

# THE CHANGING TIDES OF GLOBAL DOMINANCE: EVALUATING THE GREAT POWERS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Munaza Khalid & Yang Wenwu\*

## *Abstract*

*This study uses analytical and qualitative forecasting approaches to create and justify its arguments. Events in the contemporary era have demonstrated how China's nonviolent ascent to prominence as a new power affects the structure of global politics. The economy of China has grown at the fastest rate in several decades. US hegemony will soon be eclipsed by the rise of other nations, especially China, and the revival of Russia. Due to new trends, unipolarity gave way to multipolarity in international relations. This paper seeks to answer the questions, How can power dynamics in the new global order influence a transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, and how may Russia and China both threaten Western hegemony during this transition through multilateralism?*

**Keywords:** The Dynamic of Power in the Evolving Global Order, Hegemony and Unipolarity, Unipolarity to Multipolarity

## **Introduction**

**T**he emergence of great powers and unipolarity are closely related ideas. Austria and England in the late seventeenth century and Germany in the late nineteenth century counterbalanced the system's dominant pole. Furthermore, the shadow of pre-eminence persisted even under circumstances in which weakening the hegemon's dominance was not the primary objective of significant power development. After World War II, the US and the Soviet Union became superpowers, which impacted the bipolar global order. Since 1945, bipolarity has only occurred sporadically, indicating that the ideal balance realists discuss has never been a consistent situation.<sup>1</sup> This has sparked a debate about the nature of hegemony and the necessity of developing a more just international system for the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup> There had only been twelve years between the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union before the September 11 assaults on the World Trade Centre. As the lone superpower, the US must contend with a violent multipolar world and growing threats from radical terrorists.<sup>3</sup>

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\* Ms Munaza Khalid is student of M. Phil in International Relations at Sichuan University, China and Professor Dr Yang Wenwu serves at Sichuan University, China. The authors' email is munazzahkhalidedu@gmail.com

The resurgence of Russia and the rise of other nations, like China, will soon overshadow America's infallibility, predict Paul, Wirtz, and Fortmann.<sup>4</sup> Creating a genuinely multipolar system of European powers, each more likely to base war and peace decisions on "national interests" rather than transnational and theological considerations, was the primary characteristic of the post-1660 incredible power landscape.<sup>5</sup>

### **Objectives and aim of the Study**

The study focuses on the change from a unipolar to a multipolar world order and is situated within the changing global power balance. It examines how China and Russia have played crucial roles in opposing Western hegemony, particularly regarding influence, policy, and strategic goals. This article also considers what multilateralism means in this shift by examining Russian discussions regarding multipolarity and China as a rival to global supremacy. The study examines the cooperative connection between China and Russia, focusing on how the two countries' new and expanding alliance is changing the world's political landscape.

This paper focuses on the research question "How can power dynamics in the new global order influence a transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, and how may Russia and China both threaten Western hegemony during this transition through multilateralism?"

### **The Dynamics of Power in the Evolving Global Order**

The world's equilibrium was most disturbed between 1921 and 1940 because the US had the opportunity to act as a special balancer but declined to do so (for domestic political reasons outside the scope of our analysis). A bipolar system has developed since 1945, yet there is a growing tendency for this system to become more multipolar. The extent to which the US may be seen as a unique balancer in a multipolar nuclear era society is not entirely evident. The fact that nuclear weapons exist and can be transported across countries makes them Our debate over geographic proximity—or lack thereof—becomes moot if millions of megatons of atomic annihilation can be delivered in less than thirty minutes to any country on Earth, with the US and USSR being most affected and China, the UK, and France less so. Geographical factors don't impact nuclear power's maximum force projection capabilities significantly. However, if the system remains stable, the balancer's role remains vital, even if they are not the only balancer and whether it can or will be stable is outside the purview of our current debate.<sup>6</sup>

Despite minor changes in the balance of power, the startling situation appeared towards the end of the Cold War, when the union of significant nations did not exist to counteract the US preponderance. In the event of a single superpower, states are looking for various security measures, like "soft balancing." China is lagging behind the US in terms of homegrown weapons and is working to catch up.<sup>7</sup> The three superpowers—the US, the UK, and the USSR—became embroiled in a struggle over political, military, and economic dominance after battling for peace during World War II. After the war, Britain gained 25% more land and the same population. However, Britain's influence diminished and the US and USSR emerged as significant new superpowers.<sup>8</sup>

Before the Cold War, the US was the world's largest producer, but the USSR was also implementing its five-year plan for economic development. The US entered World War II to protect its capitalist interests in Europe.<sup>9</sup> Even after the death of the Soviet Union's child, Russia is still more determined and ambitious in world affairs. The "Strong Man" and inspirational leader "Vladimir Putin" deserves all the praise for Russia's expanding economy and upcoming development prospects. Russia is leading the constant pressure from European nations to implement financial accords, which makes sense.<sup>10</sup>

## **Methods and Materials**

A mixed-method approach is used to consult both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included government and international organisation publications, particularly in global politics and economics. The researchers used books and research articles as secondary sources to help them determine the precise outcomes and possible long-term impacts of the system's shift to multi-polarity. There are four sections to the analytical discussion. The strength of the US military and the status of the national economy are examined in the first section. The second portion discusses the potential for recently emerging states like China and Russia to become superpowers. The third segment examines the global system's growing regionalist tendencies and potential alliances formed by rising superpowers to challenge US hegemony shortly. An analytical perspective on the power shift that is taking place by the extended cycle theory and resulting in a multipolar international order is provided in the fourth section. The study's main conclusions are outlined in the conclusion.

### Related Work

**An Overview of Military Might and the US Economy.** The US economy is strong after seven years of financial crisis because of strategic investments in green growth, skills, and infrastructure, increased employment in the private sector and decreased unemployment. A 2016 OECD study states that the US economy faces several obstacles, such as slow global growth, burdensome regulations, financial risks, and insufficient financial exchange. These policy concerns are the only ones now affecting the US economy. Table 1 shows the change in the U.S. real GDP percentage from the previous quarter, 2013–2024, along with the GDP deflator, representing inflationary pressures during the same period. When attempting to link real growth with price. Numerous difficulties related to productivity plague the United States, including poor public infrastructure, pollution, a decline in entrepreneurship, decreased production, and weakened market power. Inadequate expansion, which they are addressing. The lack of possibilities for low-income families, the slow progress of women's rights, racial and socioeconomic inequalities, population aging, and the dangers of high-carbon initiatives are some other barriers.<sup>11</sup> The accompanying graphic shows how the US economy has moved quickly, especially since the 2016 presidential election, and has not been stable since the first quarter of 2016.<sup>12</sup> changes throughout time, such as table-1 will provide insight into the ups and downs the US economy has seen.

**Table-1: U.S. Real GDP Percentage Change from Preceding Quarter (2013-2024) with Price Data**



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)/ Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED).

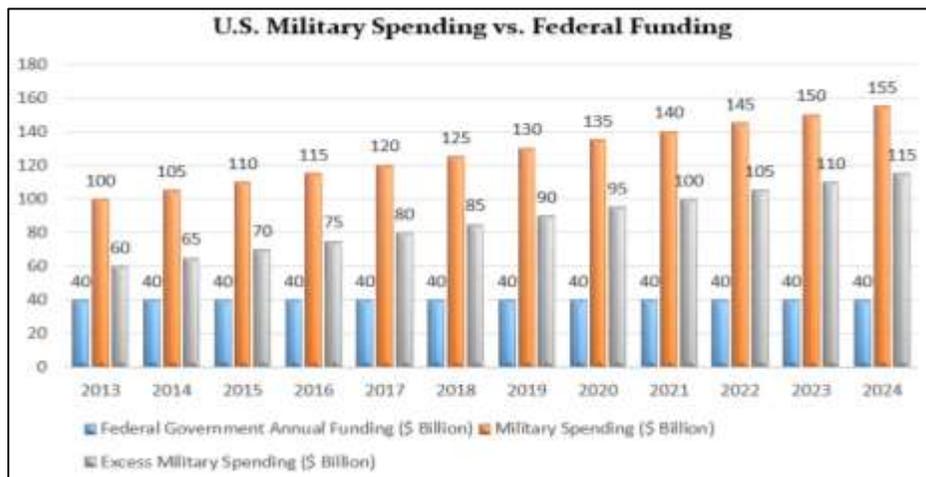
This entails stopping regional destabilisation and protecting US allies' peace and security from threats. As shown in **Table 2**, the federal government only provides \$40 billion in funds annually, yet military spending has risen to \$100 billion. Fifty years of excessive military expenditures have given rise to institutions and groups with significant political clout.<sup>13</sup>

### **Rising Powers of 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The most talked-about topics in the international world are the accusations regarding the different facets of Chinese development, from growing energy demands to military might and power expansion.<sup>14</sup> Since 1978, China's GDP has grown at the quickest rate ever—9.4 % annually faster than the global economy. It also conducted \$20.6 billion in international trade. In late 20th-century China, few mobile telecommunication services were available. Globally, there are over 300 million mobile phone users and over 100 million internet users.

Table:2. Indicates that the United States' military spending has surpassed the yearly appropriations approved by the federal government, reaching a total of more than \$100 billion by 2024. The disproportionate increase in military spending was justified by the military's growing political influence, which has become a key factor in determining government objectives and policy.

**Table-2: U.S. Military Spending vs. Federal Funding (2013-2024)**

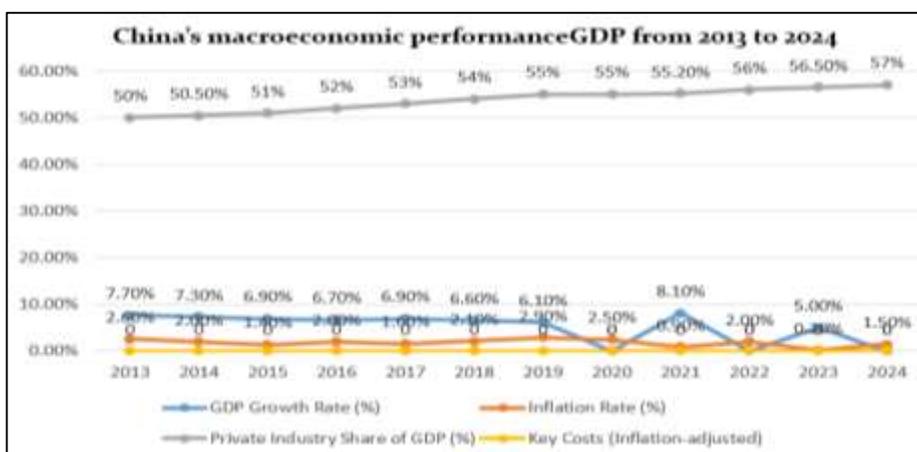


**Source:** <http://index.heritage.org/military/2016/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/MS-2016-assessment-militarypower-chart.png>

Aside from fiscal crises, Chinese macroeconomic management is very good at resolving them; the Great Recession (2007–2009) is one example. China launches its domestic consumer sector to create a robust and developed domestic market. With its contracts with billionaires and the 12th Five-Year Plan expanding non-fossil fuels, China may soon emerge as a key force in global energy politics. In addition to contributing to its economic stability, private industry makes up more than half of China's GDP,<sup>15</sup> as we can see in Table 3.

Table-3 provides an overview of economic stability, macroeconomic performance, and China's growth and GDP proportion of the private sector from 2013 to 2024. It also forecasts China's GDP growth rate, private sector proportion, inflation, and certain cost-related information. The exact figures for some categories, such as the proportion of the private sector, may differ slightly between publications and sources.

**Table-3: China GDP 2013-2024**



**Source:** World Bank ([www.worldbank.org/en/country/china](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china)).

Forty thousand ships enter and exit Chinese ports annually, according to figures from the customs agency, supporting the UN's claim that China is the largest merchant marine operator in the world. To help low- and middle-income governments catch up economically, China is expanding its intergovernmental cooperation and interconnection program to include nations in Latin America, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, and other regions.<sup>16</sup> The extensive and populous country of India inspired the drama. Forecasts indicate that China's GDP gap with other major countries will likely widen shortly, which may allow it to undertake significant measures to promote global economic growth.<sup>17</sup> Growth of the economy

and public sector. Twenty percent of the population has been pulled out of poverty due to China's distinctive socioeconomic political system, which is characterised by a free and competitive market economy and a dual political party system.<sup>18</sup> China established a new political and economic order globally by democratising international relations, which depends on global peace.<sup>19</sup>

Putin oversaw an increase in average salary from 2,200 to 12,500 roubles, which led to a decrease in the percentage of the population living in poverty from 30% to 15%. The average salary rose from 2,200 to 12,500 roubles under Putin's leadership, while the percentage of people living in poverty decreased from 30% to 40% between 2000 and 2008.<sup>20</sup> Putin's hopes of Russia becoming a major world force were realised with the aforementioned economic losses. Both Putin and Medvedev believe that today's US-dominated world order is unsustainable. Russia's issues thus demonstrate that the people and government of the nation are in favor of multipolarity.<sup>21</sup>

### **Expanding Regionalism: Endorsement of Multipolarity**

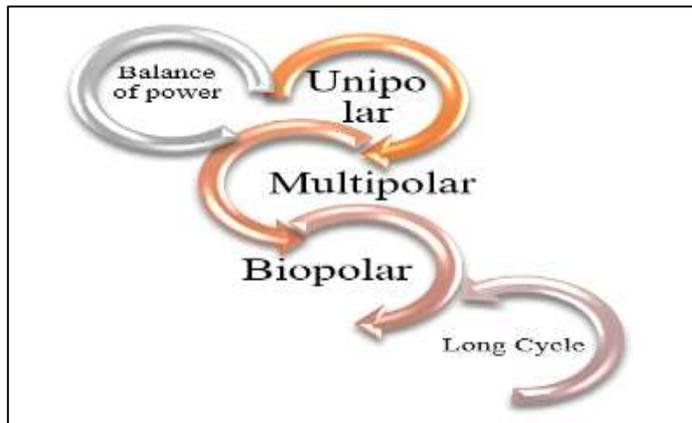
Use of regionalism in the research strengthens the case for the shift from unipolarity to multipolarity. The framework of beliefs, attitudes, and goals that gives rise to the development, maintenance, and management of a particular region or kind of global government is known as regionalism. This political agenda dates back to the middle of the 1980s. Some of the most well-known examples of regional organisations are the European Union (EU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), South African Development Community (SADC), Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Regionalism has happened in three waves: the first from 1945 to 1965, the second from 1965 to 1985, and the third from 1985 to the present. The developmental stages of regionalism are the first wave of regionalism (1945–1965) and the creation of regional bodies, most notably the UN and the Bretton Woods/GATT system. Three notable regional institutions from this era are divided into three categories based on their objectives: a) multipurpose organisations like the American States and the League of Arab States; b) the organisation that will replace the Organisation of African Unity and the Inter-American System; and c) security alliances and coalitions like the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Consider the early European institutions that had an economics-focused agenda. The Cold War between the United States and Russia created some issues with the first wave of regionalism, though. The Second Wave of Regionalism ran from 1965 until 1985.

The international system during the Cold War clearly defined the limits and opportunities of regionalism, according to the Third Wave (1985–Present) of regionalism.

### The Shift in Global Power Dynamics

Throughout history, there has been a cycle of governments, empires, regions, and global powers rising and declining. The military was the only means of "balancing the power" for a long while.<sup>22</sup> The power structure has become more inflexible due to the exceptional circumstances. Changes in the international arena during the 20th century included the transition from a multipolar to a bipolar and, in the most recent decade, to a unipolar system.<sup>23</sup> A single hegemonic state has dominated the unipolar global power system since the end of the Cold War. The international system's evolution is swiftly switching the power structure's pivot from unipolar to multipolar. Neo-conservative and imperialist policies are to blame for this change in the worldwide order. It is being modified to become a "World Order with Multiple Polarities." This fact validates the research done using the balance of power paradigm. The following diagram shows the historical change in the power structure from bipolarity to unipolarity. As new political players emerge, the international community's cycle toward multipolarity will continue.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure-1: Transition of Power (Bipolar, Unipolar, Multipolar)**



The most well-known proponents of the theory that the world order should shift from unipolarity to multipolarity have evolved due to the significant economic actions of new, developing participants in international politics, such as China, Russia, Japan, Brazil, and India.<sup>25</sup> The poor financial performance of the Unipolar globe and poor administrative practices will make it weaker and possibly more difficult for it to become a superpower.<sup>26</sup>

In response to this shift, governments are attempting to modify their calls for legislative and internal reform. Universal design has experienced significant social, financial, and political transformation in the twenty-first century. (Fawcett, L.<sup>27</sup> The complex growth situation and mounting strain now substantially impacts regional stability and global security. States are consequently battling for control of the balance of power and supporting the shift in international politics to allay these anxieties.<sup>28</sup>

## **Hegemony and Unipolarity**

Unipolarity without hegemony is a configuration in which a dominant influence does not match the preponderant capability of a single state if hegemony is defined as a unipolar configuration of political-military capability with a structure of influence that equals capability.

## **Hegemony, Hierarchy, and Unipolarity**

In the 1970s, researchers in the field of international political economy examined the connection between leadership, openness, and dominating power. The conversation quickly turned to the topic of hegemony, when one state takes the lead in establishing and defending the cornerstones of the international order. Because of the common belief that American supremacy, which had been so strong in the 25 years following World War II, was waning, the ensuing intellectual debates focused on the justification for and durability of hegemony. However, the widespread but false empirical assumption that US hegemony was waning served as the foundation for the argument. Similar problems resurfaced around the end of the 20th century, although the terms hierarchy and unipolarity were used this time rather than hegemony. The primary question was whether the hegemon's continuous rule would finally inflict enough damage to fall apart. The election of US President Donald J. Trump has heightened the prominence of the hegemony-related topics explored in this literature.

## **The Multipolarity Moment**

Multipolarity is the term used to describe the power distribution that occurs when more than two states have comparable power levels. Two of the best examples of peaceful multipolarity are the Concert of Europe, between the Napoleonic Wars and the Crimean War, and the Interwar era, during which the major European powers met regularly to address internal and foreign matters. (Haass, Richard; Kupchan, Charles A.<sup>29</sup>

The Great War, World War II, the Thirty Years War, the Warring States period, the Three Kingdoms period, and the tripartite division between the Song, Liao, Jin, and Yuan empires are a few examples of multipolarity during times of war.<sup>30</sup> The Thirty Years War,<sup>31</sup> the Warring States period, and the Three Kingdoms period are a few instances of multipolarity during wartime (Schweller, Randall L. (1993)).<sup>32</sup> The trio split between the Song, (Midlarsky, Manus I.; Hopf, Ted), and the World Wars I, II, III, and IV (1993).<sup>33</sup> Liao, Jin, and Yuan empires. Midlarsky, Manus I.; Hopf, Ted (1993).<sup>34</sup>

### **Impact on Cooperation and Conflict**

Classical realist theorists such as Hans Morgenthau and E. H. Carr argued that bipolar systems are less stable than multipolar ones because they prevent big powers from directly facing other nations through alliances and small-scale wars. Neorealists contend that because managing alliance networks is more complex and there is a higher likelihood of misinterpreting other countries' intentions, multipolar systems are more unstable and conflict-prone. As a result of "buck-passing"—the practice of allies being dragged into pointless conflicts that their alliance partners initiate—and "chain-ganging"—the practice of states that do not directly face a threat choosing not to balance against it in the hopes that others will foot the bill—Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder contend that multipolarity tends to cause instability and conflict escalation.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, John Mearsheimer claims that multipolar systems have higher rates of buck-passing. (Christensen, Thomas J.; Snyder, Jack.<sup>36</sup> Multipolarity does not guarantee multilateralism, even though it can act against it.<sup>37</sup> Kemal Derviş claims that as unipolarity declines, multilateralism is in crisis; although it can be revived in a multipolar system, it is more brittle and lacks a strong foundation.<sup>38</sup> More significant nations are more equipped than smaller ones to negotiate "mega-regional" agreements in a multipolar world. These agreements might not include the smaller states if several rival great powers exist. (Bernard Hoekman (2014-06-01)).<sup>39</sup> Multipolar systems can reduce economic interdependencies within areas, at least in those without great power, even though they create regional hegemonies around "poles," or great power. <sup>40</sup> Multipolar systems can reduce economic interdependencies within areas, at least in those without great power, even though they create regional hegemonies around "poles," or extraordinary powers.<sup>41</sup> However, Mearsheimer predicts that multipolarity will continue to support a precarious international order comprising a few multilateral agreements.<sup>42</sup>

## **Is Foreign Policy Exempt from Multilateralism?**

According to John Ikenberry and John Ruggie, multilateralism is the cornerstone of the contemporary international order that the US created following World War II.

However, multilateralism may be an exception, since nations typically use unilateralism and bilateralism as foreign policy instruments in international relations. This makes sense when particular data is taken into account. For example, when using force, the United States usually uses unilateralism as a strategy.<sup>43</sup>

In about 80 percent of its military operations, the force was used without a partner state's or an international agency's consent. Just 45 of the 212 instances in which US presidents utilised force in military action between 1948 and 1998 took place internationally. Furthermore, Fordham and Poast (2016) found that 16% of the military alliances included in the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) data set between 1815 and 2003 were multilateral. In another way, bilateral partnerships account for 84% of the total. Initiatives at international mediation, which by definition sound like multilateral approaches, were surprisingly lacking in multilateralism. According to Böhmelt (2012), unilateral mediation was used in more than 70% (219 out of 330) of disputes between 1945 and 2001. Milner (2006, p. 110) offers a similar suggestion, stating that the median percentage of multilateral aid committed to total aid is roughly 32%. The "norm" is to assist both sides. Moreover, Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi (2014) found that 335 cases, or 33%, of the 1,024 instances of economic penalties were multilateral.

Again, the vast majority of cases involve unilateral sanctions. These findings suggest that in the majority of policy domains, both unilateralism and bilateralism are default options. Unilateralism is more common when force is used, and bilateral coalitions are created. In international relations, unilateral aid, unilateral economic sanctions, or unilateral mediation attempts are the most common policy methods. If so, we must explain why governments choose multilateralism in specific (unique) circumstances.

## **The Russian Multipolarity Debates**

The Davis Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University commemorated its 75th anniversary at the end of October 2023. Experts in the field assembled on this occasion concentrated their discussion on the developing story about Russia's role in the conflict in Ukraine.

The dean of Harvard University's Ukrainian Research Institute and the Mykhailo S. Hrushevskiy Professor of Ukrainian History, Serkhii Plokhii, says that Russia has framed its claims to Ukraine within a "pan-Russian narrative" rooted in the country's imperial past. One can better comprehend Russia's activities in Ukraine by looking at the development of post-Soviet Russian national discourse and carefully examining recent changes to the Russian Constitution.

### **Putin's Assured**

Others feared that Russia would fall in the same way as the USSR did in 1991. Numerous ethnic groups assimilated into the Russian empire and continued to be Russian subjects, calling Russia home. The Russian Federation was composed historically and presently of three federal cities and geographical (oblasts and krais) and ethnic (republics, autonomous oblasts, and autonomous okrugs) federal subjects. Similarly, various ethnic groups in the Soviet Union were divided into union republics. Given these structural similarities, it was not evident why Russia's federal subjects stayed a part of the Russian Federation and the union republics broke away. Russia tried to establish federalism to regain national unity; this system was subsequently enshrined in the 1992 Federation Treaty and the 1993-ratified Constitution. The Federation Treaty and the Constitution did not provide Russia's federal subjects with a workable legal structure allowing them to live in harmony with one another. Following the approval of the Constitution, numerous bilateral treaties were signed between the federal subjects and the federal government. These deals eventually hindered the central government's ability to quell the danger of secession during the First Chechen War.

### **The 2020 Amendments to the Constitution**

Twenty years after his initial centralisation experiment, Putin has shifted away from presenting his reforms in the context of a struggle to preserve the 1993 Constitution in its original form, as stated in the Millennium Manifesto. Two thousand twenty constitutional amendments reflect this shift in approach. A new clause, Article 67.1 § 2, restated the historical rationale for the 2020 revisions. "Unified by the millennium history, preserving the memory of the ancestors who conveyed to us ideals and belief in God," this piece declares that the Russian Federation "recognises the unanimity of the State established historically." The statement in Article 13 § 2 that "no ideology shall be proclaimed as State ideology or as obligatory" is contradicted by the explicit mention of God. Its amended language provisions echo the first sentence of the Constitution. The 1993 Constitution's Article 68 § 1 declares that "Russian shall be the State language of the Russian Federation throughout its whole territory."

In 2020, Russian was defined as the "language of the state-constituting nation [included in] the multinational union of equal nations of the Russian Federation." This definition did not change from the previous year. By referring to them as citizens of the "state-constituting nation," this expression subtly gives ethnic Russians a higher status than other inhabitants of the Russian Federation. The sentence "the state protects the cultural identity of all peoples and ethnic communities of the Russian Federation and guarantees the preservation of ethnocultural and linguistic diversity" justifies this apparent conflict in an amendment to Article 69.

### **Russian Civilizationalism**

By adopting Samuel Huntington's notion of a "Clash of Civilizations," which he devised in an article released a few months before the Russian Constitution was passed in 1993, patterns can be understood by analysing the 2020 constitutional modifications. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, ideology ceased to be a unifying force, and Huntington anticipated that governments would increasingly turn to shared religious beliefs and the "civilisation identity" to galvanise support. Russian official vocabulary reflects the idea of civilisation. In the country, it is taught as "Foundations of Russian Statehood," a prerequisite subject for universities that has been in place since September 2023. "The Russian civilisation-state" and "the Russian worldview and the values of Russian civilisation" are the titles of two of the five elements that comprise the official curriculum. The course curriculum asserts that although the West is in decline, Russia, as a distinct civilisation, "marches towards the peak" of its development and has not yet attained its full blossoming." This assertion is based on the civilisational model of history. Russia's criticism of the West's universalising rhetoric is supported by the civilisation model, which denies the existence of universal human aspirations. This theory states that "failure of multicultural projects in Western countries, followed by a loss of 'cultural continuity,'" is evidence of the West's collapse.

The order refers to the *Russkiy mir*, or "Russian world," a key idea in Russia's discourse on civilisation. In the mid-2000s, Putin started using the term "*Russkiy mir*" regularly to defend Russia's actions in adjacent countries where there was a significant Russian diaspora. Georgia in 2008, where Russian intervention was justified because it would save Georgian citizens from "linguistic discrimination," and Ukraine in 2014 are two such cases. An organisation devoted to advancing the Russian language and culture overseas, *Russkiy Mir* was founded in 2007 by the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Education and Science. This was the moment when the idea of *Russkiy mir* was formalised.

The term "geopolitical imaginary" of Novorossiia, which was coined during the imperial era to highlight the shared history between Russia and southeast Ukraine and reappeared in Russian discourse with the annexation of Crimea, is closely associated with the *Russkiy mir*.

### **China's Challenge to Hegemony**

Many U.S. foreign policy scholars argue that China will become the region's principal hegemonic force without decisive American action, which justifies China's military buildup in Asia. The US would not want an unfriendly foreign power to rule over Asia. However, thinking that China could govern a region with Asia's size, wealth, and diversity is unrealistic. China's full potential for dominance in Asia must be understood in order to choose the best course of action for the United States in the region. Without robust American action, many U.S. foreign policy specialists argue that China will emerge as the primary hegemonic actor, which justifies China's military development in Asia. The US would not want an antagonistic foreign nation to control Asia. However, the idea that China could rule over an area of Asia's size, riches, and diversity is impractical. To choose the appropriate course of action for the United States, one must consider China's complete potential for domination in Asia.

### **Compassionate Hegemony**

The state with the greatest concentration of material capacities is regarded as the system's hegemon (Brooks, 2012).<sup>44</sup> These components might be classified as either military or economic. Benign hegemon enslave others to accomplish their hegemony, but predatory hegemon use force to create and maintain dominance. Charitable hegemon employ inducement to persuade other countries to adopt their favored systems. Throughout history, the United States has been a predatory and benevolent power. The global system, neoconservatives maintain that the US remains a "benevolent hegemon," particularly in the context of the Bush administration.<sup>45</sup> Its ideals, the two most important of which are the development of democracy and universal moral standards, have been successfully implemented to shape the international system to ensure its unchallenged dominance over the "free" world.<sup>46</sup> This conceptual framework's noteworthy feature is that the French Revolution and its tenets of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" lay the groundwork for the current global order.<sup>47</sup> The French Revolutionary War disseminated these concepts over most of Europe and eventually the world.

In terms of both strategy and economy, the United States emerged as the dominant player in the global system and began to grow in the 1880s. The "Four Freedoms" offered by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941 and Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" in 1918 and 1919 further reinforced the cornerstones of the US-dominated international order that ruled during and after World War II. These underpin the US government's claim that it is the benign hegemon of the world. However, academics such as Ikenberry claimed that, particularly during the Bush years, the US pursued an "imperial grand strategy" centered on militarism, exclusionism, and unilateralism.<sup>48</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The study critically analysed the shift from unipolarity to multipolarity in international relations. Ultimately, the study concludes that the earth will transition from unipolar to multipolar. Since new players will take over the role in the Long Cycle Theory's described cycle of change, the United States will maintain equilibrium within the global power structure. This research study presents four expected possibilities, which are explained in the following manner:

- a. Due to its more extensive economy and current dominance in the financial sector, China is poised to overtake the US as a superpower. There is also disagreement between the growth ratios of the two states. The merger of the two states is chaotic, and if this were to occur, there appears to be a chance of a Third World War.
- b. Secondly, while having all the required attributes and potential, China will not become a superpower very soon. China's population is too significant to threaten the existing global order. Internal discontent could quickly be a major impediment to China's ascent to global dominance.
- c. The third possibility is that rising nations like China, Russia, and others band together to challenge the US government. Because of their advantages, developing countries are attempting to have a more significant say in world affairs. The challenge emerging powers are enduring to reclaim their status as the world's leading states is evident in the current transition and balance of power.
- d. The fourth possibility is that US hegemony will endure notwithstanding the country's departure as the global economic leader. The United States, still regarded as the world's leading military force, will be too intense for other up-and-coming competitors to overtake.

It appears as though history will repeat itself, with the struggle between the blocs representing capitalism and communism reviving. In this instance, these blocs will again have a detrimental effect on global events, returning the globe to its previous unstable and devastated condition.

By defending their interests, the developing countries would stand in tandem with them, and both blocs would use them to balance each other's agendas. Power balancing and power transitions are possible even with longer cycles because stability and security depend on considering the deviation. Nothing will change if the framework remains the same, which could lead to a state of chaos in most international dealings. The recently emerged players oppose the existing global power system.

Using their resources everywhere, they are trying to challenge US hegemony. They can't defeat the might of the US military, even if they are starting to perform better than the US in several areas, like the economy and technology. According to the research, there will be a change in power in the future from a unipolar to a multipolar world through some strategies, including forging alliances or emerging as a stand-alone powerhouse. By reaching a consensus, the rising nations will quickly remove US dominance.

## Endnotes

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