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TRANSITIONS AND CHANGES IN GLOBAL GEOSTRATEGIC  
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# TRANSITIONS AND CHANGES IN GLOBAL GEOSTRATEGIC POWER BALANCE

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## ABSTRACT

Today, global political relations are experiencing significant changes. The distribution of geostrategic power is influenced by various factors such as competition among nations, economic strength, and military capabilities. Major countries, both central and regional, are pursuing their strategic interests and working towards establishing a new international relations model. As the dynamics between the United States, China, Russia, and other key players evolve, a new geopolitical landscape is taking shape, leading to substantial shifts in international security and order.

This research delves into the evolving global geostrategic power balance, examining its key trends, underlying causes, and potential outcomes. It scrutinizes the current state of international relations, the strategic policies adopted by countries on regional and global scales, and offers insights into future developments.

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## KEYWORDS

Geostrategy, International Relations, Power Balance, Political Transformation, Security

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## Introduction.

In his speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his disappointment that the Cold War seemed to be over, noting that the fundamental contradictions between the rival parties remained unresolved and that the balance of power in international relations was now dominated by a single aggressive superpower.<sup>1</sup>

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the fall of the communist regime led to Western dominance, led by the United States, establishing a unipolar world order that lasted for 15 years. However, this period did not bring complete peace, as armed conflicts continued and competition for resources intensified. Russia's military actions against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine since 2014, combined with China's rapid rise, signaled the end of U.S. unipolar dominance. This has set the stage for the emergence of a multipolar world order.

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, significantly escalating tensions between major world powers. Experts continue to debate whether this could lead to a third world war involving the United States, Russia, and China, or whether the current situation marks the beginning of a new Cold War. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has stated that the conflict between Russia and the United States has moved beyond the Cold War into a more direct phase of confrontation.<sup>2</sup>

Strategic policy experts are actively debating whether the Russia-U.S. confrontation will escalate into a China-U.S. conflict, or if the Russia-China alliance will emerge as a new global challenger to U.S.-led coalition.

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<sup>1</sup> Speech and dialogue at the Munich Conference on Security Policy: "I am of the opinion that the unipolar model is not viable for the contemporary world, both in terms of feasibility and desirability. The modern world lacks the necessary military, political, and economic resources to sustain sole leadership. Moreover, the model is fundamentally flawed as it does not align with the moral and ethical principles of modern civilization." | Office of the President of Russia – February 10, 2007. Munich#, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>

<sup>2</sup> Speech by the President of Russia: "Therefore, based on Article 51, Part 7 of the UN Charter, with the approval of the Federation Council of Russia and in compliance with the friendship and mutual assistance agreements with the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic ratified by the Federal Assembly on February 22 of this year, I have decided to initiate a special military operation." | Office of the President of Russia – February 24, 2022. Moscow, the Kremlin. <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

Evidence from the 2022-2023 UN General Assembly and Security Council sessions - including official documents, voting patterns, and shifting international positions - indicates a clear trend toward a multipolar power structure.<sup>1</sup> Nations are increasingly diversifying their partnerships and maintaining multiple strategic options to avoid over-reliance on any single power, alliance, technology, or supply chain.

***Explanation: The term 'Cold War' was first introduced by British writer George Orwell in his October 1945 essay 'You and the Atom Bomb.' Orwell predicted that two or three superpowers would possess weapons capable of mass destruction, dividing the world into their respective spheres of influence. While this would reduce the likelihood of a major world war, it would create a permanent state of tension - the Cold War - where neither side could achieve decisive victory. This heralded the beginning of a new era of nuclear confrontation in international relations.***<sup>2</sup>

Despite lasting more than 40 years until 1991, the Cold War led to significant advancements in creating a framework for maintaining strategic equilibrium. The recent global divide between the United States and the Soviet Union offers valuable lessons from this period, serving as a practical model for managing relations between nuclear superpowers. This includes using legal channels to prevent direct conflicts and reassessing existing agreements.

In the realm of nuclear powers, there are three primary categories: nuclear superpower, nuclear power, and nuclear weapons state, each with distinct objectives, approaches, and conduct in global affairs. Russia possesses 5,889 nuclear warheads (with 1,674 on standby), while the United States has 5,244 nuclear warheads (with 1,770 on standby), collectively accounting for 90% of the world's total nuclear arsenal (current global nuclear weapons count as of 2023: 12,512). The two nuclear superpowers have faced numerous challenges in managing their strategic rivalry without escalating to nuclear conflict over the past six decades. With Russia's suspension of its obligations under the existing Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in February 2023, there is a pressing need to establish a new legally binding framework to replace the treaty when it expires in 2026 (the treaty's term was extended by the parties for five years starting in 2021).<sup>3</sup>

The urgent need for a legal framework to govern and regulate the world's nuclear powers was highlighted by White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in a statement on June 2, 2023.

Sullivan conveyed the United States' readiness to engage in dialogue with both Russia and China on this matter. He also unveiled a plan to modernize US nuclear weapons capabilities, which includes the Nuclear Triad of land, air, and sea-based launch sites, as well as missile technologies capable of deploying nuclear warheads. The United States is concentrating on a containment strategy that incorporates non-nuclear technologies, cyber technologies, and space technologies to compete with Russia and China, the two nuclear superpowers, by 2030.

In light of the current global circumstances, the objectives of major powers that influence the balance of power, their respective capabilities, and the scale of their strategic arsenals indicate that we are now in a transitional phase where the international security framework is undergoing transformation. By examining historical epochs spanning the last four centuries during which global order was redefined and analyzing the patterns of change, we can outline the historical predication as follows:

- 1648. Peace of Westphalia
- 1789. French Revolution
- 1815. Congress of Vienna
- 1919. Conference of Versailles

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<sup>1</sup> UN Documents for Ukraine: General Assembly Documents  
<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/ukraine/>

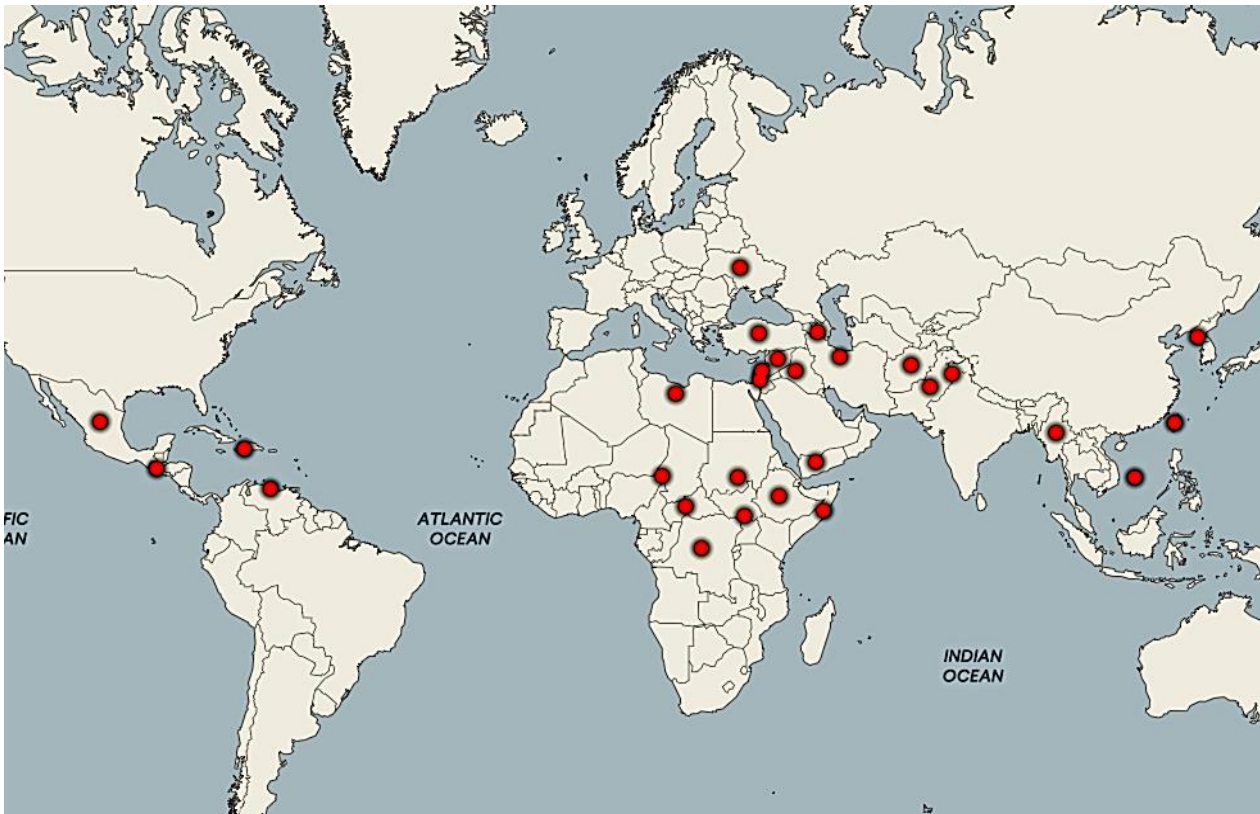
<sup>2</sup> George Orwell and the origin of the term "Cold War": "... the prospect of two or three monstrous super-states, each possessed of a weapon by which millions of people can be wiped out in a few seconds, dividing the world between them ... that such a situation is likely to put an end to large-scale wars at the cost of prolonging indefinitely a 'peace that is no peace'." | Katherine Connor Martin – Oxford University Press Blog. 24 October 2015  
<https://blog.oup.com/2015/10/george-orwell-cold-war/>

<sup>3</sup> Remarks by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan for the Arms Control Association (ACA) Annual Forum: "First – we have stated our willingness to engage in bilateral arms control discussions with Russia and with China without preconditions. Next – the United States is willing to engage in new multilateral arms control efforts, including through the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the P5: The United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France. The United States will step up to help set the norms and shore up the values of the new nuclear era. We're already making some progress, including across every major multilateral body that seeks to limit nuclear and WMD risks. The Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference. The Conference on Disarmament. The Chemical Weapons Convention. The Biological Weapons Convention." | National Press Club – The White House. June 02, 2023  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/06/02/remarks-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-for-the-arms-control-association-aca-annual-forum/>

- 1945. End of World War II; United Nations founded
- 1946–1991. Cold War; US–USSR strategic competition
- 1991. Disintegration of the USSR; End of the Cold War
- 1991–2008. Unipolar era led by the US
- 2008–2022. Transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world
- 2035 and beyond...

Transition to a strategic tripolar USA-China-Russia and possible developments:

1. USA (NATO) – China – Russia tripolar strategic balance
2. USA (NATO) – China (Russia, North Korea, Iran) bipolar strategic balance
3. USA (NATO) – China – Russia – India – Africa – European Union, and other regional alliances



*Fig. 1. Regions experiencing significant ongoing and potential military conflicts worldwide*

The "Global Conflict Tracker"<sup>1</sup> by the Council on Foreign Relations highlights various ongoing conflicts and political instabilities globally, each impacting the U.S. in varying degrees. Key conflicts include criminal violence in Mexico, political instability in the Northern Triangle, and significant crises in Haiti and Ukraine. While some conflicts show worsening conditions, others remain unchanged or are improving, indicating a complex landscape of global tensions.

**Key Points:**

- Criminal violence in Mexico remains unchanged with a significant impact on the U.S.
- Political instability in the Northern Triangle also has a significant U.S. impact, with the conflict status remaining stable.
- The instability in Haiti is worsening and significantly affects the U.S.
- The Ukraine war's status is worsening, with critical implications for U.S. interests.
- North Korea's crisis poses a critical but unchanging threat to the U.S.
- Territorial disputes in the South China Sea are critical and unchanging, impacting U.S. strategic interests.
- The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is worsening and significantly affects U.S. relations in the region.

<sup>1</sup> Global Conflict Tracker | CFR. October 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker>

According to the Global Conflict Tracker (Council on Foreign Relations) map for October 2023, there are 25 to 30 active and potentially active war and conflict zones worldwide. Conversely, human society is always in motion and dynamic, making it natural for there to be constant pulls and pushes of interests and conflicts. The current geopolitical hotspots are a manifestation and symptom of the power redistribution occurring globally.

It is crucial to acknowledge that armed conflict is merely one of the numerous geopolitical tensions currently unfolding in various regions worldwide, including the Ukrainian crisis, the Middle East, military coups in Africa, the Transnistrian region, the South Caucasus, and beyond. Furthermore, conflicts are also taking place in many other areas.

Examples include Economic Wars, Energy Wars, and Struggles for Control of Natural Resources, Competition in Infrastructure Logistics, Trade Wars, Semiconductor Rivalry, and Space Competition.

Modern warfare contrasts with traditional covert warfare in that the party that first acquires and employs technological resources can gain an advantage in a specific conflict zone. However, any technological edge is fleeting as new technologies rapidly emerge in other regions. This dynamic is anticipated to result in frequent and unpredictable shifts in the future landscape of international relations, with geopolitical power changing swiftly. The introduction of new knowledge and technologies will act as a catalyst for these transformations. The side that achieves quantum computing capabilities first risks quickly breaching its opponent's cyber defenses and incapacitating their electronic infrastructure.

At a time when a radical shift in international relations could happen at any moment, nuclear weapons continue to be a cornerstone for the great powers. Following 2022 and extending beyond 2035, the prospect of a complete ban on nuclear weapons is anticipated to remain as prolonged as it has been for the past 70 years. The great powers that shape the balance of power are not only failing to reduce their nuclear capabilities but are also investing more energy and resources in the race to develop new technologies and weapons.<sup>1</sup>

However, nuclear weapons have a deterrent effect that minimizes the likelihood of direct conflict or world war between nuclear superpowers. Conversely, as these superpowers avoid direct confrontation, they significantly increase the chances of “indirect war” through hybrid conflicts, wars involving medium-sized and small states on foreign soil, or actions by non-state groups (proxy forces, terrorist organizations, cyber groups, etc.). Examples of such “indirect war” include inciting South Ossetia against Georgia, Donbass against Ukraine, Transnistrian against Moldova, Hamas against Israel, the Taliban against the United States, Syrians against the Assad regime, various Color Revolutions instigated by the West, and Taiwan against China.

In the emerging multipolar world, it is crucial for middle-class and small-scale countries to consider how to safeguard their national security and implement suitable measures. For Mongolia, it is vital to closely monitor shifts in its internal environment while also observing changes in the external landscape and executing appropriate maneuvers. Focusing on ideological shifts, social transformations, divisions, and radicalization within society, as well as the involvement of foreign intelligence services, will form the foundation for ensuring internal unity and security.

Regardless of how the global and regional landscape evolves, the capacity to endure and navigate any challenges that may emerge must stem from the internal unity of the Mongolian people, the advancement of civil society and institutions, and the preservation of language and culture. History instructs us that while external structures may be imitated, the essence of the original Mongolian identity remains a steadfast foundation.

### **Conclusions.**

In recent years, there have been rapid changes in the global geostrategic environment. The key aspects of this transformation are as follows:

Power dynamics are shifting, with the United States losing some of its global dominance while China's strategic influence is on the rise, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

The traditional bipolar geopolitics between the United States and Russia is evolving towards multipolarity, with countries like China and India emerging as significant strategic players.

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<sup>1</sup> INTERNATIONAL ARMS CONTROL: CHALLENGES AHEAD.

In the past two decades, the United States, Russia, and China have developed diverging perceptions of the international security environment. At the US-Russia bilateral level, this has become increasingly evident through the collapse of important arms control agreements in recent years – most notably the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. In February 2021, the only remaining nuclear arms control agreement between the two powers, New START, was renewed only two days before its expiration.

NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Lisbon. | Cedric PERRIN. 16 November 2021

<https://www.nato-pa.int/document/2021-international-arms-control-challenges-ahead-perrin-report-014-dsc-21-e>

Ongoing trade conflicts and technological rivalries between the United States and China are reshaping global geostrategy, impacting trade and financial relationships.

Competition among nations for energy resources, including oil and rare earth deposits, as well as new energy sources, is a prominent feature of current geostrategy.

The importance of addressing climate change and environmental concerns is increasingly influencing the foreign policies of countries. These changes are expected to lead to new trends in global political and economic relations in the years to come.

Based on in this article, there are several key concluding points about the global geopolitical landscape:

#### ***Transition to a Multipolar World***

The document suggests we are in a transitional phase moving towards a multipolar world order, potentially evolving into one of three possible strategic configurations by 2035:

- A tripolar balance between USA, China, and Russia
- A bipolar balance between USA (NATO) and China (with Russia, North Korea, Iran)
- A more complex multi-alliance system involving USA, China, Russia, India, Africa, European Union, and other regional alliances

#### ***Nature of Modern Conflicts***

The conclusion highlights that modern conflicts are no longer just traditional military confrontations, but include: Economic wars, energy wars, struggles for control of natural resources, infrastructure and logistics competition, trade wars, semiconductor rivalry and space competition.

#### ***Technological Significance***

Future geopolitical power will be increasingly determined by technological advantages, particularly in areas like: Quantum computing, cyber capabilities and emerging technologies.

#### ***Nuclear Deterrence***

Nuclear weapons continue to be a cornerstone of great power dynamics, with: No immediate prospect of complete nuclear disarmament, a deterrent effect preventing direct conflicts between nuclear superpowers and an increased likelihood of "indirect wars" through proxy conflicts.

#### ***Importance of Internal Unity***

For smaller countries like Mongolia, the conclusion emphasizes the critical importance of: Internal social unity, strengthening civil institutions, preserving cultural identity and monitoring both internal and external changes. The overarching message is that the global order is in flux, with technological capabilities, strategic alliances, and internal societal strength becoming increasingly important in navigating geopolitical challenges.

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