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Contours of the Formation of a New World Order

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Abstract

The global order, which was based on liberal principles and Western hegemony twenty years ago, is gradually being replaced by a multipolar balance of power. Modern international relations are marked by signs of state power, institutional disintegration, and technological and economic fragmentation. New powerful centers have been developed in world politics - China, India, Russia, and the so-called "Global South", which play a decisive role in the transformation of the order. The aim of this paper is to analyze the contours of the new world order, based on its structural trends, actors, and systemic transformations. The main conclusion is that the world is in a transitional stage - on the path of the collapse of the old order and the formation of a new one in a still uncertain form.

Keywords: multipolarity, global order, international relations, China, USA, global South, geopolitics.

INTRODUCTION

The post-Cold War era began with a unipolar system in the world,¹ where the United States emerged as the dominant power. This systemic stability facilitated the deepening of globalization, the strengthening of international institutions, and the export of Western values. However, the last 30 years of a unipolar world have practically led to a crisis in the principle of sovereignty—the spirit of the UN, which was based on the progressive development of humanity through equality. This has given rise to a new

geopolitical reality: the decline of US hegemony,² the rise of China, internal crises in the West, and the strengthening of the Global South are creating new conditions where multiple powers are vying for global influence.

This paper aims to provide a structural analysis of these transformational processes and present the contours that will define the future world order.

¹ Abashidze, Z. (2009). *Cold War: Past or Present?* Tbilisi.

² Antadze, G. (2022). *The Price of Russia's Victory*. Analytical Center "Geocase".

Main Body

Although the U.S. is in a declining cycle of its global hegemony, it still maintains influence in both military and economic spheres, even though its leadership is accompanied by challenges.³

U.S. domestic political polarization is one of the main internal political challenges, which has particularly intensified in recent years. The two leading political parties often veto each other's decisions, making it impossible to invest in America's formula for success, a situation Francis Fukuyama calls "vetocracy." A prominent example of polarization and domestic political crisis is the attack on the Capitol (January 6, 2021), which signals a decline in the credibility of Western democracy.

Global Distrust and the Rise of New Powers - recently, U.S. policies and actions have caused a degree of skepticism. The chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, criticism of the U.S.'s moderate stance toward the war in Ukraine (from the perspective of some countries), and the new administration's differing approach to Ukraine are tangible facts supporting this view, raising many questions about the U.S. Considering these issues, it can be said that the stability of the U.S. and the reliability of long-term partnerships are being questioned. As a result, some countries (e.g., France) are trying to reduce cooperation with the United States. In parallel, global players such as China, India, Russia, and the Global South are strengthening their positions.

The People's Republic of China is already playing a significant role in the formation of a new world order. China, the world's second-largest economic leader (by GDP), is striving to restore global economic balance. It is increasing its financial influence on developing countries by funding infrastructure projects (the "One Belt, One Road" – BRI initiative), creating alternative financial institutions (AIIB), and establishing a different governance model without resorting to overt displays of force. China is focused on its own country's development and does not wish to present itself as a hegemon. However, China's rise is not just a story of economic success but also an ambition for a new global order. Because of this, it poses a systemic challenge to the West, not only in military and technological terms but also at the level of values-based competition.⁴

India has long been a significant international player, acting as a balancer. It simultaneously cooperates with the West (QUAD) while also participating in strengthening multipolar platforms like BRICS. Within BRICS, India aims to rationally consolidate the Global South around itself, creating a new center of gravity. As a democratic force from the East, India seeks to establish itself on the global stage, offering an alternative to authoritarian regimes.⁵

The formation of a new world order gained momentum from the Munich Security Conference on February 10, 2007. During this event, Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin delivered a speech sharply criticizing the unipolar international system established by U.S. dominance.

Subsequently, Russia moved to practical actions. This led to the August 2008 war in Georgia, after which Russia recognized

Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia as independent states. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and ignited conflicts in eastern Ukraine. Then, in 2022, it directly invaded Ukraine, where the war continues to this day.⁶

Despite being partially isolated since its invasion of Ukraine, Russia maintains partnerships with certain regions (BRICS countries, Iran, etc.). Through the war in Ukraine, Russia is attempting to cause the collapse of the Western order in Europe. It seeks to weaken the influence of Western interests in regions like Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Simultaneously, Russia is trying to re-leverage its energy resources as a tool of power. Despite sanctions that have weakened its position in Europe, Russia continues to maintain influence by seeking new energy ties.

Russia actively opposes the unipolar, U.S.-centric model and, in parallel, helps strengthen alternative centers like China, India, and other BRICS+ countries. Within BRICS+, Russia is trying to create a new financial system aimed at reducing dollarization and establishing an economic alternative.⁷

Countries in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia are no longer satisfied with Western promises. Despite the formal end of imperialism, the economic policies of these countries are still largely dictated by the Global West, which effectively controls their wealth. These nations are united in demanding equal access to global resources and decision-making. They are driven by a motivation for decolonization, seeking to solidify their sovereignty within the international system and make decisions based on their own national interests.

International institutions like the UN and the World Trade Organization are losing effectiveness. Against this backdrop, new coalitions such as BRICS+, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), AUKUS, and QUAD are strengthening.⁸ This trend indicates a transitional phase from universal institutions to interest-based blocs.

The BRICS+ economic bloc, which unites non-liberal and developing countries, is striving to become a political entity. It offers a new worldview that aims to be the voice of weaker nations, increasing its appeal. Currently, the bloc comprises 10 countries, accounting for approximately 40% of the world's population, 35% of global production, and nearly 45% of the world's oil reserves. This alliance seeks to form a multipolar world where the West is no longer dominant.

Among the leaders of the organization, China, India, and Russia are the countries that could potentially define the planet's future agenda. The bloc has growing potential, with several countries having expressed a desire to join the organization.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a security platform in Eurasia. It represents a significant geopolitical security alliance in the Eurasian space, bringing together China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and several Central Asian countries. The SCO

³ Nye, J. (2011). *The Future of Power*. Public Affairs.

⁴ Leonard, M. (2021). *The Age of Unpeace*. Bantam Press

⁵ Pant, H. V. (2020). *India's Foreign Policy*. Observer Research Foundation

⁶ Kvetenadze, Z., Kopalani, K. (2021). "The 2007 Munich Conference and the Contours of a New World Order." *Proceedings, Georgian Technical University*, N2(520).

⁷ Antadze, G. (2022). *The Price of Russia's Victory*. Analytical Center "Geocase".

⁸ Stuenkel, O. (2016). *The Post-Western World*. Polity.

serves as a Eurasian alternative to Western political and security alliances. Its influence is growing in parallel with China's economic and Russia's military activities, giving it the potential to become a global security force in the future.

Western coalitions to deter China - AUKUS is a trilateral security pact signed between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Its purpose is to strengthen Australia's military capabilities in response to China's growing naval power. The agreement includes technological cooperation, submarine construction, and cybersecurity. China perceives this initiative as a clear attempt at containment.

QUAD (U.S., Japan, India, Australia) was initially established for humanitarian assistance but has transformed into a strategic dialogue. It focuses on freedom of navigation, infrastructure investments, and balancing China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. Regarding NATO, alliance members increasingly perceive China as a "systemic challenge." Under pressure from the U.S., Europe is becoming more actively involved in Indo-Pacific security issues. It's evident that the West is attempting to balance China's role through various means, including: Military-strategic, economic, and technological coalitions (e.g., Chip 4 Alliance, IPEF – Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, EU-US Trade and Technology Council); Diplomatic and values-based alliances (e.g., G7 and G20 forums)

At the current stage of global development, economic globalization is being replaced by regionalization and the pursuit of technological sovereignty. Countries are reducing their reliance on global supply chains and striving to create independent infrastructure.⁹ Furthermore, technological domains such as cyberspace, artificial intelligence, and quantum technologies have emerged as new geopolitical arenas.¹⁰

Global security is expanding beyond the military sphere. Traditional models, which relied on military balance and the classic distribution of power, no longer address contemporary challenges. The world now faces new types of threats: climate change, cybersecurity, pandemics, and the influence of non-state actors. These issues demand cooperation among states, the private sector, and civil society.

Traditional military approaches are no longer sufficient; holistic strategies are needed, integrating technological innovation, global ethics, and people-centered policies. Adapting to change and demonstrating responsible leadership will be crucial for stability in the 21st century.

Energy and Food Sovereignty

Freeing the energy sector from the control of other countries strengthens national sovereignty, enhances autonomous decision-making, and is a powerful tool for overcoming hybrid threats. The Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—once dependent on Russian energy, completely freed themselves from Russian electricity and gas on February 8, 2025. This marks a historic shift in their geopolitical position.

Alongside energy sovereignty, the modern era highlights the growing need for food sovereignty. The war in Ukraine and supply chain crises have demonstrated how vulnerable the global food

system is. Furthermore, climate change and global disasters are accelerating the push for countries to invest more resources in achieving agricultural independence

Energy and food sovereignty are the foundation of international security and development in the 21st century. It's a priority for countries to minimize external dependence, helping them better adapt to global changes, manage crises, and maintain stability.

Migration Challenges - Migration is one of the most complex and pressing issues in the modern world, encompassing social, economic, security, cultural, and humanitarian components. Against the backdrop of globalization, conflicts, climate change, and economic inequality, migration has recently become a strategic challenge for many countries. It's safe to say that migration is neither solely a problem nor solely a benefit; it's a reality that demands balanced, humane, and intelligent global and local policies.¹¹

The aforementioned multifaceted threats necessitate new types of cooperation, yet existing institutions often fail to address the complexity of these challenges.

Conclusion

The new world order is far from stable, agreed upon, or harmonious. It represents both the breakdown of the old and the birth of the new. These emerging contours—the redistribution of power, institutional shifts, technological competition, and the strengthening of regional alternatives—indicate that the world is moving towards a multipolar, decentralized order. Success in this new reality will belong to states that can blend strategic flexibility, technological innovation, and robust domestic institutions.

The new world order is still in its formative stages. Its final formation will most likely occur after the end of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

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