with China. To this end, it is desirable to resume dialogue with China and gradually ease the additional tariffs and other measures being implemented against China so that the economic benefits can be realized.

Second, it is important to make China give up its ambition to use military force against Taiwan. It is important for Japan, the U.S., and South Korea to cooperate to make deterrence against China work and to take concrete actions so that China can imagine the losses it would incur if it were to take adventurous actions using military force. Such a deterrence strategy could lead to military escalation and increased tensions with China. However, it is necessary to make it known that such a Chinese reaction would be an economic and political disadvantage. What will be important in this process is China's application for CPTPP membership. As a member country, Japan can decide whether to approve China's request for CPTPP membership. It will be necessary to make China understand the benefits of joining the CPTPP by, for example, setting a condition that if it does not have military ambitions toward Taiwan, it will be allowed to join the CPTPP.

Third, Japan and South Korea need to resolve their historical issues. There is a lot of mistrust between Japan and South Korea, which makes joint action by the U.S., Japan, and South Korea difficult. To achieve stability in Asia, it is important that Japan-Korea relations remain stable and that the U.S., Japan, and South Korea act toward the same goal. To this end, both sides should respect each other's position on the various issues that currently exist between Japan and South Korea and make possible choices.

The Probable Future is a bleak future. It is a future in which conflicts among nations will intensify and the world will become unstable. To make this future stable and based on cooperation, the domestic politics of each

country must be stabilized. In a democratic system, people's thoughts and feelings are reflected in politics. Therefore, for the world to be stable, it is important for the domestic politics of each country to be stable, and it is important to create an environment in which the people can live in peace. In the future world, it will be important for each citizen to participate in politics, not only domestic politics but also considering the implications for international politics.

## 7. The Future of the World Order in 2050: An Indian Perspective

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### Introduction

Over the last few years, particularly after the COVID pandemic and in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the debates on the international order transition have intensified. These events accelerated the geopolitical trends set in motion since the 2008 financial crisis in a direction away from the post-Cold War international order characterized by US unipolarity. The US-China strategic rivalry remains the most significant feature of the evolving international order, and the possibility of a 'New Cold War' is also being debated. Meanwhile, the emergence of developing countries, including India, on the world stage have led some scholars to observe that the international order is moving towards multipolarity rather than bipolarity.<sup>65)</sup> Yet others have argued that the world is too interdependent and complex, and power has been significantly diffused in the system that created a situation where it has become difficult for a few countries to dominate the system, and what is most likely to emerge is a pluralistic international order.<sup>66)</sup> Meanwhile, systemic implications of climate change and new technologies are not yet fully understood, and neither are their influence in shaping the future

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65) Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Towards a multipolar order post-pandemic", East Asia Forum, 27 April 2021 <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/04/27/towards-a-multipolar-order-post-pandemic/>

66) Amitav Acharya, "After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order", September 8, 2017, <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2017/multiplex-world-order/>

international order. The only confident assumption that one could make about today's world is that the post-Cold international order is transforming, and what is emerging is not sure. In short, today's world is in between orders and adrift. At the risk of oversimplification, the article attempts to describe the world order in 2050 from an Indian perspective.

### State of the World in 2050 and the Future International Order

The intensification of the US-China strategic rivalry in the last few years has led many observers to contend it is the emergence of a 'New Cold War'. While there is a case to be made in favor of the possibility of a 'New Cold War' type of international situation, it is not yet convincing to say that the international order is becoming bipolar. The argument against a bipolar world is quite compelling, considering differences in the international context during the Post-War World and today and the nature of US-China relations compared to US-Soviet relations.<sup>67)</sup> The world today is in a new geopolitical situation caused primarily by the rise of China, India and other powers, including Indonesia, South Korea, Iran, and Vietnam, in a crowded Indo-Pacific, which is the center of global political and economic dynamics. The change in the regional balance of power has ensued a heightened sense of security dilemma, leading to a region-wide arms race.<sup>68)</sup>

The shift in the balance of power from the West to Asia is most evident in global GDP shares. In 2016, India and China accounted for about half of Asia's total GDP. They represented a significant economic force with a combined share of 17.67 per cent of global GDP (nominal) and 25.86 per cent

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67) Sourabh Gupta, "China-US rivalry no new Cold War", August 21 2022, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/08/21/china-us-rivalry-no-new-cold-war/>

68) Julian Spencer-Churchill, "Embrace The Arms Race In Asia", December 10, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/12/embrace-the-arms-race-in-asia/>

(PPP).<sup>69)</sup> Most of this, of course, is contributed by China. The center of global economic gravity has also shifted in favor of Asia. Asia accounts for 33.84percent, North America for 27.95percent, and Europe for 21.37percent. America's share has remained roughly constant since the seventies. However, Europe's contribution to global GDP has dropped sharply in favor of Asia. During the post-Cold War period under globalization, the balance of power fundamentally changed. While the economic power balance has tilted more in favour of multipolarity, the military power balance is still unipolar, with the United States still ahead of the others.<sup>70)</sup> However, the rebalancing of military power is also happening though slowly. The declining gap in defense spending between the US and China, and others, is instructive of the phenomenon of military power rebalancing.<sup>71)</sup>

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69) IMF World Economic Outlook, October 2017 and World Bank data

70) Mangesh Sawant, "Why China Cannot Challenge the US Military Primacy", *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, December 13, 2021, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2870650/why-china-cannot-challenge-the-us-military-primacy/>

71) Diego Lopes da Silva et.al, "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2021", SIPRI, April 2022, <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2022/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2021#:~:text=In%202021%20world%20military%20expenditure,cent%20higher%20than%20in%202012.>

	2016	2050	
China	1	1	China
US	2	2	India
India	3	3	US
Japan	4	4	Indonesia
Germany	5	5	Brazil
Russia	6	6	Russia
Brazil	7	7	Mexico
Indonesia	8	8	Japan
UK	9	9	Germany
France	10	10	UK

E7 economies    
  G7 economies

Figure 7-1. Emerging markets that will dominate the world's top 10 economies in 2050 (GDP at PPPs)

Source: PwC, 2017

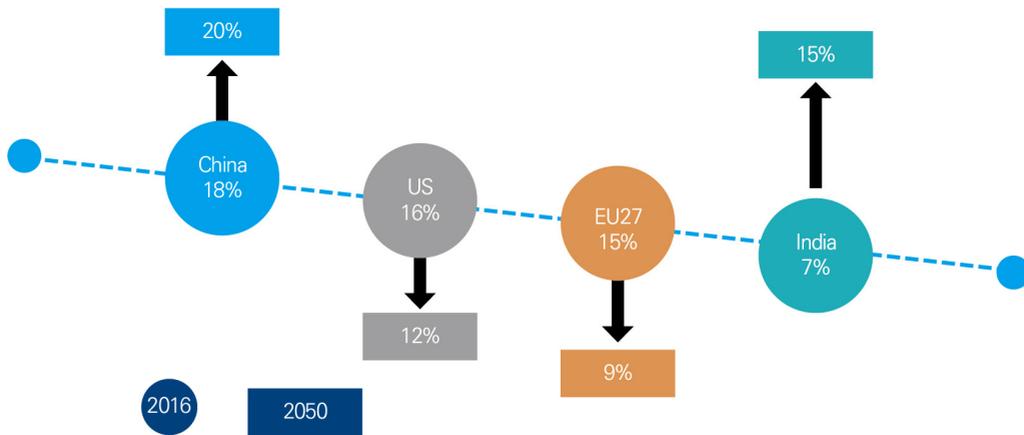


Figure 7-2. Share of world GDP (PPP) from 2016 to 2050

Source: PwC, 2017

Fast forwarding to 2050, the chances of the world becoming more multipolar is high, considering the long-term trend of rebalancing economic power. According to a report by PwC, China, India, and the US will dominate the world economic landscape as the three largest economies.<sup>72)</sup> In PPP terms, China will be the leading economy with a share of about 20 per cent of the global GDP, and India will become the second largest economy with 15 per cent and the US with 12 per cent. While India increases its share of the global GDP from 7 per cent, the US share will be decreased from 16 per cent in 2016. The relative difference in economic power between China, India and the US will be significantly less compared to what it was in 2016. Another critical aspect of the world economic landscape is the prominence of Asian and developing economies, with Indonesia and Brazil emerging as the fourth and fifth largest economies, displacing leading positions of the advanced western countries. For instance, European Union's contribution to the world economy will be reduced to 9 per cent in 2050 compared to 15 per cent in 2016.<sup>73)</sup> The change in the balance of economic power in 2050 will also manifest in the other dimensions of power as well, including military, technology and soft power.

The changed state of the global balance of power in 2050 will also have a significant bearing on the institutional and normative structures of international order. The transition of power fueled by the re-balancing of the global economy will see the declining of Western-led institutions and the rise of institutions represented by non-Western and developing countries. (See Fig 3). Along with drastic institutional change, coalition-making rather than alliance-making, as well as situational responses and ad hoc bargaining, increasingly will define actors' interactions.<sup>74)</sup> The state will remain the

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72) "The World in 2050", PwC, 2017,

<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/research-insights/economy/the-world-in-2050.html>

73) Ibid

74) Troy Lee-Brown, "Asia's Security Triangles: Maritime Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific," *East Asia*, 35 (2018): 163-176.

dominant unit, but nonstate entities will also occupy a much more prominent position in the international system, making their voice significantly louder and their ability to affect governance frameworks more pronounced.



Sources: IMF for historical GDP, PwC analysis for projections to 2050

**Figure 7-3. Global economic power will shift to the E7 economies**

Source: PwC, 2017

The current global institutions, including the UN and other global regimes, if not reformed to reflect the global power distribution, will be irrelevant and potentially extinct by 2050. While the international order will consist of some form of rule-based order, it will be very different from what it is today. The rising powers of Asia, Africa and Latin America, while emulating several of the values and principles established by the Western powers, will also bring forth their own set of values and norms to shape the international order in an image which is more familiar and favorable to their experiences.

As mentioned earlier, for the next two decades, the US-China rivalry will dominate international affairs in the Indo-Pacific and on the global stage.

However, the nature of their rivalry will be different from the Cold War US-Soviet conflict. Economically the US and China are interdependent; hence decoupling in an absolute sense is impossible. India is yet to emerge as a peer competitor to China in a systemic sense. However, China and India are increasingly competing for influence in the Asian region, especially in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. But as India emerges as the second largest economy in the world in two decades, it will likely see strategic competition between India and China to shape the regional order in Asia and beyond. The triangular relations between China, US and India will significantly influence the international order of the 2050s.<sup>75)</sup> Today, India-US relations have entered a phase of significant strategic convergence, whereas India-China and China-US relations have been reflective of strategic mistrust. While several factors underpin India-US relations, the China factor has become very significant of late. However, the dynamics of the triangular relations between China, the US and India will not be similar with what it is today once the status of India changes to that of a peer competitor or a power of equal status.

## Probable Future of Global Governance

The post-Cold War era was a unique period in international history, witnessing the emergence of a truly global order with the expansion of liberal international order under American hegemony. It was the best time for multilateral-led global governance, democracy and neo-liberal capitalism. However, it has witnessed a steady decline in the post-2008 financial crisis period. With the rise of great power geopolitical rivalry, deglobalization and strong-man political leadership, it is unlikely to see a return of the appeal for

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75) T. V. Paul and Erik Underwood (2019), "Theorizing India-US-China strategic triangle", *India Review*, 18:4, 348-367, DOI: 10.1080/14736489.2019.1662190

universal values like multilateralism, democracy and neoliberal capitalism in the short term. China has been fleshing out ideas for constructing international order based on Chinese values; however, it has not gained much appeal or support. As the world is becoming more geopolitically driven, challenges to collective action will be enormous, as witnessed during the COVID pandemic. While it can be expected to see cooperation on issues like climate change, the general trends would be more unilateralism and ad-hoc issue-based coalitions. From an Indian perspective, a critical challenge to global governance is the lack of institutional reforms. In this regard, India has been advocating for reformed multilateralism that features institutional and normative changes to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> Century realities.

### Preferred Future of International Order: An Indian Perspective

India's view of the international order is intimately linked to its perception of itself and, by extension, its view of the world. Given that a strategy is a problem of end and means, a plan of action designed to achieve one's goal using means available within a situation, India's strategy is connected to its perception of the self and deeply embedded in its strategic culture. Key factors that shaped India's Self and its strategic culture are its geopolitical location in the Indian subcontinent as a divided country, its long civilizational history and its bitter colonial experience that stripped its freedom and left its economy utterly devastated. Since its Independence, India faced three phases of international order, a bipolar order during the Cold War, a Unipolar world led by the US and a transformational moment since the 2008 financial crisis. In each of the three periods, India followed a path of non-alignment while making tactical adjustments to the realities of the international balance of power to pursue its national goals.

India's goal since its Independence has been its transformation into a strong, prosperous and a modern country.<sup>76)</sup> For the leaders of a country at the time of Independence that had just undergone partitioning, with an average life expectancy of 32, literacy at 18 per cent, a poverty rate of 80 per cent and stagnated economy, it's only natural to prioritize economic transformation over other goals, including status, reclaiming lost territories, or organizing its region.<sup>77)</sup> In terms of security, India followed a principle of sufficient security, not absolute security, to enable the country to grow faster than before. The choice of non-alignment to avoid entanglement in the conflict between the US and the Soviet Union and keeping South Asia out of the Superpower conflict was an obvious choice to the Indian leaders. To reduce the systemic impact of the Cold War and its choices of action, India also made efforts through active participation in international organizations, including the United Nations and Non-Aligned Movement. India's non-alignment was not absolute and it made tactical adjustments when it was hard-pressed. India's outreach to Washington in the context of the India-China War in 1962 and a treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971 are instances of strategic flexibility.

India's foreign policy strategy has undergone significant change in the post-Cold War period, not only because of the structural transformation but also domestic change, especially the reform and opening of the Indian economy in the early 1990s. multi-alignment and strategic autonomy emerged as two important concepts defining Indian foreign policy during this phase. The emphasis was on strengthening India's relations with all the great and major powers without compromising foreign policy independence. During the post-Cold War India enjoyed greater foreign policy freedom in the absence of great power geopolitical rivalry.

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76) Shivshankar Menon, "India's Foreign Affairs Strategy", CSEP, May 3, 2020, <https://csep.org/impact-paper/indias-foreign-affairs-strategy/>

77) Ibid

The rise of China and structural transformation in the international system in the post-2008 financial crisis period and the intensification of great power rivalry between Washington and Beijing have forced India to revisit its post-Cold War foreign policy approach. The rise of China and its growing assertiveness, especially in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, has become a major strategic concern for India, and the escalation of the India-China border conflict has further complicated its strategic environment. India's emergence as the fifth largest economy (third largest in PPP terms) has also contributed to changing the perception of itself and the world in this new international context. India sees its status in the international system as a 'leading power' and considers global institutions, particularly the UNSC, as deeply unrepresentative.<sup>78)</sup> According to India's foreign minister S. Jaishankar,

"If you have a United Nations where the most populous country in the world - maybe in 15 years - with the third largest economy is not in the decision-making process, I grant you, it affects the country concerned. But I would also suggest it affects the United Nations' credibility".<sup>79)</sup>

New Delhi's dissatisfaction with the current international system is also reflected in the Indian discourse of international order. For instance, while India strongly supports a rules-based order, but the questions like "whose rules?", "whose order?" reflects India's demand for reforming the international institutions and regimes that are built by the West in the past.<sup>80)</sup> Yet India is

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78) "United Nations Security Council is grossly unrepresentative, says India", Scroll, Jun 26, 2018, <https://scroll.in/latest/884190/united-nations-security-council-is-grossly-unrepresentative-says-india>

79) "EAM's remarks at Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C.", MEA, October 1, 2019, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/31899/EAMs\\_remarks\\_at\\_Center\\_for\\_Strategic\\_and\\_International\\_Studies\\_Washington\\_DC\\_on\\_01\\_October\\_2019](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/31899/EAMs_remarks_at_Center_for_Strategic_and_International_Studies_Washington_DC_on_01_October_2019)

80) Happymon Jacob, "A New Delhi View on the World Order", Institute Montaigne, October 6, 2022, <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/analysis/new-delhi-view-world-order>

not a revisionist power. While it sees that the order is underrepresented and biased, it still prefers an imperfect world to a chaotic one. India demands change, but it desires orderly change.<sup>81)</sup>

India prefers a multipolar world order, where it emerges as a pole. India's vision of a multipolar world, according to the Indian foreign secretary,

"India values a multipolar international order, underpinned by international law, premised upon respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, resolution of international disputes through peaceful negotiations, and free and open access for all to the global commons".<sup>82)</sup>

There is a strong belief in New Delhi that the world is moving in the direction of multipolarity and a desire to strengthen the multi-alignment approach. The underlying logic behind multi-alignment is that bloc rivalry can be disadvantageous to New Delhi's interests, as a country that still requires international support for its transformation. This view is clearly articulated by Indian foreign minister Jaishankar when he said that Indian strategy in an uncertain world requires, "advancing [its] national interests by identifying and exploiting opportunities created by global contradictions ...to extract as much [sic] gains from as many ties as possible". He further argued that in a world "of multiple poles and greater choices," India must reach out in as many directions as possible and maximize its gains. In this world of all

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81) Ibid

82) "Foreign Secretary's Remarks at the Thematic Discussion on 'Growing Role of Asia in International Affairs and Related Adaptation of Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)", MEA, June 23, 2021, [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl%2F33941%2FForeign\\_Secretarys\\_Remarks\\_at\\_the\\_Thematic\\_Discussion\\_on\\_Growing\\_Role\\_of\\_Asia\\_in\\_International\\_Affairs\\_and\\_Related\\_Adaptation\\_of\\_Conference\\_on\\_Interac](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl%2F33941%2FForeign_Secretarys_Remarks_at_the_Thematic_Discussion_on_Growing_Role_of_Asia_in_International_Affairs_and_Related_Adaptation_of_Conference_on_Interac)

against all, India's goal should be to move closer towards the strategic sweet spot".<sup>83)</sup>

Strategic autonomy is another concept that continues to define Indian foreign policy. Its significance has become more pronounced in Indian foreign policy discourse recently, especially in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis.<sup>84)</sup> While the concept emerged in the 21st century, the underpinning idea has been a running theme in Indian foreign policy since its Independence. Under its first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, it was called non-alignment, "genuine non-alignment" in 1970s, and more recently, strategic autonomy. In practice, it meant keeping decision-making power with itself, avoiding alliances, and building India's capabilities while working with others when it was in India's interest to do so.<sup>85)</sup> When a group of leading strategic analysts published a report a decade ago about Indian foreign policy strategy, called the Non-alignment 2.0, it was observed that the "core objective" of Indian foreign policy approach "should be to give India maximum options in its relations with the outside world—that is, to enhance India's strategic space and capacity for independent agency—which in turn will give it maximum options for its own internal development".<sup>86)</sup> It also means that alliance is an antagonistic idea in Indian foreign policy and would likely remain so for quite some time.

While imagining multi-polar international order is India's long term priority, in the immediate and medium term, New Delhi will be more

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83) S. Jaishankar (2020) "The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World", New Delhi: HarperCollins.

84) Happymon Jacob, "Playing the strategic autonomy game", The Hindu, April 4, 2022, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/playing-the-strategic-autonomy-game/article65287149.ece>

85) Shivshankar Menon, "India's Foreign Affairs Strategy", CSEP, May 3, 2020, <https://csep.org/impact-paper/indias-foreign-affairs-strategy/>

86) Sunil Khilnani et.al., "NonAlignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century" CPR, February 29, 2012, <https://cprindia.org/briefsreports/nonalignment-2-0-a-foreign-and-strategic-policy-for-india-in-the-twenty-first-century/>

concerned about the rise of China and its growing primacy in Asia. In this regard, India has been emphasizing a multipolar order in Asia. According to Indian foreign minister Jaishankar, "a multipolar world must have as its foundation a multipolar Asia."<sup>87)</sup> The call for a multipolar Asia reflects its anxiety about Chinese dominance in the region and its implication for Asian geopolitics. At the core of India's strategy is internal balancing, which is an emphasis on capacity building towards reducing its power gap vis-à-vis China. The Indian government has been undertaking a range of governance reforms to strengthen economic, defense, and security capabilities. Under the strategic partnership framework, India has also been reaching out to many countries to facilitate its internal balancing efforts. For instance, India's relations with the US, Russia, Japan, France, Israel, etc., are viewed as critical to New Delhi's capacity-building.

India has also been engaging in external balancing to deal with the challenges of China's rise in Asia. However, India's approach to external balancing has been cautious, engaging more in soft balancing than outright hard balancing. Indian effort is to make sure that China behaves responsibly rather than containment. However, New Delhi's approach to external balancing has been changing towards being more in favor of hard balancing in view of the deteriorating state of India-China relations in the context of escalating border conflict since the summer of 2020. The soft-balancing strategy includes strengthening a rules-based order in Asia and Asian multilateral institutions, including ASEAN-led institutions, IORA, SCO etc. Another important aspect of India's Asian strategy is to keep Asian countries out of Chinese dependency. Such a strategy is more pronounced in South Asia. This includes increasing New Delhi's bilateral support and working with partners in multi and minilateral formats to support her neighbors. A key

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87) "EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar at the launch of India-Japan report by FICCI", MEA, September 18, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSd--pmwzBY>

theme of Indian foreign policy during the Cold War period, as mentioned earlier, was to keep the great power conflict out of South Asia; such a strategy is no longer possible as China increases its footprint in India's neighborhood.

India's China challenge has both continental and maritime dimensions. This has been reflected in an effort by New Delhi to balance its maritime strategy reflected through the Indo-Pacific initiatives and continental strategy articulated through Eurasian engagement. On the continental front, India has been closely working with Russia and Iran in Eurasia, and Japan, Australia, and the US in the maritime domain. India's balancing of the continental and maritime geopolitics is also reflected in its active presence in the Eurasian and Indo-Pacific multilateral initiatives—RIC, SCO, and the QUAD and other trilateral and minilateral initiatives. India has also been attempting to link continental and maritime Asia to build an effective balance of power in Asia. India's efforts to build a trilateral coalition between India, Japan and Russia was a case in point in this regard.<sup>88)</sup>

An important element of Indian foreign policy strategy going forward would be to leverage the India-US-China strategic triangle. China-US contention—which is structural and, therefore, likely to continue for some time and will be the primary driver of the international order. While India has no means to influence the nature of US-China relations, the paradigm shifts away from cooperation to increasing contention between the two open up opportunities and space for other powers, including India. While recognizing the emergence of "a host of strategic challenges" for India in the context of the rise of China, the transformation of the U.S.-led international order, and the collusion between the two, Indian foreign minister Jaishankar contented

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88) "India, Japan in talks with Russia to create trilateral & push Modi's 'Act Far East' policy", The Print, January 28, 2021, <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/india-japan-in-talks-with-russia-to-create-trilateral-push-modis-act-far-east-policy/593402/>

that New Delhi cannot pursue any simplistic alignment with one over the other. Instead, he argues that "developing the mindset to not only respond but actually leverage that [rivalry] is what could define the new India".<sup>89)</sup> To take advantage of the US-China contradiction, New Delhi will make efforts maintain its relations with both the US and China better than the state of relations between the two.<sup>90)</sup>

## Conclusion

As explained, India's vision for the international order and its strategy is intimately linked to its perception of itself as a 'leading power' and its national goal of becoming a prosperous, strong and modern country. India increasingly envisions itself becoming a pole in the international order, which is perceived to be emerging in the direction of multipolarity. While India has a global imagination of order, in the immediate and medium term, New Delhi's emphasis is largely on the Asian geopolitical landscape. In this regard, India views Asian multipolarity as a stepping stone to the emergence of a multipolar world order. It also reflects India's concerns about the rise of China and its growing dominance in Asia. India's strategic vision for international order in the future will be to work with other powers to ensure that Asia and the World stay multipolar and that China behaves responsibly. Multi-alignment, issue-based coalition and strategic autonomy are key concepts that will define India's foreign policy strategy. However, India's emergence as an important pole in the multipolar world order is predicated on the transformation of India into a leading economy comparable to the size of the US and China by 2050. Hence maintaining a high economic growth

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89) S. Jaishankar (2020) "The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World", New Delhi: HarperCollins.

90) Shivshankar Menon, "United States and China in the World", July 12, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOO9IJLiHRk>

rate is a prerequisite. In the immediate and the medium term primary goal of India's foreign policy is to create a favorable international order that can facilitate its transformation. In this regard, it is expected to see a pragmatic approach to foreign policy to take advantage of the contradictions and uncertainty in the international system. However, the challenge in adopting a nimble foreign policy strategy aimed at taking advantage of the international system requires a stable political situation and consensus at home.

## 8. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A German Perspective

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### Introduction

The unipolar moment has passed. Another round of great power competition has begun. This isn't good news for Germany. Germany benefitted greatly from the unipolar moment following the end of the Cold War. NATO and the European Union expanded eastward, strengthening German security and increasing its prosperity. The expansion of multilateral cooperation in the guise of the IMF and the GATT/ WTO created a truly global system of economic governance, which played to the strengths of Germany's export-oriented economy. Today, US-Chinese rivalry threatens to undermine international stability and multilateral economic cooperation. The emergence of quasi-bipolar geostrategic competition will negatively affected Germany's economic and security interests and complicate its foreign policy.

If history is anything to go by, US-Chinese great power competition will be impossible to avoid. Having defeated repeated bids for regional hegemony in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, America will seek to prevent Asia from falling under Chinese domination. Washington will be forced to dedicate increasing resources to the Indo-Pacific, thereby forcing Europe to take greater responsibility for its own defense – the present conflict in Ukraine notwithstanding. Europe and especially Germany will face pressure from Washington to align their policies with America's China strategy. At the same time, Europe and Germany will

also face pressure from China not to align their policies too closely with America's strategy. As geopolitical competition spills over into the economic realm, the weaponization of interdependence, selective economic decoupling and the partial fragmentation of the international economic order will intensify. This will represent a particular challenge for internationally oriented countries, like Germany.

### 2050 Probable Future: German Perspective

US-Chinese competition is virtually inevitable. In all likelihood, China will continue to rise and pursue assertive, revisionist policies. The United States will remain committed to defending the status quo in Asia and to balancing a rising China. China's continued ascent will force America to shift its strategic focus to the Indo-Pacific region. This has important repercussions for defense policy, forcing Europe and especially Germany to take greater responsibility for their own security. The US-China relationship will range from competitive to conflictual across various domains, such as security, the economy and technology. Even in areas where US and Chinese interests align, such as climate change and global health, the two will find it difficult to cooperate, as the broader competitive-conflictual relations will dominate.

On the assumption that neither China nor the United States slides into a major domestic political or economic crisis, an increasingly bipolar structure will emerge, consisting of China, on the one hand, and the United States and its allies, on the other hand. Even before the Ukraine war, Russia was pursuing a rapprochement with China. This is bound to continue, even if it is unlikely to translate into a formal alliance or a coherent geopolitical bloc. China's rise and China-US relations will be the dominant factors driving the distribution of power in, and the competitive dynamics of, the international

system. Germany and Europe as well as the major Asian countries will remain broadly aligned with the United States. America's increasing focus on Asia and concomitant demand for allied support will lead to occasional tensions in the transatlantic and German-American relationship, particularly regarding economic and financial policies. But ultimately the alliance will remain intact, not least due to Europe's continued security dependence on the United States. The Ukraine war has underlined Germany's and Europe's continued security dependence on the United States.

Washington regards Beijing as a potential peer competitor capable of reshaping the international system. The US-China relationship "will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be", according to the Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Meanwhile, the EU sees China as "systemic rival" and an "economic competitor". In other words, Germany and Europe share America's concerns regarding China's disruptive ascent. They support the preservation of the territorial status quo in East Asia and the establishment of a more level economic playing field. But Europe and Germany will be less inclined than the United States to confront Beijing due to their greater economic dependence on China. They are also less directly and immediately affected by China's military rise. This will make Germany reluctant to align itself unreservedly and unconditionally with the United States in the geo-economic sphere. Ultimately, however, Berlin will lend qualified support to American policies. As the United States will remain the ultimate guarantor of European security, Europe's room for diplomatic maneuver is more limited than its economic size might suggest. American pressure on Europe to broadly support US geo-economic policies towards China will be a recurrent source of transatlantic frictions. Europe will therefore seek to strengthen its geo-economic defenses and reduce its economic-financial vulnerabilities vis-à-vis third parties so as to limit its susceptibility to both US and Chinese

pressure (aka “European Strategic Autonomy”). But progress towards this goal will be slow, at best.

Who will lead the world? The United States will lead, if not the world, then at least a broad group of countries consisting of traditional allies and new security partners. Its leadership will be strongly underpinned by the desire to balance China’s rise and the need to mobilize the necessary resources to do so. Washington will lead in terms of security and alliances. It will lead less forcefully in terms of economic and trade policies due to US domestic political opposition to greater international engagement, and especially free trade. It will lead in terms of securitizing foreign economic policies, including export controls and investment restrictions. The United States will succeed in maintaining alliance cohesion, provide credible strategic reassurance to its allies in the region, retain technological leadership, and generate sufficient internal (America) and external (allies) resources to support a credible and ultimately successful balancing strategy.

Meanwhile, China will be the dominant economy in Asia. And its economic weight and financial prowess will continue to grow, adding to its geopolitical influence and geo-economic power. Beijing will also continue to pursue a deliberate policy of reducing its geo-strategic and geo-economic vulnerabilities vis-à-vis the United States. China’s growing economic importance will put many US allies and partners in the region in a difficult position, given their close security ties with Washington and their close economic relationship with China. But in the end, the US track record of relatively liberal leadership, its role as a status quo defending offshore balancer in Asia, and its continued, if relatively diminishing, attractiveness as a market and source of technology will lead virtually all allies to remain broadly aligned with Washington’s security strategy – even if this means that US allies will incur economic costs as a consequence of following US

geo-economic policies vis-à-vis China. In the end, security trumps economics. This is what will ultimately underpin the US-led alliance in Asia.

For China to lead, it would need to find willing followers. Offering economic and financial incentives may allow Beijing to win support, or at least neutrality, from some smaller countries. The war in Ukraine will push Russia closer to China. However, the major Asian and Indo-Pacific countries will be more or less closely aligned with the United States in the security sphere. They are simply too fearful of China's territorial revisionism and of being absorbed into the Chinese sphere of influence. It is certainly true that countries in the region would rather not have to choose between China and the United States, not least due to their extensive economic ties with China. But the more they feel threatened by China, the more closely they will align their policies with Washington. China will attempt to weaken America's alliances but will ultimately fail to do so. Again, security concerns will override economics, informing the strategic stance taken by America's allies.

Similarly, Europe's dependence on US security commitments, even if diminished, will also keep it broadly aligned with the United States. Moreover, German foreign policy towards the United States and China will not be unduly constrained by public opinion. German public opinion has turned negative on China in the past few years, while perceptions of the United States have improved following the election of Joe Biden. Public opinion is fickle and subject to change, of course, and it is far from clear to what extent, if at all, it influences German foreign policy. Nevertheless, the perception of China as an economic competitor, as a country that supports (or at least does not oppose territorial revisionism in the case of Ukraine), and as an autocratic, anti-liberal power has become dominant in Germany. This is unlikely to change. While public opinion may have misgivings about the United States, and these could again intensify very quickly in the event of a MAGA president

being elected, there is little doubt which way German public opinion would tilt in the future if Germany were forced to choose between Washington and Beijing.

### **Probable Future of International System: Multipolar vs. Bipolar**

Despite the EU's economic importance, America and China are, or will be, the two most powerful countries in the international system. China's rise challenges the United States as the defender of the status quo. China sees the US presence as threatening its interests and security and is therefore keen to push the United States out of Asia, as the United States pushed European powers out of the Western hemisphere during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The US will seek to prevent China from emerging as the regional hegemon in Asia, the world's most dynamic economic region. Ever since it emerged as an extra-American power, Washington has sought to prevent East Asia (and Europe) falling under the domination of a single power – most recently during the Cold War. By virtue of their size and contradictory geo-political interests, Beijing and Washington will contribute to the emergence of a (largely) bipolar system in security terms. Countries in the region will find it increasingly difficult not to align themselves with one side or the other, as US-Chinese competition intensifies. Again, Europe will largely align itself with the United States given its security dependence on Washington and its own concerns about China's rise. A much weakened, Russia will tilt towards China. Virtually all current US allies and most of its fledgling security partners in Asia will stay 'close' to Washington.

The United States and China may not come to blows militarily and in this sense can be said to co-exist peacefully – present concern about a military confrontation over Taiwan notwithstanding. But their relationship will be characterized by competition and conflict. As long as China continues to rise

economically, Beijing will have little incentive to dial back its revisionist policies, and the United States will have little choice but to counter China's rise. A stable equilibrium is unlikely to emerge under such circumstances. A dynamic one will emerge instead.

The United States and China have much closer economic relations with one another than the United States (and its allies) had with the USSR during the Cold War. Unlike in the context of the superpower competition, economic interdependence is a source of geopolitical vulnerability. Therefore, both China and the United States will seek to limit their vulnerabilities and leverage their geo-economic strength vis-à-vis one another. This is one reason why China will continue to attempt to create an alternative or parallel international economic governance regime. All of this will lead to greater economic, financial and technological fragmentation in view of preserving America's and China's respective military-strategic-technological advantages and pre-empting their rival's ability to exploit their respective economic vulnerabilities.

### **Probable Future of Global Governance, Democracy and Capitalism**

Global governance will weaken, as the United States will be less committed to respecting multilateral rules-based economic cooperation than in the past. Meanwhile, China will seek to build an alternative governance regime. As the United States opts for an alliance-based approach to countering China, formal and informal US-centered governance regimes will persist. In some cases, they will weaken and in other cases they will strengthen. Washington will also opportunistically take advantage of its allies' economic and security dependence to nudge them towards supporting US policies toward China. Meanwhile, China will become more reluctant to move to a more market-based and more open, liberal economic governance, domestically or

internationally, in the face of intensifying geopolitical competition. This, too, will put pressure on multilateral economic governance and drive increased economic decoupling.

### **Probable Future of Europe (Germany) in 2050**

Germany will remain strongly committed to European integration. A strong and strengthened European Union would help Germany limit its security and economic vulnerabilities. As the United States is forced to shift increasing resources to Asia to counter China, Europe and especially Germany will have no choice but to strengthen their security policies. Russia will remain the single most security threat. As long as the United States is seen as an effective guarantor of European security, many EU members, including Germany, will be hesitant to fully commit to a significantly more integrated, strategically autonomous European security community. France will be keener to turn Europe into an independent military power than most other European countries. Continued doubts about the reliability of America's long-term commitment to European security might change countries' attitudes towards strengthening European defense policies.

Economically, Germany will push for a further deepening of the single market, a strengthening of the euro area, and a strengthening of Europe's technological capabilities. By 2050, the EU will be economically more closely integrated in terms of monetary, banking and capital markets. A full-blown fiscal union will probably not emerge due to continued disagreements over risk sharing and sovereignty. But the EU will mobilize its latent economic power more forcefully, if imperfectly, to fend off third-party geo-economic pressure (e.g., 'trade defense/ anti-coercion policy'). In brief, Europe will be more (if very imperfectly) integrated in terms of defense and even more so in terms of the economy.

## 2050 Preferred Future: German Perspective

### **Preferred Future of Great Power Competition**

Germany would prefer a future without great power competition and the concomitant risk of international economic fragmentation and destabilization. If great power competition cannot be avoided and a return to multilateral economic cooperation is impossible, a more realistic, second-best scenario from Berlin's point of view is one where a stable balance of power leads to manageable security competition and limited disruption of international economic cooperation.

### **Preferred Future of International System**

A combination of an open, rules-based economic multilateralism and a stable security environment would best reflect Germany's material and ideational interests. Germany could live with a return to US-centered unipolarity of the nineties and noughties, which provided security and economic prosperity. But this would pre-suppose the absence of US-Chinese competition. Again, an international system that that is underpinned by relatively stable or manageable balance-of-power dynamics might help limit geopolitical instability and economic fragmentation risks. From Berlin's perspective, this would be preferable to a situation where US-Chinese bipolar competition is highly dynamic and potentially destabilizing, strategically and economically.

### **Preferred Future of Global Governance, Democracy and Capitalism.**

Berlin would like to see a strengthening of multilateral cooperation and a stable security environment. Germany would like to see the establishment of a level economic playing field ("fair competition") and Washington to

recommit to multilateral, rules-based international economic governance. In such a world, countries could again focus on the pursuit of economic cooperation and prosperity rather than curtail beneficial economic cooperation in order to limit security risks.

### **Preferred Future of Europe (Germany) in 2050**

Germany's preferred future includes a stronger, more unified Europe capable to deterring military aggression and geo-economic coercion. Such a future includes the creation of a sustainable security architecture in Europe that addresses both European Union (or broadly, Western) and Russian security interests. More integrated markets and the deepening of monetary and banking union would make not only intra-European cooperation more efficient and resilient. It would also make Europe and Germany less vulnerable to political and geo-economic coercion. 'European strategic autonomy' would help limit vulnerability while facilitating rules-based cooperation with the United States and China.

### **The Regional Visions and Strategies for Preferred Future in 2050**

Europe's vision of its preferred future is closely tied to the concept of 'European strategic autonomy' defined as "the capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible". Or more precisely, "the EU's ability to decide for itself and to have the necessary instruments, means, capacities and capabilities to act upon its decisions, in such a manner that it is able to safeguard its long-term interests, with others when possible but on its own when needed, without depending on the will and capabilities of third parties." Again, the EU would prefer a future based on a stable geopolitical environment and rules-based economic cooperation.

As such a future is unlikely, Europe is preparing, albeit very slowly, for a future where US-Chinese rivalry and the weaponization of economic interdependence puts European interests increasingly at risk.

### Suggestions: Principles and Tasks of the global cooperation for the Preferred Future

Task #1: Washington and Beijing should try to explore ways to engage in what has been called “managed strategic competition” and seek to create a stable balance of power. Both sides would need to come to believe that they are unlikely to prevail in case of unfettered competition, or they would at least need to believe that neither side can win in the context of dynamic balancing. This may make both sides amenable to a more actively managed, more predictable and hence less destabilizing relationship.

Task #2: If Europe were to emerge as a co-equal, autonomous geopolitical player, it might be able to exercise a moderating influence on US-Chinese competition. After all, both Washington and Beijing would want to ensure that Europe does not tilt too far towards their geostrategic competitor. This might provide Europe with some influence over the future course of US-Chinese competition. Alternatively, by throwing its support behind Washington, the EU may be able to get Beijing to reconsider the wisdom of pursuing revisionist policies and lead it instead to pursue a more accommodating strategy.

Task #3: Even if it remains unable to influence the course of US-Chinese competition, a stronger and more autonomous Europe might hold out the prospect of cooperation among middle powers, such as Canada, Japan, Korea, and so on. This could help save multilateral, rules-based economic cooperation among them.

## 9. The Future of the World Order in 2050: An Indonesian Perspective

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### Introduction

Indonesia has no tradition whatsoever of developing a grand strategy. However, after years of being a developing country, Indonesia is now more accustomed to having a specific growth strategy and goal. Jakarta tends to see strategic issues through lenses of development, making assumptions on growth and economic prospects interlinked with projections of regional and world order. The Administration of President Joko Widodo has made these assumptions clear when developing the Indonesia Vision 2045.

Indonesia's vision of what the world will look like in 2050 majorly overlaps with the existing national discourse of Indonesian Vision 2045. The year 2045 was officially adopted as a crucial moment in the future since Indonesia will have been a century old since it declared its independence from Dutch colonial rule. Such a vision has been officially adopted by the Indonesian government, especially by the National Development Agency which is responsible for making both short- and long-term planning of various national policies.

This essay will highlight the economic essence of the Indonesian strategic outlook and will try to lay out some scenarios about how the Vision may be feasible in a few decades ahead. It will first examine brief projections, assumptions, and targets that are being set by the Vision and will discuss how

economic issues become the most salient referent object that guides Indonesia's strategic approaches. The essay will also discuss what kind of indicators can determine the future scenario for Indonesia and what kinds of scenarios Indonesia may face in the future. The conclusion will highlight what Indonesia can or may do in these different scenarios.

## Indonesia Vision 2045

The Indonesian Vision 2045, since it is mainly intended as a long-term national development vision, is pretty much characterized by socio-economic indicators. Under the term "World Megatrend 2045" Indonesia believes that by 2045 the world would be populated by at least 9.45 billion humans with more than half a portion of the world population living in Asia. With 65% of the total population living in urban areas, Indonesia believes that in 2045, city-based development will determine the future of wealth. Indonesia also predicts that in 2050, 84% of the world population will be categorized as middle- and upper-income class with Asia and Latin America having the largest number of people in these classes. Indonesia believes that the output of today's developing countries will grow by 2050 to become 71% of the world's total output, in which Asia will become the main driver of the growth, consisting of 54% of the total world's output.

With Asia and Africa becoming the most important determinant of the world in 2045, Indonesia predicts that there will be major competition to dominate access to the world's natural resources. If international trade is assumed to become the main platform of economic distribution, Indonesia expects to have 3.4% annual growth until 2045. Indonesia also believes that the dominance of the U.S. dollar as the main currency will shift when China becomes one of the most important finance sources for world development.

Technological development is anticipated to bring the world to the era of biotechnology and genetic modification, renewable energy, wearable devices, automatization, and robotics as well as artificial intelligence. However, Indonesia is also afraid that the world will become warmer in the future if the world cannot manage to reduce global warming, with a prediction that global temperature will increase by 3–3.5 degrees by the end of the century.

In terms of geopolitics, Indonesia believes that the world's center of gravity will continue to move to Asia. China's dominant role is pretty much expected, but the Middle East will still become vulnerable. With some new rising powers gaining more stages in global affairs, Indonesia expects that the world would be more multipolar in the future. Such a trend reaffirms Indonesia's "free and active" foreign policy, which requires Indonesia to keep an equal distance from contending powers in world politics and remain active in any efforts to create and maintain international peace and stability. The "free and active" foreign policy principle of Indonesia stems from one of Indonesia's founding fathers', Mohammad Hatta's speech on 2 September 1948, which translates into a robust doctrine of Indonesia's default position in world politics: being free to decide any policy that the country deems necessary in responding to international issues without being aligned with one specific power.<sup>91)</sup> With such a doctrine, which is now formally adopted in Law No. 37 of 1999, Indonesia cannot form any formal alliance with any powers.

Indonesia Vision 2045 strengthens the developmental outlook in Indonesia's aspirations. It adopts four dimensions of development that Indonesia seeks to reach by 2045: to nurture excellent and cultured Indonesian citizens who master science and technology, to achieve an advanced and sustainable economy, to foster equity and inclusive development, and to build a

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91) Ahmad Rizky M. Umar, "The Meaning of 'Independent' and 'Active' Foreign Policy: Revisiting Hatta's 1948 Speech," in *Hatta and Indonesia's Independent and Active Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Evan A. Laksmana & Lina Alexandra (Jakarta: CSIS, 2022), 21–36.

democratic, strong, and clean state. The vision envisages that Indonesia becomes a high-income country with one of the largest GDPs in the world. It seeks to transform today's democracy from merely procedural to become a more substantive democracy where democratic institutions remain stable and backed by vibrant democratic cultures and norms. The vision also specifically mentions ASEAN centrality that needs to be defended while Indonesia shall achieve defense capability with sufficient deterrent capability that comes with stable order at home and dignified human security.

These objectives must be understood within the context in which Indonesia has progressed so far. Indonesia has gone through several crises that tested both its nation and state-building. The vision, thus, illustrates a sense of optimism, particularly from the current administration of President Joko Widodo about Indonesia's future. There was a lot of pessimism about Indonesia's future when the New Order regime collapsed and deep structural problems in the Indonesian economy erupted.<sup>92)</sup> The collapse of the authoritarian regime in Indonesia was then followed by a series of ethnic conflicts, riots, and inter-religious violence in some parts of Indonesian territory. However, post-1998 Reform Era and the post-1998 Asian Financial Crisis Indonesia has continued to thrive. Except for Papua, there has been no significant separatist ethnic movement in Indonesia. The Indonesian state remains stable against the background of a multicultural and multireligious society. Democratic institutions such as the elected presidency, parliament, political parties, national election committee, judicial body, and regular election both at the national and local level remain intact as people accept that they are the only way where the government is elected and regularly tossed.

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92) See for Example Anne Booth, *The Indonesian Economy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A History of Missed Opportunities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998).

## Economics is the Chief under President Joko Widodo Administration

Evidently, the economic development outlook dominates Indonesia's strategic vision. Indonesia's foreign policy was begun by the fact that what the country seeks abroad is to compensate for the vulnerabilities inside. The Indonesian Vision fosters a sense of optimism while hoping the scenario the world is moving towards favors Indonesia's interests and ideals. Indonesia's leadership role in ASEAN and its membership in the G20 have illustrated a kind of Indonesian contribution to the international system, especially in the emerging multipolar system.<sup>93)</sup> A consolidated and functioning democracy, economic growth, and regional stability, thus, constitute necessary goals of the Indonesian vision. Growth, however, becomes a center of gravity.

The most important feedback that helps such Vision grow were predictions made by global consultants like McKinsey which place Indonesia as one of the biggest economies in the world in the future. Raoul Oberman, Richard Dobbs, Arief Budiman, Fraser Thompson and Morten Rossé, for example, in 2012 predicted that Indonesia will rank number 7 in the world. The prediction was made by the assumption that Indonesian economic volatility as well as debt proportion to GDP remain low, while urbanization, as well as a vibrant productive class continue to grow.<sup>94)</sup> At home, some economists, for example, Kiki Verico, also predict that Indonesia may become a high-income country as long as it maintains 8 to 9% annual growth.<sup>95)</sup> On various occasions, Indonesian officials quote predictions that Indonesia may become a top 5 world economy in 2045 if it keeps consistently following good and

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93) Ross Garnaut, "Indonesia in the New World Balance," in *Indonesia Rising: The Repositioning of Asia's Third Giant*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: ISEAS, 2012), 14-27.

94) Raoul Oberman, Richard Dobbs, Arief Budiman, Fraser Thompson and Morten Rossé, "The Archipelago Economy: Unleashing Indonesia's Potential," *McKinsey Global Institute*, September 2012, [https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/asia%20pacific/the%20archipelago%20economy/mgi\\_unleashing\\_indonesia\\_potential\\_executive\\_summary.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/asia%20pacific/the%20archipelago%20economy/mgi_unleashing_indonesia_potential_executive_summary.ashx).

95) Kiki Verico, "Indonesia towards 2030 and Beyond: A Long-Run International Trade Foresight," *LPEM*, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, [https://www.lpem.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/MPRA\\_paper\\_79665.pdf](https://www.lpem.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/MPRA_paper_79665.pdf).

innovative policies and succeeding in their implementation.<sup>96)</sup> The Indonesia Vision 2045 has adopted this scenario with moderate and optimistic scenarios.

**Table 9-1. Economic Growth Scenario**

1986–2015		2016–2045 SCENARIO	
		Moderate	Optimistic
5,1	Economic Growth*	5.1	5.7
16	GDP World Rank*	7	5
3.378	GDP per capita in USD	19.794	23.199
	Year of being the Highest Income Country	2038	2036
32,8	Investment role	33.1	38.1
6,4	Growth	5.4	6.4
21,1	Industry role	22.5	26.0
6,3	Growth	5.2	6.3
13,5	Agriculture role	7.8	7.4
3,1	Growth	3.0	3.2

Source: Bappenas

\*) End of Period

\*\*\*) Moderate: World economic growth is low and structural reforms are running business as usual  
Optimistic: Structural reforms are proceeding as expected and world economic growth is relatively high

The moderate scenario assumes that world economic growth remains low and structural reforms remain business as usual only. However, an optimistic scenario assumes that structural reforms accelerate while world economic growth is high. President Joko Widodo often emphasizes the necessary acceleration of industrialization and improvement of human capital to avoid

96) Kompas.com, “Ramalan Sri Mulyani: Jadi Negara Maju, Ekonomi RI Masuk 5 Besar Dunia,” *Kompas.com*, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, <https://money.kompas.com/read/2021/04/01/235100126/ramalan-sri-mulyani-jadi-negara-maju-ekonomi-ri-masuk-5-besar-dunia?page=all>.

what he often refers to as the “middle-income trap.”<sup>97)</sup> Indonesia is afraid that the current demographic bonus that the country enjoys with the rising purchasing power of Indonesian citizens – which makes Indonesia an expanding market – cannot be accompanied by a more productive and innovative workforce. Indonesia aims to exit the middle-income trap by 2036. And in so doing, the current administration has introduced some policies including the controversial Omnibus Law to boost investment and ease of doing business<sup>98)</sup>, even when they are less popular in the eyes of Indonesia’s students and labor groups.<sup>99)</sup>

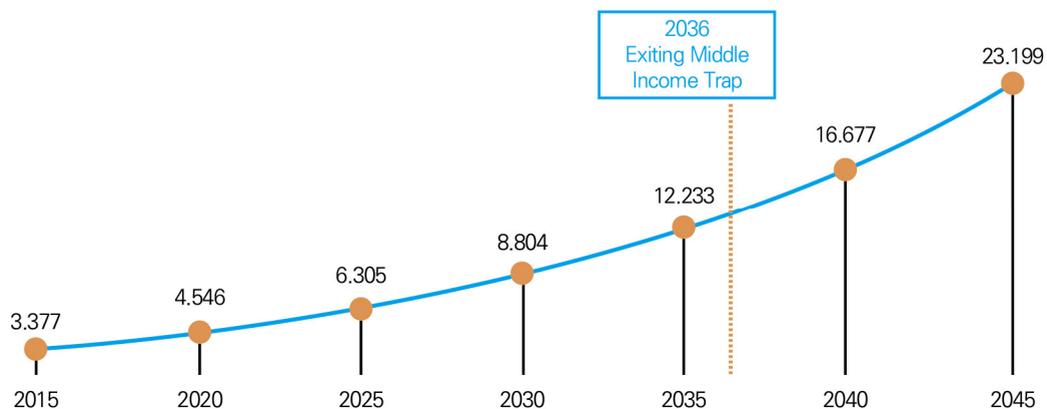


Figure 9-1. Projected Trend of Economic Growth

Source: Bappenas

97) See for example Humas Setkab, “Keluar dari ‘Middle Income Trap’, Presiden Jokowi Ajak Konsentrasi pada Pembangunan SDM,” Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, <https://setkab.go.id/keluar-dari-middle-income-trap-presiden-jokowi-ajak-konsentrasi-pada-pembangunan-sdm/>.

98) Mutia Fauzia, “UU Cipta Kerja Jadi Amunisi Jokowi untuk Lepas dari Middle Income Trap,” *Kompas.com*, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://money.kompas.com/read/2020/10/05/191812026/uu-cipta-kerja-jadi-amunisi-jokowi-untuk-lepas-dari-middle-income-trap>

99) CNN Indonesia, “Buruh dan Mahasiswa Bergerak Kepung Istana, Demo Omnibus Law,” *CNN Indonesia*, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20201110063732-20-567867/buruh-dan-mahasiswa-bergerak-kepung-istana-demo-omnibus-law>.

The objective of growth for development at home as well as the assumption of certain economic growth abroad make a predictable pattern of Indonesia's strategy and foreign policy in the past few years. During his first administration, President Joko Widodo announced a vision of Indonesia as the "Global Maritime Fulcrum." At first, it raised enthusiasm among security and foreign policy communities in Indonesia that Indonesia may finally have its own grand strategy. However, even such a foreign policy outlook was more economic in essence as the President was more interested in building maritime connectivity and infrastructure as compared to maritime security. His second administration was even more explicitly focused on human capital, infrastructure, regulatory and bureaucratic reforms, and broader economic transformation.<sup>100)</sup> In terms of foreign policy, the President gave a mandate to the Foreign Ministry to strengthen economic diplomacy to ameliorate the impact of trade imbalances with some countries as well as to attract more investment from abroad.<sup>101)</sup>

When Indonesia introduced its proposal to create an ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the assumption of promising regional growth was also apparent. Siswo Pramono, for example, an Indonesian diplomat who worked closely with the Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi to create the Proposal has adopted a prominent belief that we are now "in the Asian Century," where East Asia, including ASEAN, has become the center of global economic gravity.<sup>102)</sup> Such assumption has prompted Indonesia's vision, thus the

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100) Evan Laksmana, "Indonesia as 'Global Maritime Fulcrum': A Post-Mortem Analysis," *AMTI Update*, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019,

<https://amti.csis.org/indonesia-as-global-maritime-fulcrum-a-post-mortem-analysis/>.

101) Chandra Gian Asmara, "Jokowi ke Menlu Retno: Perkuat Diplomasi Ekonomi," *CNBC Indonesia*, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019,

<https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20191023132819-4-109406/jokowi-ke-menlu-retno-perkuat-diplomasi-ekonomi>.

102) Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia, "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and Indonesia's Indo-Pacific Strategy: What's Next? – Interview with Dr. Siswo Pramono," *FPCI Policy to Watch*, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, <https://www.fpcindonesia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FPCI-Policy-to-Watch-Dr-Siswo-Indo-Pacific-Updated.pdf>.

ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, to deal with rising great power competition by promoting an idea of an Indo-Pacific that is cooperative, inclusive, and non-zero-sum.

The actual document of the “ASEAN Outlook on The Indo-Pacific” portrays the regions – Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean – as regions which

“are amongst the most dynamic in the world as well as centers of economic growth for decades. As a result, these regions continue to experience geopolitical and geostrategic shifts. These shifts present opportunities as well as challenges. On the one hand, the economic growth of the region opens up possibilities of cooperation to alleviate poverty and elevate living standards of millions of people. On the other hand, the rise of material powers, i.e. economic and military, requires avoiding the deepening of mistrust, miscalculation, and patterns of behavior based on a zero-sum game.”<sup>103)</sup>

The document believes that ASEAN Centrality is “the underlying principle for promoting cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region,” especially with existing ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit. For Indonesia, such belief reflects a longer-term tendency that not only ASEAN Centrality expects ASEAN to become the central mechanism for security architecture in the region, but also that Indonesia maintains the centrality of Southeast Asia and ASEAN in its foreign policy.<sup>104)</sup> ASEAN plays an important traditional role in Indonesia’s great power management, especially by engaging major powers in a web of institutions and cooperative security. While Indonesia’s

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103) ASEAN, “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific,” *ASEAN*, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, <https://asean.org/speechandstatement/asean-outlook-on-the-indo-pacific/>.

104) Evan A. Laksmana, “Pragmatic Equidistance: How Indonesia Manages Its Great Power Relations,” in China, *The United States, and the Future of Southeast Asia*, ed. David B.H. Denoon (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 113-135.

defense and economic capacity remain limited, ASEAN becomes a platform where Indonesia can enhance its influence on regional affairs.

### Strategic Scenarios

By looking into both Indonesia Vision 2045 and the essence of Indonesia's ongoing strategy and foreign policy, we may expect that there are certain indicators from which we can predict where the existing strategy may go in the future. The first indicator is related to how stable relations among countries are in the region. The best-case scenario assumes that, as much as it is acknowledged that geopolitics and geostrategies are shifting – as assumed by the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, diplomacy will remain as the ultimate instrument to navigate both conflict and cooperation in the region. The moderate scenario assumes that competitions persist with no feasible solutions to major sources of disputes, but they are manageable so they will not develop into actual conflicts. The worst-case scenario assumes that great power rivalry intensifies in the region and conflicts eventually erupt. Look at the graphic below.



Figure 9-2. Determinants of Scenarios

The second indicator is structural. When Indonesia Vision 2045 assumes

certain things such as “geopolitical shift,” “multipolarity,” or even “ASEAN Centrality,” it assumes what kind of arrangement such interactions are placed in a world context. They are talking about world order indeed. Political scientist G. John Ikenberry defines “order” as the “‘governing’ arrangements among a group of states, including its fundamental rules, principles, and institution.”<sup>105)</sup> There are some examples when lexicons of “order” are apparent in Indonesian and ASEAN strategic talks. They include when “rule-based order” is invoked in responding to power situations in the region. When ASEAN expects China to respect international law, it expects that UNCLOS serves as fundamental rules that guide states’ behavior over disputed waters.<sup>106)</sup> When ASEAN launched the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, it envisaged a certain kind of principles – ASEAN Centrality, openness, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, good governance, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention, etc.<sup>107)</sup> – that ASEAN countries should observe in dealing with extra-regional power. The outlook acknowledges that the power structure is “shifting” – as appeared in the quote above – but it somehow believes that ASEAN Centrality and these principles *organize* redistribution of power<sup>108)</sup> as illustrated in various notions such as “China Rise,” “U.S. Pivot to Asia,” “Look East Policy,” “New Southern Policy,” or “Free

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105) G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 23.

106) ASEAN, “Chairman’s Statement of the 36<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit 26 June 2020 Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN,” ASEAN, June 27, 2020, <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-36th-asean-summit-26-june-2020-cohesive-and-responsive-asean/#:~:text=Under%20the%20theme%20of%20Cohesive,well%20as%20in%20addressing%20the>.

107) ASEAN, “ASEAN Outlook.”

108) Like Ikenberry writes in his other book, “[t]he distribution of power provides the setting for order building. It determines which states will dominate and which will not. ... At the same time, the polarity of a system refers only to the distribution of material assets among actors. It is not a depiction of the political order that is organized on top of these distributed material capabilities. The distribution of power creates opportunities and constraints for states. It does not determine, by itself, the character of international order.” See G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 75.

and Open Indo-Pacific.”

Indonesia’s path to its vision depends on to what extent the order remains intact. If the order remains unchanged, it means the organizing principles are still effective and the existing power arrangement stands still. However, it seems that power shifts are inevitable in the region. China is rising and the U.S. keeps its footing in the region. If China can narrow its gap with the US, the power structure is rearranged, but a moderate scenario assumes that principles may persist; that China’s rise does not seek to rewrite both the regional and global orders. In the moderate scenario, the order is renegotiated, but not entirely changed since the principles remain intact. The worst-case scenario assumes that both power structure and principles are rearranged, mostly in a conflictual setting. A crisis does not always mean something bad for the long term, but the best to worst case scenario occurs along the continuum between certainty and uncertainty, thus predictability.

For Indonesia, the prospect of global growth will determine which scenario may prevail until 2050. The Indonesia Vision already assumes two scenarios of growth: optimistic and moderate. They will be determined altogether with the progress of structural reform at home. However, Covid 19 Pandemic and the economic impact of war in Ukraine may drag the prediction down to include a worst-case scenario, that there might be a global recession which comes with a disruption of the supply chain as well as a food and energy crisis. There are still some senses of optimism both for ASEAN and for Indonesia that the economic downturn will be relatively less impactful. However, for Indonesia and ASEAN, a worst-case scenario may happen if a recession cannot be contained at the regional level.

At least two regional flashpoints may determine whether relations among countries in the region will remain stable: South China Sea disputes and Cross-Strait Relations between China and Taiwan. The former is ASEAN’s

own flashpoint, whereas the latter is a flashpoint with a huge potential repercussion for ASEAN's dynamics. To manage the South China Sea dispute, Indonesia tends to rely on the ASEAN process centered on the formation of the Code of Conduct. The dialogue involves China and ASEAN countries, and it will eventually determine if ASEAN's way of dialogue along with its normative attributes, such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, are instrumental in stabilizing relations among countries. Should ASEAN fail, the dispute may be ordered by a balance of power in the region that will not only involve ASEAN countries, but also major maritime powers in the region.<sup>109)</sup> For Indonesia, the balance of power as an instrument to manage disputes in the South China Sea is less favorable, but positive externalities politics of balancing may still be useful for Indonesia to keep the dispute manageable. If dialogue stops and conflict erupts, both Indonesia and ASEAN may fail to keep their doctrine intact: that both Indonesian territory and ASEAN should be kept away from interference.

Cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan are not necessarily ASEAN's own problem. However, the alliance between some ASEAN countries and the U.S. and the fact that Chinese influence is growing in Beijing's bilateral ties with some other ASEAN countries may complicate ASEAN coherence in responding to the issues. A mutual defense treaty between the U.S. and the Philippines, for example, might be used by the U.S. for its bases should China decides to invade Taiwan. While the U.S. might not be hesitant to come to some ASEAN countries' defense if they are attacked in the South China Sea, some countries, especially Indonesia, are still worried that their territories may be used both as access or as a theatre of war.<sup>110)</sup> In Indonesia,

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109) See, for example, recent trend where countries with overlapping claims have mobilized government vessels traditionally used for maritime law enforcement to reinforce their claims over the disputed waters. See China Power, "Are Maritime Law Enforcement Forces Destabilizing Asia?" *CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, <https://amti.csis.org/maritime-law-enforcement-forces-destabilizing-asia/>.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan was added to the ongoing discussion about a possible war between China and Taiwan that will bring the American military to the region. However, the most important referent object was still mainly the economics: Indonesia worries about an imminent threat to food and energy security as well as disruption in trade and investment.<sup>111)</sup>

While being related to these flashpoints, questions about the orders are deeper and more all-encompassing. These two regional flashpoints certainly involve deeper structural competition between the U.S. and China. However, U.S.-China military rivalry is just one story for the entire region. Their competition is now occurring in various dimensions from security to economics, such as between the network of development that Chinese's Belt and Road Initiative seeks to build norms and standards that the U.S.' Indo-Pacific Economic Framework is trying to introduce. There are, however, more strategic outlooks with different niches and twists that major and middle powers are bringing to the region. ASEAN, according to the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific does not find these multiple ideas conflicting as it believes in the idea of "the more, the merrier". ASEAN believes that the region's needs are greater than what a single partner can offer to the table. However, ASEAN's ability to navigate such multiplicity as well as to ensure optimum outcomes while denying risks of falling victim to one's sphere of influence. The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific invested so much in the principle of ASEAN Centrality. Such principle, however, will be tested by how much ASEAN can stay relevant and keep its coherence intact. Issues like dealing with the Myanmar coup since February 2021 can be a litmus test of

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110) Mercedes Ruehl, "South-east Asia Warily Navigates Rising US-China Tensions over Taiwan," *Financial Times*, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/d05cb07c-835a-4c8f-8361-bf84b0e982ff>.

111) Redaksi CNBC Indonesia, "Membayangkan Nasib Indonesia Saat China-Taiwan Beneran Perang," August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20220809121118-4-362257/membayangkan-nasib-indonesia-saat-china-taiwan-beneran-perang>.

the way ASEAN handles its own affairs to avoid becoming a victim of proxy war.

The following Figure illustrates how each scenario may proceed in the future.

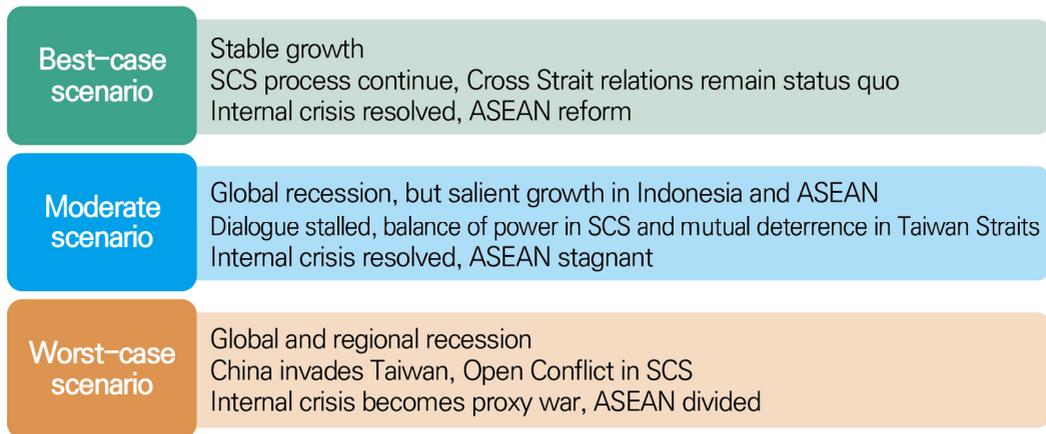


Figure 9-3. Scenarios Faced by Indonesia in The Future

### Conclusion: Implication of Indonesian Strategy

The Indonesian Government has so far not adopted a tradition to publish a national security strategy to lay out its priorities and means to achieve its objectives. However, existing patterns of Indonesia’s approaches to regional and global affairs may shed some light on what Indonesia can do or even has done to ensure the best scenario prevails. Current Indonesia’s presidency of the G20 shows how an optimistic outlook shapes Indonesia’s strategy. Indonesia will seek to secure multilateral coordination in pandemic recovery, infrastructure development, and digitalization. As the G20 President this year with the slogan “Recover Together Recover Stronger,” Indonesia has listed

some priorities including strengthening of global health architecture, digital transformation, and energy transition.<sup>112)</sup> Indonesia has always been trying to accelerate the CoC process and continue to translate the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific into some concrete actions. Soon, it involves some examples such as mainstreaming the Outlook in the ASEAN-led mechanism and revitalizing the East Asia Summit to facilitate more cooperation in the era of Indo-Pacific.

Navigating through the moderate scenario may be somewhat tricky as it involves more agency by Indonesia in responding to regional and global issues. The G20 agenda this year must be enhanced to include extra efforts at the regional level than business as usual. ASEAN Centrality requires lessening the development gap between Mainland Southeast Asia and Maritime Southeast Asia. Regional resilience requires greater integration where new arrays of policies require norms to be written, such as for regional cyber-governance and e-commerce. Indonesia may find some contending ideas between financing infrastructure development and ensuring that development projects abide by certain quality standards, such as for labor and the environment and it will require some agreement among ASEAN countries. If the CoC process stalls and the balance of power increasingly rules over the management of South China Sea disputes, Indonesia may need to ensure that the increasing maritime presence of major powers in the region is complimented with sufficient confidence-building measures. If the ASEAN Regional Forum can no longer work as the main vehicle for such purposes, Indonesia needs to seek other opportunities for order building, including by enhancing middle power coordination with like-minded countries and proponents of international law like UNCLOS.

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112) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, "Indonesia Promotes Spirit to Recover Together in the 2022 G20 Presidency," *Kemlu*, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, [https://kemlu.go.id/portal/en/read/3288/berita/indonesia-promotes-spirit-to-recover-together-in-t](https://kemlu.go.id/portal/en/read/3288/berita/indonesia-promotes-spirit-to-recover-together-in-the-2022-g20-presidency)

The worst-case scenario is least expected but must be nevertheless prepared for. In times of conflict, Indonesia may seek to ensure that threats to food and energy security do not threaten Indonesian citizens, especially since great power conflict will not only be the only major threat because Indonesia is also prone to natural disasters.<sup>113)</sup> Indonesia will need to boost its cybersecurity capability while ensuring that macroeconomic indicators are stable. In times of conflict, Indonesia will seek to deny any military access for any great power to Indonesian waters.<sup>114)</sup> It will further require Indonesia to move ASEAN from a regional cooperation organization that focuses on diplomacy during peacetime to a regional organization that can apply tactical and operational neutrality. If it is not possible with all ASEAN member states, then Indonesia may consider working with the founding countries of ASEAN.<sup>115)</sup>

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113) Indonesian Ministry of Defense, for example, has been tasked so far with food security, especially to establish more sites of national food estate, which normally would fall into the realm of Ministry of Agriculture. See Chandra Gian Asmara, "Catat! Jokowi Beri Mandat ke Prabowo Urus Lumbung Pangan RI," CNBC Indonesia, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20200709174850-4-171555/catat-jokowi-beri-mandat-ke-prabowo-urus-lumbung-pangan-ri>.

114) Ruehl, "South-east Asia Warily Navigates."

115) Thitinan Pongsudhirak, "The End of ASEAN as We Know It," *Project Syndicate*, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/asean-needs-realignment-for-new-geopolitical-realities-by-thitinan-pongsudhirak-2022-10>.

## 10. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Brazilian Perspective

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### 2050 Probable Future : Brazil's Perspective

The probable future scenarios for Brazil in 2050 require a broad reflection on the changes in the world economy, especially after the capitalist crisis in 2008, the Covid-19 crisis, and the War between Russia and Ukraine.

These events in the global economy had structural effects on the dynamics of the capitalist economy, which profoundly affect the orientation of public policies in the world, and mainly for public policies in latecomer countries, as is the case of Brazil. In this sense, this first part of the paper will discuss Brazil's probable future for 2050, addressing three dimensions: the China x US relationship; the multipolar vs bipolar world; and new governance, democracy, and the dynamics of capitalism itself.

#### **Probable Future of Great Power Competition : China vs. US**

The Chinese economy is an example of a country that has overcome the middle-income trap and is adopting policies to rise to the position of a nation with the income of a rich country. Until 2012, China had an average economic growth rate of 10% per year, which was also linked to a profound structural transformation of the economy, mainly with strong progress in the country's industrialization, with the participation of industry in GDP

exceeding the percentage of 40%.

In addition to the high economic growth, it is important to note the constant evolution of the country's GDP Per Capita. According to Purchasing Power Parity, China's GDP Per Capital in 2019 was \$19,503. This variable has been accompanied by greater social balance. Recently, the country announced the eradication of extreme poverty in the country's past. Furthermore, there is clearly a growing middle class in China, which already approaches 300 million people.

However, these structural transformations in China have been accompanied by geopolitical and technological conflicts in the world economy, in particular with the US. An example of these conflicts between the US and China is related to the semiconductor sector, a highly technology-intensive sector that is fundamental in the global production chain because it is consumed in several sectors.

In fact, the “trade war” between China and the US is perhaps the best example of the greater need for countries in the global economy to have technological dominance and strengthen their national production chains as essential elements for national sovereignty. For example, the US president, Joe Biden, clearly defends a policy of attracting US companies to the country - reshoring - with the aim of strengthening the US national production chain and also to generate more jobs in the country itself.

In addition to the US government defending a policy of strengthening internal production chains and attracting US companies to the country, there is also the imposition of sanctions against China, whose US objective is to prevent the technological development of China, considered the main rival of the USA in the international economy. These US sanctions measures against China started in 2016, when the US imposed sanctions against the Chinese telecommunications equipment company ZTE (Zhong Xing Telecommunication

Equipment Company Limited). The US increased sanctions against China, as the US revised its export control rules three times to punish Huawei. These new US sanctions have affected US and non-US suppliers of microchips and advanced circuit boards to the Chinese company Huawei<sup>116</sup>). The US's main justification for imposing sanctions against China is the national security threat that China poses to the US<sup>117</sup>).

To overcome US sanctions, China has been adopting public policies such as increased spending on R&D, investments in technology parks, public procurement, and government funding programs aimed at Chinese high-tech industries, benefiting sectors such as information and communication technology, biotechnology and energy, the space program, and the military. These increased investments in these sectors reaffirm China's strategy of building and strengthening denser and more diversified productive structures, giving the country greater autonomy in its path of economic development.

China also disclosed that in the country's next five-year plans, priority will be given to the so-called "Dual Circulation Strategy"<sup>118</sup>), whose objective is to promote innovation and technology, and also to face the economic dispute against the US. This new China strategy has two lines of action: a) to strengthen the local market; and b) to expand technological investment in national companies.

The likely future of relations between China and the US is one of worsening these conflicts, with the US imposing more sanctions against China and its domestic companies, as well as China reacting with industrial and innovation policies to achieve greater sovereignty and try to have greater influence in other countries in the world.

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116) See <https://www.asiatimesfinancial.com/china-s-semiconductor-firms-hit-hard-by-sanctions>

117) See <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Big-Story/Inside-the-US-campaign-to-cut-China-out-of-the-tech-supply-chain>

118) See <https://www.asiafinancial.com/china-circulates-new-strategy-in-economic-duel-with-us>

This scenario is a great window of opportunity for Brazil, as Brazil is the largest country in South America, as Brazil represents 49% of the population and 50% of the GDP of South America. In addition to being the largest country in the region, Brazil also has a long tradition of pragmatic foreign policy, without conflicts with other nations, which can be a great advantage for Brazil to negotiate its economic and political interests with China and the US.

### **Probable Future of International System: Multipolar vs. Bipolar**

The theory of the “multipolar world” emerged in the early 1990s with the end of the Cold War and was advocated mainly by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as an alternative to the bipolar system.

In fact, the idea of multipolarity in the real world turned out to be very different from the world dreamed of by European and non-European political leaders. This “multipolar world” is divided into three: the powerful states (G7), which have economic, financial, and military strength. It is a US-led group; by transnational corporations and international banks; and by the international bureaucracy (UN, European Union, IMF, World Bank), which serves, on the one hand, the interests of the richest and strongest countries, and, on the other hand, the interests of transnational corporations in developed countries. Indeed, this “multipolar” structure came to be dominated and coordinated more prominently by the US.

European, Asian, and emerging countries have a similar problem in the face of this “multipolar” world: they often wanted to offer paths independent of the paths of North American hegemony but depended on this structure in political and economic dimensions. These countries have domestic vulnerabilities that limit their projection in the world economy, contributing to their continuing dependence on the US and having no leadership alternatives, thus preferring to maintain the status quo of the way this “multipolar world” worked.

However, some events began to change the logic of this "multipolar" world. For example, the rise of China with the desire to be a great nation; Russia seeking to restore its power and the territory it had lost, as evident in the occupation of Crimea; Europe using soft power to ally with Ukraine and abandon Russian influence.

Even with these different actors acting in the global economy questioning the power of the USA, everything indicates that the world economic system will work according to the conflicts between the USA and China. For example, the US, with the aim of limiting China's expansion in the Asian region, seeks to strengthen a combination of trade agreements with other countries, such as, the Trans-Pacific Partnership; the strengthening of military alliances; and the implementation of technology and trade sanctions policies against China. On the other hand, China adopts a true geopolitics of investment in infrastructure that creates links with other nations, such as the One Belt One Road program, which includes financing, investment promotion, and the expansion of trade, through which Beijing extends its influence to different parts of the world. The Chinese strategy started with the New Silk Road, in China's regional surroundings, then expanded to Africa, and is now advancing in Latin America, as illustrated by the magnitude of Chinese investments in the region.

We can say that we are facing a scenario under construction of neo-hegemony, multipolarity, strategic choices, and decisions, which, in the medium or long term, will consolidate the new profile of the world's economic and geopolitical system. In order to act in this world, it is essential that Brazil knows not only its own limits and potential, but also the limits and potential of its economic and political partners, both in the North and in the South of the global economy.

### **Probable Future of Global Governance, Democracy, and Capitalism**

Recent events in the global economy – the 2008 crisis; Covid-19; War of Russia x Ukraine – have promoted a broad debate about its impacts on governance, democracy, and on the very dynamics of capitalism. For example, the Unctad report – World Investment Report 2020 International Production Beyond the Pandemic, published in 2020 – states that the COVID-19 pandemic and now the War between Russia and Ukraine, has caused a perfect storm of changes in the global system of international production that was already happening, creating three major megatrends: first, a new industrial frontier with Industry 4.0; a new governance structure in the world economy where there is growing economic nationalism; and the imperative of sustainability in pursuit of green energy and decarbonization.

From the point of view of governance, there is a tendency towards a crisis of multilateral cooperation, with regional and bilateral solutions becoming more relevant, and with the growth of protectionism measures. This is made worse by systemic competition between economic powers, as well as a general shift in national economic policy making in many countries towards more regulation and intervention to protect their national markets. That is, there is a movement away from the belief in a *laissez faire* economic approach in many economies, with the rise of the defense of an increasingly interventionist role of the State. There was high growth in the implementation of industrial policies and measures to stimulate national industrial sectors. In the past decade, at least 110 countries have issued industrial policy statements or explicit policy frameworks for industrial development. Governments are using industrial policies aimed not only at economic development and job creation, but also at responding to a myriad of contemporary challenges such as regional development and poverty reduction, participating in the technological revolution, and achieving sustainability goals.

From the point of view of the dynamics of the capitalist economy, the productive fragmentation of the Global Value Chains (GVC) loses strength, because policies to strengthen local and national productive chains, with the objective of achieving greater national sovereignty, become predominant in world economies. In this scenario, industrial policies have become common among developing countries as well as in developed countries. Policies to boost productivity growth in sectors critical to industrial development – primarily manufacturing, but also ancillary services and supporting infrastructure – are widely considered indispensable for generating economic growth and jobs. On the one hand, developing countries are adopting industrial policies to face early and premature deindustrialization. On the other hand, developed countries are adopting measures to rebuild their manufacturing base and strengthen their strategic sectors in areas of advanced technology – using instruments such as incentives, subsidies, and public investment in advanced manufacturing to increase domestic production capacity.

Furthermore, industrial policies are increasingly targeting sectors considered strategic for job creation and long-term economic growth, as well as for reasons of national security. For example, the strategic importance of the pharmaceutical and medical equipment industries, with their dependence on cutting-edge research and innovation, may lead more and more countries in the global economy to implement policies to develop national productive capacity.

From the point of view of democracy, a point that calls attention is the rise of ultranationalist movements in the world, the advance of leaders, parties, and extreme right movements that have had impacts on democracies in several countries. The election of Donald Trump, in 2016, to the presidency of the United States, a polarizing figure with xenophobic and racist speech,

was undoubtedly a turning point in American democracy. In 2018, the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil was considered a threat to Brazilian democracy. In Western Europe, there is also the advance of far-right parties and leaders in political competition, as in France with Marine Le Pen, who in the 2017 presidential election reached second place in the first round; in Hungary with the election of Viktor Orbán as prime minister; and in Germany, where the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) became the third Bundestag force with the result of the September 2017 general elections.

These extreme right-wing leaders that emerge in the world, with conservative, nationalist, and anti-immigration views, present populist rhetoric to legitimize their styles of governance, promoting authoritarian values that threaten the democratic institutions of their respective countries. This scenario brings as a consequence the policy of exclusion, justifying restrictions on the entry of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and foreigners, intolerance, racism, homophobia, misogyny, and xenophobia.

In the case of Brazil, the 2022 election decreed the defeat of the far-right party of former President Jair Bolsonaro. The President-elect, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, is a democrat, with high popular approval and an agenda of public policies of social inclusion, defense of democracy, and a foreign policy of greater protagonism for Brazil as a great nation. If the Lula government (2023-2027) is successful in its administration, it is quite possible that democracy will be strengthened in Brazil, as well as an economic agenda of greater social inclusion and for Brazil to overcome the middle-income-trap.

### **Probable Future of Brazil in 2050**

When discussing the future of Brazil for the coming years, especially from a long-term point of view (until 2050), one of the great challenges is to strengthen the national productive structure, because this is fundamental for

Brazil to surpass the condition of a country middle-income and consolidate itself as a high-income nation.

In this sense, Brazil has built internal capabilities, a fundamental factor for technological catch-up, and at the same time the global economy is undergoing transformations that open up windows of opportunity, as mentioned in the introduction.

Lee and Malerba (2017) state that in view of the emergence of “windows of opportunity”, the response of companies, governments, and other actors in a country's innovation sectoral system to these new possibilities is essential for maximizing these opportunities. For this, some elements are essential, such as the construction of the learning process, level of capabilities, organization, and strategies. In addition, the responses of other actors and dimensions of the productive sectoral system in a specific country can play an important role in the technological catch-up, mainly considering the different types and levels of networks, educational system, universities, financial organizations, and public policies, among other dimensions.

With a new window of opportunity created by the new phase of the world economy, Cimoli, Dosi and Stigliz (p. 41-43, 2018) offer an important theoretical framework for reflection on new trends in industrial policies. For the authors, the historical experience of the reality of several countries shows a wide variety of national and sectoral combinations of the types of learning policies and industrial innovation essential for catching-up and overcoming the middle-income-trap. In this sense, five regularities are always present and relevant:

1st Regularity - Firstly, a regularity that has been maintained since the 19th century in Europe and the United States until contemporary times is the centrality of public institutions, such as universities, and public policies in the generation and establishment of new technological paradigms.

2nd Regularity - Incentives are often not enough. A crucial role of policies is to affect the capabilities of actors, especially with the new technological paradigms of Industry 4.0, but also in all catching-up cases where no reasonable incentive structure could be sufficient to motivate private agents to overcome major challenges. technological lags.

3rd Regularity - Market discipline is useful in that it eliminates low-performing companies and rewards high-performing companies within specific populations of companies. However, nothing guarantees that selective shocks will not wipe out entire populations, thus also eliminating any possibility of future learning.

4th Regularity - Policies, especially those aimed at catching-up, generally face the need to balance measures aimed at training - and at protecting the "learner apprentice industry" - with mechanisms that contribute to contain inertia and rent-seeking.

5th Regularity - historically, a successful catching-up effort in terms of per capita income and wages is always accompanied by catching-up in new and more dynamic technological paradigms, regardless of the initial patterns of comparative advantages, specialization, and signals generated by the market. This is because the structural need for policies that also affect the patterns of economic signals will increase according to the country's distance from the technological frontier. It is important to mention that endogenous market mechanisms tend to behave in a "virtuous" way for countries that are at the technological frontier, especially regarding the newest/most promising technologies.

These five regularities are present in Brazil and can be used to take advantage of the windows of opportunities that arise with Industry 4.0, the new governance in the global economy, and the search for sustainable growth and decarbonization. Brazil can use new industrial and innovation policy

instruments to catch up and overcome the middle-income-trap.

From the point of view of the internal capacities already built, I believe that it is essential and strategic that the Brazilian government directs investments to 4 productive sectors, which are fundamental for the resumption of Brazilian reindustrialization. These sectors must be strengthened with investment in innovation and the strengthening of national companies that already operate in these productive sectors:

a. Health Economic Complex - Promoting investment in the innovation process, increased production density, strengthening the links in the production chains that add the most value, and directing it towards making the supply structure compatible with the country's social demand, as well as promoting greater international insertion through exports.

b. Energy Sector - The electricity sector is one of the most important and strategic sectors of infrastructure in the Brazilian economy, due to its transversality, as it is present in all productive chains of goods and services. Renewable energy in Brazil grew by around 30%, which represents 43.5% of the country's entire energy matrix. This presence is even greater if we consider only electrical energy, which totals 81.7%, while the world rate is approximately 20%. To strengthen the potential of renewable energies and promote decarbonization, Brazil can increase its investments in solar energy and wind energy.

c. Civil Construction Complex - Civil construction is one of the sectors that most generates jobs in the market and has an impact on economic growth in Brazil. Furthermore, this sector is made up of large national companies with relevant international insertion. In this sense, some measures are essential to strengthen the sector:

d. Automotive Sector - Although Brazil does not have national automakers, in the auto parts sector Brazil has national companies. Furthermore, the

automotive industry accounts for 20% of the Brazilian industrial GDP, which shows the relevance of this sector. In this sense, it is essential that the Brazilian government promote greater articulation between the automakers' production and their demands for inputs for Brazilian companies in the auto parts sector.

## 2050 Preferred Future: Brazil's Perspective

### **Preferred Future of Great Power Competition**

For Brazil, the competition between China and the United States opens a window of opportunity, as Brazil is a country that historically has a pragmatic foreign policy, without conflicts with other nations. This pragmatic foreign policy helps Brazil to make commercial, technological, and financial alliances with China and the US. These alliances are fundamental for Brazil to attract direct foreign investment and strengthen its local productive capacities, as well as for Brazil to expand its exports to these two main countries of the global economy.

### **Preferred Future of International System**

From the point of view of the international system, a strategic fact for Brazil is the strengthening of the BRICS – BRICS is the acronym that refers to Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, known as a group of selected and gathered emerging countries by the stage of economic development. These countries have several qualities that put them in a position to be countries that can reach the high-income level of developed countries.

A relevant fact that can strengthen the BRICS is the inclusion of more countries as members of the BRICS. The Chinese interest in expanding the number of countries may be associated with a quest to stabilize the Central

Asia and Middle East region, whose location becomes relevant in relation to the land routes of China's expansion project in these regions. For example, Argentina's recent accession to the Belt and Road Initiative – in February 2022 – also demonstrates the closeness of the BRICS and the global infrastructure initiative.

From the expansion of BRICS members, several scenarios may arise and will impact China's position in the international structure and its projects of global scope, which may signal a greater Chinese influence in international institutions, increasing its legitimacy and its leadership in dynamics. While the expansion of the BRICS may strengthen the possibility of a new international order based on the countries of the Global South, it may also lead to a context of multipolarity, with the establishment of a polycentric order, in which the BRICS and its members act in ways that rival Western-led structures, particularly the US.

### **Preferred Future of Global Governance, Democracy, and Capitalism**

A governance structure in which countries adopt industrial and innovation policies to strengthen their national and local production chains, and at the same time countries articulate partnerships with countries considered relevant political and commercial partners, opens windows of opportunity for Brazil to make alliances with several countries and thus implement policies to strengthen their national productive structure. Moreover, it will be fundamental for Brazil to strengthen its political articulations with developed countries to strengthen its democracy, especially in the face of threats from extreme right-wing and anti-democratic movements.

### **Preferred Future of Brazil in 2050**

Three major and desirable challenges for Brazil by 2050: i) promote a reindustrialization process; ii) promote sustainable development; iii) and reduce social inequalities. These three challenges are essential for Brazil to catch up and overcome its status as a Middle-income-trap country.

From the point of view of reindustrialization, Brazil needs to have internal productive structures more concentrated in sectors with a higher level of technological complexity. Brazil's reindustrialization process will be fundamental for the country to have a place in international trade in which products with greater technological complexity have greater relevance in its trade balance.

This reindustrialization process must be associated with a dynamic of sustainability, with renewable energies and decarbonization leading the process of resumption of the most technologically complex industry in Brazil.

Furthermore, reindustrialization must also be associated with social policies that reduce social inequality. In fact, the “mission” of reindustrialization has spillover effects, as a more technology-intensive and diversified productive structure produces more technologically sophisticated products, with high added value and that contribute to the increase in the country's level of education and income. These more technologically complex sectors generate more qualified jobs and contribute to Brazil having a more competitive international insertion, supported by products with greater technological complexity.

## Brazil's Visions and Strategies for Preferred Future in 2050

The great challenge for Brazil is to overcome the condition of the middle-income-trap and thus consolidate itself as a major world economic power. Brazil has one of the largest local markets in the world and great energy potential, in addition to being the most strategic country in South America. Therefore, for the future until 2050, it is essential that Brazil establishes a great mission: to strengthen its national industry, with a strong innovation potential to dominate productive sectors related to Industry 4.0; reduce social inequalities and promote the energy transition to become a leading country in sustainable energy sources.

## 11. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Turkish Perspective

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### Introduction

In 1992, our planet had a unipolar world order where the US was the only superpower left. Fukuyama's "End of History" argument suggested that humanity had reached the "end of history" and Western liberal democracy would be the final form of government.<sup>119)</sup> In fact, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the number of democracies in the world significantly increased.<sup>120)</sup> The collapse of Soviet Union has contributed to the decline in the number of left-wing militant groups as well as overall number of civil wars in the world. Even NATO was seen as irrelevant<sup>121)</sup> as Soviet Union no longer existed.

While the new world order immediately after Cold War apparently welcomed a more peaceful world, it didn't necessarily prevent the emergence of new threats. Religious militancy became a growing threat to the extent that

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119) Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History and the Last Man (New York, 1992)." *Fukuyama's original article in The National Interest appeared the summer of (1989).*

120) Polity Project, Center for Systemic Peace, <https://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>

121) North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 03 June 2022,  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified\\_139339.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_139339.htm)

a religious terror group targeted a superpower on 9/11 which led to the highest number of casualties in the history of terrorism in one attack. A superpower later invaded a foreign country in 2003. A global financial crisis took place a few years later, which led to a political crisis in Europe. While the developed world was striving to recover from the 2008 crisis, Russia invaded certain regions of Georgia. Then, a protest wave started in Tunisia and spread to other Middle Eastern and North African countries, which was called Arab Spring. While it was initially called “Spring”, protesters in some Arab countries, such as in Syria, couldn’t remove their autocrats, which led to protracted civil war. The civil war in Syria was followed by a huge refugee outflow that affected nearby countries and even Europe. The refugee inflow into Europe led to another crisis in the region along with the Eurozone crisis. Furthermore, this crisis has triggered nationalism in the developed and developing worlds, and that led to the rise of populist leaders in the Western hemisphere, such as in Italy, Hungary, Brazil, and the US. Not to mention the role of nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiments on Britons’ decision to leave the EU. In the meantime, China continued its economic upheaval and emerged as the primary challenger to the US-led world order. Within the last decade, China’s quest towards challenging the US hegemony became pronounced to the extent that many argued the two have entered the *Thucydides’ Trap*<sup>122)</sup> and were destined to fight. Towards the end of 2010s, it became almost mainstream that the post-Cold war unipolar world order was no more.

Beyond such political turmoil, the world was also shaken by (and is still facing) a biological disaster (i.e., COVID-19), which has led to deaths of millions of people and has come with a huge economic toll. Governments

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122) Among many such arguments, Graham Allison’s 2017 book “Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap?” and several earlier articles is the most well-known.

around the world had to issue aid packages including direct cash payments to people. Beyond its health consequences, COVID also has given rise to two other global issues: the supply chain problem and rise of prices. But this was not enough. The negotiations between the US and Russia over the eastern Ukraine didn't conclude with an agreement, and Putin declared what he calls "special operation," which turned out to be a full-blown war against Ukraine. Europe and the US have imposed massive sanctions on Russia. Russia has played its energy card, and energy prices have risen. The war continues after almost 10 months, and it remains to be seen when it will end.

The gloomy picture described above suggests that while we expected that the end of the Cold War will be the harbinger of more peaceful and democratic world, we ended up with a world where major democracies are declining due to populists and global economic stability is being shaken by exogenous shocks, such as COVID and a major war in Europe that is declared by an autocrat who desires to conquer territories of another country. The unhappy end of the previous 30-year period (1992-2022) raises a question that the authors will focus on in this report: How will the world order look like three decades from now? What should we expect to see in different regions of the world during the next 30-year period until 2050 or early 2050s? The previous thirty-year period started with welcoming greater peace and democratization in the world but ended up with a very volatile world from economic, social, and political standpoints. The current thirty-year period started with one interstate war and one global pandemic. So, should we superstitiously believe that this thirty-year period will end up ending with more peaceful world? It absolutely does not necessarily so. To understand how the world order will change until 2050s, we argue that one should focus on analyzing the existing global threats with long-term implications for future world order. More specifically, we will analyze the effect of two threats that

will have repercussions on future world order: climate change and great power competition. Although many other threats could also shape future world order, these two threats and their repercussions for the world order will be very impactful in terms of economic, political, and social sense over the next three decades as we will discuss these impacts in the next sections of this paper. We will also briefly touch upon how a middle/regional power like Turkey might fare in wake of these two broad trends.

## Climate Change and Future World Order

Climate change will be one of the major threats to the stability of international order as it has a wide range of security implications. While climate change will be impactful around the world, its impact will not be expected to distribute evenly around the globe<sup>123)</sup>. Some parts of the world could face increases in the frequency and intensity of heavy rains, but other parts of the world will experience more severe and longer dry conditions. Just as climate-related impacts will not be distributed evenly, its social, economic, and political impacts will vary by region. MIT scientists forecast that the North China Plain, where 400 million people are living, will be uninhabitable within a few decades, due to the combination of extreme heat and humidity<sup>124)</sup>. Food insecurity caused by climate change will be a major concern, especially in Africa. Heat stress, droughts, and flooding events may lead to reductions in crop yields and livestock productivity.<sup>125)</sup> In some African

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123) Climate Change: Regional Impacts, (n.d.), Center for Science Education, <https://scied.ucar.edu/learning-zone/climate-change-impacts/regional#:~:text=Changes%20in%20Earth's%20climate%20have,impacts%20on%20people%20and%20ecosystems.>

124) Kang, Suchul, and Elfatih AB Eltahir. "North China Plain threatened by deadly heatwaves due to climate change and irrigation." *Nature communications* 9, no. 1 (2018): 1-9. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-05252-y>

125) International Climate Impacts, United States Environmental Protection Agency, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/international-climate-impacts\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/international-climate-impacts_.html)

countries, for example, wheat yields could decline by as much as 35% by 2050<sup>126</sup>). Coastal settlements are especially susceptible to climate change impacts, such as sea level rise. Both developing and developed countries, such as Bangladesh, the Netherlands, and Guyana, are vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise<sup>127</sup>). Drought caused by extreme heat will have social consequences. Drought-related psychological anxiety increased in drought-declared regions of Australia especially for people facing loss of livelihood<sup>128</sup>). Research shows that long-term drought has been linked to increased incidence of suicide among male farmers in Australia.<sup>129</sup>)

These dramatic consequences described above will also have repercussions for the future world order. To understand how the consequences of climate change would affect the future of international politics, we may need to look at in what ways climate change would shape domestic and international reactions of major powers. The US's National Climate Assessment in 2018 predicted that the United States will have to deal with diverse forms of consequences of climate change by 2050, such as drought, proliferation of wildfires, coastal storm surges, more intense hurricanes, damaged infrastructure, and declining harvests.<sup>130</sup>) It is also predicted that some of these adverse consequences will cut US agricultural production to the level of 1980s. The aging crisis in the US will compound the adverse effects of climate change. The Congressional Budget Office in the US predicts that federal

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126) IPCC (2014). Niang, I., O.C. Ruppel, M.A. Abdrabo, A. Essel, C. Lennard, J. Padgham, and P. Urquhart (2014). Africa. In: *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*

127) International Climate Impacts, United States Environmental Protection Agency, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/international-climate-impacts\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/international-climate-impacts_.html)

128) International Climate Impacts, United States Environmental Protection Agency, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/international-climate-impacts\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/international-climate-impacts_.html)

129) USGCRP (2016). *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment*. Crimmins, A., J. Balbus, J.L. Gamble, C.B. Beard, J.E. Bell, D. Dodgen, R.J. Eisen, N. Fann, M.D. Hawkins, S.C. Herring, L. Jantarasami, D.M. Mills, S. Saha, M.C. Sarofim, J. Trtanj, and L. Ziska, Eds. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, 312 pp.

130) McCoy, Alfred. "How Will the World Order Change in the Next Century", November 15, 2021. <https://lithub.com/how-will-the-world-order-change-in-the-next-century/>

spending (e.g., social security, Medicare, Medicaid) for people who are 65 or older will increase from 20 percent in 2019 to 50 percent in 2049, although the labor force and the economy will grow at a much slower rate than the previous decades.<sup>131)</sup> Such a dramatic increase in domestic spending is expected to leave less budget for overseas military bases of the country, which might reduce the US global presence. In fact, the US commitment to Middle East may also decline as it will be less reliant on oil and focus more on renewable energy resources.

The US will not be the only country whose global influence may diminish due to the adverse consequences of climate change. Besides the effects of climate change on European agriculture, energy consumption, and health, Europe will also face another major issue that will have social, economic, and political repercussions, which is what John Kerry calls “climate refugees”.<sup>132)</sup> Desertification, heat waves, lack of water, and tribal fighting over basic resources will increase human mobility into urban centers. Syrians, Afghans, and Africans from Sahel are flooding into Europe. Given that states in the MENA region does not have enough resources to tackle the climate crisis, the influx of climate refugees will remain an issue for the continent, along with existing Syrian and Ukrainian refugee issues.

These consequences of climate change on the major players of world politics may lead one to think that the rise of China will converge on the decline of Western major powers, thereby making China emerge as the new superpower of the upcoming decades. However, climate change does not recognize borders, and its adverse effects spread to all countries. Elisa Chih-Yin Lai from the Chinese Environment Forum notes decrease in water

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131) McCoy, Alfred. “How Will the World Order Change in the Next Century”, November 15, 2021.  
<https://lithub.com/how-will-the-world-order-change-in-the-next-century/>

132) How Climate Change is Behind the Surge of Migrants to Europe, Aryn Baker, September 7, 2015.  
<https://time.com/4024210/climate-change-migrants/>

volume in major rivers, rising sea levels, increase in natural disasters are just some of the impacts of climate change that will hit China.<sup>133)</sup> Beyond these expected consequences, Yuan Ye also adds that food security will be impacted negatively as a warming climate will affect the yields of wheat, maize, rice, and fish<sup>134)</sup>. These consequences will have social implications as they overwhelm China's underdeveloped social safety net programs,<sup>135)</sup> thereby more and more Chinese families will be less protected by the government against the adverse consequences of climate change.

The fact that the major players in world politics will have to deal with their own domestic issues that will be caused by the consequences of climate change indicates that climate change-related crises will induce them to focus more on domestic crises to deal with negative externalities of climate change. In addition, these externalities might also induce major powers as well as other states to seek cooperation, despite their differences in other policy issues, to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change because climate change would potentially threaten the stability of international economic and political order. U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change John Kerry said, "obviously we have serious differences with China," citing Beijing's theft of intellectual property and aggression in the South China Sea as examples, but that "those issues will never be traded for anything that has to do with climate. That's not going to happen."<sup>136)</sup>

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133) Climate Change Impacts on China's Environment: Biophysical Impacts, Elisa Chih-Yin Lai, February 2009, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/climate-change-impacts-chinas-environment-biophysical-impacts>

134) IPCC Warns China Will Be Hit Hard by Climate Change, Yuan Ye, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1009809/ipcc-warns-china-will-be-hit-hard-by-climate-change#:~:text=Without%20adaptation%2C%20China%20will%20suffer,maize%2C%20rice%2C%20and%20fish>

135) China: The Impact of Climate Change to 2030, National Intelligence Council, A Commissioned Research Report, April 2009 [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/climate2030\\_china.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/climate2030_china.pdf)

136) Climate Change, Grand Strategy, and International Order, Jeff Colgan, July 23, 2021 <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/climate-change-grand-strategy-and-international-order>

Climate change-induced effect on the potential decrease in major powers' influence in world politics may also help regional powers to strengthen their grip on their regions. For example, Israel has recently recovered its strained relations with Arab countries through Abraham Accords, and that will help the country to economically benefit from these recovering relations. In addition, Israel is and will keep benefitting from natural gas exports, thanks to emerging gas reserves in Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey has also raised its profile as a middle/regional power utilizing several crises and conflicts in its region to re-arrange its relations with the U.S.,<sup>137)</sup> the EU,<sup>138)</sup> and Russia.<sup>139)</sup>

## Great Power Competition over Technology

Although climate change may cause a decline in major powers' influence and even give rise to collaboration between them, the great power competition will continue, especially between the US and China. Two consecutive administrations in the US have acted to undercut the rise of China and prevent the possibility China will surpass the US economically in the very near future. While the Trump administration imposed significant amounts of tariffs on Chinese exports to the US, the Biden administration has recently targeted China's semi-conductor manufacturing industry by prohibiting support to advanced semi-conductor fabs in China from the US people. Biden's move aims to undermine China's rise in technology realms and re-establish the US's dominance on critical technology. We argue that the US will engage in a systematic campaign that incorporates policies like

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137) Lenore Martin (2022) Constructing a realistic explanation of Turkish - US relations, *Turkish Studies*, 23:5, 765-783, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2022.2077102

138) Oya Dursun-Özkanca (2022) An examination of the underlying dynamics of Turkey-European Union relations through the lenses of international relations theory, *Turkish Studies*, 23:5, 743-764, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2022.2060083

139) Paul Kubicek (2022) Structural dynamics, pragmatism, and shared grievances: explaining Russian-Turkish relations, *Turkish Studies*, 23:5, 784-801, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2022.2060637

Biden and Trump administrations over the next three decades to make sure that the US will have as “large lead”<sup>140)</sup> as possible over cutting-edge technology, such as on semi-conductors and artificial intelligence.

In addition to exerting pressure on China to prevent its rise to achieve the sole superpower status, we also argue that the US will keep taking actions to constrain Russia’s aggressive foreign policy as it leads an aggressive sanction campaign against Russia during the Ukraine war. We contend that these sanctions, as Vladimir Putin has recognized, will have adverse consequences on the Russian economy in the long-term. In addition, Russia will face greater domestic instabilities due to unexpected Ukrainian resistance and retreats during the war. Seven Russian lawmakers demanded parliament’s lower chamber, the State Duma, charge President Vladimir Putin with treason due to his decisions during the war in Ukraine that led to a series of failures.<sup>141)</sup> It remains to be seen when the war in Ukraine will end as both sides do not show much willingness to come to the negotiation table. The West doesn’t seem to be intimidated by Russian threats about cutting gas flow as the US is persistent in sending large amounts of military aid and leading a massive sanction campaign. With these in mind, Russia will keep being weakened economically and militarily until the end of the war, and even after the war, it will have to deal with long-term consequences of the war. Not to mention Russia will be overwhelmed with dealing with the adverse consequences of climate change. Thus, we expect that Russia will be lagging behind the US and China in great power competition over the next three decades.

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140) Remarks by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan at the Special Competitive Studies Project Global Emerging Technologies Summit, White House Briefings, September 16, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/09/16/remarks-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-at-the-special-competitive-studies-project-global-emerging-technologies-summit/>

141) Russian Lawmakers Who Demanded Putin Be Charged With Treason Summoned By Police, Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, September 9, 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-putin-treason-lawmakers/32025878.html>

Based on the above discussion, we think the next three decades will be defined by US-China great power competition primarily over who will keep the technological edge and policies to counter climate change. Somewhat weakened Russia may provide China with greater leverage to consolidate its leadership of the nascent challenge to the US-led status quo. If Russia faces greater problems and struggles to keep its territorial integrity intact, China may also exert greater influence over Russia and may tap into some of Russia's natural resources. On the other hand, the U.S. might try to counterbalance China with India, another rising Asian power that is also the largest democracy in the region and the world. India potentially can keep up with China in terms of demographic capacity thanks to its rapidly growing population. While we do think US-China strategic rivalry will constitute the defining characteristic of the next three decades these two powers are also likely to remain economically interdependent. Thus, it remains to be seen if the two great powers will manage to escape the *Thucydides' Trap* or whether strategic interests will transcend their interdependence.

### 2050 From Turkey's Perspective: An imagined vision meets reality

Turkey has gained a regional power and even an emerging power status in international politics within roughly the last three decades thanks to its unique geostrategic advantages, its widely accepted role as a bridge between the East and West, strategic use of alliance relations, and reliance on more activist foreign policy. However, Turkish foreign policy has displayed three major and somewhat inter-related trends within the last decade: (1) traditional Westernism undertones were replaced with Islamism and neo-Ottomanism,<sup>142)</sup> which has grown to be more apparent over time, (2)

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142) M. Hakan Yavuz (2022). The motives behind the AKP's foreign policy: neo-Ottomanism and strategic autonomy, *Turkish Studies*, 23:5, 659-680, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2022.2100700

multilateralism,<sup>143)</sup> and (3) aggressive almost revisionist approach.<sup>144)</sup> Judging by these shifts in Turkish foreign policy and its articulated vision for the future of global politics through explicit narrative of its political leaders, it is fair to argue that Turkey is not happy with how the current global governance and would like to see a much different world order in 2050, with a preferred one in which it plays greater roles. This vision could be summarized by Erdogan's maxim "the World is bigger than five," which alludes to a pronounced unfairness of major power leverage at the UN Security Council.

On the other hand, it should be immediately noted that Turkey lacks both the material and moral power to assert its vision for a new world order. Material reasons simply include its continuously underperforming economy, dependence on external energy resources, and unimpressive performance in military and technological advances. Turkey's non-material or moral vulnerabilities include its growing authoritarianism, related grievances of domestic societal groups, and discontent by Turkey's traditional Western allies (most notably the U.S.) from Turkey's democratic decline and aggressive foreign policy. While it should be admitted that Turkey has raised its status as a regional power and its outlook as a key player in foreign policy bargaining, in part due to its diplomatic efforts, aggressive foreign policy entanglement, and bargaining behavior (i.e., exploiting the refugee crisis) vis-à-vis its allies and adversaries, there hardly more room for improvement of its profile towards its aspired global power status due to the previously stated material and moral shortcomings.

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143) Falk, Richard, and Tom Farer (2013). "Turkey's New Multilateralism: A Positive Diplomacy for the Twenty-First Century." *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 19, no. 3 353-376.

144) Paul Kubicek (2022). Contrasting theoretical approaches to Turkish foreign policy, *Turkish Studies*, 23:5, 645-658, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2022.2107340

## Conclusion

All in all, it is fair to say the world looks in disarray today. Considering the re-emergence of great power competition, the looming global economic crisis, and further strains induced on our planet by ongoing supply chain issues (thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic) and the forthcoming climate catastrophe, one can conclude that the next 30 years until the 2050s are likely to only increase this global *disorder*. As we have discussed, we expect climate change and great power technological competition to constitute the defining trends of the future world order (or lack thereof). The Russo-Ukrainian War and its anticipated ramifications on Russia's economy are likely to render Russia weaker as a global power. The great power competition between the U.S. and China is likely to continue and dominate world affairs within the next three decades. Middle and regional powers (as in the Turkish case that we included) are likely poised to taste a dose of *Realpolitik* that will offset their ambitions.

## 12. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Central Asian Perspective

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### Introduction

The interdependence and complementarity of the world have become key indicators of global politics and economic development. However, there is an imbalance in international relations, the center of which is the crisis of liberal democracy, global governance, rivalry, and competition of the states – especially China and the United States, the struggle for energy resources, the processes of deglobalization/re-globalization, the COVID-19 pandemic, the decline in the level of spiritual and moral values, which all leads to national and international shocks, including world economic recession. Thus, the international system over time and over space is in the process of changing.

We have seen the fragmentation of the world into all sorts of new political and economic blocs, unions, and associations. The world is changing significantly under the influence of information technology and artificial intelligence development. The future is becoming increasingly uncertain, filled with all sorts of risks and threats. These are complicated spatial and temporal connections that unite and separate at the same time. In fact, American businessman and founder of Microsoft Corporation, Bill Gates, has forecast the likelihood of an economic downturn or a new shake-up for the future world.<sup>145)</sup> The events of the last six months of 2022 demonstrate that a

new tectonic shift is taking place in world politics and economics, which must be reckoned with new ways of cooperation.

The different ideological attitudes in China and the United States, and the different geo-strategic and geo-economic paths have led to the fact that these two countries play the role they are assigned today: the role of the competing powers on which the future of the world, the future world order, the future of global governance, etc. depend on. This leads to the question, what kind of world order do we need? What kind of world are we looking for? Is it multipolar, new multipolar, unipolar, or maybe a new bipolar? And what if this shake-up of a new tectonic shift gives the opportunity for the development of a whole range of new elements that can lead to a new balance of forces, to a fair balance of forces?

## A probable Future 2050: The Central Asian Perspective

### A probable Future of Great Power Rivalry

The geopolitical approach of Friedrich Ratzel, a German geographer, ethnologist, and one of the founders of geopolitics, elaborates on the concepts of "political geography"<sup>146)</sup> in relation to the "expansion of living space." Based on this approach, for China, it can be described as the "expansion of economic space", whereas for the United States in the context of NATO expansion, it is the "expansion of military space." However, these different geostrategic and geo-economic paths have the same goal. The rivalry between China and the United States continues and acquires new

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145) Huddleston Tom Jr. Bill Gates sees a 'pretty strong argument' for a global economic slowdown hitting this year - here's why. May 10 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/10/bill-gates-sees-a-strong-argument-for-a-global-economic-slow-down.html?&qsearchterm=Bill%20Gates>

146) Ratzel F. Politische Geographie oder Geschichte der Staaten, des Verkehrs und des Krieges München, 1897, 159 S.

features. China for the United States has turned from a trade competitor into an adversary in all areas including political, strategic, and military grounds. Hence, in other words, China is a strategic competitor.

The discourse of the American authorities and their allies towards China has not changed: “We see the whole global balance of power is shifting because of the rise of China,” Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO, told reporters at a press conference in Brussels, 2019.<sup>147)</sup> Later on June 14, 2022, in an interview with the Athens and Macedonian News Agency, Jens Stoltenberg stressed that “Today, China's growing influence is reshaping the world, with direct consequences for our security and democracies.” This kind of confrontational stand was also amplified when the rest of the world was put in a position to choose between China and the United States. For example, during the international forum Globsec – 2022, the Indian Foreign Minister, S. Jaishankar, was asked which side India would support; the United States or China.<sup>148)</sup>

To elaborate on how the rivalry between the two countries has heightened, we analyzed the economic fundamentals from the OECD as of June 2022, and in some cases from the IMF, Yearbook 2022: World Energy and Climate Data (Yearbook). For some indicators, data are missing or data from other years are provided.<sup>149)</sup>

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147) Jie Xi. NATO's New Focus Reflects China's Rise. October 22, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/a/nato-s-new-focus-reflects-china-s-rise-/6282496.html> (*Lin Yang contributed to this report*).

148) Glava MID Indii rezko otvetil na vopros ob Ukraine [The Indian Foreign Minister sharply answered the question about Ukraine]. June 3, 2022. <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2022/06/03/glava-mid-indii-rezko-otvetil-na-vopros-ob-ukraine>

149) Data OECD. 14 July 2022. <https://data.oecd.org/china-people-s-republic-of.htm>.  
<https://data.oecd.org/united-states.htm>; IMF Data. <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/CHN>,  
<https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/USA>

Table 12-1. Economic indicators of China and the USA

Indicators	China	USA
Forecasting Growth	4.9% / OECD and IMF	2.3% / IMF
Industrial-production growth	0.4 %	2022: April - 1.3 % May - 0.1 %
Inflation	2.1 %	2.5 % - 2022 1.2 % - 2023
CO2 emissions	7.1 million tons / OECD 10.4 million tons Yearbook	4.632 million tons / Yearbook
Health expenditure per capita	2019 - 528 \$	2019 - 10855.5 \$ 2021 - 12318.1 \$
Average life expectancy	78 years	76.6 years

As it is shown in the table, there is a noticeable decline in the economic growth rates of the two countries. As of June, the IMF predicts the growth of the US economy by 2.3%, and in July 12%, under an optimistic scenario that the growth will be 1.7%, and with a pessimistic one, it will be 0.8%. These data are markers of the economic recession in the country.

The head of the IMF, K. Georgieva spoke about the likelihood of a recession: "We expected the US economy to slow. We realize that the path to avoiding a recession in the US is narrowing." Just a few months ago, the Bloomberg news agency's "Economy" section's editor-in-chief, S. Kennedy assessed a very high level of the risk of the US recession against 0%.

Several other experts also consider the possibility of a recession in the United States, while the Chinese economy is on the rise by 4.9%, as well as in developing countries, whose economies are characterized by faster growth. It bears reminding that from 2000-2012, China's GDP growth was 7-10% per year. As part of the One Belt - One Road project, China is drawing more and

more states from different continents into its orbit. Factors such as the death penalty for corruption and the lack of opposition are becoming strengths of the Chinese political and economic system.

The inflation rate is a marker of the economic development of any country. The increase in inflation is due to numerous money issues, primarily in the United States, the growth of unsecured debts of the G7 countries, the growth of anti-globalization sentiments, etc. The inflation rate, as shown in the table, differs by 0.4 with the smallest Chinese value, although the US-China trade war could lead to more inflation in both countries. Nevertheless, the White House declared that inflation is the main threat to social stability and pushed the Federal Reserve to raise the key rate, sell off Treasury and mortgage securities, and shrink the money supply.

On June 17, 2022, Newsweek published the results of another public opinion poll in the United States. The survey was conducted as part of an assessment of the economic optimism index, which showed that 53% of Americans believe that their economy has already entered a recession, another 25% of respondents found it difficult to assess, and only 20% of respondents expressed the opinion that there is no recession in the country. Americans are increasingly concerned about the inability of President Biden to govern the country. According to the poll, only 45% of Democrats gave a good assessment of President Biden.<sup>150)</sup> The presidential elections in the United States in 2024 will be difficult, but the scenario is not too different in China as well. In the fall of 2022, China showed a “Shaky Victory” of Xi Jinping.<sup>151)</sup> We are witnessing a crisis of the political elites of two big power.

Taiwan is another factor in the aggravation of US-China relations. If China

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150) Katasonov V. Ekonomicheskiy krizis v SSHA uzhe nachalsya [Katasonov V. The economic crisis in the USA has already begun]. 27.06.2022. <https://katehon.com/ru/article/ekonomicheskiy-krizis-v-ssha-uzhe-nachalsya>

151) Payette A. Chine: Xi Jinping proche d'une "victoire boiteuse" au XXème Congrès du Parti ? *Asialyst*, 2022, 13 Juillet.

decides to fully control the island where TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company) the largest semiconductor manufacturing company and factories to produce microprocessors, microchips, microcircuits, and many others are located, America's economic and financial superiority will end. For example, TSMC's revenue for the first quarter of 2022 was NT\$534.14 billion (\$18.16 billion), up 43.5% year-over-year.<sup>152)</sup>

Today, China is actively developing "third-generation" chips and attempting to acquire foreign semiconductor technology to reduce its dependence on imports. By extension, the United States is also building up its semiconductor factories to not be dependent on China.

The confrontation continues in the military sphere. China called on NATO to abandon the so-called "Cold War mentality," according to NATO analysts, this Asian nation creates systemic security challenges.

There is pressure on some countries from the United States. For example, at the end of June during the 14th BRICS Summit (23-24.06.2022) on the topic of "Building high-quality partnerships between the BRICS countries, creating a new era of global development." It was to determine the future orientation to form a comprehensive, practical, and high-quality partnership for joint overcoming risks and challenges. It is also worthy of note for two significant points, first, the US is not a BRICS member but 3 BRICS members such as Brazil, India, and South Africa have strategic partnership relations with the US.<sup>153)</sup> These countries were invited to the G7 / Group of Seven summits in Germany (26-06.2022), thus pursuing a split policy towards the BRICS. It is widely known that the BRICS Forum makes up about 42% of the world's

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152) Taiwan Semiconductor poluchil rekordnyuyu chistuyu pribyl' vo 2-m kvartale blagodarya rostu yručki [Taiwan Semiconductor received a record net profit in the second quarter due to revenue growth]. July 14, 2022. <http://www.finmarket.ru/database/news/5760561>

153) Chushkin V. BRIKS-2022: radikal'naya smena mirovogo landshafta [Chushkin V. BRICS-2022: a radical change in the world landscape]. June 26, 2022. <https://centrasia.org/newsA.php?st=1656228120>

population and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the world's GDP, standing up to Western summits such as the G7. The second important point is the frequent use of the term "comprehensive partnership", which has become characteristic of regional associations and agreements, and, in our opinion, it is becoming a counterbalance to globalization.

The contradictions between China and the United States affect the international interactions of these countries with the rest of the world. Thus, relations between China and the EU deteriorated in 2017, although China is an important import and export market for the EU. To continue effective cooperation, China turned to the EU countries with a proposal to work in the "27+1" format instead of "16+1" (as it was before). Therefore, China is trying to expand the influence of China in Central and Eastern Europe, which began to weaken due to the special operation in Ukraine. Serbian President A. Vučić considers China as the only country capable of helping the Serbs.

China does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries but is ready to cooperate and contribute to the sustainability and stability of different states, considering the specifics of each state, based on the Confucian worldview. On the contrary, the United States believes that by intervening in the internal affairs of different states, they contribute to the processes of democratization, without considering their local situation and norms, putting pressure on them and methods, and forgetting about the crisis of liberal democracy in general.

Currently, there is a decline in the role of the dollar as a global currency. Russia's refusal to sell resources in dollars and euros and the transition to settlements in trade with China in national currencies simultaneously contribute to the reduction of the role of the dollar as a world reserve currency, while leading to the rise of the yuan in this capacity.

A well-known American financier and founder of the largest hedge fund

Bridgewater Associates, R. Dalio believes that China has all factors to become a world leader. His new book, *Principles for Changing the World Order*, analyzes the China-US relationship. And the author comes to the point that there will be a conflict that will put an end to US imperial domination.<sup>154)</sup> The reasons for this conflict are the modification of the PRC-US trade war into another real one.

If Beijing joins Taiwan, well known for its TSMC in the production of semiconductors, processors, and other chips, China will gain advantages in terms of technology to be the first economics in the world.

From G2 to G1: The confrontation and competition between China and the United States will be continued. Both the US and China are experiencing difficult stages of crises. Dialogues will take place in the short and long term, but they will not lead to G1.

### **Probable Future of the International System**

China-US competition is turning the international geopolitical environment into a weak structure. In the context of the geopolitical and economic struggle between the US and China, the general character of the international system and regions are changing.

Liberalism, theorized in the 1930s by W. Lippmann,<sup>155)</sup> which grew into neoliberalism, and it is positioned as a philosophy of social justice and freedom. Neoliberal ideology promotes market logic and competition between people, destroying all aspects of humanity, that is, the decline and even loss of spiritual values inherent in societies and, very importantly, political elites. Neoliberal ideology leads to economic and social crises. When

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154) Dalio R. *Principles for Dealing with the Changing World Order: Why Nations Succeed and Fail*, Avid Reader Press / Simon & Schuster, 2021, P. 79.

155) Lippmann W. *The Good Society*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1937.

neoliberal freedom is mixed with competition, societies begin to erode.<sup>156)</sup>

Disagreements in the UN Security Council (May 2022) according to new US sanctions against the DPRK in connection with its testing of ICBMs in 2022, when Moscow and Beijing vetoed the sanctions draft resolution, are becoming a factor in the formation of a new world order, the features of which will be a decrease in significance and opportunities for the UN as a world arbiter, and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons holders<sup>157)</sup>.

Internal political events in the United States (growth of mistrust towards the president, the revival of racism as a new field of politics, protest demonstrations, shootings in schools, etc.) have weakened the international leadership of the United States. Conflict is increasingly acquiring ethnic and religious features, conflicts go beyond the borders of the state, which represents a different level of conflict, which is very dangerous. China's internal political actions in the form of fighting corruption, developing a "non-war military scheme" (The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue)<sup>158)</sup>, summertime security campaigns and strengthening "security policy measures" and "social control", internal party problems, regime, suppressing conflicts of various kinds, does not find many supporters in the world but economic expansion is better than military expansion.

The debate about regime change in various countries and the new world order has revived. Some believe that a new world order is being created under the leadership of China. Others argue for the end of American leadership. Then it is also a unipolar world but a new unipolar world. Still, others say that

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156) Teppaz M. *Le néolibéralisme est un totalitarisme. L'impasse politique de la mondialisation*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 2021, 240 p.

157) Kitay raskritikoval rezolyutsiyu SSHA v Sovbeze OON po sanktsiyam protiv KNDR [China criticized the US resolution in the UN Security Council on sanctions against the DPRK]. May 26, 2022. <https://iz.ru/1340162/2022-05-26/kitai-raskritikoval-rezolyutsiiu-ssha-v-sovbeze-oon-po-sanktsiiam-protiv-kndr>

158) White Paper--The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue. August 2, 2022. <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/celt/eng/zt/zgtw/t125229.htm>

it will neither be a new Chinese world nor a new rise of America. Then, it is a bipolar world but a new bipolar world, different from the bipolar world of the 20th century.

Fourth, there is also the view that both powers will wear out and weaken in the race they have entered, and this situation will create many opportunities for the emergence of a more balanced world order. China-US competition is a new Cold War that can be presented in various forms. It is possible that a new cold war may take a place between other states and become a trigger for new conflicts. Coexistence will continue in the context of developed, developing, and least developed countries.

Now the world system is a new bipolar, unbalanced one. The ongoing China-US competition must give way to cooperation of the two big powers based on issues of effective economic development and security. China and the United States should involve developed, least developed countries and developing countries in the orbit of their cooperation. First, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the two great Powers should help minimize conflicts of various kinds.

### **Future Possible Scenarios of Global Governance**

Global governance, democracy, and capitalism are interconnected and interdependent. Nowadays they are becoming blurry and unstable concepts. Global governance, defined as the consolidation of international cooperation involving non-state actors/civil society and representing a multi-level system, acts to achieve common goals. Today, it is faced with big problems, including China-US rivalry, the struggle for energy resources, which has escalated due to anti-Russian sanctions, the climate crisis, the possibility of new pandemics, and demographic problems – when the population of the earth, according to UN estimates, by November 15, 2022, reached 8 billion

people,<sup>159</sup>) it may lead to the impoverishment of the population, uncontrolled migration, rising unemployment, an increase in the number of conflicts and others. Hence, they all worsen the problems of energy, food, environment, water, information, cyber security, etc.

The withdrawal of the United States from several international agreements and international organizations will further diversify the deepening global problems of governance. China contrarily is interested in creating new alternative mechanisms for global governance, emphasizing the need for collective opposition to the hegemony of the West and, above all, the United States.

The collapse in gas and oil supplies for Western Europe has escalated the problem of energy security. The use of coal by some EU countries will lead to an increase in carbon dioxide emissions, i.e., intensification of the climate crisis, and thus non-implementation of the Paris agreement about climate change. In these cases, politics is stronger than the market. This policy leads to a weakening of the dollar's power when the issue of settlements in national currencies is discussed with increasing frequency. China and Saudi Arabia are negotiating to pay for a part of the oil in yuan. China and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are thinking about creating an independent international monetary and financial system. Some countries in Asia and Africa do not stand aside. Argentina and Brazil are developing mechanisms for the implementation of mutual settlements in the trade of the two states using national currencies.

This has created various new political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian blocs, for example, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP), AfCFTA (The African Continental Free Trade Area), G5

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159) Naseleniye planety skoro vyrastet do 8 milliardov – i chto togda? [The world's population will soon grow to 8 billion – and what then?]. July 07, 2022. <https://www.un.org/ru/184344> 11

Sahel, which are evidence of the beginning process of deglobalization or re-globalization.

Nevertheless, the above problems of the 21st century need to be addressed in a consolidated manner and require a higher level of coordination than the one existing today. Global governance should act as the main tool for building a harmonious world. Global governance is at a low ebb today, showing an inability to overcome risks and threats.

### **Future Possible Scenarios of Central Asia in 2050**

Located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, having rich natural resources and borders with the Caspian Sea in the east, Central Asia has no access to an open sea but has become a bridge between the countries of Europe and Asia, a kind of hub of trade and economic ties, providing sea links along the Caspian Sea.

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the formation of newly independent states in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) led to a rift between republics with a common past but an unclear future. The general characteristics of the states are as follows: the wealth of natural resources and minerals, and a high potential for agricultural, hydropower, and tourism development. An economic downturn is predicted in all Central Asian states because of the anti-Russian sanctions. There are also common problems in the region: water and energy, migration, radical Islam, ongoing cross-border conflicts, and the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, which are resolved through peaceful dialogue and consensus. Common problems can become a ground for successful cooperation and interaction.

Table 12-2. Gross domestic product (IMF data)<sup>160</sup>

Figures / 2022	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
Population (million)	19.6	6.7	9.8	5.7	34.9
GDP: slowdown of economic growth in %	1.5-2.0	no data	2	no data	3.6

Political reforms in Kazakhstan after the riots on January 5, 2022, are aimed at creating a new political culture with amendments and additions to the Constitution (56 amendments): a ban on membership in any party for the president of the country, the transition from a super-presidential form of government to a presidential republic with an influential Parliament and an accountable government, conflict-of-interest rule and a ban on holding public posts for the closest relatives of the president, holding elections at the national and regional levels according to a mixed electoral system, recreating the Constitutional Court of Kazakhstan, simplifying party registration procedures, and also tightening the fight against corruption. These reforms are aimed at achieving sustainable growth and improving the well-being of the population in the context of the vision of “New Kazakhstan,”<sup>161</sup>

The main challenges for Kazakhstan are slow growth in production, wealth

160) World Bank in Kazakhstan. <https://www.vsemirnyjbank.org/ru/country/kazakhstan/overview>; August 01, 2022. Shamanov V. Uzbekistan na poroge fundamental'nykh peremen [Shamanov V. Uzbekistan on the threshold of fundamental changes]. <https://rg.ru/2022/07/11/na-poroge-fundamentalnyh-peremen.htm>; World Bank in Tajikistan. <https://www.vsemirnyjbank.org/ru/country/tajikistan/overview>; World Bank in Turkmenistan. <https://www.vsemirnyjbank.org/ru/country/turkmenistan/overview>; World Bank in the Kyrgyz Republic. <https://www.vsemirnyjbank.org/ru/country/kyrgyzrepublic>

161) Kuzekbay A. Reformy Kasym-Zhomarta Tokayeva: formirovaniye novoy politicheskoy kul'tury [Kuzekbay A. Reforms of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: formation of a new political culture]. May 17, 2022. [https://www.inform.kz/ru/reformy-kasym-zhomarta-tokayeva-formirovanie-novoy-politicheskoy-kul-tury\\_a3933728](https://www.inform.kz/ru/reformy-kasym-zhomarta-tokayeva-formirovanie-novoy-politicheskoy-kul-tury_a3933728)

inequality, the rising cost of living, and the risk of a slow process of political and economic reforms.

In early autumn 2022, Uzbekistan will host a nationwide referendum on updating the Constitution, aimed at institutional reforms. Currently, the attention of the authorities is focused on removing structural barriers to GDP growth as part of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2022-2026: macroeconomic stability.

After gaining independence in 1991 Kyrgyzstan experienced several periods of political and economic instability. Corruption and nepotism caused social upheaval in 2005, 2010, and 2020. In 2021, early presidential elections were held in Kyrgyzstan, and a new Constitution was adopted. The government maintains macroeconomic stability, invests in infrastructure, and improves access to social services.

The National Development Strategy (NDS) of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030 sets the task of increasing the internal income of the population, reducing the level of poverty by 2 times. However, only 36% of the rural population has access to safe drinking water. In 2021 the economy began to recover but the potential of the labor market remained weak. Tajikistan's high level of vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters in contrast with other Central Asian states poses an additional challenge to successful national economic management. Between 1992 and 2016 natural disasters and climate-related catastrophes caused great damage to GDP, affecting 72% of the population.

Turkmenistan's real GDP growth increased, the current account and budget deficits narrowed, and inflation remained moderate. Turkmenistan is endowed with rich natural resources (gas), and it is at an early stage of transition. The first reforms began late, after 2007. Economic growth is still heavily dependent on hydrocarbons and related industries. In the public

sector, tight administrative controls and state monopolies continue to dominate the economy. Medium-term plans include a further increase in natural gas exports to China, the largest gas exporter, and other countries in East and South Asia. Turkmenistan's exports depend on one large market (China) dominated by one product, natural gas, making the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices independent of the country.

The UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (December 2007) brought together the Central Asian countries. Its goal is to prevent potential threats, promote dialogue between governments in solving emerging problems, maintain regular contacts with international organizations operating in the region, promote their peacekeeping efforts and initiatives, develop a culture of peace in the region, etc. The Center carries out activities, together with the Central Asian countries, to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, especially after the withdrawal of American troops from its territory in August 2021.<sup>162)</sup>

In the past and present, and well into the future, Central Asia is the focus of close attention of foreign countries, both strong and less powerful, as a new "Great Game." The US policy in Central Asia is aimed at reorienting it to the West, minimizing the influence of Turkey, Iran, Russia, and China by using the mechanisms of "soft power." NATO's diplomacy in Central Asia is conducted through informational, scientific, and educational research and expert activities. One of the latest examples is Kazakhstan's participation in the NPP (Nuclear Power Plants) educational program FIRST - "Basic Infrastructure for the Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technologies". On the other hand, the cultural diplomacy of China is carried out in the region, in the context of the development of the network of Confucius Institutes.

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162) United Nations Regional Centre for preventive diplomacy for Central Asia. May 27, 2022.  
<https://unrcca.unmissions.org/ru>

However, regardless of these approaches, water issues that are covered by water diplomacy, traditionally constitute one of the most complex and controversial issues in Central Asia. Additionally, territorial conflict is another issue to look out for. Public/people's diplomacy promotes the settlement of territorial conflicts between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. A brief border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan occurred on June 14, 2022. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan agreed to withdraw their units from combat positions. Iran is also developing this form of diplomacy in the region.

In the context of economic and humanitarian cooperation Russia's interaction with the region is developing, within the framework of the EAEU (The Eurasian Economic Union) and bilateral cooperation with each of the Central Asian States. But bilateral cooperation is preferable.

An important component of the development of successful international cooperation between the Central Asian countries is the breakaway from the resource-based economy as part of a reasonable reindustrialization, as well as the transition to knowledge-intensive industries. At the international conference "Central Asian Cooperation in the New Geopolitical Conditions: Challenges and Prospects" (06/30/2022), experts from the leading "think tanks" of the Central Asian countries discussed the region's opportunities to overcome barriers to cooperation and ways of closer interaction, considering the powerful influence of various external factors.<sup>163)</sup>

The problem of regional integration of the Central Asian countries has been standing for a long time. From December 2020 to January 2021, a survey was conducted in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on the prospects for the integration of Central Asia. There were 100 respondents from each country who attended

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163) Czentralnoaziatskoe-sotrudnichestvo-v-novyh-geopoliticheskikh-usloviyah-vyzovy-i-erspektivy [Central Asian cooperation in new geopolitical conditions - challenges and prospects]. June 29, 2022. <https://kisi.kz/blogs/czentralnoaziatskoe-sotrudnichestvo-v-novyh-geopoliticheskikh-usloviyah-vyzovy-i-perspektivy/>

and different groups took part as specialists in the field of international relations, political scientists, experts, specialists with higher non-core education, teaching at all levels of specialized fields, and respondents from other areas. The purpose of the survey was to reveal the opinion of the Kazakh and Uzbek communities about the future of Central Asia, and their readiness for consolidation, which is seen as stabilization, strengthening cooperation, uniting, and rallying individuals, groups, organizations, and states after breaking ties to achieve a common goal or strengthen the struggle for common goals. The results of the survey are described in the article “Expectations and Predictability of the accumulated cooperation experience: Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan” (Sembayeva Zh., Shaymordanova Z.).<sup>164)</sup>

**Table 12-3. Assessing the Prospects for Central Asia Integration**

Countries	Do you think Central Asian integration is possible in the future? The number of respondents in %					
	Yes	No	In the next 5 years	In the next 10 years	In the next 15 years	Never
Kazakhstan	20	14	38	11	10	7
Uzbekistan	23.2	3.6	23.2	33.9	16.1	0

The data obtained showed that the Kazakh side spoke out within 5 years with 38% of all respondents, and the Uzbek side - 10 years with 34% of the respondents, and after 15 years - 10% and 16.1%, respectively. It seems that approximately the same data with a variation of  $\pm 3-5\%$  can be obtained from other Central Asian countries as of 01/04/2022, without considering the January events in Kazakhstan, protests in Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic within Uzbekistan.

<sup>164)</sup> Sembayeva Zh., Shaymordanova Z. Expectations and Predictability of the accumulated cooperation experience: Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 2021, Vol.22, Issue 3, P. 66-78, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37178/ca-c.21.3.06>

The acceleration of widespread changes is one of the trends and characteristics of our time. These changes are manifested in the decisions of the Consultative Meeting of the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, held on July 21, 2022, in Cholpon-Ata (Kyrgyzstan). Based on the results, the Road map for the development of regional cooperation for 2022-2024, the Concept of interaction between the states of Central Asia within the framework of multilateral formats, and the Regional Green Agenda Program for Central Asia were approved.<sup>165)</sup> The Treaty between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan on friendship, good neighborliness, and cooperation for the development of Central Asia in the 21st century was agreed upon and the procedure for its signing has already begun.<sup>166)</sup> Thus, there is hope that the integration of the Central Asian countries will take place. Hypothetically, we can assume Central Asian regional integration by 2050.

## Preferred Future by 2050: Central Asian Perspective

### Preferred Future of Great Power Competition

The confrontation between the US and China and the US and Russia will lead to a division into 2 hostile economic blocs due to the distribution of spheres of influence of the great powers. The problems of globalization will worsen, in the direction of re-globalization.<sup>167)</sup> The confrontation between

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165) 21 iyulya v g. Cholpon-Ata sostoyalas' chetvertaya Konsul'tativnaya vstrecha glav gosudarstv sentral'noy Azii [On July 21, the Fourth Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia was held in Cholpon-Ata]. July 21, 2022. <https://e-cis.info/news/568/101986/>

166) O chem smogli dogovorit'sya na sammite glavny stran Tsentral'noy Azii [What could be agreed upon at the summit of the heads of Central Asian countries]. July 21, 2022. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/sammit-glav-stran-tsentralnoy-azii/31953790.html>

167) V Britanii predrekli razdeleniye mira na dva vrazhduyushchikh bloka [Britain predicted the revision of the world into two warring blocs]. May 1, 2022. <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/05/01/halligan>

the US and Russia has had a negative impact on the EU, primarily in the oil and gas market that we are witnessing now.

The United States wants not only to control the world, but above all to remodel it, and give it a new shape, which is reflected in the National Security Strategy as the introduction of the American political, constitutional, and economic model in the world. China, on the other hand through the One Belt, One Road project is rebuilding the world as it sees fit. As for the EU, according to Bloomberg, the UK, having left the EU is experiencing serious financial recession, inflation, and economic problems.<sup>168)</sup>

Just 28 years are left until 2050 and there will be significant changes in the political and socio-economic spheres, the sphere of security and growing conflicts, global governance and world order, the development of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, and the spiritual and moral sphere. At the beginning of 2022, the UN named one of the main threats to the modern world as the decline in spiritual and moral values, especially in the context of the political elites which we are deeply convinced that the future of the world depends on. World economic growth will also slow down significantly, especially it will be observed in developing countries.

The political systems of the great powers will not be able to solve a block of problems and issues in the socio-economic and humanitarian-spiritual spheres. The future of the European Union is one big question. The center of economic development will shift to the eastern part of the world.

The relevance of regionalization continues to signal a transformation in the development of regionalization towards its strengthening and the development of new forms of interaction. Countries have been searching for an effective and competitive system of international cooperation, creating

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168) UK Set for Recession and Pound Test of Historic Lows, Survey Finds. June 20, 2022.  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-20/uk-set-for-recession-and-fresh-selloff-of-everything-mliv-pulse>

new market macro-regions and mega-regions in the emerging new system of world economic relations.

Regional processes are going on in parallel with political transformations. A "new Big Eight" was formed, which includes China, India, Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Iran, and Turkey. The "New Big Eight" may become an indicator of the formation of new political blocs, which may be followed by new financial, trade, and regional blocs.<sup>169)</sup> Today we can observe that there is a slow but steady turn from global to regional bodies, which can contribute to sustainable economic development and minimize production and transportation costs. Countries will turn to regional organizations to solve new global problems.

However, the level of security will decrease, and the number of conflicts will increase: a new "Great Game" in Asia, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, the unresolved Kurdish issue, and unrecognized new states. Conflicts will worsen the prospects for food production. Humanitarian crises stifle the ability of the international system to aid.

The development of technologies with artificial intelligence, 3D printers, drones, new energy sources, etc. will have a double effect: positive and negative. Regardless of these changes, great power competition will be continued.

### **Preferred Future of the International System**

The world system will become bipolar: the US and its allies/China and its allies. Scenarios involving India and Russia are possible, or is there a possibility of a new multipolar world? These questions continue but one thing

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169) Al Mayadeen With weakening Western economies, new G8 forms - this time with Russia. June 11, 2022.  
<https://english.almayadeen.net/news/economics/with-weakening-western-economies-new-g8-forms---this-time-wi>

for certain is that the ongoing China-US competition will not yield to cooperation.

Nonetheless, the preferred future is a unipolar world. As it was in the book "Utopia" by Thomas More, where the head of the state [the world community] is a "wise" monarch with full democracy,<sup>170)</sup> all positions are elected, and work is compulsory for all. This correlates with the mission of Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: "Chatham House's mission is to help governments and societies build a sustainably secure, prosperous and just world,"<sup>171)</sup> i.e., the preferred future. Yet, this inter-polarity is not without threats: the potential use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups, the collapse of states, intrastate conflicts, etc., still exists.

### **Preferred Future of Global Governance, Democracy, and Capitalism**

Having a world government is a top priority because of the fear of structuring the world between the 2 superpowers, other nation-states are interested in multilateral cooperation and the principle of responsibility of the world government. Having a speech at the High-Level Dialogue on BRICS+ Global Development (20.06.2022), President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.- J. K. Tokayev focused on the crisis of multilateralism and global governance, noting that international institutions remain the only mechanism in the fight against global threats.<sup>172)</sup> He believes that new types of global partnerships should be replaced by mutually beneficial dialogue.

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170) Mor T. A golden little book, as useful as it is funny, about the best arrangement of the state and about the new island of Utopia Per. from lat. A. Maleina. Moscow, 2018, 153 s.

171) Chatham House: Our mission and values. August 2, 2022.  
<https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/our-mission-and-values>

172) Prezident Kazakhstana prinyal uchastiye v Dialoge vysokogo urovnya po global'nomu razvitiyu BRIKS+ [The President of Kazakhstan took part in the BRICS+ High-Level Dialogue on Global Development]. June 24, 2022.  
<https://www.akorda.kz/ru/prezident-Kazahstana-prinyal-uchastie-v-dialoge-vysokogo-urovnya-po-globalnomu-razvitiyu-briks>

The global management system must be transformed.

The point of the "Great Reset" (an idea owned by the World Economic Forum (WEF, May 2020) and Klaus Schwab, the permanent president of this Forum) lies in a fundamentally new social model, which is very conditionally called "new capitalism" or "post-capitalism."<sup>173)</sup> Following the example of China's new economic model of "Dual Circulation Strategy", i.e., domestic consumption and services will be the basis of the country's economic development.

### **Central Asian (Kazakhstani) visions and strategies for a preferred future in 2050**

Kazakhstani socio-political and social thought analyzes the preferred future in 2050 in the political (primarily security/non-proliferation of nuclear weapons), economic, cultural, humanitarian, and scientific spheres. Kazakh and Central Asian experts are unanimous that the world is becoming more and more polarized with the problems of extremism, terrorism, and international conflicts, but all issues should be resolved through dialogue.

Political scientist, expert, and director of the Research Institute for International and Regional Cooperation of the Kazakh-German University, Bulat Sultanov believes that the world order should be based on international law, but not on the rules that the Anglo-Saxon world imposes.<sup>174)</sup>

The US will maintain a tough stance against China as the internal agenda of the US political struggle requires it, the expert believes, to create a barrier between China and Central Asia. He assesses the growing confrontation between the United States and China as a threat to the conjugation of the

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173) The Great Reset. July 2, 2022. <https://www.weforum.org/great-reset/>

174) Sultanov B. «V Belom dome sozdayut bar'yer mezhdru Rossiyey i Kitayem v Tsentral'noy Azii» [Sultanov B.: "The White House creates a barrier between Russia and China in Central Asia"]. April 03, 2022. <https://m.realnoevremya.ru/articles/246051-bulat-sultanov-o-sozdavaemom-ssha-barere-mezhdru-rossiyey-i-kitaem>

Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt project, drawing attention to the threat of nuclear proliferation. Analyzing the situation, political scientists conclude that the United States is gathering forces to fight China, starting the first half with Russia, the situation, which will continue in the medium and, most likely, in the long term.

Uzbek expert Bobur Usmanov draws attention to such negative factors as the volatility of financial markets and rising food prices, the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, the disruption of traditional supply chains, etc., which significantly limit not only the development of the region but also the world.<sup>175)</sup> Based on his opinion, in such conditions, it is necessary to further strengthen and consolidate the region.

Vyacheslav Dodonov, one of the leading Kazakh economic experts, confirms the fact that the world is on the verge of a global economic crisis, which must be fought in unity, through joint agreements.<sup>176)</sup> At the international conference "Global and Regional Trends in Terrorism and Violent Extremism" (February 11, 2022, Nur-Sultan) Sanat Kushkumbaev believes that in the context of the transformation of terrorism and extremism, which are the most important issues for the whole world, it is necessary to develop programs for regional and international levels and develop practical methods to combat terrorism.<sup>177)</sup> The political scientist focuses on ensuring

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175) 11 fevralya 2022 goda v g. Nur-Sultane sostoyalas' mezhdunarodnaya konferentsiya Global'nyye i regional'nyye trendy terrorizma i nasil'stvennogo ekstremizma» [On February 11, 2022, the International Conference "Global and Regional Trends in Terrorism and Violent extremism" was held in Nur-Sultan. February 11, 2022.

<https://kisi.kz/blogs/kisi-provel-mezhdunarodnuyu-konferencz/O П У Б Л И К О В А Н О 11/02/2022>

176) Dodonov V.: Povysheniye dokhodov naseleniya – strategicheskiy kurs Prezidenta [Dodonov V.: Increasing the income of the population is the strategic course of the President]. July 14, 2022.

<https://www.zakon.kz/6019610-viacheslav-dodonov-povyshenie-dokhodov-naseleniia-strategicheskii-kurs-prezidenta.html>

177) Eksperty vedushchikh «mozgovykh tsentrov» stran Tsentral'noy Azii vstretilis' v Nur-Sultane [Experts from leading think tanks of Central Asian countries met in Nur-Sultan]. June 29, 2022.

[https://www.inform.kz/ru/v-usloviyah-global-nogo-krizisa-neobhodimo-sohranyat-ekonomicheskuyu-stabil-nost-sanat-kushkumbaev\\_a3731444](https://www.inform.kz/ru/v-usloviyah-global-nogo-krizisa-neobhodimo-sohranyat-ekonomicheskuyu-stabil-nost-sanat-kushkumbaev_a3731444)

and maintaining economic stability, international and regional security, issues of environmental protection and ecology, etc. as key directions for a preferred future world. About the future of Russian American relations, he says: "No easing is foreseen."<sup>178)</sup>

Dr. Chokan Laumulin's research is devoted to scientific policy and believes that humanity is not able to respond without science, as it is the only effective means to the geopolitical and geo-economic problems of the modern world.<sup>179)</sup> For example, it is impossible to carry out an energy transition under the Paris Agreement within the framework of the existing technology package. This is leading to a major restructuring of the world economy, including for Kazakhstan. This also entails a change in educational programs for the development of new technologies, etc. New information technologies also entail a block of new knowledge and new research in an interdisciplinary context, considering the continuity of global value chains and the discontinuity of world economic relations in the event of a pandemic.

Political scientist and expert Aidar Amrebaev expresses his point of view on building his national and regional strategy in accordance with the response to external challenges of the re-division of the world. In his opinion, this point is very important in the analysis of the current international situation, since "we live in a world where all moral and ethical constraints have been leveled," which are the basic principles of the balance of power in international relations. He criticizes democracy using the "right of force," which is also used by totalitarian regimes: "... democracies are able to use this right, regardless of anyone." And further: "Global challenges are objectively pushing

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178) Sanat Kushkumbayev: "Smyagcheniya ne predviditsya" [Sanat Kushkumbaev : No easing is foreseen]. July 07, 2022.

<https://eurasia.expert/zamdirektora-kisi-o-budushchem-rossiysko-amerikanskikh-otnosheniy/>

179) Chokan Laumulin: *sovremennaya ekonomika nachinayet-sya s nauki* [Chokan Laumulin: modern economics starts with science]. June 26, 2022.

<https://ia-centr.ru/experts/vyacheslav-shchekunskikh/chokan-laumulin-sovremennaya-ekonomika-nachinaetsya-s-nauki/>

countries towards cooperation and mutual assistance. Reason must prevail in a situation of global interconnectedness of countries.”<sup>180)</sup> Having a world government is a top priority. This is because of the fear of structuring the world between the 2 superpowers, other nation-states are interested in multilateral cooperation and the principle of responsibility of this government.

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.J.K. Tokayev took part in the High-Level BRICS+ Global Development Dialogue, which was held online on June 20, 2022, under the chairmanship of China. During his speech, the head of state focused on the crisis of multilateralism and global governance, noting that international institutions remain the only mechanism in the fight against global threats. He believes that new types of global partnerships should be replaced by mutually beneficial dialogue.<sup>181)</sup>

### Suggestions for a preferred future

We are witnessing the formation of a new world order. The old system of international security that took shape after the Second World War is increasingly failing, new centers of power and new geopolitical alliances are being formed. The world is moving toward the future, even if it turns out to be different from what we expected, and in many ways will lead to unexpected and unforeseen results. The ways to bridge the gap between

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180) Aidar Amrebaev: «Global’nyye vyzovy ob’yektivno tolkayut strany Tsentral’noy Azii k sotrudnichestvu i vzaimovyruchke» [Global challenges are objectively pushing the countries of Central Asia towards cooperation and mutual assistance]. July 13, 2022.  
[http://iph.kz/ru/novosti/anonsi/13\\_iiulia\\_2022-2/](http://iph.kz/ru/novosti/anonsi/13_iiulia_2022-2/)

181) Prezident Kazakhstana prinyal uchastiye v Dialoge vysokogo urovnya po global’nomu razvitiyu BRIKS+ [The President of Kazakhstan took part in the BRICS+ High-Level Dialogue on Global Development]. June 24, 2022.  
<https://www.akorda.kz/ru/prezident-kazahstana-prinyal-uchastie-v-dialoge-vysokogo-urovnya-po-globalnomu-razvitiyu-briks-245321>

probable future and preferred future are through:

- direct joint efforts to protect peace and stability throughout the world,
- strengthening diplomatic initiatives to find durable solutions,
- transform and improve global governance to create new benefits for humanity,
- reconcile force and legal norms: the absence of influence of various kinds (political, economic, military, etc.) of countries on each other,
- achieve the trust of states in each other,
- restore the economy through the development of new models of economic development, through the expansion of domestic investment, for example,
- prevent future pandemics,
- ensure global security by resolving conflicts of all kinds based on dialogue, compromise, and mediation,
- implement the Paris agreement about climate change,
- the return of classical moral and spiritual values.
- switch to an innovative path of development in all areas.

In conclusion, the harmonious ideological interaction of the countries of the world should become the basis for overcoming the gap between the probable and the preferred future, with its focus aimed at people.

## 13. The Future of the World Order in 2050: An Arab Perspective

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### Introduction

Long before the February 2022 Russian attacks on Ukraine that will most likely usher in a new world order, dramatic political transformations were envisaged after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990, even if missed opportunities by the winners of the Cold War failed to re-arrange the condominium that was devised by the Treaty of Westphalia. That epochal agreement, which became known as the Peace of Westphalia, was concluded in 1648 and ended the Thirty Years' War after Western political entities became entangled in different conflicts concerning the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire, religion, and the state system of Europe. At the time, feudalism gave way to the concept of the nation-state and, presumably, new mechanisms that managed intra-state affairs, even if the record between 1648 and 1914 was not particularly bright.<sup>182)</sup>

During the first half of the twentieth century, that is after the end of two wars that killed around 100 million human beings and wounded many more, two major rearrangements—the League of Nations and the United Nations—preserved the concepts advanced at Westphalia. Nevertheless, winners once

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182) For key discussions on this period, see Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. See also, Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West, Volumes One: Form and Actuality and Volume Two: Perspectives of World History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926 and 1928; Fernand Braudel, *On History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980; and Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, London: Routledge, 1992.

again redrew various maps and divided the world to fit their preferred outcomes, which is to say they split the lasting coat of power. Some believed—and might still think—that China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Russia after 1991), the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the five permanent (P5) members of the United Nations Security Council, protected their interests, though that record was also not particularly impressive for two reasons: first, because it created a two-tier system, the P5 on one side and the rest of humanity on the other; and, second, because the collapse of the Soviet Union highlighted what could easily go wrong when those who were skilled in every field could not give up their penchants for violence.<sup>183)</sup> In 2022, mankind was now on the cusp of a new era, perhaps one in which civilizations will clash, but certainly one that will take time to emerge, which means that the entire global family will realign, identifying friends and foes, joining alliances here and there, protecting perceived interests and, last but not least, survive in nascent environments that will be unsettling, to say the least.<sup>184)</sup> What will most likely emerge may well be a new Cold War for some, others will be concerned that we may live through a hot war, meaning nuclear exchanges, even if the limited variety of such exchanges may be perceived as temporary solutions. Still others will trust their leaders to reach the right decisions even if it is too soon to know which direction mankind will go. What is certain is that the world as we knew it in the second half of the last century was no more, and a new condominium will

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183) It was important to point out that the global condominium could not, or did not, prevent the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and countless confrontations through the second part of the twentieth century. See Nile Gardiner, “The Decline and Fall of the United Nations: Why the U.N. has Failed and How it Needs to be Reformed,” *Macalester International* 19:9, Summer 2007, at <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macintl/vol19/iss1/9>. See also Peter Nadin, “The United Nations: A History of Success and Failure,” *Australian Quarterly* 90:4, October-December 2019, pp. 11-17, at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26773344>.

184) Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. See also Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press, 2006; and Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.

replace it over the course of the next few decades, which will once again see fresh realignments, perhaps even a new political order.<sup>185)</sup>

It was thus fair to ask where the Arab World would fit among putative rearrangements that might well emerge, and how the estimated 600 million human beings that will identify themselves as Arabs in 2050, protect themselves and their systems of government. In short, the fundamental question that required attention was whether Arabs will have a voice, what that voice will say, and who might articulate it. Will visionary leaders emerge to exercise their will to power as well as promote and protect their nations? Will they seek solace, individually, bilaterally, or through coalitions, partners, and allies, or will they go their own separate ways? Will Arabs be able to determine their own destinies or, alternatively, will they succumb to fresh global political condominiums that will marginalize them once again as was the case after 1945? What will the Arab World look like in 2050 and how will it compare with the rest of mankind?

## Future of World Order in 2050

To better address these questions, and before offering probable vs. preferred future scenarios—where probable ones are likely to happen while preferred ones are possibilities one might want to see come true—it might be useful to think about the most probable global challenges ahead. An effort will be made to examine what has been anticipated by several futurologists,

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185) There are various scenarios for future clashes. See, for example, Office of the Director of the National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World*, Washington, D.C.: National Intelligence Council, March 2021, at [https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends\\_2040.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends_2040.pdf); and Erika Holmquist and John Rydqvist, *The Future of Regional Security in the Middle East: Expert Perspectives on Coming Developments*, FOI—R—4251—SE, Stockholm, Sweden: FOI, April 2016. For an interesting, even if an imaginary yet frighteningly real nuclear war situation, see Elliot Ackerman and Admiral Jim Stavridis, *2034: A Novel of the Next World War*, New York: Penguin Press, 2022.

through the examination of two major studies funded by the European Union, even if the literature is rich and growing. A plethora of studies that investigate these matters were available, though only two were identified here for their far-reaching views, and relative detachments.<sup>186)</sup>

## Probable Global Challenges

A tentative first reading of current tensions must conclude that the globe was dominated during the first two decades of the twenty-first century by venal nation-states, both democratizing and totalitarian regimes, as key leaders rethought strategic dimensions. Presumably, such reconsiderations were meant to advance stale political interests, because many officials concluded that their orientations came under threat. Consequently, strongmen—both the properly elected Western varieties as well as the non-Western kinds—pursued changes in political systems even if globalization prevailed.<sup>187)</sup>

In fact, this was the first point that thinkers were invited to keep in mind, namely that globalization won its survival battles and was guaranteed to further advance the gains secured during the past several decades. Even if still unclear as to its future form(s), globalization would probably evolve further, perhaps shrink nascent global socio-economic conditions, and redraw the post-Westphalia paradigm to fit its all-encompassing vision(s). In other

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186) The choices made here are not meant to overlook equally pertinent prognostications. One can examine, for example, reports published by leading think-tanks, government agencies, and news agencies to identify critical scenarios. For additional insights, see Uri Dadush and Bennett Stancil, *The World Order in 2050*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2010, at [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/World\\_Order\\_in\\_2050.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/World_Order_in_2050.pdf); Lindsey Galloway, “Five Superpowers Ruling the World in 2050,” *BBC*, 23 March 2020, at <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20200322-five-superpowers-ruling-the-world-in-2050>; and Vincent Petit, *The Future of the Global Order: The Six Paradigm Changes That Will Define 2050*, London: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2021.

187) Francis Fukuyama, *Liberalism and Its Discontents*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022.

words, globalization would be a force to reckon with as nation-states and/or the surviving or replacement entities, will come to terms with it. Whether alliances may be able to supplant globalization was difficult to foresee as international trade and modernization would most likely continue to flourish, bringing with them non-ideological ideas and far more responsible goals. Industry, trade, agriculture, tourism, and just about every other human activity would flourish, including in the Arab world, which cannot remain aloof if Arabs are to survive and prosper.<sup>188)</sup>

The second challenge ahead was how to prepare for the strategic confrontations that will preoccupy mankind between now and 2050. Although too soon to know with any degree of metaphysical certainty, the entire global arena was poised to endure severe convulsions between the United States of America and its allies on one hand and the United States of Russia and its allies. It was possible to envisage how other entities would play significant roles too, including the United States of China and its allies and the United States of Africa, among others. Our question must therefore be whether the United States of Arabia might be a possibility and under whose leadership it might emerge. This is a theme that will be developed in the last part of this essay but, naturally, politicians everywhere could be expected to make deals, offer concessions to troublemakers, and presumably worry about how best to defend their own interests and the like, all of which complicated matters for statesmen—increasingly rare—whose goal(s) would be to ensure survival and prosperity. In other words, it was critical to ask how democratizing societies may retain their relevance among those preoccupied with domination, and how decision-makers may think about dramatic

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188) For interesting perspectives on Arab perceptions of globalization, see Mohamed El-Shibiny, *The Threat of Globalization to Arab Islamic Culture*, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania: Dorrance Publishing, 2005; John Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Mohammed al-Mutawa, *Globalization and the Gulf*, London: Routledge, 2006; Charles Tripp, *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006; and Imad Salamey, *The Decline of Nation-States after the Arab Spring: The Rise of Communitocracy*, London: Routledge, 2017.

transformations that required new treaties among nation-states.

The third point was cultural survival amidst ongoing rearrangements. Over the course of the next three decades—the short life of a single generation for mankind—alliances will not only have to preserve and protect raw geopolitical and security interests but also to shield cultural, ethnic, and religious dimensions of their respective societies. For the powerful, those who have won in the past and those who might win in the future, few may still believe that national considerations ought to receive the attention they deserve. Evidently, the United States, Russia, China, or other power-poles would calculate how cultural, ethnic, and religious practices affected other societies, which was both regrettable and, admittedly, one of the core reasons for perpetual conflicts. Presumably, the leaders of the United States of Arabia—should one emerge and effectively lead the approximately 600 million Arabs in 2050 (or at least a large part of it)—will want the global communities to accept them as legitimate entities.

The fourth concern must surely be how the United States of America, Russia, China, and other power poles would deal with the United States of Arabia, given that most perceived the Arab World in general and the Arabian Peninsula in particular as a vital region for global security on account of its petroleum reserves, financial might and, not a negligible point, increasing desire to join the global innovation village. How the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies, which will most likely lead the United States of Arabia, come to terms with the United States of America or the United States of Russia—as the former maintained substantive military bases in the region while the latter enjoyed a physical presence in Syria and Libya in particular—could determine its fate. In 2050, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under King Muhammad bin Salman, will have to manage its nascent alliances within the United States of Arabia, keep correct ties with friends and foes alike, and preserve its global interests all at once. There were, in other words, new strategic convulsions

that could challenge Riyadh in particular and Arabs in general, and that will require recalibrations, including strengthening domestic and regional relations both to secure legitimacy and enhance long-term stability of the United States of Arabia.

Finally, it was also valid to wonder whether ideology itself would be a valid principle to govern. All ideologies, from liberalism to communism and including conservatism, democratization, socialism, totalitarianism, colonialism, agrarianism, and theocracy, have been challenged by globalization that, and this must be admitted, displayed their narrowest attributes, with poor records. It may thus be fair to ask whether ideologies would be replaced by new operating principles to govern increasingly complex and technologically advanced societies. Pessimists will conclude that complacency in the past will not disappear and that mankind was bound to linger from one failure to another. Optimists, on the other hand, will devise more solid alliances precisely to defend their sovereignties and freedoms.<sup>189)</sup>

### Probable Future of MENA in 2050

Given these probable global challenges, which will naturally be divided further along more practical challenges that, by necessity, mobilized almost all governments, what were some of the more salient scenarios envisaged by leading futurologists for the Arab World? As stated above, two critical reports funded by and prepared for the European Union were identified, to which we turn next to further elucidate what the scholarly community anticipated for societies that captivated many and befuddled countless.

#### *European Union Institute for Security Studies*

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189) Joseph S. Rousek, "A History of the Concept of Ideology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5:4, October 1944, pp. 479-488, at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2707082>. See also Leon P. Baradat and John A. Phillips, *Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impact*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed., London: Routledge, 2020.

In 2015, a group of scholars within the Arab Foresight Group—an initiative undertaken by the European Union Institute for Security Studies to bring together experts from Europe and the Arab World to develop scenarios for the future of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region—held a series of meetings that produced a report that advanced three possible scenarios for the year 2025. These included: (1) the “Arab Simmer,” in which societies reformed but not sufficiently to turn things around; (2) the “Arab Implosion,” in which governments failed to address burning issues; and the “Arab Leap,” when they managed to reform in a sustainable manner.<sup>190</sup> All three scenarios made several assumptions, including sharp demographic increases [growing from 357 million inhabitants in 2015 to 468 million in 2025 and this despite falling fertility rates], heightened urbanization [56% to over 61%], documented weak responses to the climate change phenomenon [that was expected to exacerbate acute challenges of water shortages and desertification, as well as the scarcity of natural resources], recorded unequal energy production and consumption [as oil-producing Arab states apparently continued to rely on the hydrocarbon sector for their economies], logged sustained reliance on food imports that perpetuated existing vulnerabilities], noted increased literacy rates [that reached 90% in 2025], verified better access to the World Wide Web [that was expected to rise from 25% to 50%], and predicted qualitatively healthier gender equality [with the number of women in politics and business steadily growing], all of which promised both positive as well as negative consequences for the three imagined frameworks.

In the first scenario, the report posited that Saudi Arabia had “simply missed the boat” of youth unemployment as

“[T]he Kingdom had settled comfortably in its low debt and budgetary

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190) Florence Gaub and Alexandra Laban, eds., *Arab Futures: Three Scenarios for 2025*, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2015, p. 23, at [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/188691/Report\\_22\\_Arab\\_futures.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/188691/Report_22_Arab_futures.pdf).

surplus, hoping to tackle youth unemployment with Saudi employment quotas for the labor market. Instead, it stifled the private sector and now faces high youth unemployment rates of 35%. Even though some states, such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, have managed to improve the quality of their educational systems, most have failed to deliver on the second half of the solution to youth unemployment, which is the creation of jobs. There are several reasons why 2025 looks so much worse in youth unemployment terms than 2011, the year that brought the issue to the forefront.”<sup>191)</sup>

This, and other economic drawbacks in key countries like Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, the authors anticipated, would surely increase terrorism, a perennial Western preoccupation given the allegedly relative peace of the continent. The authors forecast terrorist threats against EXPO 2020, held in the United Arab Emirates in 2021 because of the Corona pandemic, and the World Cup held in Qatar in 2022, which apparently led to the formation of an “Arabpol” to better control extremists. Mercifully EXPO 2020 was peaceful and the World Cup in late 2022 proved to be so popular that few bothered to threaten anyone, anywhere, which placed a dent in this first scenario, as terrorism actually went down in the Arab World. The only violence was practiced by the leading Western ally, Israel, which continued its sanctioned assaults on the hapless Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. This first scenario further missed the pandemic that squeezed everyone, and while food prices increased, this was the result of supply chain problems in producing states more than any other reason. Even the alleged Tunisian transition to democracy, which confronted Islamist extremists, proved to be a mistaken assumption in this scenario since anticipating doom and gloom was never a good proposition. Focusing on tangible indicators instead of concentrating on visionary leaders, who could and did move nations, was far more appropriate than this scenario skipped (see below).<sup>192)</sup>

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191) *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Comically, the scenario forecast a continuation of the civil war(s) in Syria, though “Maher al-Assad, who became President after his brother’s death in 2020, has signaled readiness to accept an international peace enforcement force,” which was imaginative to say the least. One of the more correct assumptions in this first scenario related to Iran, when it posited that:

“A potential nuclear Iran is still destabilizing the Gulf States; Tehran is now considered an undeclared nuclear state, or at least a threshold state with the capacity to acquire a nuclear weapon in very little time. Distrustful of their neighbor’s intentions, all the GCC states have invested even more in their defense budgets and engaged in rather aggressive and sectarian rhetoric. This has in turn emboldened Hizbullah in Lebanon and Shia militias in Iraq. Instability remains the overriding feature of the region,”<sup>193)</sup> which were certainly developments of the probable varieties.

In the second scenario, “The Arab Implosion,” futurologists lamented that by 2025, the Arab world seemed to have “regressed on several fronts, turning back the development clock by several decades and wiping out important progress made in the course of the twentieth century.” Under this scenario, leading Arab countries “neglected to implement important reforms which would have created jobs, … [as gullible] decision-makers were lulled into postponing reforms” and,

“instead of growing, Arab economies, which had just begun to recover from the upheavals of 2011, started shrinking again as a result of several factors: a combination of insecurity, instability, unsustainable subsidies, the food price impact of the weather phenomenon El Nino and fiscal debt [that] led to the economic paralysis of almost all Arab states, even those which did not see large-scale unrest.”<sup>194)</sup>

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192) *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

193) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

194) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Because of increased terrorism, tourists apparently stayed away from several Arab countries that sorely needed their hard currencies to survive and prosper, agriculture tanked because climate change necessities were allegedly neglected, and youth unemployment skyrocketed because few government policies concentrated on the all-important creation of job requirements. As a result of “harsh repression of the political opposition and ever-increasing pressure on terrorist networks,” readers discovered, “young unemployed men have either joined regional terrorist networks or taken part in regular and violent street demonstrations against [various Arab] governments. The Caliphate, the successor organization of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, is now believed to be operational in almost all Arab countries, …,”<sup>195)</sup> which did not occur. In hindsight, we now know that the Caliphate as contemplated by the hysterical Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (1971-2019) ended before the Corona pandemic that swept the world in 2020-2021 and, as stated above, terrorism was on the wane though periodic developments certainly colored this tragic chapter.<sup>196)</sup> Still, the authors anticipated more gloom and doom under this second scenario, as political repression apparently took hold of Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Libya (“drifting in and out of a political coma”), with most governments channeling larger percentages of their GDPs into defense expenditures to further repress domestic foes. A nearly destroyed Syria was evidently contemplating a fresh military incursion into Lebanon (again), which “has lost 2.9% GDP every year of the duration of the conflict, and now [in 2025, had] a population of 170,000 living below the poverty line.” In reality, Lebanon entered its self-created chaotic environment on 17 October 2019, which was further exacerbated by the 4 August 2020 harbor explosions that killed 242, injured 6,000 and left 300,000 homeless in the capital—all because Lebanese merchant-politicians failed to shed their

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195) *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

196) Mohammed Alsulami, “Terrorist Detonates Suicide Vest as Saudi Security Forces Try to Make Arrest,” *Arab News*, 12 August 2022, at <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2141411/saudi-arabia>.

corruption as well as their party-driven, and sanctioned, ethnic and religious emasculations of the nation-state.<sup>197)</sup> Consequently, the Lebanese economy, bragging a per-capita income of over 10,000 US\$ in 2010, tanked, as the national currency lost 95% of its value, unemployment reached 45% and nearly 1 out of every 3 Lebanese lived in poverty in 2022, surviving through the generosity of outside donors. In a truly shocking outlook, the authors of this scenario, envisaged the existence of a “high number of refugees, among them former rebel fighters and suspected terrorists, [which] has led to the re-emergence of Christian militias.” Even worse, the report continued:

“Allied with President Michel Aoun, [Christian militias] have begun to join Hizbullah in its fight against Sunni jihadi groups” and, in a rerun of 1975, “the country [was] once again divided into sectarian cantons run by warlords. Sectarianism, always a latent problem in Lebanon, is now rampant—and has spread throughout the region. In Iraq, the unsatisfying deal struck in 2015 has motivated several Sunni groups to take up arms, again, against the central government.”<sup>198)</sup>

This scenario implied that Christian militias and Sunni Muslims were little more than terrorists, whereas Hizbullah militias were innocent boy-scouts. This rapprochement with minority Shi‘ah Muslims (10% of global Muslim populations) was highly problematic as European scholars and, consequently, decision-makers, seemed determined to perceive the majority Sunni Muslims (90%) in the Arab World and in fact the rest of the planet as little more than extremists, who supported al-Qa‘idah, and other terrorist groups. Needless to say that this was wrong and, one could safely predict, highly dangerous

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197) Casualty figures for Lebanon explosions are largely inaccurate with most sources advancing the “over 200 killed” in the 4 August 2020 harbor explosions. A United Nations report affirmed that the powerful blast—in which a stockpile of ammonium nitrate stored in a port warehouse exploded—destroyed 77,000 apartments, wounded 7,000 people, displaced over 300,000 more and made at least 80,000 children homeless. For recent data, see the Lebanon page kept by the International Medical Corps, at <https://internationalmedicalcorps.org/country/lebanon/>.

198) Gaub and Laban, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

though one should never underestimate the raw need for conflict to justify one's own security expenditures.<sup>199)</sup>

Scenario two closed with the predictions that after Iran acquired nuclear weapons, left the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and reinforced sectarian tensions not only in Yemen and Lebanon, “Saudi Arabia and Egypt [we]re exploring options to procure nuclear weapons for themselves.”<sup>200)</sup> It was unclear why Riyadh and Cairo would simply learn to live with a nuclear Iran without, and this must be stated as clearly as possible, matching the latter's hegemonic aspirations.

In the third scenario, “The Arab Leap,” futurologists foresaw a steady recovery in the “global economy and in particular the eurozone” [again without anticipating the Corona pandemic nor the spillover effects of the War for Ukraine], which translated in relatively positive economic developments in most Arab societies. Apparently “20% of foreign labor in the Gulf” were replaced with Arab workers, unemployment rates dropped in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, while GDP rates grew in all Arab countries. In addition to these positive elements, educational reforms led to a “substantial decline in youth unemployment” [down to 18%], which was certainly a positive outcome. Still, the authors expected that by “2016, the region had ... hit an unprecedented peak both in terms of youth unemployment and terrorism-issues which concerned virtually every Arab state,” as if the good economic news cited earlier could not possibly exist on its own terms. Somehow, even a relatively optimistic scenario had to have checks and balances, but, of course, of the worst kind. It was unclear what where the motives for such foresights that, mercifully, did not materialize by the end of

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199) For a useful insight on this lingering perception, see Nabil Khalifé, *Istihdaf Ahl al-Sunnah*, translated and introduced by Joseph A. Kéchichian as *The Attempt to Uproot Sunni-Arab Influence: A Geo-Strategic Analysis of the Western, Israeli and Iranian Quest for Domination*, Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2017.

200) Gaub and Laban, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

2022. To be sure, the authors recognized that a potential reduction of youth unemployment might lead to a “rapid depletion of the pool of potential terrorist recruits,” as the phenomenon became little more than a “nuisance rather than a grave strategic threat;” with an end of the War for Syria; the rise of a “civil rights movement in the Palestinian territories that “triggered the formation of a national unity government,” which even raised the discussion to contemplating an “Israeli-Palestinian confederation,” which was too good to be true.<sup>201)</sup> This scenario prophesied the establishment of new Islamist parties, which was incredulous, though the so-called Islamic State was apparently on the brink of extinction.<sup>202)</sup> Still, it failed to see the rise of ‘Awrabah, a non-ideological alternative led by the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies and its allies (see the section on Preferred Future Outlook, below).

The scenario’s most humorous feature was the hypothesis that Iran had “formally ended its nuclear program in 2016 after having achieved threshold status,” which was so out-of-the-box that toddlers in Tehran and Shiraz could not believe it. Why would Iran give up a program that defined its foreign policy vision for decades and why would it acquiesce to such a preference when its intention was to dominate the entire Muslim world and, in a second-stage, take its putative place among the world’s nuclear powers? As developments between 2015 and 2022 illustrated and proven beyond the shadow of a doubt, Iran was embarked on a single-minded objective to acquire a nuclear capability come what may, and it was determined to reach

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201) Gaub and Laban, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

202) The so-called Islamic State, Da’ish for the initiated, was long gone by 2022. For details, see Willem Theo Oosterveld and Willem Bloem, *The Rise and Fall of ISIS: From Evitability to Inevitability*, Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, January 2017, at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12613>. See also Anoushiravan Ehteshami, Amjed Rasheed and Juline Beaujouan, *The Rise and Fall of Islamic State: The Fading Influence of Political Islam in the Middle East*, Durham, U.K.: Durham University, HH Sheikh Nasser al-Mohammad al-Sabah Publication Series, Number 31, November 2020, at <https://www.politicalsettlements.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/al-Sabahpaper-AAJBook.pdf>.

that goal despite Western and Israeli threats to deny it this objective.<sup>203)</sup>

The report's witty description of "confidence-building measures" between Iran and GCC states, which "finally contributed to a slowly but steadily improving situation of *détente*,"<sup>204)</sup> envisaged the United Arab Emirates making "a deal regarding three islands in the Persian Gulf region occupied by Iran but over which the UAE claims sovereignty," was truly fanciful. Why would Abu Dhabi make a deal over its sovereign land that was "occupied" lock, stock, and barrel? There were other features of this pathetic vision, including a weakening of sectarian rhetoric across the region on account of the Hizballah militia's reintegration into Lebanese political affairs and other such wishful thinking narratives, which raised serious questions as to the authors' motives to show Iran in good light and Arabs in negative terms. Irrespective of such delusions, the scenario rode the positive perspective bandwagon, as stability further stimulated various Arab economies, with increased foreign direct investments, improved tourist visits, the removal of subsidies that weakened budgets, control over soaring food prices, reduced desalination costs on account of improved technologies, better agricultural productions, all of which seemingly occurred as Arab states learned that "cooperation [was] the only way forward."<sup>205)</sup> The scenario closed with an unexpected vision that imagined political integration as the League of Arab States underwent "a major review in 2025, [and was] likely to evolve from a multilateral to a supra-national body," expected to happen around 2040. Beating the old drum of the utterly ossified League of Arab States vision was

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203) Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 91:4, July/August 2012, pp. 2-5. See also Eric Brewer, "Iran's Evolving Nuclear Program and Implications for U.S. Policy," Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2021, at [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/211015\\_Brewer\\_IranNuclear\\_USPolicy.pdf?x71oEFdt\\_zke9xyP7qN5Nc31Rw50FVCd](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/211015_Brewer_IranNuclear_USPolicy.pdf?x71oEFdt_zke9xyP7qN5Nc31Rw50FVCd); and Ali Alfoneh, "Does Iran Want the Nuke and How Fast?," Washington, D.C.: Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, 12 August 2022, at <https://agsiw.org/does-iran-want-the-nuke-and-how-fast/>.

204) Gaub and Laban, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

205) Gaub and Laban, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

an amusing page-turner that highlighted the lack of imagination as to what Gulf Cooperation Council leaders contemplated.

To better protect their vision, the Arab Foresight Group scholars identified thirteen [even the number was suspect since these all qualified for pessimism and uber negativity] wild cards that illustrated potentially disruptive future events in the region, and which could upset all three scenarios. These included: (1) Chemical weapons in the hands of a non-state actor; (2) The House of Saud falls; (3) War between Saudi Arabia and Iran; (4) Energy technology revolution; (5) A Russian proxy war; (6) Death of Bashar al-Assad; (7) IS attacks the West; (8) Disintegration of the Gulf Cooperation Council [this one was a doozy as it envisaged Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman leaving the GCC], (9) A new Nasser emerges; (10) Natural catastrophe fosters cooperation; (11) War between Egypt and Ethiopia; (12) Islamic State becomes a state; and (13) Kurdistan becomes a state.<sup>206)</sup> These wild cards were, well, too wild to be taken seriously though the report concluded with a call for multilateralism, since that may be “the answer to Arab problems,” because economic integration, intelligence sharing, confronting youth unemployment, addressing climate change trials, and fighting terrorists, among other challenges, would all require “regional and never purely national” solutions. It further admonished Arab states to act and avoid the “wrong turn” if they did not wish to “face not only protracted instability, but lose important gains made over the last few decades.”<sup>207)</sup>

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206) Gaub and Laban, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

207) Gaub and Laban, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

*European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme*

The second major report identified for analysis in this essay, *Imagining Future(S) for the Middle East and North Africa*, was equally comprehensive as it looked into hopes and frustrations.<sup>208)</sup> After a brief introduction that listed a full catalog of risks in what its authors believed was a diverse region with disparate expectations, the reader absorbed seven scenarios for 2025, and ten scenarios for 2050, which deserved attention in toto. Interestingly, scenarios were defined as “imagined futures, ... neither forecasts nor prognoses,” though the authors hoped that these would “help to guide strategy and shape the future as they sharpen our ability to think about alternatives and open up thinking ‘outside the box’.” In short, scenarios described “a societal system, its structures, basic drivers, powers, relations, and other aspects,” even if everything in this report pointed towards “greater conflict and contentious state-society dynamics, regional fragmentation and shifting centers of gravity,” the consequences of “the region’s embeddedness in global rivalries and disruptive socio-economic and environmental international trends.”<sup>209)</sup> According to this report, the Middle East was

“characterized by high levels of violence—conflicts were by far the most frequently mentioned risk, and terrorism came next. It is worth underlining that politically related risks such as authoritarianism and political instability, as well as a fragile economic situation, were also identified as potentially destabilizing factors” by interviewees who shared insights with researchers. Like the first report analyzed above, this second one identified youth unemployment, bad governance, corruption, political repression, and environmental degradation that acted as key indicators of significantly

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208) Edgar Göll, Silvia Colombo and Eduard Soler i Lecha, *Imagining Future(S) for the Middle East and North Africa*, Middle East and North Africa Regional Architecture [MENARA]: Mapping Geopolitical Shifts, Regional Order and Domestic Transformations, Number 2, March 2019, at [https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/menara\\_fr\\_2.pdf](https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/menara_fr_2.pdf).

209) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

increased risks for conflicts. While it covered the entire region, the report concluded that the Arab Gulf region was in a world by itself, with many opportunities that encouraged foreign direct investment(s) (FDIs) though several risks endured, including rentierism and the Iran–Saudi Arabia rivalry that could, potentially, discourage FDIs. Researchers who produced this chronicle interviewed scores of indigenous actors, who were asked to identify what could or would shape the future of the region. “Respondents spontaneously mentioned many actors and of very different kinds (local, regional and global),” though the “top four players appeared to be Iran, Saudi Arabia, the USA and Russia,” to which we will return below after we examine the scenarios in some detail.

The seven 2025 scenarios start off with (1) *Scarce Natural Resources: Water, Food and the Effects of Climate Change*, which assumed “environmental degradation, coupled with demographic growth to well above 500 million people, placed natural resources under stress.” Water scarcity was a reality and chances were good that by 2025, this resource would be in severe shortage although Arab Gulf monarchies continued their large investments into desalination plants to meet demand.<sup>210</sup> The scenario envisaged that by 2025 no climate-related food crisis emerged, though the analysis highlighted the attention being devoted to the matter, something that could only be applauded.

In the second scenario, (2) *Oil Still Matters—But Decarbonisation Is Unstoppable*, there was an appreciation that crude production, which accounted for around 38 percent of total world output in 2016, still mattered. Most of the gas produced in the MENA region, which was chiefly exported to

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210) For a brief introduction to the massive water desalination programs in GCC states, see Buzaina Moosa, Priyank Trivedi, Haleema Saleem and Javaid Zaidi, “Desalination in the GCC Countries—A Review,” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 357, 10 July 2022, at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2022.131717>.

Asian states (mainly Japan, the Republic of Korea, India and China), came under pressure in 2022 in the aftermath of the War for Ukraine after European countries bid for the same supplies. The scenario added that “most MENA countries have failed to meet the energy goals they fixed for 2025 and it was likely that the obstacles preventing them from doing so will not be removed in the short term.” This was disheartening but just the tip of the proverbial diagnostic iceberg. It continued:

“Saudi Arabia, on the contrary, is falling short of realizing its ‘Vision 2030,’ as regional and domestic tensions have diverted attention from this strategic transformation. Overall, in terms of energy demand by fuel, by 2025 most countries in the region continue their efforts in diversifying their energy mix, albeit with different degrees of success.”<sup>211)</sup>

What this perplexing foresight revealed was seriously troubling because it first anticipated a failure for *Vision 2030* and, second, indicated that alternative sources of energy were coming online. In fact, this was one of the goals enunciated in *Vision 2030*, but the negative outlook revealed deep-seated wishful thinking that, to be fair, was unimaginative. Why not consider *Vision 2030* as a successful development even if many hurdles remained to be crossed, and why should scholars rule concrete realizations out?

In scenario (3) *Social Contract Under Threat: Inequalities in the Forefront*, “income inequality within individual MENA countries was not very high when compared with the international statistics ... though “wealth inequality was considerably higher and under-reported, as large fortunes were not adequately accounted for in official statistics.” The scenario quoted the 2018 edition of the “World Inequality Report” that concluded MENA “as a whole had the highest income inequality in the world: 10 percent of the population

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211) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

had 61 percent of the income,”<sup>212)</sup> which raised the question of such discrepancies elsewhere. To usher in more equality, the report envisaged female empowerment even if in 2017, readers discovered, “the Middle East rates were the worst in the Global Gender Gap Index, and out of 144 countries Saudi Arabia occupied the 138th position.” Apparently, the solution was to take “World Bank development indicators,” which “pointed out a very low labor force participation for women (around 20 percent), the highest unemployment rate and the widest gender gap in entrepreneurship in the world,” all of which needed attention. The scenario foresaw that by 2020, Saudi Arabia “put an end to the male-guardianship system together with the laws introduced in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Jordan incentivizing women’s participation in the job market were seen as major turning points.”<sup>213)</sup> Amazingly, this was precisely what *Vision 2030* called for, with significant progress in female employment recorded across the board just a few years in, though social roadblocks persisted.<sup>214)</sup>

In scenario (4) *Fragmented Societies: Polarization and Pluralization*, the authors examined another transnational trend that, reportedly, shook the entire Middle East in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings that highlighted the fragmentation of the Islamist camp both domestically and regionally. On the one hand, the distinction between moderate Islamists and more conservative, even purist, views widened—“as exemplified by the entrenched doctrinal and political differences between the Muslim Brotherhood-derived groups and the Salafists in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia.” In this instance, we still have various sects benefiting from Saudi Arabia’s financial and political backing, which was uncharacteristic of Riyadh’s actual record between 2015

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212) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

213) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

214) Saudi women made up 33% of the labor force in 2021—nearly double what it was five years earlier. See Raya Jalabi, “Saudi Women Barrel into Workforce in Changing Kingdom,” *Reuters*, 4 November 2021, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-women-barrel-into-workforce-changing-kingdom-2021-11-04/>.

and 2022. Still, the scenario envisaged a renaissance for Iraq in particular, with lower “levels of violence and political tension” though the trend was not as peaceful elsewhere. The scenario further predicted how “everyone talked about Iraq leaving behind its dark ages.” Relying on interview responses, the authors claimed that some placed “more emphasis on the brutality of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship while others pointed to the sectarian violence that followed the US intervention in 2003 and the trauma of the ISIS takeover of Mosul.” It closed with the prediction that in 2025, Iraq was “said to be experiencing a renaissance in all fields,” though “Iraqi politics remained extremely complex but political tensions did not affect citizens’ daily life and militias were effectively integrated into the state security apparatus.<sup>215)</sup> Importantly, Iraq’s fortunes improved dramatically after Prime Minister Mustafah Kazimih joined the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies in the camp of those who valued ‘Awrabah, and rejected foreign interferences in its internal affairs.<sup>216)</sup> For the record, this was only done because the GCC States backed Baghdad but also because Kazimih, a Shi‘ah, was persuaded that Iraq’s Arab identity prevailed over its religious affiliation.

Scenario (5) *Intrusive Authoritarianism: Control, Repression, and Disinformation*, relied on the 2025 reports published by Amnesty International, Transparency International, Freedom House, and Reporters without Borders, all of which depicted gloomy situations for political freedoms and human rights throughout the region. It further relied on World Bank indicators on governance, which were equally depressing, with Tunisia

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215) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

216) For insights on Prime Minister Mustafah Kazimih’s accolades to the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies, see Rank Alaaldin, “Iraq’s Best Hope is Developing Stronger Ties to the Gulf—with US help,” *Brookings*, 19 August 2020, at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/08/19/iraqs-best-hope-is-developing-stronger-ties-to-the-gulf-with-us-help/>. See also Hassan al-Mustafa, “Kadhimi Deepens Cooperation with Saudi Arabia, UAE in Gulf tour,” *Al-Monitor*, 8 April 2021, at <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/04/kadhimi-deepens-cooperation-saudi-arabia-uae-gulf-tour>; and Layal Niaz, *Tumultuous yet Promising: The Evolution of GCC-Iraq Relations*, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Gulf Research Center, June 2022, at <https://www.grc.net/documents/62a9917b71502GCCIRAQLAYAL.pdf>.

as the only case in which significant progress was recorded between 2005 and 2025. This scenario opted to concentrate on anxiety among authoritarian leaders who, remarkably, harbored perceptions of betrayal from within. Several governments suffered from “underground factional fights but the opaque nature of those systems kept them away from the public eye.” Much like the *European Union Institute for Security Studies* examined above, the authors of this scenario conceived of:

“hereditary successions that have taken place in some of these countries (Saudi Arabia, Bahrein, Oman, UAE), the election of a new supreme leader in Iran and the speculation about post-Sisi’s Egypt unleashed these political frictions. One of the most destabilizing succession processes was that of Saudi Arabia. King Salman disappeared from the public scene for three months and there were imminent rumors of the abdication of his son Mohammed bin Salman. These were the circumstances that prompted internal rivals in the House of Saud to attempt a military coup in July 2021. They failed. The coup was suffocated within thirty-six hours and its promoters were sentenced to death. Since then, monarchs and presidents across the region have intensified purges against high-level officials. Mistrust has never been so high.”<sup>217)</sup>

It was fair to ask why scholars continued to expect military coup d’états in a part of the world that had not recorded such outbursts in over five decades! What were the reasons that possibly motivated the creation of such scenarios, except to foster a sense of instability, where the opposite prevailed? Why was every single scenario embedded in gloomy predictions that truly were at some distance from reality?

Scenario (6) *A Militarized and Brutalized Region*, continued this trend, assuming that in 2025, the Middle East would still be “one of the least

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217) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 31

peaceful regions in the world.” According to the Global Peace Index, duly quoted in this scenario, the area accumulated “unsolved conflicts and persistent humanitarian crises,” as it was also “one of the most-militarized regions in the world and one in which mistrust” prevailed since countries looked to each other as rivals. This was disingenuous because conservative Arab Gulf monarchies were not anxious to devote large percentages of their financial resources to military expenditures if no credible threat(s) existed. In fact, the scenario acknowledged that Iran continued to pose security challenges though this was cleverly twisted to fit specific agendas. “The level of support or opposition to Iranian policies in the region remained a polarizing factor,” the scenario reported, and added:

“However, it is not the only one. Mohamed bin Salman’s unilateralism, even more so since he became king in 2020, has infused confrontation with its own allies. Relations between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi are not as good as they were back in 2018. The division among those who advocate for normalization with Israel and those who label such a move as a betrayal is also igniting the region. Jordan is the epicenter as Gulf countries push Amman to further compromise with Israel, but its population is ostensibly against it. In Jordan, political and economic frustrations are a very dangerous cocktail. Analysts point out that tensions between Turkey and the Emirates are escalating, and that they are likely to project their ideological rivalry in the Horn of Africa, Libya, and Palestine. Rumors of imminent Israeli or Israeli-US attacks on Iran have surfaced every now and then, but the two camps have preferred to flex their muscles in Syria and Lebanon.”<sup>218)</sup>

Once again, a plethora of dubious impressions blurred scholarly visions, all to emphasize preferred gloom and doom outlooks. According to this scenario, there was opposition to Iranian policies without clarifying whether those

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218) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

strategies merited any resistance. Was Tehran a peaceful neighbor, pursuing brotherly guidelines, or was it an aggressive regional hegemon that confronted fresh internal challenges in 2022? Readers could not possibly figure this out even if they tried hard to read between the lines. Then we have Muhammad bin Salman's unilateralism, which remained undefined here as well, though it allegedly "infused confrontation with its own allies" that, to say the least, reflected schizophrenia instead of exhibiting the behavior of a monarch. Several other negative features were sprinkled next, including poor ties between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, political normalization with Israel, pushing Amman into a corner, and escalating tensions between Abu Dhabi and Ankara, all topped by the perennial Israeli attack on Iran. Interestingly, less than three years after the publication of this scenario, intra-GCC ties were quasi-normal, ties between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were at their zenith, normalization with Israel was more advanced than many envisaged, Jordan became an asset to the Arab world and Turkey reconciled with both the Kingdom and the Federation. To be sure, Iran was a serious concern, not because Arabs rejected any cooperation with their neighbor, but due to Tehran's persistent interferences in Arab affairs—stretching from Iraq to Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and several GCC States. For reasons that remained murky, the authors of the scenario relied on an official from the security forces in Lebanon, who stated that: "Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel [we]re the four major powers in the region, and Saudi Arabia and Israel have become a united bloc," which was genuinely insipid though typical of pro-Iranian perspectives. What stood out in this scenario was the continued emphasis on al-Qa'idah, and while it claimed that the so-called Islamic State was defeated as early as 2018, by 2025 those claims appeared to be misguided. "ISIS initially mutated into a plethora of mafia-like organizations," it claimed, "which later on sporadically launched violent operations pretending to defend the rights of disenfranchised Sunni communities in Iraq,

Syria, and Lebanon,”<sup>219</sup>) even if there was nothing in the scenario about Hizballah in Lebanon, the Hashd al-Sha‘abi in Iraq, the Huthis in Yemen, and other Shi‘ah militias that spread havoc throughout Arab societies. Why was this not part of long-term inspirations to futurologists anxious to get it right?

Finally, scenario (7) *Foreign Meddling and Rebalanced Global Ambitions*, conceived no major changes in the United States foreign policy towards Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict by 2025, which was tragic. It posited that the terms of the so-called “Deal of the Century” were additional proof that Washington was not and did not aspire to be an honest broker, which was not a revelation. According to this scenario, the United States of America maintained its “stick policy” towards Iran as the “succession of the Supreme Leader, after Khamenei’s unexpected demise in 2023, opened space for the USA to further meddle with Tehran, but always with the same objectives in mind: delegitimizing the Islamic Republic and its leadership and toppling the regime.”<sup>220</sup>) This was somewhat surprising since Washington pursued a pro-Iran policy for decades in a classic divide and rule approach that allowed it to retain its hold on the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies. Indeed, and notwithstanding the 1979 hostage crisis that breached every diplomatic norm, Washington concluded the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, better known as the “Iran Deal”) under the Barack Obama Administration, which a successor froze, before the Joe Biden government tried to rekindle it—without any success—all, ostensibly to avoid a potential nuclear Iran.

What these seven scenarios identified for 2025, presumably of the conservative varieties that aimed to anticipate what could presumably occur, failed to record some of the significant changes that occurred after 2015 on the Arabian Peninsula. The ten scenarios for 2050, which are very briefly

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219) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37.

220) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

identified next, were equally stale since they too skipped the most important transformations that parts of the Arab World recorded between 2015 and 2022. For example, who could disagree with the first 2050 scenario, (1) *Unstoppable Climate Change*, since this “will be a decisive global reality, but its impact will differ from one region to the other”? Moreover, who could discount those developing countries, especially those in arid regions of the globe, “will be among the most affected”? In fact, it was a foregone conclusion that “extreme weather phenomena, heat waves and droughts, desertification, severe water shortages and a rise in sea level,” will all leave consequences for many societies—rich or poor.<sup>221)</sup>

In the second 2050 scenario, (2) *Post-Oil World*, readers are advised to anticipate “profound changes in the global energy market,” not for lack of supplies, but due to “the gigantic steps forward in technological innovation for renewable energy production and storage capacities.” The authors recognized that a “drop in oil prices, particularly in heavily populated countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Algeria, and Iraq, could force governments to introduce austerity measures,” which would translate into “regular waves of unrest” that, in turn, carried the risk of further “repression and region-wide destabilization.”<sup>222)</sup> Regrettably, this scenario did not foresee the probability that GCC governments could adopt policies that would generate resources from alternative sources of energy as several embarked on large-scale solar and nuclear programs.<sup>223)</sup>

Scenario (3) *An Urbanized Region*, listed population increases in major cities throughout the Middle East, including Tehran (with 11 million

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221) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

222) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

223) For important indicators of future investments in alternative energy sources, see “Saudi Arabia Plans \$100 bln Renewables Investment, says Minister,” *Reuters*, 13 December 2021, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-plans-100-bln-renewables-investment-says-minister-2021-12-13/>. See also “Algeria Powers Ahead with Huge Renewable Energy Plans,” *International Energy Forum*, 21 June 2021, at <https://www.ief.org/news/algeria-powers-ahead-with-huge-renewable-energy-plans>.

inhabitants in 2050), Riyadh and Jiddah (with 8 and 7 million, respectively). Algiers and Casablanca recorded over 5 million, all of which implied that these surges would create concrete challenges, even if urbanization was well established in the realm, and intimately familiar to most Arab intellectuals and decision-makers.<sup>224)</sup>

Scenario (4) *Digitalization and Automation*, foresaw important changes in this area, and scenario (5) *Religiosity, Individualization, and Citizenship*, anticipated profound societal trends that, by 2050, ushered in new variables to further polarize indigenous populations and their leaders. In a eureka moment, this scenario stated that “attitudes towards religion will continue to be a major driver of societal and political dynamics and remain a highly contentious issue,” which was akin to declaring that the sky was blue!<sup>225)</sup>

The next four scenarios for 2050 were all the practical variety as (6) *Strong or Fierce States*, opined that Middle Eastern states proved far more resilient than some expected, but not for the right reasons. By 2050, elites apparently adopted practical considerations, and controlled the state the only way they knew how to: “consolidate state centrality vis-à-vis non-state players.” With yet another degree of cynicism, “state agents (state elites, the public sector, security apparatuses) and the dynamics revolving around them (clientelism, state capitalism)” remained “predominant in the region compared with other parts of the world,” which was depressing because it failed to imagine that rulers and elites would also do everything in their powers to protect, promote, and even serve their populations.<sup>226)</sup> Be that as it may, scenario (7) *Managing the Effects of Today’s Conflicts*, prepared “new drivers of conflict,” as

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224) For useful primers on this topic, see Abdulaziz Y. Saqqaf, ed., *The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World*, New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987; and Harvey Molotch and Davide Ponzini, *The New Arab Urban: Gulf Cities of Wealth, Ambition and Distress*, New York: New York University Press, 2019.

225) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

226) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

“demographic pressure and accelerated urbanization; climate change and natural resources scarcity; energy transition and its effects on the labor market,” and similar phenomena turned into “sources for risks or opportunities depending on how they were managed by regional and international actors.” By 2050, the scenario expected Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates to “have developed their own nuclear weapons,” the consequence of deeply ingrained “insecurities and the lack of effective multilateral mechanisms.”<sup>227)</sup> In light of yet another practical feature, scenario (8) *China: Primus Inter Pares*, anticipated that Beijing would “likely to be the world’s largest economy” by 2050, with an annual growth rate that remained steady, and the remarkable accomplishment of “keeping in check internal tensions associated with inequality and governance deficits.” This was a positive development though problematic in more ways than one given the lack of liberal traditions and transparency in China. Still, no one would or should be surprised if such a scenario became reality presumably because Chinese society could achieve such progress. Interestingly, the scenario recognized that the United States and Europe retained certain roles in 2050, even if the “consolidation of China as the new key power on the international system,” which “coexisted with other players rescaling their objectives and strategies or taking a step back, yet still representing a voice to be heard in MENA regional governance,” were also present.<sup>228)</sup>

Finally, scenarios (9) *Game-changing Africa*, and (10) *Europe and the MENA Region: A Family Issue*, projected connections between the European Union and these regions that, presumably, allowed for further growth in some Middle Eastern countries. It foresaw a possible Turkish accession to the European Union by 2050 that, were it to occur, would indeed be a “major game-changer,” though this was far-fetched given civilizational problems.<sup>229)</sup>

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227) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

228) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

The chief shortcoming of this second report appears early when the authors opine that:

“All Arab states struggle with national identity—as highlighted by the ongoing debate on the disappearance of the Sykes-Picot states—as the main political ideologies are regional rather than national, and implicitly seek the abolition of the Arab state as such. The different forms of Islamism or Arabism reject the regional state system as it is and seek to establish a larger pan-Arab state: both ideologies are infused with sectarianism, used by states and local groups alike, as it promotes either Arabs over non-Arabs (such as Kurds, Israelis or Iranians) or one type of Islam over another. Although the 2011 uprisings initially had a strong Arabist dimension, this has now given way to a militant Islamist rhetoric.”<sup>230)</sup>

What was amazing was the emphasis on ideology, which was genuinely outdated, as leading actors stepped away from most, if not all, ideologies starting around 2015. Few looked back. This was the single most important socio-political consequence of the post-2011 uprisings that necessitated carefully reassessments though few bothered.

### Probable Futures of Global Order and MENA's Strategies

By 2050, the political geography of the Middle East will probably be significantly altered, led by the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies grouped within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), along with Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt. The GCC+3 states, representing the nascent United States of Arabia—even if this did not encompass the entire Arab nation—will most likely have positioned themselves as the premier nation-states to consolidate their

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229) Huntington, *op. cit.*, 144-149, 174-179.

230) Göll, Colombo, and Soler i Lecha, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

avant-gardiste visions, articulated core interests like never before, and played increasingly useful roles on the global scene.<sup>231)</sup> North Africa was likely to be both Europeanized and Africanized over the next three decades, meaning that the Maghrib was likely to record significant progress in the context of traditional societies, while several countries adopted fresh outlooks to defend themselves. Turkey, Iran, and Israel, three peripheral states to the Arab realm for centuries, were somewhat integrated in Middle Eastern affairs though cultural differences lingered, which meant that all three voluntarily placed themselves outside of Arab and Muslim orbits for any meaningful dialogues. Even Turkey, which harbored the dual dream of the Ottoman Empire and the leadership of the Sunni World, and which could not shed its heavy Islamist shroud, stood apart. Ankara's projections were rejected by the GCC+3 that, naturally, assumed the mantle of Arab and Muslim leaderships. By 2050, the Iranian hallucination for a rekindled Persian Empire would probably continue, but such dreams could only be revitalized if the country's multi-ethnic composition was transformed into a truly "Persian" State—a near impossibility. Israel struggled with its Jewish identity, which excluded most of the population that happened to be Palestinian, as it confronted democratization. Its elites rejected ethnic absorption that, consequently, allowed them to rule—but always in fear of conflicts to come. Syria and Lebanon wallowed in misery unable to overcome mercantilist demons that defined their very *raison d'être*, as survivors of repeated civil wars branched out into nations of beggars, anxious to live on the dole. Only the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies, led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, along with Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt, managed to acquire the political will to reorder priorities, adopt long-term global visions to create wealth, and implement policies that allowed for prosperity to flourish. Only the United States of Arabia was

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231) As these lines are composed at the age of 68, chances are excellent that this author will be dead by 2050, when several of the prognostications made here may well have (or may not have) occurred. History will record whether the predictions that follow prove to be accurate.

positioned to deal with the United States of America, the United States of Russia, the United States of China, and other power poles in 2050.

### Preferred Futures of Global Order and MENA's Strategies

Conservative Arab Gulf monarchies may well have been, as Clement Henry Moore coined, “bunker regimes,” though dramatic transformations by 2050 liberated them from such categorizations.<sup>232)</sup> Ironically, bunker regimes were traditional Western allies par excellence, thrived for a while throughout the Middle East, and included Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Syria, and a few failed states. The conservative monarchies on the other hand, while “undemocratic” by certain standards—allegedly because they lacked political participation rights, exhibited limited freedoms of speech and association, and above all else, did not tolerate personal liberties to display one’s sexuality in public for example—were far less repressive, and far less corrupt than regimes driven by ideologies from a different era. Importantly, the GCC+3 was certainly committed—one is even inclined to state, married to the very idea—to fulfilling the needs and aspirations of their societies, which was certainly novel though a reality by 2050. Even the allegedly “repressive, corrupt, divorced from the needs and aspirations of their societies,” and similar labels that Samuel P. Huntington identified in the last part of the twentieth century, were no longer valid.<sup>233)</sup>

Indeed, nothing could be further from the truth in 2050, as several young leaders emerged to guide their countries to different shores, in relatively transparent ways and, far more important, without emulating others. For some, there were specific models to mimic, Kemal Ataturk from Turkey or

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232) Clement M. Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 113-161.

233) Huntington, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

Lee Kuan Yew from Singapore, both of whom allegedly married modernization with Westernization, though an individual like Muhammad bin Salman was not interested in emulating either. Strangely, the Kemal Ataturk model may well have been applicable for Turkey, at least before the *Justice and Development Party* and its Islamist leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came to power, but this was not what Arabs sought. Critically, while Arabs accepted Westernization in specific contexts, little of Western norms were what most wanted to emulate. Rather, Arabs endeavored to acquire true modernization, that is to transform from a rural, agrarian societies into urban, industrial societies without shedding their traditions and without becoming secular. The Arab preference was neither *Ti-Yong* (Chinese learning for the fundamental principles; Western learning for practical use), nor *Wakon, Yōsei* (Japanese spirit, Western technique), but *‘Awrabah* (Arab/Muslim learning/spirit, global shared principles). In other words, the desire was not simply to borrow specific ideologies from other civilizations to survive, but to share one’s values and become inclusive of what one determined was precious in other cultures. Those who argued that the use of interest rates (usury), fasting, inheritance laws, and female participation in the workforce, among other behavior that allegedly prevented modernization, failed to note, as Maxime Rodinson forcefully posited: “there is nothing to indicate in a compelling way that the Muslim religion prevented the Muslim world from developing along the road to modern capitalism.”<sup>234</sup> A leader like Muhammad bin Salman did not even wish to emulate Lee Kuan Yew, who learned mandarin to govern Singapore properly, though this model was certainly appealing.

Interestingly, the only leader Muhammad bin Salman wanted to follow was his grandfather, ‘Abdul ‘Aziz, who had a vision for the United States of Arabia as promoted by his Christian Lebanese advisor, Amin Rihani. Like his

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<sup>234</sup>) Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*, London: Saqi Books, 2007, p. 157.

illustrious predecessor, Muhammad bin Salman worked to make Saudi Arabia part of the world, especially the developed world, as he invested in his own nation, strengthened the Kingdom's role within the G20 and most other global institutions. He labored to modernize the Kingdom while ensuring that Arab civilizations were further strengthened after they first emerged in Iraq around 5000 BC. What he coveted were values, knowledge, and culture to thrive without discarding accumulated traditions. That was his aspiration for *Vision 2030* and, by 2050, the vision's enhanced successor, *Vision 2060*.

Moreover, unlike Western (read Christian) civilization, Muhammad bin Salman was not engaged in a conquest of the world for God or gold, which was a Shi'ah/Persian quest but not a Sunni/Arab objective. Rather, he (and others who agreed with his goals) searched for relevance and happiness. To add value whenever that was possible and to do so both in Arabic as well as in other languages, which finally gave the language its dues much like leading Western scientists did centuries earlier when they became acquainted with Greek discoveries through the then lingua franca for scientific and philosophical knowledge. Ultimately, and through the GCC+3, Riyadh wished to strengthen indigenous laws, both Shari'ah and non-Shari'ah as applicable and necessary, because this new generation of Arab leaders understood that they had to be contributors just as much as they had to borrow from other societies. Shari'ah Laws did not mean one ignored non-Shari'ah principles, even if the revival of non-Western religions in 2050 was largely misunderstood, some labeling it as Westoxification. The latter was a pejorative Persian term (*Gharbzadegi*) variously translated as "Westernized" or "West-struck-ness," which apparently demanded cultural independence from the West and that translated for Samuel P. Huntington in the following: 'We will be modern but we won't be you.'<sup>235</sup> In reality, what the GCC+3 or the United States of Arabia aimed for was "to be modern with others," a subtlety that Western elites missed.

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235) Huntington, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

## Conclusion

In the global struggle for supremacy and influence, which pitted leading Western powers led by the United States with a rising China and that will probably define the state of the world in 2050, the Muslim world was poised to record dramatic gains by that date, as nearly 600 million Arabs added their weight to global affairs. This did not mean that the American-Chinese equation was pre-determined to act as a new world condominium since European powers might have resolved lingering sovereignty concerns and learned to speak with a single voice, or to a lesser extent, Russia may have gained traction by consolidating gains within its near-abroad spheres of influence. Still, no one would be able to ignore the estimated 2.5 billion Muslims who represented over 25% of the global population of 10 billion by 2050 and who, under the United State of Arabia's leadership, would be in a position of influence. Inasmuch as Muslims bowed towards Makkah, read, and prayed in Arabic even if Arabic language speakers were limited, Saudi Arabia was certainly well positioned to lead the United States of Arabia by 2050. Remarkably, Arabs and Muslims looked up to the Kingdom as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, whose leadership quest in the Muslim World was no longer contested. Notwithstanding various Western preferences for Shi'ah Iran—as discussed above—chances were excellent that Tehran would tame its religious zeal and accept its minority status, especially if its leaders wished to rekindle the forlorn Persian civilization.

In the end, and as irreconcilable differences emerged in the 2050 World Order, it was important to note that Arabs were finally writing their own histories and determining their own destinies. They demonstrated that they could and would embark on key transformations through *'Awrabah*, a non-ideological emphasis on Arabism (or COSMO-ARABISM as the Lebanese thinker Nawfal Daou initiated in 2022), which ensured consolidation and

success. Of course, there were other probable global challenges, though leading Arab elites and decision-makers reached their dramatic choices—to be part of the globe—to advance core interests.

To be sure, the likelihood of a multipolar system was high, one that valued survival and prosperity and in which humans stressed intrinsic norms contained in, and celebrated by, a multitude of cultures. They freed the arts to define an evolving mankind, and espoused inclusive economic systems that allowed for the creation of wealth across the board, all of which meant that pragmatism was carefully married with values. These small but useful steps buttressed democratization, whose putative accomplishments ensured more preferable futures, ones where tolerance and the rule of law were acclaimed and upheld.

## 14. The Future of the World Order in 2050: An African Perspective

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### Introduction

The coming decades will be a new phase in Africa's post-independence history. In an initial phase, the continent constituted itself as a formal entity in 1962, when it founded, in the wake of the victory of national liberation over colonialism, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). OAU, imbued with liberationist ideology, was supposed to minister to the birth of Africa as an autonomous bloc of countries, willing and able to decide their own fate. The crisis in the 1970s-1980s signaled the failure of the development models that aimed to fulfill that ambition and the OAU project ran out of steam by the end of the 1980s. The second phase came in the mid-1990s, when the project was revived under the name African Union (AU). Some of the goals of the OAU were kept and reinforced, especially a vision of unity and federation. Others were added, including cultural revival and organization via democratic rule and cooperation on principles of democracy. A vanguard of this reset of African unity, the South African president of 1999-2008 Thabo Mbeki, called it "African Renaissance." Thus, if OAU tried to birth Africa, the AU was to preside over its rebirth. In an essay for the *Review of African Political Economy* in 2001, Rok Ajulu described Mbeki's vision thus: "Mbeki speaks of the rebirth and renewal of the continent, the establishment of democratic political systems, the achievement of sustainable economic development and

the changing of Africa's place in the world economy so that Africa becomes free of the yoke of the international debt burden, and no longer a supplier of raw materials or an importer of manufactured goods." Importantly, Mbeki believed that "the end of the cold-war, completion of the process of decolonization on the continent, and the acceleration of the process of globalization" provided a critical juncture at which such goals became achievable.<sup>236)</sup> The most recent formulation of Africa's vision for its future, the "Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want," adopted by the AU assembly in 2015, expands on Mbeki's vision.<sup>237)</sup> In it, as the title states it, we find what Africa's preferences for the next five or six decades officially are.

But neither the discourse of the African Renaissance nor the policy vision of the AU consider the grave challenges that have all the looks of turning into serious and intractable problems for Africa in that period. The flashpoints here are population growth, climate change, and the management of the natural capital, which are mechanically interrelated: deterioration in one means trouble in the others and vice versa. In each of these areas, the future looks dark, in the sense that they hold the peril of social entropy, i.e., increasing levels of out-of-control disorder that may reach a threshold where disorder grows exponentially and results in full-on chaos, with maximal occurrence of violence and immiseration. As this essay will illustrate, signs of this are already visible today in some countries. Moreover, the tense geopolitics of recent years strongly suggests that the positive critical juncture that Mbeki thought would be favorable to Africa's efforts may be at an end.

Thus, the dramatic story of Africa in the coming decades will be determined by (1) whether the pace of organization that the AU is promoting will be fast enough to beat the rapid progress of social entropy in many – perhaps most –

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236) R. Ajulu. 2001. "Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance in a Globalising World Economy: the Struggle for the Soul of the Continent," in *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 67: 27-42, p. 27.

237) Published online at <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

countries on the continent; and (2) whether international conditions as they may develop under escalating global geopolitical tensions will be favorable or not to Africa's efforts.

This essay does not forecast but analyzes trends and draws some conclusions on what may happen. More specifically, I review the flashpoint challenges mentioned above, I provide a very brief analysis on how or whether they might be turned into opportunities that match Africa's preferences (i.e., the Renaissance vision), and I end with a more speculative reflection (and tentative forecasting) of where current trends, in Africa and internationally, are leading the continent.

## Challenges

Africa's population of 1.2 bn will nearly double to 2.09 bn by 2050. This is a trend of what historian Adam Tooze called an "astonishing demographic transformation," calculating that between the early 1900s and 2050, Africa's share of the world population would have grown from just 7% to a quarter.<sup>238</sup> Powering this surge is youth. If Asia will stay the demographic giant of the world in 2050, a crucial difference with Africa is that half of the continent's population will be below 25 years of age, which implies a socio-economic vibrancy that will be absent in the aging rest-of-the-world. Moreover, Africa is urbanizing as fast as its population is growing, so much so that two-thirds of the population increase by 2050 will be absorbed by large cities and towns, many of which will be among the biggest in the world at that point.

This amounts to a demographic revolution. Historically, Africa, in particular its part south of the Sahara, was underpopulated compared to Asia

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238) A. Tooze, "It's Africa's Century - for Better or Worse," *Foreign Policy*, May 13, 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/13/africa-century-economic-growth/>

and Europe. Its low and scattered population densities prevented, for instance, the development of the big service and labor markets, tax, and property regimes and draftable populations on which states were built in those continents (and a map of ancient African statecraft shows it tended to develop in the areas of high population densities that did exist). Though Africa was more urbanized in the past than the clichés of wildness and savagery produced in the colonial era would have us believe, that rarely amounted to the dense networks of towns and cities found in historical European and Asian geographies (again, with some exceptions). These conditions are being overturned at breakneck speed, giving little time for states and governments to adjust and exploit the potential positive fallout. Socio-economic conditions have constantly improved in Africa since independence, as is shown by the most telling indicator, life expectancy. In practically all countries on the continent, it has lengthened by twenty years and more, despite the brakes put on it by the HIV epidemic in the 1980s-1990s, and this trend will continue in the future. But this means more years to make more children, a fact that must be related to poverty trends. Here too things are better in the sense that poverty rates have been reduced everywhere over the years, but the growth in population means that the absolute number of poor people has increased and will continue to increase. By 2050, the outcome risks being vast poverty amidst more opportunities created by improving conditions but put out of reach by immiseration – a certain recipe for social explosion. The precursor of that grim futurity today is South Africa, which has, according to some sources,<sup>239)</sup> the highest murder rate in the world today, but where socio-economic conditions are the best in Africa south of the Sahara.

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239) See report on recent statistics by journalist Nicole McCain: “An Exceptionally Toxic Mix’: Why SA’s Murder Rate is Shockingly High.’ For News24.  
<https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/an-exceptionally-toxic-mix-why-sas-murder-rate-is-shockingly-high-20220718>

Economic structures in most of Africa are different from those in South Africa today, but they will look very much like them in 2050. At the moment, the primary sector – farming, herding, fishing – is the largest for most national economies, and is thus the biggest employer, producer, and contributor to GDP. This highlights the problem that Africa will have with climate change. The continent is the world region most vulnerable to the climate events that will be triggered by warming above the Paris-Agreement benchmark of 1.5 degrees Celsius because its production systems are extremely weather-sensitive. 95% of agriculture is rain-fed, most fishing is artisanal, most herding pastoral. And more importantly, perhaps, most of the population growth is happening in the rural areas, specifically in farming families, a trend that is increasing violent competition over a dwindling natural capital (water and land for farming and pastures), with the further stress of unpredictable climate change events. Phenomena of social entropy are already occurring in the region that has the largest primary sector, the concomitant highest population growth rates, and the fastest environmental degradation – the Sahel. The blind violence of the Jihad wars that have engulfed the central Sahel is a clear sign of social entropy, especially since they took their turn for the worse when the impoverished pastoralist Fulani were enlisted in Islamist troops.

But Nigeria is the cautionary tale here because it is heading toward a particularly worrying direction on all scores. Its northern region, which has a Sahelian population growth rate (i.e., higher than anywhere else on the continent), is rife with social ills that translate into rampant armed banditry. Roads are infested with highwaymen and rural communities are under attack. Meanwhile, Nigeria has the highest urbanization rate south of the Sahara after South Africa, with signs of similar dystopian realities brewing.<sup>240)</sup> In

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240) See, e.g., Abiodun Raufu and Edidiong Mendie. 2021. "Exploring Gang Risk Factors Among Urban Nigerian Youth," in *Caleb Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, Vol 6, No. 1: 128-143.

sum, Nigeria combines the type of social entropy generated by the current structure of Africa's political economy, with the one that develops with urbanization – i.e., when the tertiary sector and shadow parallel economies come to dominate socio-economic landscapes. Nigeria's woes are also tied to the ways in which its huge natural capital is mismanaged or un-managed.

Conditions in Africa's prime wealth, natural capital, which makes it a rich home of poor people, is another major cause of looming social entropy. According to the United Nations, the continent has 30% of the world's mineral reserves, 12% of its oil, and 8% of its natural gas reserves. It also holds 65% of the world's arable land and 10% of all internal renewable fresh water source.<sup>241)</sup> So far, this natural capital has not been converted into the type of financial capital that could serve as a catalyst for the structural transformation of the economy in any of the countries. Instead, much of it suffers from abusive exploitation, partly due to crime, corruption, and corporate greed, and owing to the stress on the environment from the rapidly growing population and the impact of climate change. Protection and regulation of Africa's natural capital, already difficult now, risk turning into utopia in conditions some decades from today, not least because resource-hungry regions of the outside world will engage in renewed competition to access and exploit it. Depletion from unsustainable use and losses due to illegal or unregulated activity may reduce or degrade the capital over time, and the possibility of Africa turning into a poor home of still poor people by 2050 is very real.

Finally, in the list of challenges going forward, one must note the changing international geopolitics, which is apparently headed in a direction where multilateral cooperation will become harder, with a serious toll on the voice of weaker countries, and nations may be forced to choose a camp in the

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241) See the United Nations Environment Program's online publication "Our Work in Africa" at <https://www.unep.org › regions › africa › our-work-africa>

confrontations that will shape outcomes in critical issue areas – be they climate change-related or access to markets, finance, and resources.

Given the agenda that African states have set for themselves, how would they respond to these growing challenges?

## Opportunities

A flip side of many challenges is opportunities, and perils may also be potentials. Regarding population, most of the world is transitioning into aging, a stage that means depopulation, to use a term that will come back into fashion, especially in the North. Africa, too, will transition into the aging stage, but that will only be in the medium term, i.e., after the 2050s. In the 2050s, Africa will have the largest working age population and potentially the most dynamic consumer market in the world. Some of the AU plans can realize this potential if they are implemented, especially those tied to benchmark objectives in education (“Every child of secondary school age in school and seven out of ten of its graduates without access to tertiary education enrolled in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) programs”), industrial policy and transformations in agriculture and the blue economy.

Opportunities arising from a well-developed plan to combat global warming – which is conspicuously lacking in Agenda 2063 – can tie into this. Africa has the lowest total greenhouse gas emissions and the lowest per capita emissions in the world, but it has the largest potential for renewable energy, in solar, wind, hydro, and its newly found immense potential for green hydrogen. According to the International Energy Agency, “Africa could supply the whole world with affordable low-carbon energy in the form of hydrogen.<sup>242)</sup>” Already, Namibia has embarked on a 9.4 bn \$ green hydrogen

project that is scheduled to enter production in 2026, with an initial target of 2 gigawatts of renewable electricity generated – enough to power about 2 million homes regionally and globally. Other countries, such as Kenya, Nigeria, or South Africa are developing similar projects.<sup>243)</sup> Going forward, this can be a game-changer on a continent where upward to 45% of the population has no access to electricity. Africa also has the largest reserve of the rare earth needed for “green” technologies, a winner in a future where drastically reducing the incidence of climate change will increasingly be a priority of industrial economy.

Incidentally, such developments underline the difficulty of forecasting decades into the future: projections are made based on current trends and structures, but the “continuity fallacy,” i.e., the failure and, often, impossibility to take into account solutions (or problems) that are still invisible or nonexistent will prove them wrong, in part or in toto.

That caveat being given, I conclude by doing just such an exercise.

### Third phase

The questions of the future for Africa as I have argued here are: will organization overtake entropy? And will the global (dis)order help or hinder the “African Renaissance?” These questions are so pressing that they are ushering Africa in a third phase of its post-independence history, where some attitudes will persist, but conditions will change.

Africa has opted for democracy as its preferred mode of organization.

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242) Victoria Masterson. 2022. “How Africa could be Global Hydrogen Powerhouse”. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/07/africa-hydrogen-iea/>

243) Bitsat Yohannes and Arona Diedou, “Green Hydrogen: a Viable Option for Transforming Africa’s Energy Sector,” 13 July 2022, Africa Renewal. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2022/green-hydrogen-viable-option-transforming-africas-energy-sector>

Considering the extreme heterogeneity (in terms of culture, religion, language, and ethnicity) of all its countries, that preference seems wise. Moreover, the idea is that if all the countries adopt this regime, then cooperation between them will be fluid, and integration rendered more achievable. But judging by current trends, most African countries will not be democratic in 2050 or will be so only in name. North and Equatorial Africa are in the hands of dictatorships intent on perpetuating themselves, including by resorting to large scale violence; west Africa, its French-speaking part at least, is prone to coup d'états; in many other countries, democracies have produced failing political classes that incite many to admire the successful strongman of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, who will be 93 in 2050 – the age at which Robert Mugabe was ousted from power in Zimbabwe. Since integration aims to curtail authoritarianism (democracy clauses are enshrined in union treaties), it will not be promoted in any genuine way by most rulers. The African Renaissance vision, which depends on integration being taken seriously by national leaderships, will therefore not be consistently implemented.

Those leaderships do adhere to the vision, which is not an artificial production of the AU but a set of aspirations that rises from African history and is cultivated by intelligentsias and civil societies. They will not reject it, but they will implement bits of it only when it serves their own interests and particular vision. In some cases, this will happen as a response to the pressure of entropy. As disorder increases, leaders will be forced to think up organizational solutions to tame it, as is already seen today in the Sahel countries, where long-neglected security forces are being built up and states must learn the work of hardwired territorial control. The countries closer to the threshold of entropy – Nigeria comes to mind – will have a tougher job doing this than others, and their setbacks will be a danger for their neighbors.

In the global arena, Africa, as a weak agent, is inherently revisionist, even though the Renaissance vision is an attempt at reconciling the incompatibles, i.e., development through industrial policy, which implies some form of protectionism and promotion of “national firms,” and neoliberal globalization, which relies on “free trade” and low tariffs. But the US-led status quo that came out of the end of the Cold War is failing to take on global challenges such as climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, and others. The Indian scholar and diplomat Shivshankar Menon explains this by arguing that at this stage all the powerful agents have become revisionists too, including the US. “Major powers,” he writes, are “pursuing their own ends to the detriment of the international order and [are] seeking to change the order itself.<sup>244</sup>” The emerging situation is not a return to the clear-cut great-power antagonism of the Cold War, but a transition into a world of uncertainty, and therefore less cooperation and more confrontation, albeit tempered by the interdependence of economic interests inherited from globalization (but Russia’s war in Ukraine suggests that such *doux-commerce* restraint has limits).

In any case, the international conditions under which the Renaissance vision was formulated no longer exist. The new turn of events will create new constraints and opportunities for Africa in the coming decades and may foster two very different attitudes: either a stark focus on the “national interest,” in imitation of powerful actors, or a pooling of forces to mount a bloc response to certain constraints and exploit certain opportunities. Given the very low level of political and economic integration in Africa, the former is the likelier scenario, even if a bloc logic may materialize on certain issues that may arise, at least in subsets of countries. Contrary to the hopes of Thabo Mbeki, the post-Cold-War international order was not favorable to African integration and transformation – but to a subaltern integration of

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244) S. Menon, “Nobody Wants the Current World Order,” in *Foreign Affairs*, August 3, 2022. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/nobody-wants-current-world-order>

Africa to trade regimes organized principally by the European Union and China. It might be that the new configuration of potentially “meaner, more contentious geopolitics” (to quote Menon) would give more bargaining power to many African countries in the years to come. But the African predicament is part of the great global issue of uneven development which only a functional world order with active multilateralism can tackle helpfully. Absent this, countries in Africa will strengthen their position in the thickening geopolitical haze if they manage to turn into opportunities the challenges of population, climate change, and the natural capital. Some will perform better than others in that regard, and those who take the program of the African Renaissance will hold the key to a better future.

# PART IV

## CONCLUSION

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15. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Korean Perspective
16. Comprehensive Analysis and Suggestions for Preferable Futures



## 15. The Future of the World Order in 2050: A Korean Perspective

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### Introduction

Changes in the current world order are multifaceted and multi-layered. It is difficult to grasp the overall picture because short-term changes and long-term transitions take place together. While discussing the end of the Anthropocene, pundits also discuss the end of the Westphalian order. After World War II, the liberal rule-based order led by the United States is slowly weakening, and many countries are competing for an alternative order to replace it. The United States posits the world order as a confrontation between liberalism and authoritarianism, and the Ukraine War exemplifies Russia's efforts to replace the liberal order.

Since many changes are happening simultaneously, it is not easy to study them with their respective logic in depth. Moreover, it is difficult to figure out how these changes are connected and, in some ways, amplified. When analyzing the world order, geopolitical competition among the great powers stands out, so other changes are likely to be less focused. During the post-Cold War period, the U.S. unipolar hegemonic system has been the most prominent feature during the post-Cold War period. This is because the U. S. power, which was unprecedentedly predominant in history, defined all aspects of the world order. However, over the past 30 years, phenomena such as globalization, the so-called rise of the rest, the fourth industrial revolution,

worsening of environmental problems, and health crises such as Covid-19 have co-occurred.

In National Security Strategy 2022, the Biden administration emphasized the importance of strategic competition between the U.S. and China and the cross-border challenges, claiming that the post-Cold war was over. The problem is that the current multi-layered changes are mainly dealt with from the perspective of geopolitical competition among the great powers and strategic competition between the U.S. and China. Serious crises that may lead to the destruction of humanity are dealt with from the perspective of power competition between existing countries.

Studying the changing world order is very difficult and complex, but it has become a practical task rather than a merely academic one. In addition, the mainstream International Relations theories, based on the experience in the 20th century, also has many limitations in studying new phenomena, so a new and more complex perspective will pave the way to enlighten the view.

## 2050 Probable Future

### **Back to the Cold War falling into the Thucydides Trap?**

The time for mutual engagement between the U.S. and China is over, and both countries think they are conducting a hegemonic war, or at least a competition for leadership. The scope of US-China strategic competition is gradually expanding, and competition will intensify for the time being.

Both the U.S. and China are facing the task of simultaneously coping with the negative consequences of neoliberal globalization and the task of winning the great power competition.

The competition started in the field of trade, now spreading to the fields of

technology and finance, then to the fields of ideology and military security. Competition in the field of technology is emerging as an essential issue that will determine victory or defeat in the future economy and the military domain. In a situation where rules and norms for a new global economic order are not emerging, the US-China competition is expected to further strengthen the current competitiveness. The United States strictly restricts trade and investment in China, starting with semiconductor production, a key technology sector. It is trying to maintain its technological superiority in China through cooperation with its allies. The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the so-called Chip 4 Alliance are efforts to reorganize the supply chain of key materials against China and prevent the outflow of advanced semiconductor technology to China. China criticizes the U.S. export restrictions, trade wars, and restrictions on technological cooperation as arbitrary economic policies that violate the liberal economic order and strongly opposes the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy as a policy to contain China.

The future possibility of having a U.S.-China military clash is not in sight yet. But security competition generally unfolds in gray areas, conventional warfare, and nuclear forces. The South China Sea, the East China Sea, the cross-strait, the Korean Peninsula, and the China-India border, security flashpoints in the Indo-Pacific region, could develop into a military conflict between the U.S. and China in the future.

The United States established a multi-layered security system in the Indo-Pacific region while maintaining its superiority in the field of new military technology and linking the security structure of this region and the European region. The concept of multi-domain operations and integrated deterrence that integrates land, sea, air, cyber, space, and electromagnetic domains aims to balance against China militarily.

China is also rapidly increasing its nuclear military capabilities to overcome

U.S. balancing and is pursuing the Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) strategy. For the rapid increase of military power, the vision of the so-called Chinese military dream 2027 is pursued, and efforts such as Chinese-style multi-domain operations, a rapid increase of naval power, and maintenance of China's theater system are the major targets of the PLA.

During the US-China military competition, if the balance of nuclear weapons between the U.S. and China reaches the level of mutually assured destruction, China is likely to be more aggressive in the gray area and trade war. Currently, China's nuclear military power is significantly inferior to that of the U.S. Because of its position, China avoids the possibility of full-scale war with the United States in regional conflicts and remains in partial military operations.

### **Hegemonic competition, but the impossibility of hegemony by one state**

There is a tendency to view the conflict between the great powers, especially the competition between the U.S. and China, as a competition for hegemonic power. From a theoretical perspective, hegemony means the power of a powerful country that provides international norms and public goods with both the ability and intent to exert global influence. The United States and China can be seen as pursuing global leadership with capabilities and intentions.

Thinking of the future world order, it is necessary to consider that the demand for international public goods is growing exponentially in current and future international politics. It will be difficult for the future hegemonic state to provide international public goods with only its own capabilities. Global crises such as health, environment, and non-proliferation that are very difficult for a single country to resolve alone. Even if one country wins the competition between the U.S. and China, it is difficult for a hegemonic

state with sufficient capabilities to emerge. The era of state hegemony, or the era in which state-level hegemony is impossible, will come, and the exercise of collective leadership or global governance will inevitably come. The U.S. and China may perceive that they are competing for hegemony on their own. But this is the old perception of the competition for hegemony from the past, and the country that wins the US-China competition will soon realize that it will no longer be able to maintain the burden of hegemony. In this respect, the current hegemony competition between the U.S. and China is not the same as in the past, even if the U.S. and China are unaware of it.

The competition for supremacy will gradually become a competition for practical solidarity and persuasion among countries, especially for alliance and strategic partnership. A hegemonic state should be recognized when it provides international public goods demanded by many countries in the world or the international community, gains the support of its people, and is approved by other countries. This trend will become stronger, and the strategic competition between the U.S. and China will go beyond bilateral competition and become a competition of alliance and influence in global governance.

### **Future world order based on coercion or rules?**

All major powers acknowledge that the current international politics has changed from an international order based on coercion and power to an international politics based on rules. The core of the problem is that international politics will be maintained by what rules, who will make the pillar international norms and rules, and by what procedures.

Powerful countries such as the United States, China, and Russia paradoxically agree that international politics should be conducted by norms and rules, not force, and emphasize that rules should be prepared

multilaterally rather than unilaterally. What is important is that neither the liberalism pursued by the United States nor the community of human destiny that China refers to are ideologies and policy packages that cannot serve as the basis for the future international order and new leadership.

The United States has established the so-called liberal international order since 1945, and the core of it can be said to have been to achieve and keep multilateral rules. The liberal international order emphasizes liberal democracy, human rights, an open international economic order, and a multilateral security system. Still, the United States has not always maintained this order. John Ikenberry also discussed that liberalism has colluded with other ideologies in the flow of the times and discussed the past of liberal imperialism.

In the end, multilateralism, international law, international organizations, and international norms were emphasized amid changes in international politics. These tendencies became emphasized not only in the liberal democratic camp but also in almost all camps. For example, in President Xi Jinping's speeches, the emphasis on human rights, democracy, international law, multilateralism, and the United Nations is always overflowing. Even in the joint signature of the summit between President Xi Jinping and President Putin on February 8, 2022, elements of the so-called rules-based order, such as human rights, democracy, and international law, are emphasized. Instead, the United States and Russia claim that the United States is violating the international norms of multilateralism, breaking international law, and coercing other countries to the present.

Some may think that the future competition between the U.S. and China will be between democracy and authoritarianism. Others may think that it will become a clash between rule-based competition versus might-based competition. However, an essential factor in determining the future world

order is who will make the norms and rules and who will be supported by more countries with reasonable justifications. Recently, President Xi Jinping presented establishing and maintaining new global governance as an important foreign policy goal in the report to the 20th Party Congress and proposed common security in the global security initiative announced at the Boao Forum in April 2022. The U.S. also emphasized the importance of transnational threats in its National Security Strategy document. It discussed the importance of cooperation between countries while not excluding cooperation with China and Russia. In the future, it will be important whether the great powers, including the U.S. and China, first realize the necessity of a kind of meta-leadership that leads to solidarity to jointly respond to transnational threats beyond the hegemonic competition between themselves and create new leadership.

## 2050 Preferred Future

### **Future World Order without wars**

The most important premise for the future world order is preventing war and maintaining peace. Despite emerging great power rivalry, especially between the U.S. and China, the chances for war are still slight. First, the military gap between the U.S. and China is still significant. China has continued to increase military spending based on economic development. Even when the economy is in trouble after the Covid-19 crisis, China has tried to maintain the annual growth rate of military spending by around 6 percent. It is true that by 2027, China will be pursuing a military strategy called a strong military dream and is ultimately pursuing a military buildup that may overwhelm the United States. Nonetheless, as of now, the gap in military power between the U.S. and China is still significant, so there is little

possibility of resolving conflicts in non-military fields using military means with the U.S.

Second, it is true that there are issues that could lead to military conflict, but how these issues are directly related to the strategic competition between the U.S. and China is a separate issue. Currently, the areas under strain are the South China Sea, the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, the border dispute with India, and the Korean Peninsula. As for China, it is putting forward the justification that it wants to complete the territories and territorial waters that it failed to secure during the transition to the status of a modern sovereign state. In terms of completing lost territories and territorial waters, it may be a policy to change the status quo, but whether China is pursuing a unilateral expansion policy in the international political environment is controversial.

Third, countries other than the U.S. and China have very strong demands for the stability of the international situation. The United States emphasizes cooperation with allies and strategic partners rather than pursuing a China strategy independently. Unlike the Cold War, China's rise occurred under a US-led order and was based on strong mutual dependence between the U.S. and China. With the remaining effects of the economic logic that defined interdependence during the last 30 years, third-power countries also attach great importance to the cooperation between the U.S. and China.

Nevertheless, the possibility that the U.S. and China could go to a military conflict still exists. First, East Asia, or the Indo-Pacific region, is traditionally a region where the multilateral security order is fragile. During the Cold War, communist forces and liberal forces competed for security against each other, and even after the Cold War, a multilateral security system among countries did not take root.

Second, even if the US-China competition is unlikely to turn into a military confrontation, it is difficult to completely ignore the possibility that the

conflict over the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea will escalate into a full-scale military confrontation. These will involve the intervention of neighboring countries. Currently, the conflicting factors in the so-called flash points in the Indo-Pacific region are mainly related to China's territorial claims, which are related to China's core interests or sovereignty issues.

In this process, even if China does not pursue a pure expansion policy, there is always the possibility of escalating the war as it is a sovereign issue from which it is difficult to back down in the event of a conflict. In addition, the United States does not view these disputes as a matter of completing China's sovereignty but rather sees that China is pursuing very ambitious policies, so it has a strong tendency to perceive China's policies as expansive and to change the status quo.

Third, China's economic growth is continuing, and technological development is also taking place rapidly. In the 4th industrial revolution era, cutting-edge technologies that can be used for military purposes are continuously being developed, and technologies for both civilian and military use are also developing rapidly. Depending on China's technological development in the future, there is a possibility that China's military technology will partially surpass that of the United States. If China takes the lead in the military technology competition between the U.S. and China, or if China subjectively judges that China is surpassing the U.S. by utilizing advanced technology, the military competition between the U.S. and China will be a more probable alternative.

### **Rules-based Order, Rules-based Competition, and Competition-based Rules**

Great powers such as the United States and China agree that they oppose coercion-based order and emphasize rule-based order based on multilateralism. In the future, we expect the formation of new global governance and the establishment of collective leadership based on the formation of norms and rules that can be agreed upon. Hopefully, Russia is the only exception.

Great powers should compete for peace and a better world order for the international community. What is vital in current international relations is to propose an alternative to the great power geopolitical conflict by presenting more broadly the problems of human security and transnational threats humanity commonly encounters. Competition between great powers is not destructive, as they avoid escalating into a military conflict. It is crucial to contribute to improving the world order without radically challenging the existing international order, which may be called “rules-based competition”. Competition must be conducted legitimately and must not develop into a military conflict. Since the international community and middle powers are watching the great power competition, and their interests are intertwined, the international community's concern is also essential.

Furthermore, for the current US-China rivalry to move towards a better world order and secure the new leadership discussed above, it is crucial to make the competition come out with better norms and rules, that is, to make it a productive competition. We could call these “competition-based norms/rules.”

### **The evolution of liberal world order into a liberal democratic order**

The current international order is not democratic. The liberal order is not necessarily democratic. The liberal international order respects the sovereignty of individual countries, an open international economic order that values the logic of the market, a rules-based order, a multilateral order, the prevention of war, and an emphasis on peace. Although it respects national sovereignty and values the free actions of nations, it does not mean that it respects every state's equal contribution and rights.

Here it is important to note that there is a difference between the liberal and democratic order at the international and global levels. Liberalism and democracy often work together as liberal democracies but are also in tension and conflict. While liberalism emphasizes the freedom of the subject and minority opinions, democracy emphasizes the equality of individuals and the rule of the majority. While liberalism emphasizes inequality between individuals, democracy pursues a representative decision process that values equality between individuals. The democratic international order values equality among states despite their power differences. The democratic international order takes equal participation in policymaking among states, guarantees of representativeness and responsibility, and decision-making by majority vote as norms. Even a great power does not have more policy-making authority. If the democratic international order is based on equality among states, it does not recognize differences in power between states.

In this respect, the current U.N. promotes the basic norms of the liberal international order, but it is not democratic in its organization and performance. If the veto power of the five permanent members remains, the current international order seeks to preserve the values of the liberal international order in an undemocratic way. The equal participation and

rights of many powerful countries must be guaranteed, and middle and weak countries should also participate in important international issues together, and legitimate voices should be reflected regardless of the size of their power.

### South Korean Visions and Strategies

The world order is undergoing multi-layered changes, and superpowers such as the United States and China are not adapting effectively to these changes. These changes lead to the strategic and leadership competition that repeats the experience of power transition, the so-called Thucydides Trap. However, this hegemonic war will be the last one in international politics because the complex international political situation will not permit the role of a hegemon for the victor because it cannot produce desired international public goods as indicated above.

Worse, the disruptions of world order so far have led to the violation of essential principles that both countries have adhered to and to the disregard of long-term structural and institutional principles to solve the immediate problems. Middle powers like South Korea are free from great power geopolitics, so they should accurately recognize world order changes and advise the U.S. and China to avoid getting too preoccupied with the blaming game between the two.

The U.S. and China are not much different from other countries in that they face structural challenges brought about by these macro changes and are working hard to resolve them. In the face of structural challenges such as economic crisis, globalization, health crisis, and security threats, the United States is grappling with enormous domestic challenges such as economic development, reconstruction of the middle class, and restoration of democracy. In this process, the principles of liberalism, which the United

States has valued, are virtually breaking down.

China, too, faces challenges such as low-growth economic development, health crisis, supply chain disruption, and global reputation amid the new trend of globalization. Both the U.S. and China are revealing domestic vulnerabilities in the complex macroscopic implementation of international politics, and they are incapable of maintaining the developed norms. Furthermore, they make the mistake of blaming these problems on mutual threats and the geopolitics of great powers to solve the problems or utilize them for domestic politics.

In the future, the U.S. and China will battle over who is less vulnerable and who can better overcome structural trends. It is crucial to gain global support, not just one's own camp, and expanding efforts beyond so-called like-minded countries will be necessary.

Under this situation, the role of middle powers and weak countries is growing. Middle and small powers need to suggest a way for great powers to compete so that they avoid the pitfall of military clashes and observe the existing norms and rules. In the rule-based order, of course, power competition will continue, but we are entering into an era where rules are set by consensus and accumulation of legitimacy.

For South Korea, it is essential to effectively promote middle power diplomacy, given that South Korea has acquired the status of an advanced country but cannot pursue great power diplomacy. In other words, in a situation where it is difficult for South Korea to conduct great power diplomacy to persuade and impose an international order consistent with South Korea's interests and values, South Korea's promotion of universal values and rules is critical. It is a matter of presenting a vision that can gain the consensus of the international community, including the weaker countries.

South Korea needs to emphasize the importance of the existing rules-based order of multilateralism and the need for fundamental cooperation between the U.S. and China to develop it. As the U.S. and China recognize the importance of a rules-based order, South Korea should encourage rules-based competition between the two countries. South Korea should solve the problems of the existing order through competition between the U.S. and China and encourage the U.S. and China to cooperate through competition in forming norms and regimes in many emerging fields that need to be established in the future. In this process, it is important to promote cooperation with other developed and middle power countries.

Lastly, pursuing a realistic strategy that can maximize Korea's profits and minimize its losses in the short-term strategy competition between the U.S. and China is also important. For the time being, there will be areas where an alternative strategy is unavoidable. Still, a multi-layered strategy must be pursued while calculating the overall national interest and pursuing a new phase that can be realized mid-to-long-term.

The Yoon Seok-yeol administration emphasizes the global pivotal state, value-based diplomacy, and global citizenship. This is not the original idea or slogan of the current government but rather the identity and values of the Korean people and the international community's perception of South Korea's status. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say whether Korea will be able to set national interests, establish policies, and accumulate policy means to realize them. Only when South Korea has visions and capabilities can South Korea continue to develop in the new international political arena of rule-based order.

## 16. Comprehensive Analysis and Suggestions for Preferable Futures

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When the bipolar era came to an end with the dissolution of the USSR, Kenneth Waltz raised the two questions; “*What structural changes are in prospect? What effects may they have?*”<sup>245)</sup> After three decades of post-Cold War order, we are facing a transition from the one era to another and we must ask similar questions to those Waltz did in 1993. *What structural changes may occur after the end of post-Cold War era? What effects may they have?* If we raise another question, it will be *What will be the strategies of states? (What is the national preference for the future order?)* To better address this question, this report has tried to collect the intellect, insights, and wills of the distinguished scholars from all over the world. We raised the two questions to the global scholars; *What will the future world look like in 2050? What do you want the future world to look like in 2050?* With these two questions we may navigate the most likely future and most preferable future in their views. These questions include three parts; 1) US- China relations 2) Global Structure and Governance 3) Each State or region's future strategies. In this last part of the conclusion, I draw some key takeaways from the participants' writings on these questions presented in the previous chapters and find some meaningful implications on interpreting the current changes of the international order and predicting its future.

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<sup>245)</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz (1993), “The Emerging Structure of International Politics,” *International Security* 18:2, 45.

Here the key findings I describe for comprehensive analysis are mostly based on the narratives of all the participants of this research. We can find many commonalities and differences on the perceptions on the future of international order. Even some countries, so called like-minded countries, have nuanced differences on their views of a future world order. There are also many convergences among the states that are assumed to be in different positions in the bifurcated order driven by the US-China strategic competition. There may be a complicated matrix of the perceptions and strategies toward the future of international order among the less powerful states as well as among the great powers. This research was designed to initiate the global discussion on the future of international order; not only the probable future of international order but also the future we prefer for international order. Mapping and understanding the diverse perceptions is the starting point to discuss the multi-directional future of international order.

Even though this report has the word “future” in the title and collected the global perspectives on the probable futures, this report do not pursue to predict the future accurately, but instead share the diverse views of possible futures and preferred futures and provide some implications for the studies and policies regarding the future of international order. The pieces which 13 scholars from different countries dedicated for this research are their personal perspectives on the future of world order, and do not necessarily reflect the views of their countries or regions. Therefore, this report can be regarded as a volume of academic papers collected for further discussions on the probable and preferred futures of world order and the regions. By collecting the diverse views, we can navigate the global perceptions on what is the most likely future and what is the most preferable future. Here are the most likely and favorable futures of world order, which are drawn from previous chapters of each author’s opinion.

## What is most likely future for 2050?

The prospects of scholars who join this research show that the probable future of the world order is likely to be gloomy and unstable with continued great power rivalry. It has been drifting further from the preferable future.

### **Prolonged and intensified great power competition with some constraints**

Many scholars in this research share the consensus that US-China competition is inevitable and is likely to continue. China is likely to continue to rise and pursue assertive, revisionist policies. The US will remain committed to balance a rising China (Jaeger). The U.S. will strengthen its “Made in America” policy and play a smaller role in the international community, while strengthening its decoupling strategies with China (Suzuki). Conflicts among nations will intensify and the world will become unstable. Middle powers as well as the developing countries are likely poised to feel pressure from the great power competition.

The probability that the U.S. and China will have fought a major war by 2050 are low, but not nil. The military buildup and tension is likely to increase (Laipson; Chun; Suzuki). China in coming decades will work hard to defend its regime security, and US will strengthen export controls to deter the Chinese technological supremacy and strengthen the military presence to deter China from using military force against Taiwan.

The U.S. and China's conflict is likely to continue and worsen, but it is still different from the Cold War conflict (John; Moreira; Kirisci&Kocaman; Zara). The U.S. China conflict can be contained with economic interdependence, the involvement of middle powers, and regional power competition. Although some conflicts may be inevitable, the result of China-U.S. competition can be coexistence rather than a life-or-death scenario (Li).

However, Russia's war in Ukraine suggests that such "doux-commerce" restraint has limits (Rahmane), it shows a great power rivalry could go beyond the manageable level despite their economic interdependence.

With intensifying of great power competition and decoupling strategies, the rest of the world will find it difficult not to align themselves with one side or the other. They may be forced to pick a side (Chun; Jaeger). The biggest concern for the great power conflict is still mainly the economy: imminent threat to food and energy security as well as disruption in trade and investment (Mantong).

### **Growing Disarray with a Quasi Bipolar or Unstable Multi-Polar World**

The ongoing power transition and distribution is leading to structural changes in international politics. However, there are some differing perceptions on whether the future of international system will be unipolar, bipolar, or multi-polar.

Many scholars in this research perceive that the US and China will have preeminent status, competing for technological superiority and global influence. The US will remain more powerful in broad spectrum military power but China will have the advantage in high technology (Laipson). Increasingly bipolar structure will emerge, consisting of China, on the one hand, and the United States and its allies, on the other hand. The US will lead the world while China will be maintained as the dominant economy in Asia (Jaeger). China's economic power may exceed that of the US in 2050. However, the U.S. may not be declining that much, maintaining its superiority in the high-tech and education sectors (Li).

Even if the world order is likely to take on a structure of bi-polarity rather than multi-polarity, many scholars agree on that this bipolar future will be not the same as that of the Cold War era. Even if the US and China are likely

to keep competing for the hegemony, it is unlikely for one to achieve traditional hegemonic power. As the demand for international public goods is growing exponentially, it is no longer possible for one great power to be able to maintain the burden of hegemony (Chun). If the US and China's relations will be in the frame of new Cold War, it will be a weak bipolar whereby some middle powers will play important role.

Some scholars think a multipolar world is the most likely future (John; Moreira; Suzuki). It will be an unstable multi-polar world in which hegemonic powers will not maintain the international order (Suzuki). India will be China's peer competitor, the dynamics of the triangular relations between China, US and India will be a significant factor of future of great power politics (John). As the developing big states such as India and Brazil and regional blocs like EU and AU pursue the status as a pole in the future, it may possibly lead to multi-polar world.

#### **World heading towards a Bounded Order, not the same one as the Cold War era**

Many scholars are concerned that the world is likely to move from the liberal international order to a bounded order with the intensification of US-China rivalry. The confrontation between the US and China and the US and Russia will lead to a division into two hostile economic blocs due to the distribution of spheres of influence of the great powers (Zara). Global struggle for supremacy and influence, which pitted leading Western powers led by the United States with a rising China and that will probably define the state of the world in 2050 (Kéchichian). As geopolitical competition spills over into the economic realm, the weaponization of interdependence, selective economic decoupling and the partial fragmentation of the international economic order will intensify (Jaeger).

However, this bifurcation of the world is not likely to be a repeat of the

Cold War era bifurcation which was based on an ideological divide. The emerging situation is not a return to the clear-cut great-power antagonism of the Cold War, but a transition into a world of uncertainty, and therefore less cooperation and more confrontation, albeit tempered by the interdependence of economic interests inherited from globalization (Rahmane).

### **The Decline of International Institutions**

There is some consensus on the weakening of global governance. The US will be less committed to respecting multilateral rules-based economic cooperation and China will seek to build alternative governance regimes in selected domains (Jaeger). The current global institutions, including the UN and other global regimes, if not reformed to reflect the changing global power distribution, will be irrelevant and potentially extinct by 2050 (John). The multilateral cooperation in the guise of the IMF and the WTO have also been in decline and their role for the future of liberal international order is questionable.

Regional organizations, such as the SCO, pick up some of the work of the UN, but delegated down to the regional level, rather than attempting to be inclusive of all global constituencies (Laipson). International economic governance may be challenged with the rise of alternative power. With the weakening of the power of the dollar, China and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are thinking about creating an independent international monetary and financial system (Zara). Brazil also places much importance on the BRICs' mechanisms.

The value of democracy will be challenged with the rise of force of more state control. Most democracies will prevail, but several states will no longer be ranked as truly democratic (Laipson). Africa has opted for democracy as

its preferred mode of organization, but judging by current trends, most African countries will not be democratic in 2050 or will be so only in name (Rahmane).

Considering the intensification of great power competition, geopolitical/geo-economic instability, and the decline of the roles of international institutions, the next three decades until 2050s are likely to be more unstable and unpredictable. There is little in terms of leadership to initiate the global cooperation and solve the global challenges.

### What is the Preferable future?

For the preferred future, most scholars share the consensus that the US and China's relations would be more cooperative and harmonious. The global order rather needs to be more multipolar. Their region and states desire the sustainable development and no pressure to pick a side.

#### **Great Power Cooperation / Manageable Competition without war**

The most preferred future is one without great power competition and the concomitant risk of international economic fragmentation and destabilization, so that countries could again focus on the pursuit of economic cooperation and allow for technological diffusion. Second-best scenario is manageable competition (Jaeger). Without cooperation between China and the U.S., any kind of future concert of powers cannot be realized (Li). The "preferred" would be for the two countries to find a modus vivendi that embraces competition and selective cooperation, and finds means to avoid outright conflict (Laipson). The US needs to cease its "America First" policies and play the role of stabilizing the international order with stabilizing economic relations with China by adhering to the principle of

free trade in economic terms (Suzuki).

Most scholars in this research also share the consensus that a war between the US and China is the worst scenario for the future of world. The worst-case scenario assumes that great power rivalry intensifies in the region and conflicts are eventually erupted. They strongly argue that military conflict must be avoided. Competition between great powers is not always destructive, if they avoid escalating into a military conflict. Great powers should compete for peace and a better world order for the international community (Chun).

We may draw the lessons from Waltz's (1993) argument, "economic competition will provide plentiful sources of conflict, but we should prefer them to military ones."<sup>246</sup>

#### **Multi-Polar World with nuanced differences between the great powers and the rest**

The great powers as well as the less great powers prefer a multi-polar world. The US and China still view the great powers' leadership as necessary even in a multi-polar future though. Some view a loose unipolar system with the US as the guardian of the international order as preferred unless the open, rules-based economic multilateralism and stable security environment can be secured (Suzuki; Jaeger). Although a bipolar world is more likely to become a reality than a multi-polarity one in 2050, multi-polarity is better for China and the rest of the world (Li). The BRICS countries will strengthen the possibility of a new international order based on the countries of the Global South, rivaling the Western-led structure and leading to multi-polarity (Moreira).

Many middle powers prefer a multi-polar world in which they will play a

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<sup>246</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz (1993), "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18:2, 74.

more important role as one of the poles. India prefers a multipolar world order, where India emerges as a pole. India also prefer a multipolar order in Asia, expressing concerns over the growing Chinese primacy in Asia (John). Turkey has also raised its profile as a middle/regional power, utilizing several crises and conflicts in its region (Kirisci & Kocaman). A world in which the middle and regional powers have more strategic autonomy and bigger roles is regarded as the preferred future for the rest of the world.

### **The Reform of Global Governance for a more Democratic and Pluralistic system**

The great powers as well as the rest of the world are likely to become revisionists regarding the international institution reform issues. Many scholars argue that global governance needs to be more democratic in a preferable future. The current international order is not democratic. The evolution of liberal world order needs to move towards a liberal democratic order, based on equality among states despite their power differences (Chun). Even though a framework of multilateral cooperation, centered on the United Nations is preferable, many developing countries argue that it needs reform to achieve a preferable world future.

From the Chinese perspective, world governance, such as the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund are mainly controlled by the U.S. and its western allies. If the new system accommodates more players from developing countries and emerging economies, world governance will be fairer and better balanced. Accommodating the participation of smaller countries, G20 or G20+ should become one of the important platforms for achieving international cooperation (Li).

From the Indian perspective, India is a 'leading power' in the international system and considers global institutions, particularly the UNSC, as deeply unrepresentative (John). Turkey also is not happy with current global

governance, especially the unfairness of major powers' leverage at the UN Security Council, and would like to see a much different world order in 2050, with a preferred one in which it plays greater roles (Kirisci & Kocaman). Africa, as a weak agent, is inherently revisionist, arguing the US-led status quo that came out of the end of the Cold War is failing to take on global challenges such as climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, and others (Rahmane).

The non-Western countries argue that the other important factor for a preferable future of global governance is to go beyond a Western Centric rules based order. A more balanced global governance structure is presented as a goal of future, constructing a system of rules reflecting the values and interests of different countries rather than a Western centric rules-based system (Li). India also dissatisfied with the current international institutions and regimes dominated by the Western bloc. India strongly supports a rules-based order, but the questions such as "whose rules?" and "whose order?" reflect India's demand for reforming international institutions and regimes that were built by the West in the past (John).

There are strong desires for the reform of current global governance from the scholars in this research, but there on consensus is lacking regarding what the new global governance must be and specifically what kinds of reform agenda will be needed for reforming the current international institutions.

Unfortunately, many scholars think that the many parts of a preferable future are likely to be somewhere between unlikely and impossible. As the US and China's strategic competition and the mutual distrust are becoming more severe and the geopolitical instability with Ukraine war still ongoing, the preferable future of world order is becoming less probable. However, there is still strong hope, vision and will to turn the world's path towards a more

constructive and cooperative way.

## Key Takeaways and Implications for Future of World

### **Requests for the US and China to take actions for the Preferable future of world**

There is consensus that the future of the US and China, and the relations of these two great powers are the central determinants of any future international order. Many scholars emphasize that Washington and Beijing should try to explore ways to engage in what has been called “managed strategic competition” and seek to create a stable balance of power. The U.S. needs to change its protectionist policies and resume the dialogue with China. It needs to deter China from using military force against Taiwan. China needs to dial back its coercive and wolf warrior diplomacy. The rest of the world would like to see the creation of a level economic playing field as well as see Washington recommit to multilateral, rules-based international economic governance.

### **Diverse perspectives on the Impact of Great Power Politics**

The rest of the world views the future of great power rivalry as a negative factor for unstable future order. US-Chinese rivalry threatens to undermine international stability and multilateral economic cooperation. Furthermore, the emergence of quasi-bipolar geostrategic competition will negatively affect states’ and regional economic and security interests. Even if the powerful states’ intentions are benign, Waltz argues, the less powerful states will, from their different historical experiences, geographic locations, and economic interest, interpret events differently and often prefer different policies.<sup>247)</sup> The developing states have different interpretations of current

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247) Kenneth N. Waltz (1993), “The Emerging Structure of International Politics,” *International Security*

great power rivalry.

Central Asia sees the growing confrontation between the United States and China as a threat to the conjugation of the Eurasian Economic Union. However, Africa views the post-Cold War international order was not favorable to African integration and transformation and hopes the new configuration of more contentious geopolitics will give more bargaining power to many African countries in the years to come. Brazil also sees a great window of opportunity in the US and China's tech competition, giving a great advantage for Brazil to negotiate its economic and political interests with China and the US. From these diverse views, we can understand that some countries see not also the challenges but only the opportunities stemming from great power rivalry.

### **Strategies for Strategic Autonomy and Regional integration**

Many countries are placing importance on strategic autonomy in the great power rivalry, not wanting to get pressured to pick a side. Regional integration and cooperation for attaining more collective power and economic power are important policy agendas for a preferable future in 2050. The EU wants to mobilize its latent economic power more forcefully to fend off geo-economic pressure from Washington and Beijing. It pursues a stronger, more unified Europe capable to deterring military aggression and third-party geo-economic coercion, believing that 'European strategic autonomy' would help limit vulnerability and facilitate rules-based cooperation with the United States and China.

Indonesia's "Vision 2045" also specifically mentions that ASEAN centrality needs to be defended. ASEAN believes that the region's needs are greater than what a single partner can offer to the table. Central Asia also has strong

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18:2, 74.

eager for regional integration, assuming the Central Asian Regional Integration by 2050. The Arab countries would embark on key transformation through Awrabah, a non-ideological emphasis on Arabism (or COSMO-ARABISM), which ensured consolidation and success. The African Union envisages an African unity and “African Renaissance” for bright future of Africa.

### **The Rise of Like-Minded Blocs and the Prevalence of the Mini-lateralism**

The US NIC report on *the global trends of 2040* indicated that communities are increasingly fractured as people seek security with like-minded groups based on established and newly prominent identities in a more contested world. It said that the international system is more competitive—shaped in part by challenges from a rising China—and at greater risk of conflict as states and non-state actors exploit new sources of power and erode longstanding norms and institutions that have provided some stability in past decades. With these trends in mind, the great powers compete for expanding formal and informal coalitions of like-minded countries that try to influence the more powerful on issues that affect their stability and security.

Encouraged by the fragmentation of the world order, many countries pursue bilateral and mini-lateral approaches with like-minded countries. India’s Asia strategy is to keep Asian countries out of Chinese dependency, supporting multi and mini-lateral formats such as RIC, SCO, and the QUAD. Brazil’s strategic focus is on the strengthening of the BRICS forum. The various mini-lateral and regional systems such as AfCFTA (The African Continental Free Trade Area), and G5 Sahel are likely to supplement the diplomatic challenges stemming from the great power rivalry.

### **Pursuing the Multi-alignment approach**

With the intensification of US-China competition, multi-alignment approaches and strategic autonomy are likely to become key concepts for the rest of the world. The great power rivalry, from most states' perspectives, may be disadvantageous to their interests. Even if many countries can feel the pressure to pick a side from the great powers, still they do not seek exclusive partnerships with one great power. Most secondary and small powers would prefer to shape a multi-aligned and multi-networked world.

India has a strong belief in this multi-alignment approach, believing that world is moving in the direction of multi-polarity. To take advantage of the US-China tension, New Delhi will make efforts maintain its relations with both the US and China. Brazil also pursues a pragmatic foreign policy to make commercial, technological and financial alliances with China and the US. It would also like to strengthen BRICS with China and strengthen the political ties with the developed countries against anti-democratic movements.

Most medium and small states want to have more autonomy and not to pick one side. Most of them want to cooperate with the great powers based on specific agendas and national interest. They want to have a multi-aligned policy and the third party partnerships with the other like-minded countries beyond the two great powers. Many developing states pursue to maximize the absolute gains from those great powers as they compete for influence.

### **Economy and Innovation First**

The great powers as well as the rest of the world are setting economic and technology innovations as the most important policy goals for the preferred future of 2050. The developing countries as well as the developed countries are strengthening industrial policies to achieve greater national sovereignty. Indonesia tends to see strategic issues through the lens of development. Brazil's great mission for the 2050 also is to strengthen its national industry, with a strong innovation potential to dominate productive sectors related to Industry 4.0. Most Central Asian policy missions like the vision of "New Kazakhstan" are aimed at achieving sustainable growth and transitioning to knowledge-intensive industries. Japan is also pursuing technological superiority and international competitiveness.

With the growth of protectionism measures, the economic policies of many developed countries are putting more focus on the regulation and intervention to protect their national markets. Protectionism and nationalism are deeply focused on emerging technologies such as AI. In the digitalization era, the foreign policy of the developing countries as well as developed countries are strongly connected to industrial policies especially for the digital and green transition.

### **Increasing the Importance of Middle Powers' Role for Preferable future**

The strategic competition between the US and China will go beyond bilateral competition and become a competition of alliances and influence in global governance. It is crucial to gain global support, not just of one's own camp, and expanding efforts beyond so-called like-minded countries will be necessary. Under this situation, the role of middle powers and weak countries is growing. The middle powers will play an important role in managing tensions between the two great powers. European states, South Korea, Japan

and Australia will be constructive mediators and honest brokers to prevent open conflict between Washington and Beijing.

The middle powers are likely to pursue the bigger role in multi-polar future. India sees its status in the future international system as a 'leading power', arguing that India is not a revisionist power. Turkey also prefers a future world in which it plays a much greater role. Turkey also wants to play a role as a bridge between the East and West as a regional power and emerging power even if it has some shortcomings.

Middle powers which have a like-mind to play a constructive role as brokers in the coming great powers competition era should accurately recognize world order changes and align with each other to promote middle power diplomacy.

### **Climate Change as an Important Challenge requiring Global Cooperation and Development**

Many scholars in this research suggest climate change as the most important challenge requiring global cooperation. Global cooperation is needed to expand the capacity and resources for addressing climate change (Laipson; Zara). Climate change-induced effects may decrease major powers' influence in world politics and may also help regional powers to strengthen their grip on their regions (Kirisci). Africa is the world region most vulnerable to the climate events and could see the biggest opportunities from low carbon policies (Rahmane). Many scholars agree that reemergence of great power competition is likely to have negative impacts on managing and solving the problem of the forthcoming climate catastrophe. Great powers as well as the rest of the world should convene to start to take action to solve the climate catastrophe.

## Conclusion: Global Cooperation Required to Make the Preferred Future More Probable

We are in the midst of a crisis of multilateral cooperation and collective leadership. The great power competition, pandemic, and the Ukraine war have been accelerating world instability and the growth of protectionism and nationalism, giving the challenges to the global economy. While the United States is othering China as authoritarian and mobilizing the like-minded countries to deter the Chinese rise, China is seeking an alternative alignment of their own political bloc to rival the Western led international order. The rest of the world is seeking a way to harness this great power competition while trying to avoid the costs of mis-steps in foreign policy decision making. Furthermore, many middle powers and big developing countries envisage that they will play a bigger role and rise to become poles in a future multipolar world. With the rise of power transition and the decline of the Western led international order of the past thirty years, the institutions of global governance are in crisis of legitimacy and representativeness. With all of these transitions and changes, the world is at a great turning point, with no clear direction to head to in next three decade.

In this unstable and unpredictable situation, this study tried to navigate the global perceptions on the future of world and regional order in 2050. As many scholars emphasized, it is very hard to predict the future of world but it is a very useful exercise to discuss the future of the world and delve into developing their countries' long-term strategies. Many scholars in this research are afraid that the best scenarios for the future of the world order are not likely to happen. The preferable future of world is getting less probable with rising geopolitical tensions and antagonistic nationalism. We hope this study is the beginning of the necessary global discussions on how to make the world more preferable and how to bridge the gap between

probable future and preferred future.

Waltz(1993) argues that structural change begins with a system's unit, and then unit-level and structural causes interact. The states strive to maintain their positions in the system and the great powers try to arrest or reverse their decline. With the dramatic changes of international order, many states are eager to maintain their status in an unpredictable future. They start to reflect on what will be the future of US-China rivalry and the changing global order and what is the best way to secure their national interest and their position in the future world. As Waltz argued, we are witnessing the dynamic interaction between the structural changes and each state's responding strategies to the changes. In dealing with the changes of international order and preparing for the future world, it is important to know how the states view the current changes of international order and how they predict the future of international order. This report collected the 13 scholars' views on the probable and preferred future of international order and is dedicated to expanding the academic discussion and provide various policy implications. We found that there are a lot of common viewpoints between the developed and developing countries. We learned that like-minded countries can have different opinions and strategies on certain issues and that states from different groups can share much in common regarding their views on global issues. Exchanges, interaction, and communication will be the best way to navigate the way to bridge the gap between the probable future and preferred future.

We would like to conclude this report by expressing sincere gratitude to all the scholars who joined this research. We deeply appreciate all of the participants' insightful and precious opinions on the future of world. As Laipson commented in her writing, it is important to recognize the limits of projections and predictions, and to be careful to use such work properly, and

to avoid treating the judgments of future work as some kind of scientific truths. This study does not pretend to offer a completely accurate prediction of the future but instead focuses on understanding other states' views and strategies, searching for space for global cooperation. The authors' contributions were a great help for us to understand the global perceptions of probable and preferred futures. I hope this research is a meaningful start for the world to open discussions for building back a better world for all.



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