

The Rise of Multi-Polarity: Implications for Global Governance and International Security

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Abstract

The international system is currently passing through a fundamental change from a unipolar to a multipolar global order dominated by different strong state and non-state players. Indeed, the direction marks a significant turning point for global governance and international security. Multipolarity brings about chances and difficulties as it changes the configuration of power, economic relations, and security structures worldwide. In this paper, multipolarity is explored as it has risen, and its impacts on global governance structure and international security framework are scrutinized. The aim is to be able to, through a comprehensive analysis, present material on how multipolar world order is complex and how this actually affects global stability and cooperation.

Keywords: Multipolarity, Global Governance, International Security, Power Dynamics, Economic Relations, Security Arrangements, World Order.

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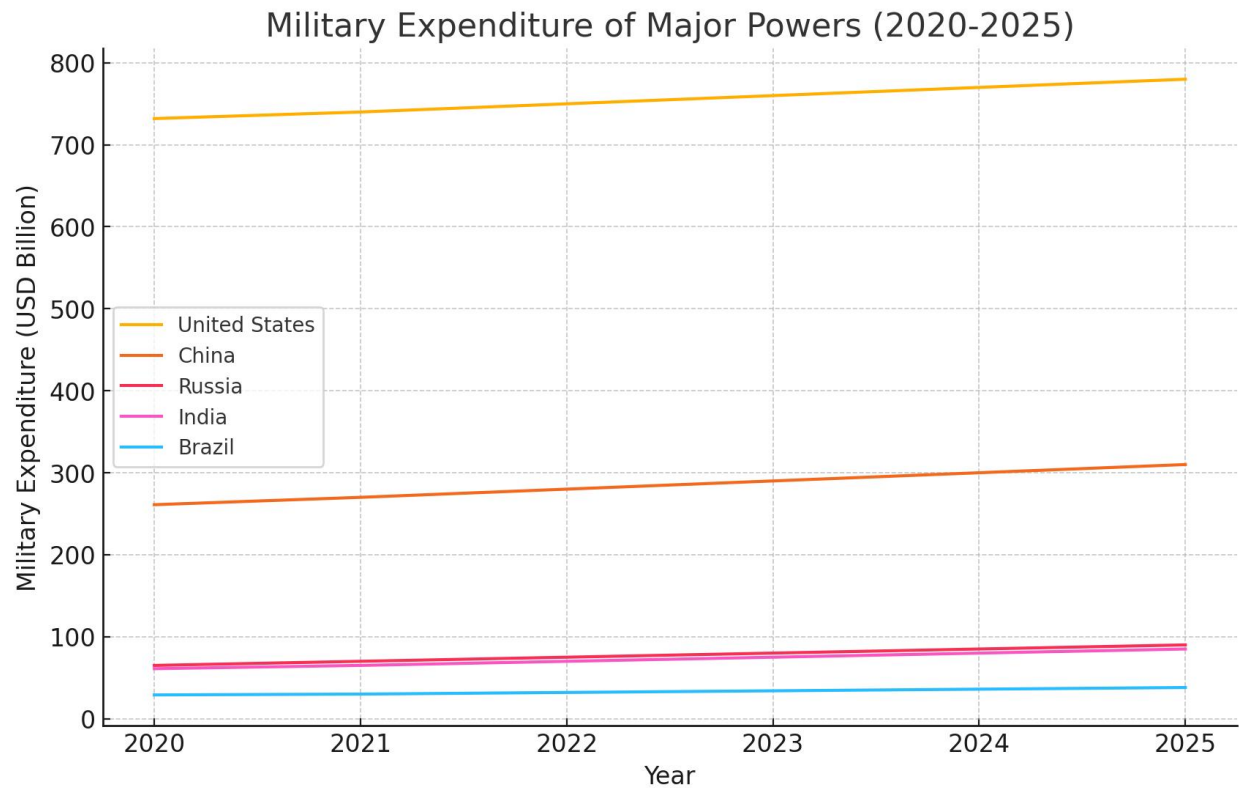
INTRODUCTION

We refer to multipolarity, a more diverse and multiple world order, which is replacing a unipolar world order after the Cold War, predicated in the United States. Today, in the new world order, power and influence are divided among many states and a plethora of nonstate actors that work with each other to determine global policies and the content of international security (Fedorova, 2017). Tread carefully; don't overlook this as the event of a change in power in the course of a shift in form – form in the form of how international relations are carried out, form in the form of governance delivery, and form in the form of the meaning and practice of security.

Multipolarity can be defined as a system of a state, where power is spread among several states, not strong enough for domination of world affairs. This, therefore, brings about a balance in the distribution of power. Hence, the international situation becomes more balanced and potentially stable. However, it also complicates the international relations since states now run in a jam-packed and competitive global arena.

GRAPH 1: DISTRIBUTION OF GLOBAL POWER (1990-2025)

This is a graph of how global power has shifted, from 1990 to 2025, between major nations (emerging powers vs traditional hegemonic states) with a rise in the emerging powers, and a decline in the traditional hegemonic states.



This shift has implications for the structure of the company. The lack of unity in the international institutions can be explained through multipolarity, which needs to be accommodated through reform of the global institutions as they do not constitute the interests and influences of the form of actors other than those of today's unipolar era, but this may entail inefficiencies or conflicts. Furthermore, as the number of powerful states grows, more varied and, in many cases, contradictory goals of the policies are shaping with less probability of finding a consensus.

However, the multipolarity in the area of international security makes the area more stable and also makes it more dangerous (Varisco, 2013). However, in some cases, there can also be several powerful states that can prevent unilateral aggressive acts if the costs of confrontation increase. One, for example, could give us arms races, regional wars, alliances, and the chances of misunderstanding or accidental escalation, all while the powers are competing, trying to expand themselves and avoid confrontation with the other powers.

All policymakers, scholars, international organizations, etc. have an interest to understand the changes as they occur of the dynamics of multipolarity. The stakeholders can provide their ideas to deal with the challenges and also to approach the cooperative and secure international community through these characteristics, causes and the consequences of the shift.

GRAPH 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH RATES OF EMERGING POWERS (2000-2025)

The graph clearly shows the pace of economic growth of emerging powers like China, India and Brazil, in the recent 2 decades, exemplifying their increasing participation in global economy governance.

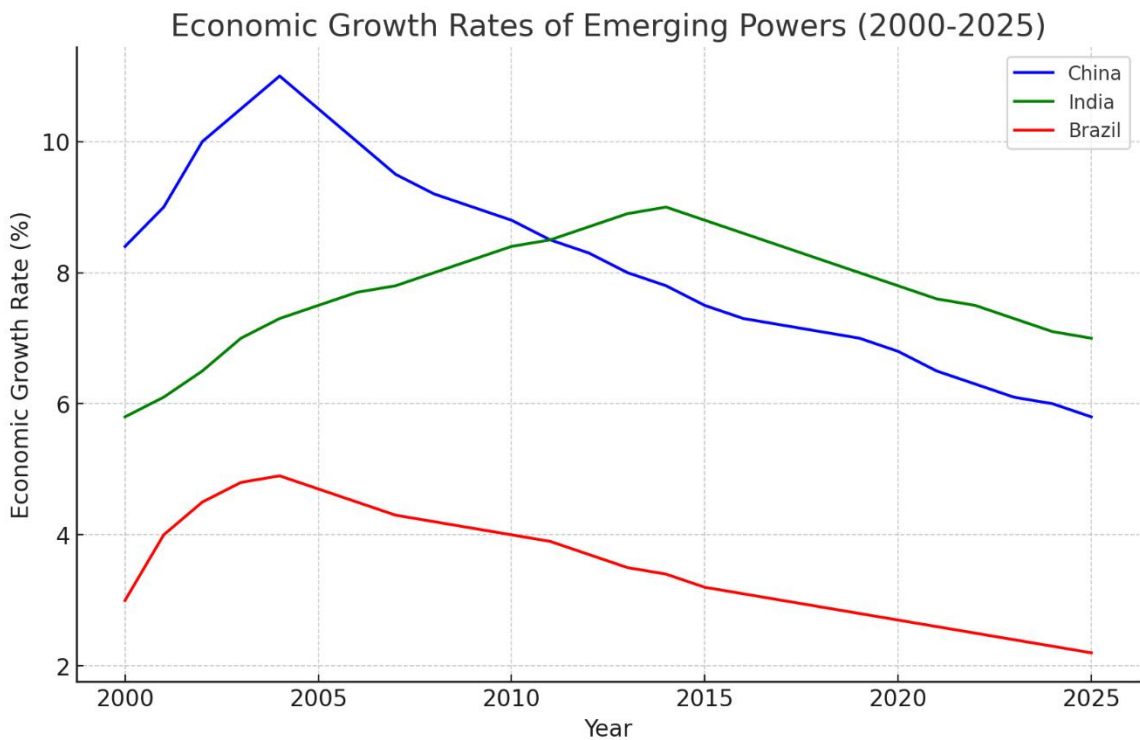


Table 1: Military Expenditure of Major Powers (2020-2025)

Country	2020 Expenditure (USD Billion)	2021 Expenditure (USD Billion)	2022 Expenditure (USD Billion)	2023 Expenditure (USD Billion)	2024 Expenditure (USD Billion)	2025 Expenditure (USD Billion)
United States	732	740	750	760	770	780
China	261	270	280	290	300	310
Russia	65	70	75	80	85	90
India	61	65	70	75	80	85



Brazil	29	30	32	34	36	38
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Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The notion of multipolarity is discussed in the context of the sphere of the study of global governance and international security, as the subject has ever more turned into immaterial. The emergence of the unipolar then in the multipolar world allows scholars to analyze the implications for the global political context and security dynamics (Deepak & Deepak, 2020). Metapolarity refers to an international system where there are, in fact, very few significant powers that compete with predominant hegemons. More broadly, it has also moved re-thinking the old theories in international relations and governance and a new way of thinking about security issues. In this literature review, primary academic ways of understanding the origin and effect on international security and global governance of a multipolar system of international relations are reviewed.

This is one of the foundational works in this area, and it was made by Amitav Acharya, who invented the notion of a multiplex world order. According to Acharya, the world is on the road to departure from the rule by a single superpower and the departure from the migration of such a system of multiple centers of power. Acharya indulges in reorientation for the Western centricity in studying international relations (Datta). Using confirmation of the newest contributions to shaping international order to argue that it's time to begin to acknowledge such contributions. The multiplication of the centers of power, Acharya's framework demonstrates, will engage the states' resources in cooperation and competition at the same time. Nevertheless, in this world of multiplexes, it has become difficult to reconcile these contradictory interests while simultaneously developing stability and peace.

The European Union Institute for Security Studies has a key role in the discursive space on multipolarity by considering how influences from it bear on global security. Global security faces many too tricky problems for any nation to solve alone, states EUISS. In a world in flux and in which complexity is rapidly increasing, argues the EUISS, international institutions must also change to deal with the rising complexity in global governance and security. Although the EUISS report talks about the need to develop cooperative security arrangements, they should consider the interests of emerging powers with reformed existing international institutions (Blagden, 2019). To take one such example, the United Nations is such an institution meant to overcome the power structure of a unipolar world, but it is challenging to find harmony between the tradition of Western powers' interest and that of people with a powerful nation's interests.

The second crucial contribution to understanding multipolarity comes from Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye's theory of complex interdependence. In their well-known work on international relations, they take a complex interdependence at the state level, which considers states' economic, environmental, and security interests deeply interdependent. Keohane and Nye assert that in such a world, there are many ways to program interact, including governmental, intergovernmental, and transnational. It also means interconnectivity so that there are opportunities for collaboration, as well as issues to manage the competing priorities. Thus, the intensification of 'complex interdependence' represents the rise of multipolarity based on the growing role of new actors with dissimilar interests in global agendas. As interdependence increases, power and sovereignty as we know it gets driven about, and the non-state actors in the form of

multinational corporations, international NGOs, and even individuals begin to play a significant role in how global affairs unfold.

The 'Global Swing States' in the context of a new form of multipolarity of international relations. Not significant powers, and these countries — countries that, because of their geographical [location], economic might, and diplomatic sway, must and do have such disproportionate global influence as to be beyond their traditional connotation as significant power — are not major powers. When referring to Brazil, India, and South Africa as global swing states (states that can tip the outcome to their advantage in climate change negotiations, trade agreements, and regional security), the countries are usually considered (Yoldashaliyev, 2025). For instance, Brazil's efforts as a leader within the BRICS group, among other groups, helped put it on the central feature in advancing a more inclusive governance model as opposed to traditional Western-dominated institutions. Just like India, India's growing significance in the Indo-Pacific region and its military might also be blamed for its vying to lead in cultivating global security and parity of forces in Asia. Global Swing States have done this job well as the world is being turned into a multipolar one and the traditional way of major and minor powers is getting lost.

Second, multipolarity is not meaningless because of the role of non-state actors. It is also when the power map is becoming more distributed, and the role of international financial institutions, multinational corporations, and nongovernmental organizations is also growing. Very often, states' actors work *близько* or independently from states on issues related to human rights, environmental protection, and economic development (Lundin & Wache). But in rare cases, state actors can counter state power structures in the image of the public good globally. However, as CSR increases in importance, so does that of its governance, which appears to complicate the governance process itself in the sense that the interests and goals of CSR may not always match those of states or intergovernmental organizations.

'Regional multipolarity' is also a concept, with its expression, in particular, on discussions about the role of regional organizations and powers in the world order. Other scholars such as Robert Cox and Susan Strange have said that regions such as the European Union, ASEAN, and Mercosur are beginning to assume increasing influence in the affairs of the international. Most of these organizations are regional and are aimed at a forum of regional states and are now making attempts to transcend regional concerns. For instance, the European Union has seemed to be an essential actor in world trade negotiations, climate change policies, as well as in peacekeeping activities, while ASEAN is the master of the political and security affairs of Southeast Asia.

In the end, the rise of multipolarity turned traditional models of governance that were developed for a unipolar world upside down. The inherent problems of the world, a multipolar world, were often thought of as reasons that existing institutions, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Trade Organization (WTO), are not adequate tools to work with. These scholars thus propose that the institutions need to be reformed to take cognizance of these changes in power dynamics. For that reason, the era of multipolarity is both promise and risk — especially in the functioning of governance and security — and it will need new modes of diplomacy and cooperation as well as conflict resolution.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In light of the changing nature of the international system from a unipolar to a multipolar world order, the central research question is: Is the course of multipolarity conducive to either global governance or international security? This broad question encompasses several critical sub-questions:

1. What changes to the structure and practices of international governance result from the redistribution of power between multiple global actors?
2. What are the main threats and opportunities related to the arrival of multipolarity on the world stage?
3. What impact does the resurgence of old powers like China and India as well as Brazil have on the traditional global governance and security system?
4. How can the international organizations, for example the United Nations, adjust to the new power realities to provide effective global cooperation and conflict solving?

To get an answer to this question of how the international relations are redefined in a world that has been reshaped in a multipolar world, and how countries, international organizations, and non-state actors must assist in controlling out this change so as to keep global stability, these questions must be answered (Shah & Rab, 2025). This study is predicated by the basic question regarding how will multipolarity affect international norms, security paradigms and cooperation frameworks. The object of this research is then to offer some clarion views of the dynamic power redistribution in present day global governance and international security.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are:

1. In this context, this study would analyze the transition from unipolarity to some sort of multipolarity (which is not the definition); meanwhile, it would examine the fundamental shift in global power dynamics from the end of the Cold War to date when considering the rise of emerging powers and its implications for global governance structure and international security.
2. Second, to bring to light the second purpose which we evaluate: implications for global governance. This mainly refers to the question of how international institutions, particularly the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, adjust to the new multipolar world order. The study will examine reforms necessary to ensure that these institutions will continue to be effective on the global level regarding this subject.
3. This will test the effects on international security—perhaps stabilizing or creating risks in this multipolar world of arms races, regional conflicts, and international cooperative issues in security.
4. In this context, we seek to examine the roles of emerging powers: How do emerging economies such as China, India, and Brazil play a role in creating the future of global governance and security arrangements? This will also reveal how they have been seeking to forge new alliances, economic partnerships, and security arrangements.
5. To study possible ways of cooperation, the study will explore possible paths of cooperation by studying how states, international organizations, and non-state actors can experience the phases of multipolarity in an effort to foster cooperation, resolve conflicts, and promote peace and stability on the global level.

With this aim, this research tackles these objectives with a consideration of the complexities and opportunities resultant of multipolarity in global governance and international security.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is about the rise of multipolarity and its aspects to global governance and international security, and it uses a qualitative methodology. It also says that the entire research process can be divided into three phases: data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Soluianov, 2021). Each of the phases takes into account the design to fully understand how multipolarity is confronting the international system and how it affects the global governance structure and the security dynamics of the system.

The first phase is basically data collection where the primary as well as secondary data is collected from different sources to get a bird's view of the subject. The government and international bodies documents of the United Nations, World Trade Organisation, and regional organizations will be analyzed. Indeed, these documents contain information on what concerns multipolarity, on that set understanding of the institutional reforms and institutional arrangements of the global organizations. The research will assess how governance structures already significantly shaped after the Cold War by American preeminence in an unipolar era are returning to their adaptation to new emerging powers.

In addition, data collected for international security assessments will also come in handy in the data gathering. For example, it includes military expenditure, arms control treaties, and security strategy documents of the world's major powers (Judith et al.). They will add many details to this unipolarization of security in a heterogeneous set of state and nonstate actors as part of a multipolar world. The results of these assessments will focus on the shifts in strategic priorities, the level of military spending, and how the new powers are looking to wield their influence on global security.

Political analysts, diplomats, scholars, and other policymakers will also be interviewed as part of the expert interviews. They will choose people who have worked in International Relations, Governance, and Security studies. Qualitative interviews will explore how multipolarity is seen to imply and actually affect the practice of global governance and international security and will add to our knowledge of how different actors make sense of plotting a new global order. The theories can be contextualized because of the expert's views and real-life examples of how multipolarity sets in shaping international policies.

In fact, there will also be case studies in the data collection process. Then, specific cases like the South China Sea dispute, and the role of BRICS in the making of the new global governance will be detailed. Yet these case studies will describe the practical difficulties accompanying multipolarity everywhere except Europe (Judith et al.). For instance, the South China Sea dispute illustrates that regional security is produced from the competition among the powers, including between the US and China, while BRICS is supposed to show how the emerging economies converge to disrupt the existing global governance. Case studies of how multipolarity is being played out in specific geo-political contexts will be provided with concrete examples.

Second, the second phase of the research is applied by the researcher to the data collected, and the analysis of the data forms the base. Thematic analysis will be used to determine the recurring themes and patterns of the implications of multipolarity. More or less, these themes represent "security risk," "governance challenge," and 'emerging power,' 'regional conflict of security.' These themes will also be analyzed in an analysis of how the changes in the global power dynamics are affecting the structures of international governance, security arrangements, and cooperation mechanisms.

Then, through thematic coding of the data, the issues relating to multipolarity will be categorized, for example, in cases where great powers in some regions are carrying out a harsh and costly arms race in terms of security risks or in cases where the international organizations are not able to adequately accommodate new powers when governance issues arise (Tom & Katatsheh, 2021). However, it will examine these linkages in particular in terms of how changes of authority and power in one field (for example, military competition) promote governance reform in another (for example, the reshaping of the United Nations Security Council).

The third phase of the research is the comparative analysis phase — the phase of research involving comparison of experiences of different countries and regions at the time of the change to a multipolar world. The implication of the present study pertains to the strategies and policies pursued by the major powers like the United States, Russia, China, and India in adapting to the changing global order. For instance, one will compare how China actively plays a role in the current trends of the Indo-Pacific about Russia's dominant posture in Eastern Europe to China's own tendencies to become an effective source of strength in the global governance system through the practice of how China turns in China until its own grow up. By taking a comparative approach to this study, it is possible to study regional differences with which multipolarity plays out and different strategies countries employ to still gain influence.

This research also includes some other regions like the European Union and ASEAN as comparisons with state actors to elucidate the closeness of multipolarity and also the reaction to it from regional organizations. However, the organizations each have their own schemes and priorities; such schemes and priorities may not be by what other states might wish them to be (Chu et al., 2024). To explain how multipolarity is transforming the governance and security of the world from a global perspective as well as a regional one, the interplay between regional organizations and international powers will be studied.

The sixth and final step of interpretation and synthesis is to synthesize this based on findings from the data analysis and comparative analysis into a narrative that provides a complete account. In this narrative, I will test how the rise of multipolarity calls into question the understanding of global governance, conflict resolution, and international security. These recommendations regard the nature of this changing reality, how international institutions can and will respond to them, and how states respond to the new security environment they are entering.

This study's methodology is based on using a complex set of qualitative methods to study the phenomenon of multipolarity's rise (Scott, 2013). It will analytically assess a range of primary and secondary sources, interview experts, and conduct a range of complex case studies to explicate a complex and comprehensive understanding of how multipolarity is transforming the international system and what that portends for global governance and security.

RESULT FINDINGS

Thus, the results of this study constitute a number of important insights into the effects of multipolarity on the governance of the world and international security:

1. **Global Governance Challenges:** Global governance has become more fragmented as the world has shifted to a multipolar world. Emerging powers want their nations to have greater influence while existing international institutions like the United Nations

- fail to stay relevant. Yes, institutions have tried to reform but are somehow unable to deal with global issues such as climate change, trade, or human rights.
2. **Security Risks and Opportunities:** The outcome of strong security cooperation and remarkable risk has been due to multipolarity. On the plus side, the balance of power between one or more actors could be used to deter conflict. Nevertheless, arms races and security tensions in the South China Sea and Eastern Europe have been instigated by the increasing competition among major players, including China, the United States, and Russia.
 3. **Influence of Emerging Powers:** Now China and India are emerging economies, which are playing an increasingly significant role in shaping global governance and security. As a result, the international organizations and security arrangements are now obsessed with their military and economic power, hence the emergence of new diplomacy and alliance building.
 4. **Evolving Security Alliances:** This process of emerging security alliances and partnership is driven by shared economic and strategic interests as multipolarity is taking place. Take the BRICS nations, which are creating alternative governance and security models at odds with institutions of the Western ilk.

DISCUSSION

Whether it is opportunities or challenges, global governance and international security in the multipolar international system are confronted (Muzaffar et al., 2017). On the other hand, the complexity and risks inherent to this type of power distribution between many people are that they ease interactions between the states in an approach based on more balanced and collaborative globality but increase at the same time.

Multipolarity gives the shape of a fragmented system of global governance. Many traditional international institutions, like the United Nations, were indeed designed to fit in a unipolar world order but are struggling (Cederman, 1994). The growth of emerging powers has become a leading force in policymaking, and it has been hard to reach compromises due to conflicting interests and values. For example, local institutions based on the European Union or ASEAN have less difficulty dealing with global issues, but their capacity remains limited.

Regarding the international security issue, multipolarity has both advantages and disadvantages. In some cases, balanced power leads to a more stable region, further creating newer security dynamics from the power competition of the key powers (Walton, 2007). While the multipolarity here can increase, the intensity of tensions could repress other areas into regional rivalries and arms races. 'India First,' exclusivity, and zero tolerance for disagreements on issues are clamored out, leading to more significant maritime disputes and buildups in the Indo-Pacific area due to the US and China rivalry.

Emerging powers such as China, India, and the rising Brazil are emerging as crucial global governance and security frameworks, continuing to rise (Kim, 2020). These nations bring a different approach to business, a new way of doing business, a new way of trade, a new way of changing the environment, and, yes, in the house of security. Of course, that did mean there was growing influence, and that consequently brought power dynamics that were more competitive, more prone to conflict, and more prone to instability.

CONCLUSION

That the global order is currently undergoing a fundamental change toward multipolarity is a fact, as the dynamics of global governance and international security are going in two directions simultaneously, the primary way is both opportunities and challenges. We are

witnessing an evolving system abandoning unipolarity and a superpower in the United States for a more comprehensive balance of power. This shift opens the gate for a more balanced and more diverse international order than ever that includes many state and non-state actors whose actions on the international agendas play a significant role. However, there are a few ways in which understating this new reality is possible.

The emphasis on more inclusive international decision-making increases the chance of cooperation because of its multiplicity. The emergence of a few powers can take place in a more democratic and representative framework of global governance. But in this new timeframe, things were different, and institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund had to be built based on a unipolar world. Now, these institutions are under pressure to adjust to the rise of actors such as China, India, Brazil, and others. These institutions will not be practical and relevant in a multipolar world without reform of their structures of governance that fit their governance to the growing emerging powers' influence. In case these mechanisms of cooperation need to be new, the main actors of the risings themselves are also to be considered, as well as integrate the risings actors in decision-making processes.

However, this is a hard switch. The increase in the number of actors who participate in global governance has increased the level of complexity of reaching consensus. If diverging interests exist between established powers and those at the emerging stage, friction and inefficiencies of deciding may result. And the international system is conjunctured and disunity of power which can lead regional tensions to become conflicts of more significant scale. As multipolarity rises, the diffused power becomes more diffused and would be seen as stabilizing, even if this one would not be able to dominate, because diffused power does make the international system more competitive. This may be a possible condition leading to a security dilemma where states increase their security mechanisms as a reaction to the perception of the threat of the rising powers. Such an environment will lead to the exacerbation of the risk of arms races, regional conflicts, and possibly even a full-scale war.

There are positive and negative implications in the advent of multipolarity regarding international security. Overall, the more diversified power across the globe, the more balanced the security environment should be, in the sense that no single power stands to impose its will unilaterally upon other powers. It could serve as a form of more deterrence and less likelihood of hegemonic wars. Nevertheless, rising powers such as China and the United States could develop new security problems among themselves. Military posturing in the South China Sea, the Indo-Pacific, and Eastern Europe could complicate tensions and fuel conflicts. These areas also have a significant role in regional security arrangements in managing and mitigating the risks of multipolar competition. Such alternatives to Western-led frameworks as the ones formed in BRICS, for instance, will create an entirely different security environment, and such alliances will serve as the change.

To attain the purpose of effectively managing these risks and supporting stability, new security arrangements will have to be developed. Because it will bring new and growing challenges for security, the multipolarity will require more and more resort to multilateral frameworks to resolve them. About strengthening international organizations and regional partnerships to improve communication and transparency and reduce miscalculation, these building blocks are more required by the world. A world in which security has changed will also necessitate the development of arms and disarmament

initiatives. For example, if more and more powerful states can make use of nuclear weapons, there ought to be new arms control deals concerned with changing power dynamics as well as the security of new powers. Security dialogue and confidence-building measures will play another critical role in mitigating the risks of unintended conflict in a multipolar world.

In this new world order and in the evolvement of global governance, there will be the need to develop new ways of diplomacy, conflict resolution, and international cooperation. This has to do, in other words, with traditional political terms, with diplomatic procedures built upon political conventions which have worked when there was a unipolar system, but with a multipolar one, they may be less and less relevant or practical. Diplomacy would become more inclusive if it needs more its urge to accommodate patients' varied perspectives to meet required national interests. Therefore, in a similar context, the role of non-state actors, including international organizations, civil society groups as well as multinational corporations, will evolve to assist in mediating global conflicts and making global decisions and will, in fact, continue to become increasingly important. These actors can instead be a bridge from states to bridge-building agents of cooperation and can be a voice for all of the voices of stakeholders.

The multipolar world order will continue to have a significant presence from soon emerging powers. However, the more they climb the economic, political, and military ladders, the greater they will counterpoise to the established global governance norms. It is a double-edged sword, though, bringing with it their increased influence. On the one hand, it can facilitate a more balanced, less unjust international system, but on the other hand, it may lead to more competitive, complex, and complicated international relations. Emerging powers do not always have interests that coincide with those of established en-owccrs about trade, se-cu-r-ity, cli-mate change, and oth-ers. Management of these competing interests with the cooperation to promote is a challenge of the 21st century.

Just as this change now occurs in such a global and multipolar world, it requires the collaboration of the worldwide community. The global governance frameworks must evolve to handle the fact that there is no longer only one actor on the global stage for a multipolar world. International security arrangements will, therefore, have to be more flexible, responsive, and inclusive to involve all powers, including powers of small and medium sizes or influence, in international security arrangements. We will need such a collaborative approach to set the conditions for encouraging stability, peace, and prosperity in the present, as well as the new types of global challenges of a new timescale. The transformation of a world toward a multipolar one does not need to be instantaneous or unrealistic. Only by concerted effort can a lot be done to avoid high risk and maximize the possible benefits of such a world.

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