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# World Order: The Shift of the Geopolitical Axis

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## Introduction

The present work arises, in the awareness of its partiality and narrowness (both in relation to the complexity of the theme and to the hermeneutical tools used), from the need for an understanding, as clear and rich in elements as possible, of what have been, and what in the immediate term appear to be, the major lines of development that led initially to the creation of the international order after the Second World War, subsequently to its crumbling and finally to the construction of a new "World Order." The ultimate outcomes of the dissolution of a world polarized into two alignments, clearly recognizable both from an ideological point of view and by their different economic organization, are still emerging, making any definitional statement effectively impossible (as well as useless!). Imagining the evolution of the relations between the main state actors in what is called the "World Order" is, structurally, a very complex undertaking; attempting to foresee the development of processes that have only recently begun and are evolving under pushes that are not always unidirectional appears even more difficult. The fundamental prerequisite of a thorough knowledge of past events and the causal links that determined them is no longer sufficient today to allow one to venture into predictive readings. The speed of transformations that characterizes our reality, the quantity of sources and documents that can be accessed, the amount of information that is daily constructed and distributed by the most diverse agencies complicate matters, and even the most attentive, scrupulous and prepared analyst often has the impression that something is being missed, that dynamics that are not obvious are being concealed.

Moreover, as H. Kissinger stated, international systems have a precarious life, and every world order, while aspiring to eternity, has shortened its existence over the centuries and today its duration is constantly decreasing, as its component elements are in a flux of continuous change<sup>1</sup>.

This situation might deter any hermeneutic approach.

However, if the indication of possible future developments appeared adventurous to us, what oriented our work was the awareness that only through in-depth study and knowledge of the processes and their historical course, one can begin the construction of those interpretive tools that allow one to reconstruct plausible but "elastic" scenarios

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<sup>1</sup> Kissinger, H. A. (2014). *World Order: reflections on the character of nations and the course of history*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB19653441>

within which to orient oneself in order to understand the future outcomes of those processes themselves.

In the course of our work, we have tried to illustrate why it is virtually impossible today to imagine a "World Order" built around and by a few actors. However, it has also become increasingly evident that if there are many actors "actively" involved, bearers of diverse interests, and capable of creating micro-areas of "Local Orders," the United States, China and Russia will continue to be those centers of gravitation around which the interests of the other actors will coalesce, leading to the establishment of strategic alliances, more or less lasting or even temporary and destined to quickly evaporate.

The work was divided into four basic parts, theory, the fundamental basis from which any work must start, and then three chapters entitled construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, respectively.

In terms of theory, a precise definition of world order was provided by exploring the multitude of approaches that have concerned its study.

Regarding the construction of the order, the approach has been a historical one, tracing the history of the liberal world order from the Peace of Westphalia to 2001, the year of the attack on the Twin Towers, in which the U.S.-led Unipolar Liberal World Order is brought to an end, and the last chapter focuses on the reconstruction of a new future alleged order, analyzing its main actors and providing conclusions on the analysis conducted, assuming that the order to come will be multipolar in nature with a preponderance of regional scope and there is unlikely to be a return to unipolarism as experienced until 2001.

# Chapter 1: The Beginnings of World Order

## 1. Definition of World Order

The concept of world order is “essentially contested”<sup>2</sup>. There is no single definition which finds within the literature an unambiguous consensus, but now, more than ever, international relations are seeking to define world order. The reason for this is that the existing order is at risk and chaos seems to prevail.

For the purposes of this work “world order” will be conceived as “the body of rules, norms, and institutions that govern relations between the key actors in the international environment”<sup>3</sup>.

This is a general definition of this conversely complex concept, which is applicable to many distinct systems that share a common feature: the inherent level of predictability. It is this predictability that sets order apart from chaos.

In a more practical definition world order is defined as a governance anchored to the promotion of four steady values (the units of measurement) in each arena of international relations: democracy (political), market (economic), peace (military), national self-determination leading to single-nation states (cultural)<sup>4</sup>, linked to this concept the concept of “stability” as the distribution of power for a shorter or longer period of time. There have been periods of stable order, such as the order established in Europe with the Peace of Westphalia, and stable, but disordered global orders, while regionally ordered for example.

The concept of world order as a major theme emerged with the birth of nation states in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it has been eviscerated by International Relations theories. However, the world order is the leitmotiv of all the human history long before the creation of nation states, peoples have always aspired to an order that would guarantee peace, security, justice, welfare and many of their expectations have been fulfilled, whether for brief or prolonged periods.

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<sup>2</sup> Gallie, W. B. (1956). IX.—Essentially contested concepts. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society for the Systematic Study of Philosophy*, 56(1), 167–198. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aristotelian/56.1.167>

<sup>3</sup> Lascurettes, K. M., & Poznansky, M. (2021). International order in theory and practice. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.673>

<sup>4</sup> Fossati, F. (2018). Il legame tra ordine mondiale e stabilità internazionale dalla guerra fredda ad oggi. *Università Di Trieste*, 2018(2), 261–285. <https://doi.org/10.13137/2611-2914/22738>

As Kissinger stated “no truly global world order has ever existed”<sup>5</sup>, but each era had different types of order, each trying to impose itself on the other.

The Pax Romana, expression first attested in Seneca (De Providential IV, 14), became customary to indicate the concept of Roman rule over the world understood as a guarantee of universal peace and concord; it serves as the earliest example of this scenario, preceding the emergence of nation-states<sup>6</sup>. Rome successfully integrated distant peoples, often enemies, into a single culture and political entity, and held the destiny of Europe and the West in its hands for more than five centuries.

The Roman Imperial regime can be considered a real-world order, as it held sway over much of the known territories of its time. Today, while we preserve the legacy it left in law, art and architecture, the global situation has significantly shifted with different actors playing a role in it. Actors have increased and diversified over time, with various orders succeeding each other in history up to the present.

Currently, the order in which we live today is more reminiscent of disorder, and chaos seems to loom precisely because there is no longer a level of predictability such that we can refer to it as order. International Relations theory, which has long focused on the world order, give the most diverse and disparate meanings of it; it has various meanings and specific orders can take many forms. In order to explore the different perspectives that approached the concept we will mention among the most relevant ones to provide an idea of the diversity there is between them.

International Relations can be defined as the study of relationships and interactions between countries, including the activities and policies of national governments, international organizations, non- governmental organizations, and multinational corporations. It can be both a theoretical subject and a practical or policy subject, and academic approaches to it can be either empirical or normative or both<sup>7</sup>. Some aspects of International Relations, in particular the concept of world order, have been scrutinized and commented on for decades and since it is one of the core themes in the study, all schools of thought have developed their own ideas about world order.

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<sup>5</sup> Kissinger, H. A. (2014). *World Order: reflections on the character of nations and the course of history*.

<sup>6</sup> *Pax romana - Treccani - Treccani*. (n.d.). Treccani. <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pax-romana/>

<sup>7</sup> Sørensen, G., Møller, J., & Jackson, R. (2022). *Introduction to international relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford University Press.

## 1.1 Realism

The struggle for power and security among sovereign states characterizes the relentless dynamics of the world order according to realists.

Realism is a significant theory in International Relations with roots in the thinking of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. It developed as a distinctive approach to international relations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with further significant developments after World War II.

The realist tradition is founded on a pessimistic view of human nature. It assumes that human relations, including those between states, are inherently conflictual and that conflicts must be resolved through the use of force. Realists place a special emphasis on international security, arguing that “the acquisition, possession, deployment and use of power are central preoccupations of political activity”<sup>8</sup>. International politics is “power politics”<sup>9</sup>, in the specific realists refer to a military power.

Realists often have differing views, particularly between classical realists who focus on both normative and empirical aspects, and contemporary realists who are divided into strategic realists, neorealists, and neoclassical realists. The latter group prioritizes social scientific analysis of world politics over norms and values.

Despite these differences, all realists share a common perception of the system in which international relations take place is considered anarchic, meaning that there is no higher governing authority. However, this does not imply chaos, but rather a lack of centralized control.

In this self-governing system, states take the lead as the main actor in international law. Other subjects of international law<sup>10</sup> are in the background, as the priority is to defend the interests of states. It is important to emphasize that not all states are equal, and there is a well-defined hierarchy. Realists understand international relations as primarily a struggle between great powers for domination and security<sup>11</sup>. Weaker powers must adapt to the decisions of the greater powers.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibidem

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem

<sup>10</sup> Ronzitti, N. (2022). *Diritto internazionale dei conflitti armati*.

<sup>11</sup> Sørensen, G., Møller, J., & Jackson, R. (2022). *Introduction to international relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford University Press.

The foreign policy of both major and minor states takes into account national interests at the forefront, and this means that there are no constraints between independent states, no treaties, agreements or conventions that hold before national interests.

In a world in constant struggle in which each actor pursues its own special interests, according to realists achieving a balance of powers is possible.

Realists prioritize the balance of power, which is both an empirical and normative concept. It refers to the way world politics operate and is a structural concept of a state system. It is also a legitimate goal and a guide to responsible statecraft for great power leaders. It is a structural concept and a legitimate goal that upholds the values of peace and security by keeping great powers in check.

The realist tradition interprets the world order as a system in which states act rationally to protect their interests in a context of anarchy, competition and balance of power. This perspective offers a more pragmatic and realpolitik-based view of global dynamics, in complete contrast with more idealistic approaches that promote international cooperation based on shared values.

The realist ideals can be summarized in the dictum: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*<sup>12</sup>.

## 1.2 Liberalism

Liberalism contrasts with the realist tradition of power and conflict by taking a more optimistic view. The liberal approach emerged with the modern liberal state in the 17th century and is associated with thinkers such as John Locke, Montesquieu, and Immanuel Kant. However, its greatest development has been since the end of World War II with various thinkers.

The liberal tradition has faith in human nature and progress and sees international relations as cooperative and non-confrontational.

The ultimate goal of liberalism is to promote the happiness of individuals. Progress and modernization can lead to a better way of life for most individuals through cooperation on a broader level.

The world order is perceived as a cooperative system in which international institutions, human rights, and democracy can foster system stability and economic prosperity on a broad scale. The market economy and free trade are often viewed as drivers of global

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<sup>12</sup> If you want peace, prepare for war.



prosperity and trade agreements and economic liberalization are seen as tools to foster economic growth and reduce international tensions.

It is important to note that liberalism is not a monolithic ideology, as liberal theorists may emphasize different features of world politics.

Sociologists with liberal views emphasize transnational ties, which involve people, groups, and organizations from different countries. They also focus on nongovernmental ties between societies, similar to those that exist between individuals and groups.

According to Karl Deutsch, a high level of transnational ties between societies results in a consolidation of peaceful relations that means more than just the absence of war<sup>13</sup>; it gives rise to a community of security, in which social communications increase, there is greater mobility of individuals, and stronger economic ties are established<sup>14</sup>.

Independence liberals pay more attention to the economic ties of exchange and mutual dependence between peoples and governments<sup>15</sup>.

Richard Rosecrance has noted that prior to the end of World War II, a state's prestige was determined by its military might and territorial expansion. However, since 1945, economic development and foreign trade have become the primary indicators of a state's international standing. This is due to the high level of interdependence between states resulting from the division of labor in the global economy, which discourages conflict. As the saying goes, 'if goods don't cross borders, soldiers will.'<sup>16</sup>

During the second phase of liberal thought, scholars attempted to develop a general theory of interdependence among states based on the relations that were developing among Western European countries since the 1980s.

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye Jr's *Power and Interdependence* presents a general theory of complex interdependence. The authors argue that postwar complex interdependence differs from previous episodes, where high politics<sup>17</sup> of security and survival took precedence over low politics<sup>18</sup> of economics and social issues. In the postwar era, relations between states are no longer solely played out on the level of

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<sup>13</sup> Deutsch, K. W. (2015). *Political community and the North American area*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Sørensen, G., Møller, J., & Jackson, R. (2022). *Introduction to international relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem

<sup>16</sup> Mallery, O. T. (1943). *Economic Union and Durable Peace*.

<sup>17</sup> Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. (2001). *Power and interdependence*. Longman Publishing Group.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem

government leaders. Instead, they are managed on different levels by different exponents, including the previously nonexistent role of non-state actors. Due to the increasing fragmentation of power, a state's position of preeminence concerns specific sectors and can no longer be measured solely by military power, but also by wealth.

Institutional liberals argue that international institutions are essential for promoting cooperation among states. To assess their actual contribution to the politics of cooperation, the level of institutionalization is measured. This takes into account the breadth, or the number of areas in which international institutions are present, and the depth of the institutionalization process. The parameters of this process include commonality, which refers to the degree to which states in the order share expectations of appropriate behavior and the criteria for interpreting that behavior; specificity, which refers to how expectations are embodied in rules; and the autonomy of the institution to change the rules<sup>19</sup>. Institutions are crucial for stability and continuity.

Republican liberals argue that democratic-liberal constitutions and forms of government are essential for promoting peaceful and cooperative relations among states.

It is not claimed that a democracy cannot go to war, but rather that two democracies should not fight each other.

Despite differing perspectives, the liberal world order is rooted in idealism, with a vision of global cooperation, promotion of democratic values, and trust in international institutions. However, reality does not always align with theory.

### **1.3 Constructivism**

With the end of the Cold War, the dichotomy between realism and liberalism was no longer sufficient. This implied that all states capable of doing so would have to resist American hegemony in order to ensure their own security. To counter this idea, constructivist theory emerged in international relations from the 1980s onwards, particularly in the United States.

Constructivism places human consciousness and its role in world affairs at the center. Constructivists reject the one-sided approach that considers the distribution of material power of states, military or economic power, as the most important aspect of international

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<sup>19</sup>Keohane, R. O. (1989). *International institutions and state power: Essays In International Relations Theory*. Westview Press.

relations. They argue that power relations are defined by social character and place it at the center.

According to constructivists, the world order is a social construction that emerges through the interactions and shared interpretations of international actors. From this perspective, the world order is not only a system of power relations but also shaped by norms, ideas, identities, and meanings ascribed by global actors. International reality is constantly constructed and reinterpreted through dialogue, communication, and negotiation, shaping an ever-changing global context based on shared and contested meanings.

#### **1.4 Post-Positivist Approaches**

It is important to mention post-positivism, although it does not provide a clear definition of world order, as it offers a critical and contextualized analysis of international reality, moving away from traditional empirical and objective approaches.

This perspective incorporates elements of constructivist theory and critiques positivist presuppositions. It emphasizes the complexity of human interactions and the importance of subjective interpretations.

In contrast to traditional views that primarily emphasize the role of states, the post-positivist perspective recognizes the importance of non-state actors, such as international organizations, social movements, and citizen groups. These actors participate in shaping the world order through action, advocacy, and mobilization. For instance, the feminist approach in international relations, which falls under the umbrella of post-positivist approaches, highlights that women are a marginalized social group in the international political-economic system.

Post-positivists critique existing power structures and question systemic inequalities. They explore the power dynamics implicitly present in the world order and seek to unveil relations of domination that may escape a more traditional analysis.

This view takes into account cultural differences and contextualizes international interactions. It recognizes that norms and practices may vary according to cultural and historical context, challenging the universality implicit in some traditional theories.

Post-colonialism theory argues that the relationship between the West and former colonial areas continues to be hierarchical in nature, reflecting Western *modus operandi*. This is despite the fact that the process that began with the end of World War II has formally ended, and the former colonies are now sovereign states that are members of international society.

The post-positivist perspective on world order provides a more nuanced and critical comprehension of international relations. It emphasizes the constructed, contested, and constantly changing nature of global dynamics.

There is no single world order or theory of world order that can be universally applied. At certain points in history, none of them may be effective, as well as they all could be.

With the end of World War II, the Liberal International Order established itself as an alternative to the communist-led order, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became the leading order of our time, but now chaos is looming over the Liberal International Order for a specific reason: the Liberal International Order, as well other types of order that preceded it and are a source of study, such as the Westphalian Order or the restorative order of the Congress of Vienna, are all Western-oriented models and the problems addressed and the possible solutions are also Western-oriented<sup>20</sup>.

Amitav Acharya, first non-Western President of the of the International Studies Association (ISA) asserted that the discipline of International Relations was incapable of reflecting the voices, experiences, knowledge claims, and contributions of non-Western civilizations and governments, and instead marginalized them, in contrast in the international arena, the non-Western actors are increasingly playing a leading role.

The present, as never before, is spasmodically striving for a redefinition of world order and for a reorientation of the theory of International Relations on the subject, because it would facilitate interactions between the main actors of the international chessboard held together by a network of interdependencies.

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<sup>20</sup> Akgül, P. (2021). Non-Western international relations theories. In *BRILL eBooks* (pp. 217–239). [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004470507\\_011](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004470507_011)

## 2. Varieties of world order<sup>21</sup>

The Liberal International Order is the world order that hegemonically prevailed over any other system until September 2001, but it is important for this study to trace the milestones that led to the establishment of the LIO and the different types of orders that followed, analyzing their similarities and differences.

### 2.1 Peace of Westphalia

It is important to clarify that the world order that ruled the international community has not always been the same and no world order lasts forever. What passes for order in our time was devised in Western Europe nearly four centuries ago, at a peace conference in the German region of Westphalia<sup>22</sup>, 1648 was the year in which the history of Europe and the world underwent a total change.

A century of disorder that had resulted in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), one of the most devastating and protracted wars in European history.

The peace of Westphalia not only set off the conclusion of this period of disorder ranging in Europe, but simultaneously laid the foundation for the contemporary order based on principles such as sovereignty of states, freedom of religion and the right of self-determination, shaping a geopolitical situation much like the contemporary one: multiple political units with conflicting ideologies and seeking an order with neutral rules to avoid conflict as much as possible.

The Peace of Westphalia is one of the most cited documents in history and became a turning point in the history of nations because the elements it introduced were as uncomplicated as radical.

In addition to having enshrined the right to religious freedom, which is still recognized by most states in the world, the main legacy for the contemporary system has been the introduction of the principle of sovereignty.

It was enshrined that the state was the cornerstone of the order, each signatory state would undertake to respect the territorial rights of the other signatory states, principle of non-interference, diplomatic consultations were provided to regulate relations between them,

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<sup>21</sup> Main references of the chapter:

Cammarano, F., Guazzaloca, G., & Piretti, M. S. (2015). *Storia contemporanea. Dal XIX al XXI secolo*. Sabbatucci, G., & Vidotto, V. (2019). *Il mondo contemporaneo*. Gius.Laterza & Figli Spa.

<sup>22</sup>Kissinger, H. A. (2014). *World Order: reflections on the character of nations and the course of history*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB19653441>

any other state that adopted these rules would be welcomed into the system without having to give up its own culture, politics, or religion, an ancestor of the principle of self-determination of peoples.

The Westphalian order was not consciously designed on a global scale either because the tools did not allow for the spread of a single global system or because other power cores, if aware, did not consider adopting the principles of Westphalia either.

Not even neighboring Russia was involved in the change, both because there was no interest in involving it and because at the same time principles opposite to those just enshrined were being consolidated in Russia: a single absolute ruler, religious orthodoxy, and an expansion plan.

Opposed to Europe, in Asia developed different conceptions of world order, among which China developed the most enduring conception of it and also the most distant to the principles of Westphalia, not only a geographical distance, but also ideological. Instead of the balance between states the key word was "hierarchy," China had developed a concept of order of which it was the center, the power of the emperor was regulated by the political ideology of the Mandate of Heaven<sup>23</sup>, according to this doctrine Heaven selects the most deserving individual or family to whom to mandate, who subsequently are given control of all under Heaven (*Tianxia*-天下英才) for the benefit of all of its inhabitants. As a result, legitimate authority is, by definition, universal.

Between China and Europe, the Islamic concept of world order prevailed.

The Islamic concept of order was linked to the idea that the spread of the Quran would unite humanity and bring peace, Islam was presented simultaneously as a religion, a multi-ethnic state and a new world order<sup>24</sup>. *Jihad* was considered the means through which this universal system could be achieved. The Quran expresses the concept of *jihad* repeatedly and in different contexts, leading to diverse interpretation throughout history, but the term *jihad* literally means “effort” or “struggle” as “interior struggle” in order to improve oneself and get closer to God or “spiritual effort” to promote and defend the Islamic faith using all available means, but the struggle must be conducted without exceeding the limits imposed by God, as stated in verse 190: يُقَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ سَبِيلَ فِي وَقَاتِلُوا

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23 Harari, Yuval Noah (2015). *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. London: Penguin Random House UK. ISBN 978-0-09-959008-8. OCLC 910498369.

24 Hodgson, M. G. S. (1976). The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 15(2), 205. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1385364>

لَا الْمُعْتَدِينَ يُجِبُّ لَآ اللّٰهَ إِنَّا نَعْتَدُوا وَلَا  
“Fight in the cause of Allah only against those who wage war against you, but do not exceed the limits. Allah does not like transgressors”<sup>25</sup>.

During the XII century the enterprise of a universal order resurfaced with the rise of a Muslim empire led by the Ottoman Turks-followers of the conqueror Osman.

The Ottoman Empire, in its early stages, established itself as the leader of a unified Islamic world and maintained expansion. The sultans proclaimed themselves "the shadow of god on earth" and "the universal ruler who protects the world."<sup>26</sup>

While in Europe the multistate order took shape the vision of the Ottoman Empire was that of a single divinely sanctioned government capable of pacifying the whole world, and in the eyes of the Ottoman neighbors watching the developments that the principles of Westphalia were having in Europe, it was not a new order that was developing, but new divisions.

Of all these visions, the Westphalian order prevailed and was consolidated over time because of its inventiveness and the fact that its provisions were procedural rather than substantive, so European countries easily carried the pattern of their order with them, although they neglected to apply it to the colonies and colonized peoples when they claimed their independence precisely in the name of Westphalian principles.

For more than two centuries the balances spawned by the peace of Westphalia did not prevent war in Europe, but certainly limited its damage.

The balance could and did falter in two situations: first, when an already relevant state on the chessboard increases its strength in a dangerous way toward hegemony; the second way is when a secondary state wanted to increase its relevance to the point of leading to a reorganization of the balance, which can also occur through direct confrontation.

The 18th century was divided into a first part in which, as mentioned above, the balance faltered at the hegemonic thrust of Louis XIV's France, and the second half of the century Europe had to face the second case when Frederick II of Prussia, known as the Great, made claims to a higher status.

In both cases, although facing some confrontation, Europe overcame both crises, the real change came with the French Revolution.

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<sup>25</sup> Quran.com. (n.d.). Surah Al-Baqarah [2:190].

<sup>26</sup> Black, J. (2016). Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, from 1453 to the Present by Brendan Simms. *Journal of World History*, 26(1), 209–211. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2016.0001>

## 2.2 French Revolution

The statesmen who maneuvered the 18th century European order were representatives of a single elite society: the aristocracy who spoke the same language: French and frequented the same salons in European capitals. National interests, though different, managed to converge.

The Enlightenment was a period when harmony reigned over Europe, during which rampant intellectual progress fostered a new spirit of secular enlightenment that was based on a new spirit of analysis and rigorous verification of every premise.

This new mode also reflected on the concepts of government, political legitimacy and international order.

The French Revolution fits right into this context. It erupted in one of the most developed countries in Europe, and its original impetus was associated with the bourgeoisie seeking to shape government on the new principles of the Enlightenment.

For revolutionaries, order was no longer a reflection of the divine plan, as in medieval times, nor the result of dynastic interests as in the 17th century.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the ideological father of the revolution, condemned institutions such as private property, social classes, and government as illusory and proposed their replacement with a "new social order."<sup>27</sup>

In this light all monarchies were seen as enemies and the revolution was to impose its principles for world peace.

The worldwide character of the challenge is clear in two acts enacted by the French National Assembly in 1792.

The first extraordinary decree of November 1792 expressed France's commitment to militarily support other popular revolutions. The second decree of December of the same year contained even more radical principles and had an even more universal reach.

Any revolutionary movement interested in the decree had to complete a document with the heading "the French people to the people..." where they gave their approval to the revolution and pledged support for it.

To accomplish such ambitious goals there could be no enemies, and so it was that the period of "The Terror" began by eliminating all those who questioned the revolution and its methods.

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<sup>27</sup> Rousseau, J. (1796). *Del contratto sociale, o Principi del diritto politico*. Di J.J. Rousseau, cittadino di Ginevra, tradotto dal francese da G. Mennini, romano. P.731



After this period of disorder and revolution a new order was established, but one of the great legacies of the French Revolution to the system of international order is that internal changes within societies are able to shake the international equilibrium more profoundly than aggression from abroad\*.

The end of the revolutionary period coincided with Napoleon Bonaparte's seizure of power in 1799, the year of the coup d'état that overthrew the French Directory and established the Consulate, with himself as First Consul.

Napoleon at the time of the coup d'état was a 30-year-old general who distinguished himself in several battles during the French Revolution wars, he was extremely popular within the French people thanks to his charisma.

His charisma, his military genius and the weakness of the French government were the key factors that contributed to Napoleon's rise to power.

While taming the revolution Napoleon attempted to appear as its guarantor, he simultaneously embodied the crowning glory of the Enlightenment.

In the name of these values Napoleon set out to expand its order, to achieve dominance over Europe, and its unification, but his policy of expansionism was a challenge to the European balance of power, and the great European powers, particularly Austria, Russia, and Great Britain, united to stop him.

Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815 ended the Napoleonic period and was the beginning of a new balance of European power, enshrined in the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815).

### **2.3 Congress of Vienna**

The Napoleonic Wars had led to major changes in European borders and political structures.

Imperial Russia had been drawn to Europe, and its strength raised fundamental problems for the restoration of the pre-Revolutionary balance.

The great powers wanted to review these changes to ensure their own security and influence.

The statesmen of the Congress of Vienna were confronting the unraveling of the Westphalian order.

In September 1814, a diplomatic assembly met in Vienna whose purpose was to lay the foundations for a new and lasting European equilibrium.

With the conclusion of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 began the Restoration Age, so called because the powers were determined to restore the ancient monarchies and orders that predated the Revolution and the Napoleonic period.

The goals of the powers meeting in the capital of Francis I of Austria were to reestablish borders, resettle the rulers deposed by the revolutionary events, and to create a European balance capable of averting a repeat of what happened.

Although most European ruling houses participated, the real decision-making power was in the hands of the four major powers: Austria, represented by Klemens von Metternich, Great Britain represented by foreign secretary Lord Robert Stewart Castlereagh, Prussia with Chancellor Karl August von Hardenberg, and Russia led by Alexander I himself.

Germany, where the Holy Roman Empire had dissolved in 1806, and France, which was considered a defeated country, nevertheless played a major role and had been the main parties affected by the redrawing of the continent's borders.

In the complicated game of diplomatic negotiations, a leading role was played by French diplomat Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, also known as Talleyrand, who was able to play on the rivalries opposing the allies by bringing the defeated France back into the diplomatic game of the new European order, even as France reentered its borders dating back to 1790 and war reparations were imposed on it.

The geopolitical map of Europe was inspired by two basic principles: the principle of legitimacy, which provided for the return of their thrones to their rightful monarchs, tending to return the borders of the states to their pre-revolutionary ones; and the second, the principle of balance, which aimed to establish a balancing system among the European powers so as to prevent one state from advancing hegemonic interests over others.

Especially to avoid a possible French offensive, "buffer states" were created, a concept that returned during the Cold War, examples are the territorial strengthening of the Kingdom of Sardinia and the establishment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Two treaties were concluded to guarantee the agreements reached: the Holy Alliance, between Russia, Prussia and Austria at the initiative of Alexander I in September 1815 and the Quadruple Alliance, which joined the first three with Britain, November 1815 and in 1818 France was also admitted.

As Kissinger stated, the system designed in Vienna rested on three institutions: the Quadruple Alliance, to dispel threats of territorial order; the Holy Alliance to neutralize

threats to national institutions, and third a concert of powers institutionalized by periodic diplomatic conferences.<sup>28</sup>

The system of international relations derived from the Congress of Vienna, the "European Concert," helped spread the principles of multilateral diplomacy and respect for national sovereignty. These ideas were fundamental to the development of a more peaceful and cooperative international order.

The delicate balance that was the child of the Vienna Congress began to show its beginning in the 1840s due to three main events: the rise of nationalism, the revolutions of 1848, and the Crimean War, 1853.

There emerged during the 1840s the idea that peoples were defined not by dynastic and power logics, but through the sharing of cultural elements such as linguistic identity, belonging to the same traditions, and the presence of common ethnic and kinship factors. A new idea of nationhood was born that claimed the self-determination and freedom of peoples.

Daughters of Nationalism and socialist ideals, the revolutions of 1848 were lethal to the balance established in Vienna.

Protests began in February in France, where protesters demanded greater political and social rights, the main demand being universal suffrage. The conservative government was forced to abdicate, and a republic was established.

Revolutions quickly spread to other European countries, including Germany, Italy, Austria and Hungary. In Germany, revolutionaries aimed to unify the country under a republican government. In Italy, patriots wanted to unite the various Italian states into one nation. In Austria, revolutionaries sought to create a federal Austria. In Hungary, revolutionaries attempted to secede from Austria and form establish their own sovereign state. Although most of the revolutions had been suppressed, Hungary thanks to Russia was brought back under the aegis of Austria, in France history seemed to repeat itself when Napoleon's nephew took power under the name Napoleon III at the head of the Second Empire, the old order proved unable to cope with revolutionary disorder.

The Crimean War, 1853-56 sanctioned the end of the Vienna order, shattering one of the two pillars of the order, the unity of the conservative states Russia, Prussia and Austria.

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<sup>28</sup> Kissinger, H. A. (2014). *World Order: reflections on the character of nations and the course of history*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB19653441>

It was a war for control of the Balkans and the Mediterranean (1853-56) that pitted the Ottoman Empire, supported by France and Britain and a Piedmont expeditionary force, against Russia, which ended with Russia's defeat and the Paris Peace Congress in 1856.

The first war since the conclusion of the Congress of Vienna also marked its end.

A fourth event must be mentioned, however, the unification of Germany in 1871.

The European order since Westphalia had been based on the division of Central Europe whose drives would balance each other. The unification of Germany was the work of one of the most important statesmen in history: Otto von Bismarck, chancellor of Prussia who promoted his Realpolitik aimed at strengthening the country, which led him to promote German unification under the leadership of Prussia to weaken Austria.

By the second half of the nineteenth century new powers began to emerge, in addition to Germany, the United States had just concluded on the other side of the world the Civil War (1861-1865) and was settling in as a power while on the opposite side, Japan, which went through rapid industrial development during the "Meiji Restoration". The country of the rising sun profoundly changed its political-institutional structure, overcoming the feudal system to which it was still tied and building a modern state organization modeled on the Western example. This renewal went hand in hand with commercial opening to the outside world.

Thanks largely to the contribution of Britain and the East India Company, Western control over Southeast Asia had increased and if by the sixteenth century merchant trade was already touching four out of five continents, by the nineteenth century a market on a global scale was established.

The character of this new market was the dependence of the peripheral parts of the planet on the center of the world economy, which in the late 1800s remained Europe even as the U.S. slowly drew closer to Europe going on to form a Western bloc.

Then free market concepts became established in Europe.

At the same time, from the early 1800s Latin America's wars of independence were going on, Argentina in 1816 achieved independence, followed in 1818 by Chile, in 1819 by Greater Colombia, which included present-day Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador, and all three gave themselves a republican order.

In 1821 Mexico became a constitutional monarchy and Brazil the following year became an independent empire from Lisbon.

It was on the fledgling South American states that the U.S. focused its expansion. With the Monroe Doctrine, 1823, they expressed their intention to impose supremacy over the

entire American continent, declaring that they would stand by any European intervention in Latin America, ending the aspirations of Simon Bolivar's project of a union of Latin America, if not of all states at least of perpetual federation between Colombia, Bolivia and Peru.

Although vulnerable, the new republics were recognized by the U.S. and entered into trade treaties with them and Latin America also gradually became part of the new international economic environment. Thus began a season of growth.

In 1898 they faced the issue of Cuba with Spain, intervening in an international issue; the U.S. gained Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Atlantic power was becoming increasingly consolidated.

## Chapter 2: Construction

### 2.1 World War I

The last decade of the 1800s and the early 1900s were a contradictory historical phase for Europe. While on the one hand it was still the center of world balances and experiencing a phase of scientific and technological progress, on the other hand new non-European powers were emerging that would soon spell the end of European hegemony.

A momentous turning point was the Russian-Japanese War (1904-1905), which saw a European power lose to a non-European nation for the first time.

Japan at the time was the leading Asian power, but China and India were experiencing a period of great transformation.

China became a republic and opened a phase of civil war that would last 30 years. India was taking its first steps toward the Indian national movement.

The world was beginning to be truly interconnected, and the balances in Asia or Africa were already involving the European continent.

Colonial dominions, together with old-rooted tensions such as the nationalism of the various powers, were cause for further tensions. The contention between France and Germany over Morocco, the Italian initiative in Libya, but the European powder keg was the Balkans, where two Balkan wars (1912-13 and 1913) were waged, at the end of which the Ottoman Empire had a drastic reduction, exacerbating instability in the area.

The policies of states were becoming increasingly aggressive witnessed by the arms race and the organization of opposing alliance blocs: the Triple Entente between France, Britain and Russia and the Triple Alliance between Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy, in a secondary position.

Exasperated nationalism and rivalry between states crystallized into opposing military alliances exploded in 1914, and the squares of European capitals filled with huge crowds cheering for war.

World War I was a "European civil war" (Ernst Nolte). The conflict did not truly conclude with its official end in 1918, but rather persisted until 1945 as a result of the resentments it instilled.

Eric Hobsbawm described World War I as "the beginning of the age of catastrophe." \*Up to that time, the historical phase that began with the Congress of Vienna, which sociologist Karl Polanyi called "the Hundred Years Peace," was turning toward its end.

The conflict began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Habsburg on September 28, 1914, by Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Serbian nationalist group Black Hand. The war soon widened because of the increasingly global network of alliances that bound the powers together. The allied powers of the Entente-Great Britain, France, Serbia, and the Russian Empire, later joined by Italy, Greece, Portugal, Romania, and the United States fought against the Central Empires Germany and Austria-Hungary, later supported by the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria.

World War I was an entirely different conflict from those that had preceded it. It was a massive war, both because it mobilized 70 million men and because it impacted not only the military lives of those involved, but also the private lives of citizens. Since it involved everyone there was a need to fight also on the "home front," vis-à-vis the national community, a new form of propaganda aimed at addressing public opinion.

All energies were directed to the war effort involving a change in the role of the state, which intervened in society as never before, creating new structures and strengthening existing ones to organize work and production.

The war economy was planned and centralized, in stark contrast to the liberal ideology of the 1800s.

World War I was the war of steel and chemistry, weapons acquired a destructive capacity like never before. For the first time the airplane was used in warfare, and many inventions were later adapted for civilian purposes, such as the field telephone.

Given the extraordinary war powers, the illusion was created that the conflict would be brief; on the contrary, the balances were such that it led to a positional war.

the turning point came in 1917 with the entry of the United States into the war and the Bolshevik Revolution raging in Russia that forced the power to withdraw from the conflict and led to the birth of the Soviet Union.

The war ended in November 1918 with the capitulation of Germany.

World War I had very serious economic, social and psychological aftermaths and left open wounds both within individual states and in international relations.

Ruling classes that had taken Europe to war lost credibility. Once the war was over, the liberal state was in crisis, the old structures had not proved adequate to meet the needs of the society.

At the Versailles Conference (1919), the fate of war-torn Europe would be decided.

Europe emerged completely redrawn from the Versailles Conference with the final exit of the four empires Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman and Russian.

Two main visions were at the winners' table: the idea of democratic peace that was the child of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, which aimed to bring the principles of liberalism into international relations.

The U.S. project took up the 14 points that Wilson had published in 1918 as conditions for negotiating peace with the Central Empires, and on the general level they included the abolition of secret diplomacy, the liberalization of world trade and shipping, the limitation of armaments, and finally the proposal to find a "League of Nations" to guarantee peace and the territorial integrity of states. These 14 points aimed to redesign Europe on the basis of the principles of nationality and self-determination of peoples.

The second vision at the Versailles table was that of punitive peace against Germany. Unlike what the Congress of Vienna had done with defeated France, Germany was not readmitted into the European order.

President Woodrow Wilson used the expression "new world order", expecting that it would create a system capable to maintain international peace and security and for the first time on a scale that encompassed 42 states and not confined only to European borders.

Wilson's efforts were successful with respect to the League of Nations, whose charter was approved at Versailles on January 10, 1920. However, the United States was not among the 42 member states, thus undermining the institution's strength from the outset.

While the vision of a "democratic peace" clashed with France and Britain, who on their part succeeded in obtaining a truly punitive and vindictive Diktat, on which was imposed the restitution of Alsace and Lorraine, the demilitarization of the Rhineland and the transfer of the Saarland coalfield under League of Nations control for fifteen years. Additionally, Germany was compelled to cede Posnania, a strip of Pomerania and some territories in East Prussia to Poland. Furthermore, it was stripped of all colonies, which were then divided among France, Britain, Belgium and Japan. Germany was obligated to downsize its armed forces and pay massive war reparations.

At the end of the conference the four empires underwent dismemberment, in addition to the German power, the Tsarist Russia underwent profound changes and was transformed into the Soviet Union led by a Marxist-Leninist government. As a result of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, new republics arose in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia also takes place. Italy gained



control of Trentino, South Tyrol, Istria and Trieste, but was unable to obtain Dalmatia, claimed by Yugoslavia.<sup>29</sup>

The Baltic republics, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, were born out of the annulment of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire relied on the remnants of old European imperialism, disguised as mandates.

Wilson intended the mandate formula to distance the League of Nations from the concept of European imperialism, with the end goal of achieving independence for the mandated countries.

The last remnants of European Imperialism have produced some of the most artificial borders the world has seen, creating what we identify today as Middle East, but which did not exist a century ago.

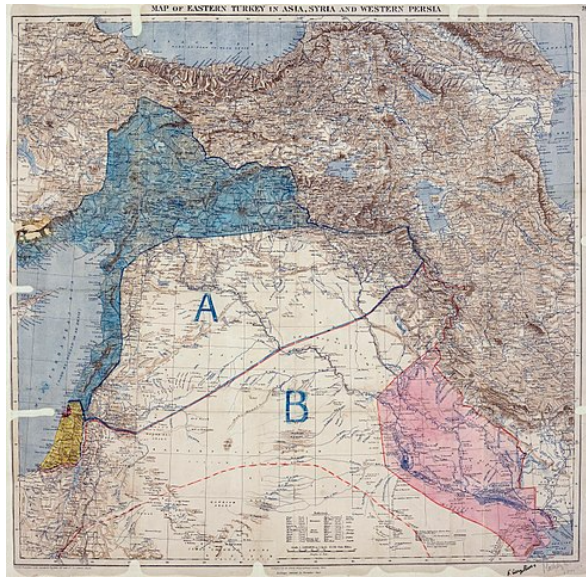
The United Kingdom and France have been the main actors involved in the planning of the Ottoman-controlled region. As the Empire began to crumble, they entered into a secret agreement, known as Sykes-Picot, named after the statesmen who formulated it in 1916, which with the acquiescence of tsarist Russia aimed at partitioning the area.

The agreement called for the division along the horizontal line from “the E of Acre to the Last K of Kirkuk”<sup>30</sup>. Zone A (Figure 1) would be assigned to France, with control over the Syrian Lebanese area, southeastern Anatolia and Northern Iraq. Conversely, Zone B (Figure 1) would be assigned to Britain, who would have direct and indirect control over a region consisting of present-day Jordan and southern Iraq, with access to the sea via the port of Haifa.

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<sup>29</sup> Treaty of Saint-Germain-En-Laye, 1919.

<sup>30</sup> Barr, James. "The E of Acre to the K of Kirkuk: A memoir of one of the architects of the Middle Eastern mess." *TLS. Times Literary Supplement*, no. 5963, 14 July 2017, p. 14. *Gale Literature Resource Center*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A634971710/LitRC?u=googlescholar&sid=googleScholar&xid=32e17180. Accessed 6 Nov. 2023.



*Figure 1 Map of showing Eastern Turkey in Asia, Syria and Western Persia, and areas of control and influence agreed between the British and the French. Royal Geographical Society, 1910-15. Signed by Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot, 8 May 1916.*

Moreover, the pact granted Russia control over Istanbul, the territories neighboring the Bosphorus Strait, and select provinces in eastern Anatolia. Greece was assigned control over the western coast of Turkey, while Italy was promised control over southwestern Turkey, with the supplement of the Agreement of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne. Palestine and Jerusalem should be under an international regime.

The end of the war was still two years away, and the agreement proved premature, if symbolic. The terms of the understanding were partly modified at the end of the war, particularly in the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. France and Britain divided the Fertile Crescent through the system of "mandates," but with some adjustments made since 1916.

Meanwhile, as the mandated power with regard to the Palestine region, Britain supported the creation of a Jewish National home in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha's Turkey refused to ratify the Treaty of Sèvres, in 1923, following Turkey's victory over the Greeks and the overthrow of the sultan during the War of Independence, Atatürk's government was able to demand a new peace treaty. As a result, the Treaty of Lausanne<sup>31</sup> was drafted and replaced the Treaty of Sèvres.

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<sup>31</sup> Treaty of Lausanne, (1923), final treaty concluding World War I. It was signed by representatives of Turkey (successor to the Ottoman Empire) on one side and by Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) on the other. The treaty was signed at Lausanne, Switzerland, on July 24, 1923, after a seven-month conference. The treaty recognized the boundaries of the modern state of Turkey. Turkey made no claim to its former Arab provinces and recognized British possession of Cyprus and Italian possession of the Dodecanese. The Allies dropped their

The pencils of Mark Sykes and Francois Picot designed the map of one of world's most unstable regions into states that cut across ethnic and religious communities, without regard to their needs.

A century on, the area continues to bear the consequences of the two diplomats' drawing. The creation and the partitioning of the Middle East is one of the most important legacies of the First World conflict, but this last vestige of the European imperialism did not prevent the fading of European centrality.

The war marked the end of European centrality on the world stage, economically and diplomatically, but the United States chose the path of isolationism, which prevented even more the creation of a stable international balance.

The combination of these factors explains why Kissinger called the Treaty of Versailles one of the most unsuccessful in history "rarely has a diplomatic document so missed its objective as the Treaty of Versailles. Too punitive for conciliation, too lenient to keep Germany from recovering, the Treaty of Versailles condemned the exhausted democracies to constant vigilance against irreconcilable and revanchist Germany as well as a revolutionary Soviet Union."

The Locarno Pact of 1925 highlighted even more the fragilities of the Versailles system. Weimar Germany, a weak republic born out of the compromises of the new democracy with the old system, accepted the western borders and demilitarization of the Rhineland, as already established at Versailles, but refused to extend the same guarantees to the borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia, which portended German ambitions.

Although the Versailles system had left Europe in an unstable situation and the United States had retreated to private life, as global as the war had so too been the economic crisis that hit America in 1929.

The center of the increasingly globalized 20th century world shifted more and more to the United States, which after World War I experienced an unprecedented economic boom; these were the years of widespread but unequal prosperity, cultural progress and regressive drives, prohibition and racism.

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demands of autonomy for Turkish Kurdistan and Turkish cession of territory to Armenia, abandoned claims to spheres of influence in Turkey, and imposed no controls over Turkey's finances or armed forces. The Turkish straits between the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea were declared open to all shipping. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kingdom-of-Serbs-Croats-and-Slovenes>

The symbol of America in those years was the Wall Street stock exchange point of immaterial and unregulated exchanges, where in 1929 the speculative bubble burst, spilling first to the motherland and then to South America and Europe, where democracies failed to offer remedy, unlike the United States, which, under the leadership of the new Democratic President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, managed to cope with the crisis with a broad program of state investment, the New Deal.

The collapse of Wall Street had disastrous consequences for the economy of the now old continent; the crisis spread from the economy to politics.

The crisis of the capitalist system legitimized Stalin's "real socialism" as a viable alternative; in Italy Benito Mussolini presented fascism as a real alternative to the crisis, accusing the United States, France and Britain of causing the great collapse to defend their economic primacy.

In Germany it was one of the underlying causes of Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933, who won wide support by proposing economic self-sufficiency and the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles.

Under Hitler's leadership and inflamed by resentment, Germany in 1935 rearmed in violation of the Treaty of Versailles and occupied the Rhineland in violation of the Treaty of Locarno.

The same year Italy attacked and conquered Ethiopia, and Japan outside the society of nations, between 1935 and 1936 proceeded with the occupation of Manchuria, in an increasingly imperialist perspective to gain a privileged sphere of influence in the Far East.

To contain Hitler, the strategy of appeasement was adopted by Britain in order to prevent through negotiation an escalation of violence. Despite French pressure for a stronger opposition, symbolic was the construction of the Maginot defensive line on the Franco-German border, both Britain and France were aware that they did not have the resources available to deal with the many threats on the horizon.

The balance in Europe began to change, after the Ethiopian War Hitler and Mussolini began to talk about a "Rome-Berlin axis," they jointly supported Franco's sedition in Spain, which saw no opposition because of the policy of appeasement.

In March 1938 the Anschluss of Austria was completed, and in September of that year it was the turn of the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia, which the following year was then dismembered divided between a protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under

German control and a formally independent Slovakia, but with a pro-Nazi government that made it a satellite country of Germany.

German claims on Poland were advancing, and despite ideological differences Stalin accepted Hitler's offer of a non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR signed by German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov on August 23, 1939. A secret protocol provided for a partition of the Eastern European zones of influence. London and Paris faced with this shift in alliances rushed to sign a defensive pact with Poland.

The fate of the world was about to change.

## 2.2 World War II

World war II represented for Eric Hobsbawm the conclusion of the “age of catastrophe”<sup>32</sup>, that opened in 1914, and the beginning of the “age of gold”, during which the war ceases, to become “cold” and development in all fields soars.

Some scholars prefer to call the First World War the "Great War" and the Second World War the "Second World War," in order to emphasize the global dimension of the latter, but the Second World War compared to any other war had an unprecedented impact, starting with the number of countries that targeted, all the way to the technologies used, which led to the creation of the atomic bomb, the only weapon capable, from the invention of the arc between arc between 30,000 and 15,000 B.C. to 1945, of "freezing" conflicts. The starting point of the world war was Hitler's expansionist project of a "Greater Germany" that would gather all Germans and subjugate the peoples he considered inferior.

The first phase of the conflict opens on September 1, 1939, with the German invasion of Poland, claiming the territory of the Danzig corridor.

After adopting a diplomatic and non-intervention strategy, the United Kingdom and France realized that the only way to stop the Nazi advance was through the use of force, and on September 3, 1939, they declared war on Germany, beginning World War II.

Despite the declaration of war France and Britain did not intervene militarily and once Poland was dismembered, operations concentrated on the eastern front.

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<sup>32</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. Bur.

Western countries expected a war that would follow the patterns of World War I, so they were preparing for a long war of position, but the Wehrmacht changed to blitzkrieg warfare strategy, using coordinated armored and airborne forces launched against the weakest point in the enemy's deployment to penetrate the front.

With this strategy Paris fell on June 14, 1940, and the armistice, signed on June 22 by Marshal Philippe Pétain, established that France was controlled in the north, including Paris, directly by the Germans, with the southern part under French administration, which mutated to a collaborationist regime, the Vichy Republic.

An important feature of this war was that it was an ideological clash of Nazi-fascist and non-Nazi ideals; in fact, an unprecedented alliance of democratic capitalist countries such as France, UK, US with the USSR was necessary to act as a counterbalance to an increasingly likely Nazi-fascist world order.

Until the middle 1941, the war was mainly consumed on the European soil, excluding the submarine warfare phase in the Atlantic. During the last part of 1941, the conflict took a worldwide dimension. On June 22, 1941, Hitler initiated the Operation Barbarossa, a huge offensive against the Soviet Union, breaking the 1939 pact.

1941 was the turning point of the conflict, the German occupation of the Balkans, the escalation of the war in Africa and the same year Japan attacked the American base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. It intended to become the hegemonic power in Asia and the Pacific, and to do so they had to put the US out of business, since they had similar aims.

December 8, 1941, the US responded to the attack, declaring war on Japan and automatically entering World War II.

Germany and Italy<sup>33</sup>, Japan's allies, side against the US and China, (involved in the conflict itself, already at war with the Japanese since 1937).

From this point on, the leading powers destined to control the fate of the world begin to emerge.

The conflict started to come to an end in 1943 when the Allied forces gained the upper hand. They then sought to reshape the international order through a series of conferences. The first occasion when the big three I. Stalin, F.D. Roosevelt and W. Churchill met was in Tehran in November 1943.

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<sup>33</sup> Entered the conflict in 1940.

During the meeting, they discussed providing assistance to Tito in Yugoslavia, the date and manner of executing Operation Overlord<sup>34</sup> and the invasion of France from the south, delineating the borders of Poland, and for the first time, the partitioning of Germany at the end of the conflict.

In October 1944, the percent partitioning of the Balkans and Eastern Europe took place in Moscow between Churchill and Stalin<sup>35</sup>.

The three leaders met for the third time at Yalta, Crimea in February 1944. There, they ratified the military victories of the Red Army, reaffirmed the principles of order that would characterize the relations of the Allies after victory, including free elections, open international trade, and self-determination of peoples. They also discussed plans for concluding the war against the Axis powers.

In Europe, the war can be said to have ended in April 1945 and in July of the same year the last allied conference was held in Potsdam, Germany. In the mid-time the US presidency had passed from Roosevelt to his Vice President H.S. Truman, the latter received the news of the success of the atomic experiment at Los Alamos, while the divided and dematerialized Germany was argument of discussion on the victors' table, and issues about free elections in Europe were already arising. The contradiction between the solemn commitment, made up that point, of free elections throughout Europe and the recognition of military achievements led to the abandonment of the good intentions of those agreements<sup>36</sup>.

With the dropping of "Little Boy" and "Fat Man" on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, it became clear that the main goal of the future order would be to make sure that a conflict like the one that had just ended would never have to happen again.

War-torn and devastated Europe realized that it was no longer able to shape its own future on its own.

World War II is distinguished from World War I not only by its global nature but also by the scale of destruction.

As historian Tony Judt has considered, the opposite happened at the end of World War II than at the end of World War I: as opposed to redrawing borders and immobilizing

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<sup>34</sup> Normandy landings, June 6, 1945

<sup>35</sup> Romania and Bulgaria to Russia for 90%, Yugoslavia and Hungary 50% each, Greece to UK for 90%, Marcello Flores "Il mondo contemporaneo"

<sup>36</sup> P.20-21 Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*.

peoples, the end of World War II led to millions of people moving mainly from East Central Europe.

Germany retained its territorial integrity but was divided into four zones the military occupation: British, French, American and Soviet (On May 23, 1949, the United States, Britain and France ceded sovereignty of their respective occupation zones to the newly formed Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BDR).

Also in Potsdam, the International Military Tribunal was established for crimes committed by Nazi generals that would be part of the Nuremberg Trials.

Although Germany had been brought to its knees by the Potsdam conference, all of Europe was at the end of the line, the UK and France emerged from the war deeply weakened.

The European nation-state emerged defeated, part of multilateral alliances whose strategic decisions were attributed to the superpower of reference: the U.S. or USSR, which had divided two zones of influence.

The axis of world order in 1945 shifted to the Pacific and specifically to the United States.

### **2.3 Post WW2 and the Cold War**

The world order established at the end of World War II is not stable<sup>37</sup>. It is composed of two opposing orders that generate a stable system, with the contrast between the two superpowers that emerged from the end of the conflict as its main feature.

This order will last until the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 and can be divided into two phases, the first from 1945 to the 70s and the second from the 70s to 1991.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of World War II, the world had undergone significant changes. The use of atomic weapons marked a new phase in the history of warfare.

However, even before the use of such weapons, evil had manifested in its most heinous form through the ideologies of Nazism and Fascism which had raised new priorities on the international scene which began to be glimpsed as early as 1941 when during the Battle of Britain (August 14, 1941), Churchill and Roosevelt met to declare in the Atlantic Charter principles aimed at countering the totalitarian theories and practices of Nazi

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<sup>37</sup> According to the definition expressed in the first paragraph.

<sup>38</sup> Division according to Hobsbawm



Germany. These principles were based on the 'four freedoms'<sup>39</sup> that the American president had presented to Congress in his Annual Message on January 6, 1941.

Following the same principles, in 1942, China, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain signed the Declaration of the United Nations Committed to the Struggle Against the Axis Powers. In 1945, in San Francisco, 50 countries pledged their support to this project.

Although there was goodwill and optimism for this new project, the world was still facing many challenges, from north to south and east to west. The United States was the only country that could be considered a true world power not only because star-spangled tanks are scattered over much of Europe and Asia, but because its territory has remained unscathed, has at the end of the conflict a monopoly on the atomic weapon and commercial and financial hegemony.

Having established this, a rational assessment would have to conclude that in 1945 Washington was unrivaled.

The Soviet Union, which emerged from the conflict as the victor, could not even come close, had paid a high price in terms of human lives, destruction and economic resources lost in the conflict. In 1945 Stalin's priorities were focused on rebuilding the country's industrial base and readjusting the population.

In this unbalanced antagonism, ideology certainly played a pivotal role.

Liberal ideology did not feel so sure about the future, Washington expected "major post-war upheavals" that would threaten "the economic, political and social stability of the world"<sup>40</sup> and this fear made it necessary to find an antagonist to contrast with in order to be on the side of the righteous.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union felt threatened and even encircled by the American world power, with which it shared none of the values.

On February 9, 1945, it became evident that the communist and capitalist worlds could not coexist peacefully, and a harmonious world order would not be established. On that date, Stalin delivered what has gone down in history as the 'Bolshoi Speech.' In this speech, Stalin aimed to uplift Soviet society, which had been destroyed by the war. He praised the Union's commitments, which had contributed more than any other nation to

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<sup>39</sup> The freedom of speech, the freedom of worship, the freedom from wants and the freedom from fear. *FDR and the Four Freedoms Speech - FDR Presidential Library & Museum*. (n.d.). <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/four-freedoms>

<sup>40</sup> Kolko, G. (1970). *The politics of war: The World and United States Foreign Policy, p.485 1943-1945*.

the defeat of Nazism. He encouraged the export of communism and emphasized how capitalism had been the driving force behind the last conflict.

The clash would likely have occurred even without the strong ideological matrix. This is evidenced by the reaction that Stalin's words at the Bolshoi Theater triggered in George Frost Kennan. The United States chargé d'affaires at the Moscow Embassy drafted a 5,000-word document, the Long Telegram, in which he analyzed the Soviet situation and its goals, the context in which these goals were being developed, plans to achieve these goals at the official level, and practical deductions from the standpoint of U.S. policy<sup>41</sup>.

He described the Russian people as a backward and barbaric society driven by the sense of insecurity "typical of Russians,"<sup>42</sup> always seeking security through struggle that annihilates the enemy, responding only to the "logic of force,"<sup>43</sup> never to reason.

Communism only reinforced the violence of an already violent people.

The direct consequence, according to Kennan, was that the only power that could "contain" it would have to resist the expansion of Russian ideology, even if it was not communist. This final point gave rise to the theory of "containment"; a hint of this strategy was used by Secretary of State George Marshall in February 1947 to justify to the Republican-majority and isolationist Congress the rationale for intervening in Greece during the civil war: responding to London's request for aid, which had the protectorate on Greece, would allow Russian access to the Mediterranean to be conditioned, and by leveraging ideology the members were convinced. A few days later, on March 12, 1947, President Truman announced the "Truman Doctrine".

In July of that year, the telegram expressing the doctrine was published in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in an article titled 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct' and signed X.

In response to this theory, which did not convince him, the journalist Walter Lippman coined the fortunate definition of Cold War<sup>44</sup>.

The most obvious face of the Cold War was the arms race and especially the nuclear one, but it was not the only effect.

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<sup>41</sup> George Kennan's "Long Telegram." (n.d.). <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm>

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem

<sup>44</sup> Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*. P.25 Le edizioni il Mulino.

In fact, it is referred to as the Cold War, but the "hottest" moment of the war was the beginning, starting with the Truman Doctrine, until 1949 when the Soviet Union dropped the first atomic bomb.

From this time on, both powers abandoned war as an instrument of struggle, being equivalent to a "suicide pact."<sup>45</sup>

Threats were made and served for negotiating purposes, although in some cases the fear of threats becoming reality was real and perceived by both blocs, we can therefore speak from 1949 onwards rather of a Cold Peace<sup>46</sup>.

Immediately after the war, Europe was in ruins, peoples seemed unfavorable to moderate politicians, communist parties had increasing support, and French Socialist Premier Paul Ramadier urged the Americans to intervene in Europe to prevent the rise of communists in governments.

The Marshall Plan, officially the European Recovery Plan (ERP), named after George Marshall who on June 5, 1947, at Harvard University announced the allocation of funds for the European reconstruction.

The ERP provided just over \$13 billion<sup>47</sup> over a four-year period; the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was established simultaneously with the Program as a technical body, with programmers from Washington to promote economic integration on the Continent. In total sixteen countries<sup>48</sup> adhered to the plan, but they did not all benefit equally, Great Britain received approximately 26%, France 18% and West Germany 11%<sup>49</sup>, while Switzerland received less support, as a neutral country.

The two objectives of the plan were to prevent the spread of communism in Europe and to stabilize in the international order in favor of the development of democratic principles and free market economies<sup>50</sup>, de facto, the plan aimed to be extended to eastern countries as well, but Moscow prevented them to access.

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<sup>45</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. P.276. Bur.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem

<sup>47</sup> Marshall Plan (1948). (2022, June 29). National Archives.

<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/marshall-plan/>

<sup>48</sup> Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom The National Museum of American Diplomacy. (2022, November 2). *The Marshall Plan - the National Museum of American Diplomacy*.

<https://diplomacy.state.gov/online-exhibits/diplomacy-is-our-mission/development/the-marshall-plan/>

<sup>49</sup> Notre Dame International Security Center. (2023, May 15). *What is the Marshall Plan and What Did It Accomplish?* ND International Security Center.

<https://ndisc.nd.edu/news-media/news/what-is-the-marshall-plan-and-what-did-it-accomplish/>

<sup>50</sup> Marshall, G. C. (n.d.). *Overview - For European Recovery: The fiftieth anniversary of the Marshall Plan*

In September 1947, the Deputy Foreign Minister Vyshinsky, expressed the Soviet position on the Marshall Plan at the UN saying that it constituted an “attempt to split Europe into two camps... to complete the formation of a bloc hostile to the interest of the democratic countries of Eastern Europe and most particularly to the interest of the Soviet Union<sup>51</sup>”.

In response, the Soviet Union proposed the Molotov Plan in the same year. This plan suggested an economic grouping that would later become the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), that was founded in January 1949.

The first period of activity of the Council focused on the independent development of the steel and mechanical industries in each member state, but the organization was hindered by a system of bilateral agreements that prevented the coordination that was its *raison d'être*. During the 1950s and 1960s, COMECON focused on international division of labor, economic and trade relations, agricultural development, chemistry and shipping agreements, and the establishment of the International Bank for Economic Cooperation. The antagonism between the USSR and US extended beyond the political-economic sphere and also had a military connotation.

In 1947, the UK and France signed the Treaty of Dunkirk, which established mutual assistance in the event of new German rearmament. The treaty aimed to create the conditions for a Western European Union, a Third Force on equal terms with the United States, capable of confronting the Soviet bloc<sup>52</sup>.

The hypothesis of a Third Force was unacceptable to Washington, and when on March 17, 1948, when the United Kingdom and France extended their intent to Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg with the Treaty of Brussels, the United States decided to intervene by absorbing the project and turning it into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established by the Atlantic Pact signed in Washington on April 4, 1949 and came into force in August of the same year as a collective security system whose states pledged to defend each other in the event of external attack, according to Article 5 in the event that one or more member states

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*Exhibitions - Library of Congress.* <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/marshall/marsh-overview.html>

<sup>51</sup> McCauley, M. (2017). *The Cold War 1949-2016*. P.124 Routledge.

<sup>52</sup> Graziano, M. (2019). *Geopolitica. Orientarsi nel grande disordine internazionale*. P.257. Il Mulino.

suffered an external attack, each member could exercise the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of United Nations<sup>53</sup>.

The stated purpose of the pact was to defend Western Europe from the Soviet threat, a possibility neither the Dunkirk nor Brussels Treaties referred to.

NATO was joined by 10 European states<sup>54</sup> and two North American states<sup>55</sup>. Since 1949 membership has gradually increased to 31 in 2023<sup>56</sup>. The main *raison d'être* of the Alliance was to oppose the Soviet bloc, but after its dissolution NATO adopted a new doctrine of "strategic concept" that on the one hand laid the foundation for a non-confrontational relationship with former adversaries and on the other confirmed the need for common defense because of the albeit changed, however unstable international strategic framework.

On May 9, 1955, the Federal Republic of Germany joined NATO, this ever-closer threat prompted the Soviet Union to create a few days later, on May 14, the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, which led to the creation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia joined in addition to the founding Soviet Union.

The Warsaw Pact was created as a mirror image of NATO, was also based on a system of collective security to ensure peacekeeping in Europe, taking into account the situation created in Europe following the ratification of the Paris Agreements, which provide for the establishment of a new military body in the form of the Western European Union, involving the participation of remilitarized West Germany and its integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, what increases the risks of a new war and creates a threat to the national security of peaceful states<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Art. 5 Nato. (n.d.). *The North Atlantic Treaty*. NATO.

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm)

<sup>54</sup> Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom

<sup>55</sup> Canada and United States

<sup>56</sup> Greece, Turkey, Germany, Spain, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Finland.

<sup>57</sup> Preamble Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance Between the Soviet Union and Certain East European Communist Governments, Signed at Warsaw, May 14, 1955, United States-Department of State. CVCE.EU by UNILU. (n.d.). *Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance* (Warsaw, 14 May 1955). [https://www.cvce.eu/obj/treaty\\_of\\_friendship\\_cooperation\\_and\\_mutual\\_assistance\\_warsaw\\_14\\_may\\_1955-en-b1234dbc-f53b-4505-9d86-277e4f5c20d4.html](https://www.cvce.eu/obj/treaty_of_friendship_cooperation_and_mutual_assistance_warsaw_14_may_1955-en-b1234dbc-f53b-4505-9d86-277e4f5c20d4.html)

Henceforth, the world order would consist of a confrontation between two contrasting superpowers, each organizing an international order within its own sphere<sup>58</sup>.

With this last act, Europe was officially divided, ideologically and militarily along the Iron Curtain<sup>59</sup>, but the consolidation of the two blocs was accelerated by the 1948 events, that made the division between the two spheres more entrenched.

In 1948 Europe still represent the central theatre for the cold war; in the Balkans, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia were communist led, even if the rupture between Stalin and Tito took Yugoslavia out of the COMECON in June of that year, preferring to renounce to a window to the Mediterranean, than having an inside enemy, the US crept into the dispute offering support to Tito, symbolically encouraging other communist leaders to dissent. The US intervened also Greece aiding it repelling the communist advance. Poland and Hungary attempted to maintain political pluralism, which had been suppressed by communist power seizures, although Finland and Austria were able to embrace neutrality.

The communists also overthrew the last remaining semi-independent government east of Germany, Czechoslovakia, in February 1948.

The Prague event can be considered as a retaliatory move by Stalin<sup>60</sup> against Western powers, which met two days before announcing intentions to increase coal and steel production in the Ruhr region, create a separate German state and incorporate it to the Marshall Plan.

This was not surprising when a crisis erupted in Berlin in 1948. A new currency, the Deutschmark, had already been introduced in the western areas and the drafting of a new constitution had been authorized. The Soviet Union left the Allied Control Council in March, and to the proposal to introduce the new currency in Berlin as well, Moscow responded on June 24, 1948, with a total blockade of food, gas, electricity and all basic necessities; in addition, all roads to and from West Berlin were closed.

The Allies developed an airlift capable of daily supplying West Berlin, turning the blockade into a boomerang<sup>61</sup>. This situation persisted until May 12, 1949.

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<sup>58</sup> Kissinger, H. A. (2014). *World Order: reflections on the character of nations and the course of history*. P.284 <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB19653441>

<sup>59</sup> Metaphor coined by British PM Winston Churchill in a speech at Fulton on March 5, 1946, when he said of the communist states, "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent." The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2023, December 27). *Iron Curtain | Definition & Facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iron-Curtain>

<sup>60</sup> Fink, C. K. (2021). *Cold War: An International History*. Routledge.

<sup>61</sup> Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*. P.31. Le edizioni il Mulino.

The crisis was one of the hottest moments of the Cold War; the U.S. was, for a short time yet, the sole holder of the atomic weapon, and being the first battleground, it was unpredictable to know how the two powers would behave, especially after Truman's announcement that he had made sixty B-29s available to the UK, while not issuing any direct threat to Moscow.

The Berlin Blockade can be viewed as a turning point that accelerated the division of Germany. During the creation of West Germany, neighboring countries, particularly France, had concerns about its rearmament. On May 8, 1949, German officials, under Western supervision, adopted the Basic Law, a constitution that marked a complete departure from the past and established a parliamentary democracy focused on protecting human rights. After the first elections, Konrad Adenauer became the first chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. Moscow had tried to oppose this by invoking the violation of the Potsdam Agreements, but their objections were ignored. Five months later, the German Democratic Republic was proclaimed.

The division of Germany had several effects, one of the most significant being that it made it clear that neither power was prepared for a direct confrontation. This was especially true after it became known that the Soviet Union had successfully tested its first atomic weapon.

We can therefore speak from 1949 onwards rather of Cold Peace<sup>62</sup>, between the two superpowers, because from 1948 onward there was not a year until 1991 in which conflicts of a more or less violent nature did not take place, Europe, however, remained partially exempt from them, although it remained one of the privileged theaters of the Cold War.

However, recent events to the East indicate that Europe is becoming increasingly marginalized as the center of the world and the cold war is shifting its axis toward East. The attention shifted to the East.

The Second World War had accelerated the exacerbation of a contradictory reality created by the British first with the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and then with the Third White Paper<sup>63</sup> of 1939, with which they attempted to placate the uprising of the Arab population by restricting the sale of lands to Jews.

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<sup>62</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. P.285 Bur.

<sup>63</sup> White Paper, an authoritative report detailing an issue, position, problem, solution, or even a commercial product and service. Originally produced or commissioned by a government agency or office, providing

The violence in the region was exacerbated by the intensification of migration from Europe following the Nazi Holocaust. The British government repeatedly declared itself incapable of handling the situation.

The national military organization Irgun Tzevai Leumi, created in 1931, and its terrorist counterpart Lehi Herut Israel in 1944 began a campaign of attacks against the British, who in 1947 with an Anglo-American proposal proposed the division of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish zone, with Jerusalem under international administration and the Negev under British control. However, the proposal failed, and London decided to return the Mandate to the United Nations.

In November 1947, the U.N. General Assembly passed Resolution No. 181 stating that "Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the city of Jerusalem, set forth in part III of this plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory power has been completed but, in any case, no later than: October 1948."<sup>64</sup>

The declaration also drew the borders of the new states.



Figure 2- United Nations partition plan of 1947 – Map<sup>65</sup>

in-depth background information on topics of public interest, including proposed and existing legislation and government policies.

<https://www.britannica.com/money/white-paper#ref1307764>

<sup>64</sup> Resolution n.181 ONU <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/038/88/PDF/NR003888.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>65</sup> United Nations partition plan of 1947 - Map - Question of Palestine. (2019, March 12). Question of Palestine. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-208958/>



The Arab community rejected the decision, as they had previously opposed Jewish immigration and were now faced with the possibility of dividing their state to create a Jewish one.

Starting in December 1947, guerrilla warfare broke out between the Jewish and Arab communities. The Jewish forces, supported by France and Czechoslovakia and purchasing tanks and planes from the United States, sought to displace and expand their borders. Meanwhile, the Arabs aimed to prevent the birth of an independent Jewish state. This violent conflict continued for some time.

On May 15, 1948, following the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, the armies of the Arab League launched an attack from three directions, marking the beginning of the first Arab-Israeli War.

In 1949, the Arab armies were defeated, and the newly formed state of Israel took control of approximately 78 percent of the territory of Palestine<sup>66</sup>. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip remained outside of its control, and 700,000 Palestinians were forced into a forced exodus, remembered as *Al-Nakbah*<sup>67</sup>.

This event marked the beginning of a relentless conflict that has continued since 1948.

In the decades following Israel's founding, the inflow of capital to the fledgling state of Israel was extremely high. Since 1950, the 'law of return' has allowed any Jew, anywhere in the world, to assume Jewish nationality. Reparations from Germany, which began in 1953 and are still being bestowed on the state today, constituted a substantial sum for the internal development of the state. In addition, beginning with the Eisenhower presidency, the United States provided Israel with economic aid in the form of loans to obtain basic foodstuffs. Another source of foreign currency was the sale of State of Israel bonds in the United States, which began at that time and was very successful<sup>68</sup>.

The U.S. partnership has played a crucial role in Israel's economic development, which has experienced both ups and downs, including periods of stagnation and prosperity. The military has been the driving force behind its policies since the beginning, .

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<sup>66</sup> *Israele-Palestina: 12 grafici per capire come siamo arrivati fin qui.* (2023, December 6). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/escalation-israele-palestina-12-grafici-per-capire-come-siamo-arrivati-fin-qui-126406>

<sup>67</sup> *Nakba - Treccani - Treccani.* (n.d.). Treccani. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nakba\\_\(Dizionario-di-Storia\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nakba_(Dizionario-di-Storia)/)

<sup>68</sup> Rivlin, P. (2019). *The Israeli economy.* Routledge.

flanked by a highly centralized system, extensive state intervention, high levels of education and high productivity are the factors that will make, Israel, paradoxically, the most stable reality in the Middle East<sup>69</sup>.

Moving further East, the two major regional powers in Eastern Asia, India and China, are now independent and have a significant presence on the world stage.

The Indian subcontinent, the British Raj, becomes independent on August 15, 1947. The arrogance with which the UK had embroiled India in World War II had sharpened impatience with colonial rule and starting in 1940 Mahatma Gandhi calls on the Indian people for nonviolent disobedience, but at first the protest has no visibility; until the end of the war, unrest persisted, and *satyagraha*<sup>70</sup> deaths increased. In 1945, the Attlee Labor government, driven by democratic ideology and increasingly unattractive economic ties with India, sought a solution for India.

The first proposal for a federal structure with limited powers and broad autonomy for provinces grouped into three different categories, with balanced representation in the constituent assembly, was rejected. In July 1947, Britain ceded, and the House of Commons announced the establishment of two independent dominions. India received 82.5 percent of the territory, while Pakistan received 17.5 percent and was divided into two distant states.

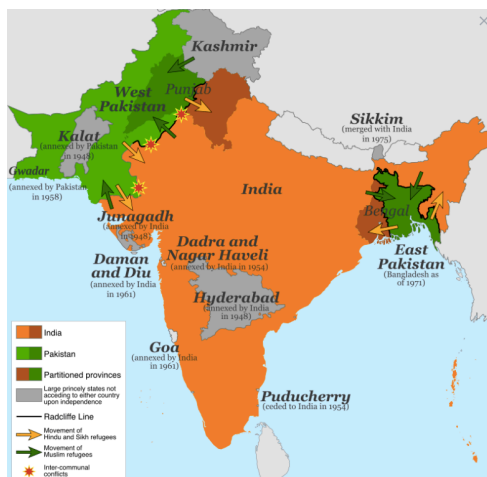


Figure 3- Map of the partition of India (1947). Note: Small princely states not acceding to either country upon independence is shown as integral parts of India and Pakistan.

<sup>69</sup> Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*. P.64. Le edizioni il Mulino.

<sup>70</sup> The word ‘Satyagraha’ is Sanskrit in origin. It is a compound word formed of ‘Satya’, meaning ‘truth’ and ‘Agraha’, meaning ‘clinging, holding fast, adherence, insistence’. Gandhiji described Satyagraha as “firmness in a good cause” in Indian opinion. *Indian National Congress*. (2021, March 6). Indian National Congress. <https://www.inc.in/congress-sandesh/dandi-anniversary-march/satyagraha-1>

On August 15, 1947, India and Pakistan celebrated their independence. However, the division that was intended to prevent violence ultimately led to new conflicts.

Approximately 12 million Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs left India during the summer of 1947.

In the process, Pakistan's Muslims massacred the Hindus and Sikhs who fled to Punjab and Bengal, and the number of dead and refugees was almost impossible to count. Kashmir is another disputed territory, Muslims number 3 million, Hindus 1 million, but headed by a Hindu Maharaja, Hari Singh, in October 1947 an uprising forces annexation by India.

1948 Mahatma Gandhi is assassinated and so also wanes the ambition of a nation pacified from all internal and external antagonisms.

In 1950 India presented itself to the world as the most populous democracy; in January of that year 360 million voters are called to the polls to choose the Lok Sabha.

In 1954, Congress aimed to create a more socialist society. However, this did not deter India's Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, from playing a leading role in organizing the movement of 'non-aligned' individuals who would gather at the Bandung Afro-Asian conference in 1955.

Despite the term 'non-aligned,' India developed significant relations with the Soviet Union. Nehru established cordial relations with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. The Soviet Union provided economic and technical support to India, covering several areas, including heavy industry, nuclear technology, and defense, but above all India borrowed from Moscow the model of "five-year plans", that led the nation to experience incredible and rapid industrial development despite the contradictions of uneven wealth distribution, widespread poverty, and a backward countryside.

At Nehru's death in 1964, India was at the third five-year plan, and it was ranked the seventh most industrialized nation in the world.

Troubled relations with neighboring China, led it later to also seek American support.

Eight days after the announcement of the soviet atomic weapon test, the People's Republic of China was declared under the rule of Mao Zedong's communist forces and the faith of the world order was about to change.

Neither a grievous political defeat for the United States, because the US supported Chiang Kai-Shek fled into exile on the island of Taiwan, nor a triumph for the Soviet Union, the

establishment of a communist rule in China exposed the limits of the superpower's agility and skill<sup>71</sup>.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Marxist ideology had a profound impact on China. In 1921, the Chinese Communist Party was established in Shanghai, adopting the doctrine and shifting its focus from the factory proletariat to the rural population. Since the founding of the party, this vision has been in conflict with the Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, which had overthrown the empire and established the republic, and which since 1925 had openly attacked, with its leader Chang Kai-shek, the communists who had taken root in parts of the country in the south, particularly in the Jiangxi region.

This vision since the founding of the party had clashed with the Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, which had overthrown the empire and established the republic, and which since 1925 had openly attacked, with its leader Chang Kai-shek the communists who had taken root in parts of the country in the south, particularly in the Jiangxi region; in 1934 the attacks of Chang's army became increasingly intense until the communists were encircled.

To avoid being captured by Chang's army, they decided to leave their bases and move on foot into North China. This journey became known as the Long March and is significant in the history of the Communist Party partly because it made the figure of the young Mao Zedong stand out as a leader.

In 1941, internal clashes were temporarily halted due to the entry into the war on the side of the United States to combat the invasion of Manchuria that Japan had been perpetrating for years, but once 1946 arrived the civil war resumed.

The People's Liberation Army, renamed from the communist army, managed to take control of Manchuria and bring the war to the heart of China. On October 1, 1949, Mao entered Beijing and proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Mao's victory was surprising, given that Chag's army appeared larger and stronger on paper. However, the People's Liberation Army was more united and less corrupt. Additionally, the Communist's agrarian policy garnered widespread popular support.

Mao centralized power and objectives of the new regime include strengthen the figure of the state, capable of maintaining law and order and economic recovery.

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<sup>71</sup> Fink, C. K. (2021). *Cold War: An International History*. Routledge.

He began dismantling the cornerstones of both domestic and international order: Western democracy, Soviet leadership of the communist world, and China's domestic legacy<sup>72</sup>.

He posed in the middle of the conflict.

Mao called his vision of order “great harmony”, by this reference to Confucianism he meant how the new China would have to rise again from the rubble of the old.

The state's presence is reinforced by various reforms, including the formation of labor unions, the resumption of industrial activity, and the promotion of a collective identity through propaganda and psychological pressure to consolidate a collective identity.

Four major mass campaigns were implemented between 1950-52.

The first campaign aimed to identify internal counterrevolutionaries, primarily among former Kuomintang members; the secondary purpose was to deprive civilians of weapons. The second campaign was directed against the three vices that hindered the smooth functioning of the party, The campaign against corruption, wastefulness, and bureaucratic obstructionism was followed by a campaign against the five vices that marked the bourgeoisie: bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts, and embezzlement of economic information. The final campaign was directed against foreigners and came to fruition with the Korean War.

Economic reforms in the early years focused on land reform and then at a later stage made the Great Leap Forward, an economic and social plan developed between 1958 and 1961, whose ultimate goal was to transform the country from an agrarian systema to an industrialized Communist Power, characterized by a Collectivization System, the results were catastrophic and caused the great famine of the Chinese population.

Moving for this leap forward was the need to implement the war industry sector, which was another crucial point of Mao's domestic and foreign policy.

Beijing continued to have outstanding accounts with regions that had seceded, as well as foreign adversaries. Beijing Radio announced in 1949: “The People’s Liberation Army must liberate all Chinese territories, including Tibet, Xinjiang, Hainan, and Taiwan”<sup>73</sup>.

In 1949 the People's Liberation Army entered Xinjiang and in 1955 its autonomous region was established, in 1950 it annexed Hainan Island in 1951 it annexed Tibet, but American interests did not seem to match with the Chinese takeover of Taiwan.

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<sup>72</sup> Kissinger, H. A. (2014). *World Order: reflections on the character of nations and the course of history*. P.221. Penguin UK.

<sup>73</sup> Marshall, T. (2016). *Prisoners of geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World*. Simon and Schuster.

It was in 1950 that the U.S. Seventh Fleet was sent to patrol the Taiwan Strait, and the island became a strategically crucial element in U.S.-China relations, the latter feeling encircled by the Americans, who also intervened in the Korean War in June 1950.

Korea had been a Japanese colony until 1945, when it was liberated by the Allies and occupied by the Soviets in the north and the Americans in the south, each establishing its own system of government, and then both superpowers withdrew between 1948 and 1949, engaged on the Eastern Front.

In June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The decision by Kim Il Sung, the North Korean leader, had found favor with Stalin.

He saw Korea as a distraction for Mao's leadership, whose leadership skills Stalin feared were so difficult to assimilate into Soviet satellites, and it would also be a catalyst for U.S. attention, distracting it from Europe.

Pyongyang's unification project would also have given the Soviet Union a prominent position in Asia and could have been a geographical counterweight to neighboring China. Mao, on the other hand, supported unification because he feared encirclement by the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, the Americans continued to follow their principle of defeating the aggressor and succeeded in getting the UN Security Council to agree to intervene in Korea.

When they landed at Ichon with General MacArthur in September 1950, two different concepts of order clashed. Nothing was more antithetical to American principles of legality and defense of the status quo than Mao's revolutionary mission.

Once Washington crossed the 38th parallel, Beijing attacked, where various internal arguments, the surprise attack rolled back the American deployment, and in June 1951 the line was reestablished at the 38th parallel. Each side achieved its objective, although the Soviet Union was nearly defeated, but a debate opened in the United States about the success of the Korean War. For the Truman administration it had been a success, the doctrine of containment had been achieved by successfully stopping the communist advance, while for General MacArthur and his followers the goal should have been pursued to ultimate victory.

In this way, America lost its aura of invincibility<sup>74</sup>, but on the other hand, with the American intervention, China lost the possibility of conquering Taiwan.

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<sup>74</sup> Kissinger, H. (2014). *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*. P.295 Penguin UK.

The war officially ended on July 27, 1953. It was also a crucial year because in March of that year Stalin died and Dwight David Eisenhower unveiled a new phase of the conflict. On one hand, Nikita Khrushchev succeeded Stalin after a power struggle with Malenko, who was Stalin's heir apparent and his rise to power and he changed the course of Soviet history and the Cold War by calling called for peaceful competition with the West. On the other side, the new elected Eisenhower promised a tougher stance toward the Soviet Union<sup>75</sup>.

The golden age<sup>76</sup> in the 50s was beginning to bear fruit, in noncommunist countries the institutions put in place by the United States were proving their effectiveness, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) facilitated international trade, the Bretton Wood system established stable currencies and exchange rates, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank started investing in Africa, Asia and Latin America to supply the West with inexpensive raw materials.

The Soviet Union was slower to engage in international trade, with the exception of its relations with satellites states, China and North Korea.

1953 was also the year that Third World<sup>77</sup> countries became part of the Cold War theater. Washington and Moscow replaced European colonialism with their rival models.

Intelligence agencies, the CIA and the KGB, were deployed to recruit informants around the world and monitor the political movements of foreign governments in order to anticipate the other side's intervention.

Another sign of the end of European imperialism was the defeat of France in Indochina by Vietnamese forces backed by China.

On July 21, the Geneva Accords ended more than 60 years of French rule by granting independence to Laos and Cambodia and dividing Vietnam along the 17th parallel.

The French defeat echoed in Algeria, where a nationalist uprising against France broke out on November 1, 1954, but while Morocco and Tunisia would have been granted

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<sup>75</sup> Fink, C. K. (2021). *Cold War: An International History*. Routledge.

<sup>76</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. Bur.

<sup>77</sup> In 1952, French demographer Alfred Sauvy, coined the term "Third World" a neologism that expanded globally and became a key category of post-world thought. Palieraki, E. (2023). The origins of the 'Third World': Alfred Sauvy and the birth of a key global Post-War concept. *Global Intellectual History*, 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23801883.2023.2166558>

It was used to describe those states not part of the first world, the capitalist, economically developed states led by the US, or the second world, the communist states led by the URSS. (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, October 13). *Third World*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/Third-World>)

independence in 1956, it was inconceivable for the government to let Algeria go, both because it had been annexed in the 1830s and was the only one of the colonies answerable to the French Ministry of the Interior and not the Ministry of Colonies, and because oil deposits had recently been discovered in the Algerian Sahara and the vast expanses of desert were useful to the government for nuclear testing. The Algerian War was a bloody and protracted conflict that fit neatly into the Cold War order, with France backed by the United States on one side and the Algerian National Liberation Front backed and financed by Moscow on the other. The war ended in 1962 with the Evian Accords.

The French defeat in Indochina sparked optimism in the former colonial world. The term 'third world', as described by Alfred Sauvy, initially referred to nations whose territories had long been under colonial control, excluded from wealth and development, and now found themselves threatened by a new form of colonialism.

It did not indicate the backwardness and misery of these states that, with toil, followed the path of modernization, often unsuccessfully. It is important to note that the term should not be used to imply bias or suggest a lack of progress.

The formula aimed to revive the 'third state' during the French Revolution, a concept that, if forgotten, could trigger a revolution<sup>78</sup>.

In 1955, representatives from 29 countries, including Indonesian President Sukarno, India's Nehru, Yugoslavia's Tito, and Egypt's Nasser, convened in Bandung for the first time. The goal was to develop 'positive neutralism,'<sup>79</sup> even though some attendees had already established relations with one of the two superpowers.

The meeting resulted in a 10-point 'Declaration on the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation,' known as the Desasila Bandung.

Respect for the fundamental rights and principles of the United Nations Charter, respect for the territorial sovereignty of all nations and recognition of equality among races and among all nations, large or small, were reaffirmed in various points.

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<sup>78</sup> *Nous parlons volontiers des deux mondes en présence, de leur guerre possible, de leur coexistence, etc., oubliant trop souvent qu'il en existe un troisième, le plus important, et en somme, le premier dans la chronologie. C'est l'ensemble de ceux que l'on appelle, en style Nations Unies, les pays sous-développés... Car enfin ce Tiers Monde ignoré, exploité, méprisé comme le Tiers Etat, veut, lui aussi, être quelque chose.*

*TROIS MONDES, UNE PLAN TE.* Alfred Sauvy. (n.d.). <http://www.homme-moderne.org/societe/demo/sauvy/3mondes.html>

<sup>79</sup> Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*. Le edizioni il Mulino.



The conference focused on two central elements: the pursuit of decolonization for states still oppressed by former imperial powers and the need to establish an autonomous camp that represented an international political alternative to the two blocs.

As the Cold War was in the thaw<sup>80</sup> and entering a détente phase between the two powers, non-aligned countries saw this as an opportune moment for autonomous political action. Following the focus on Asia, the two superpowers shifted their attention to Third World countries, particularly Africa.

While the Algerian War signaled the end of old colonialism, the Suez Crisis marked its final collapse.

Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egyptian leader, had been one of the protagonists of the Bandung conference and an advocate of pan-Arabism.

During those years, his feats had provoked his opponents. In particular the acquisition of military supplies from Czechoslovakia made Israel fearful, to the point of launching a preemptive attack, supported by France, which feared its aid to Algeria, and Britain, as Egypt threatened its relations with Iraq and Jordan and was seen as a real impediment to oil revenues access for the Europeans; the three met secretly in Sèvres in April 1955.

In 1956, the United States withdrew its promise to fund the Aswan Dam, which it had made a year earlier to gain favor with the Arab world. In response, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company on July 26th of that year.

This move was used as a pretext by France, Britain, and Israel to take action.

Israel attacked Egypt, and Britain and France issued an ultimatum to suspend the conflict under the guise of this action. Nasser refused, and the European powers intervened with a mock intervention.

On November 2, 1956, the UN issued Resolution 997 (ES-I) for a cease-fire. Egypt and Israel halted hostilities on November 5, but an Anglo-French ground offensive began.

At the same time, the Soviet Union was suppressing the Hungarian uprising and, siding with the United States, threatened to intervene.

On November 7, after heavy American pressure, London and Paris accepted the UN resolution and left Egypt defeated.

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<sup>80</sup> The years between the middle of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s saw a relaxation of censorship and repression in the Soviet Union as a result of Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinization and peaceful worldwide cooperation policy.

Nasser lost the war but won the peace<sup>81</sup>, and all around the anti-Western sentiment was spreading, in 1957 the Jordan-UK alliance ended, Iraq in 1958 had a coup d'état that resulted in a republican-style regime, and the same year the civil war in Lebanon began. Among the witnesses to the Hungarian and Suez crises was West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

Although it declared neutrality in the Egypt war, the repression in Hungary and Moscow's threats to London and Paris shook it, and the desire to build Europe grew stronger. In 1956, the Suez crisis led to a historic rapprochement between Bonn and Paris, which revitalized the 1951 European Coal and Steel Community project, which had brought together France, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries under a common high authority.

European leaders Alcide De Gasperi from Italy, Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman from France, and Paul-Henri Spaak from Belgium understood that coal and steel were the two essential industries for war, and they believed that by tying their national industries together, future war between their nations would become much less likely<sup>82</sup>.

The ECSC established a free-trade zone for important military and commercial resources such as coal, coke, steel, scrap, and iron ore. To oversee the ECSC, the treaty created several supranational organizations, including a Court of Justice to interpret the treaty and settle disputes, a Common Assembly to develop policy, a Council of Ministers to legislate, and a High Authority to administer.

Franco-German relations continued to be strained, which hindered the community's progress. Additionally, the absence of one of the leading figures in European history, due to the Attlee government's refusal to join the community, further contributed to its incompleteness. In 1957, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was ready to take the next step. The European economy was growing, employment rates were high, and the economic boom of the 1960s was on the horizon. On March 25, 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed by the six founding countries, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC). Additionally, the European Atomic Energy Community was established at the same time. The United Kingdom continued to be absent; already in possession of the atomic secret since 1952, it had decided not to share it.

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<sup>81</sup> Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*. P.80. Le edizioni il Mulino.

<sup>82</sup> *History of the European Union – 1945-59 | European Union*. (n.d.). European Union. [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59_en)

The main objectives of the EEC were to create a common market characterized by the free movement of goods, services, people, and capital among member states, as well as to harmonize member states' economic policies to promote greater cohesion and coordination.

Following the devastation of World War II, the European Economic Community (EEC) aimed to contribute to peace and stability in Europe through economic and political integration. Economic cooperation was viewed as a means of preventing future conflicts among European nations. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) received particular attention. Although the reunification of Germany was not a priority for the European communities, it remained an open issue. The question of Berlin, the former capital located on GDR territory and a showcase of capitalism's prosperity, was particularly concerning to Khrushchev.

Ten years after Stalin's blockade of Berlin, the Soviet leader threatened the four Western countries to give East Germany sovereignty over the ways leading to West Berlin, putting the order in danger once again.

The goal was to have the peace treaty he never had at the end of the war, in which the GDR was recognized as a state, to turn Berlin into a vulnerable city that would then be absorbed by the GDR.

Khrushchev took advantage of the situation in Berlin, which was considered abnormal even by U.S. President Eisenhower, to urge Washington to engage in a global dialogue to regulate competitive coexistence between the two superpowers and mitigate risks.

Khrushchev withdrew the ultimatum after receiving an official invitation to the United States, the first for a Soviet leader, for a series of meetings with President Eisenhower that sized up the Berlin issue to one that could be resolved by peaceful means and would be discussed again at the meeting set for the following year in Paris.

The spirit of friendship and cooperation between Khrushchev and Eisenhower did not last long. Just two weeks before the long-awaited conference, the Soviet Union intercepted and shot down a U2 reconnaissance flight departing from Pakistan and the pilot, who had parachuted, was arrested.

Eisenhower took responsibility for the incident, calling the espionage activities 'distasteful but vital necessity.' Khrushchev demanded an apology, which Eisenhower refused to give. This mishap led to the cancellation of the conference.

Following these events, Khrushchev, who had previously positioned himself as pro-distension and friendly towards opponents, adopted a more belligerent and aggressive

policy. He began supporting leftist guerrillas around the world and inciting unrest in third world countries.

With the change of administration in the United States, Soviet officials expressed renewed interest in negotiating the German question.

In June 1961, newly elected U.S. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, met for the first time in Vienna, however, the meeting proved to be unsuccessful. The new administration focused on reaffirming the U.S. presence in the world to defend the Allies and their freedom, beginning with the outpost of West Berlin; at the same time, some observers from Washington governmental circles were apprehensive about the East German exodus through Berlin, seeing it as a factor of perpetual destabilization. They wondered why the Soviets did not curb it, perhaps with a wall.

On August 13, 1961, news broke that a wall had been built between East and West Berlin. It became the most powerful symbol of the Cold War.

Kennedy stated that the situation was 'definitely better than a war,' as it signaled a renunciation of taking over the western part.

The U.S. attitude received strong criticism from Willy Brandt, who was the mayor of West Berlin at the time, who lamented the inaction in a letter to Kennedy three days after the wall was built.

The West German authorities recognized that their interests did not completely conflict with those of the United States. They believed that a more assertive international approach was necessary for their advancement. In 1961, the groundwork for the 'New Ostpolitik' was laid, which would later be led by Brandt as foreign minister and then chancellor. This policy evolved over the next decade.

The confrontation between the two superpowers was not limited to Berlin between 1958 and 1961, and over, but it extended to Latin America.

Latin America, although siding with the Allies, was only marginally affected by the world conflict. At the end of the war, the United States reassimilated the continent and formalized its presence with the Inter-American Treaty of Mutual Assistance, also known as the Rio Pact of 1947, with the establishment of the Organization of American States (OAS in 1948, and by bilateral agreements signed with the various states in the years to follow. A common trait of postwar South American regimes was the presence of

nationalist military forces in power; in many countries, communist ideology was declared illegal<sup>83</sup>, which fostered conflict and coup attempts.

The presented regimes portrayed themselves as having reformist traits and democratic goals. The need to integrate the masses into the processes of industrialization led to the rise of populist ideology. Populism was the only ideology capable of uniting workers, who were increasingly organized into unions, the nationalist military, the church, and the anti-communist side, under a single figure who could garner as much support as possible. This was exemplified by Getulio Vargas in Brazil and Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina, where populism bears the name Peronism par excellence. The countries of South America were also united by the widespread poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor. Plundered by northern countries for basic necessities, it is in the Cold War years in the grip of dictatorship and coups. After the end of the Good Neighbor Policy<sup>84</sup>, the United States adopted the Backyard Policy under Truman, which aimed to combat communism throughout the continent through various interventions, some more invasive than others. In 1954, local troops in Guatemala, who were trained and financed by the CIA, overthrew the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz, who had enacted a land reform that benefited the peasant population but hindered the interests of the multinational United Fruit Company<sup>85</sup>.

But the country hardest hit by Washington's line was Cuba, a U.S. protectorate since the Spanish-American War of 1898, in 1952 it was handed over to the puppet-dictator Fulgencio Batista, whose sole responsibility was to administer the island's agricultural and human exploitation and suppress any anti-Yankee revolts.

Stalin's death in 1953 reignited revolutionary aspirations, on July 26, a rebellion led by Fidel Castro, which was ultimately suppressed, occurred. Castro then went into exile in Mexico, where he fraternized with Ernesto Guevara de la Serna.

Fidel Castro refers to the South American tradition of caudillos and libertadores, men who led the liberation of South America from Spain, from which the figure of José Martí, hero of the Spanish-American War from which Cuba had gained independence from

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<sup>83</sup> Brazil, 1947, Chile, Colombia, Perú and Costa Rica, 1948, Venezuela, 1950.

<sup>84</sup> Roosevelt, 1933 *Milestones: 1921–1936 - Office of the Historian*. (n.d). <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/goodneighbor#:~:text=President%20Franklin%20Delano%20Roosevelt%20took,maintain%20stability%20in%20the%20hemisphere>.

<sup>85</sup> Immerman, R. H. (1982). *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention*. P.141-142 University of Texas Press.

Spain, particularly stands out. Ernesto Guevara, an Argentine-born medical graduate, studied Marxist political economy and traveled throughout Latin America, where he witnessed the absolute poverty of the continent.

This cooperation in Mexico gave rise to a Cuban liberation movement called M-26<sup>86</sup>. Fidel Castro along with his younger brother Raul, Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto Guevara with a few hundred men, set sail from Mexico and landed on Cuba's southern coast, where they were welcomed as libertadores and gained more and more followers. Also participating in the revolution was a battalion of women led by Celia Sánchez Manduley, future congresswoman and first secretary of the Cuban revolutionary government.

On January 2, 1959, the revolutionary army entered La Habana, where the dictator had fled. This was the first successful revolution to see the light of day in the Western world, just a few miles from the United States.

The new government focused on education with the slogan "Un pueblo sin cultura es un pueblo fácil de engañar," with Ernesto Guevara at the Ministry of Economy, industries and telephone companies are nationalized, land expropriated and distributed to agricultural cooperatives. The U.S. administration under Eisenhower approved a document titled 'A Program of Covert Actions Against the Castro Regime' which was based on four points: creating and supporting an opposition to the regime abroad, practicing an offensive based on anti-Castro propaganda, maintaining U.S. forces on the island, and training outside paramilitary forces for future actions<sup>87</sup>.

On July 6, 1960, Congress passed an economic measure against Cuba, authorizing the President to reduce or eliminate sugar imports from Cuba. The following day, Eisenhower issued a decree drastically reducing sugar imports.

On October 20, 1960, an embargo was placed on exports under the Export Control Act of 1949<sup>88</sup>. They could have referred to the Trading with the Enemy Act<sup>89</sup>, but the former allowed US multinationals to circumvent the blockade.

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<sup>86</sup> It indicated the date of July 26, 1953

<sup>87</sup> Haney, P. J., & Vanderbush, W. (2005). *The Cuban embargo: The Domestic Politics of an American Foreign Policy*. P.14. University of Pittsburgh Pre.

<sup>88</sup> Morley, M. H. (1987). *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952-1986*. P.121. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>89</sup> King's Printer of Acts of Parliament. (n.d.). *Trading with the Enemy Act 1939*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/2-3/89/enacted>

During his campaign, Kennedy accused Republican candidate Richard Nixon, Eisenhower's vice-president, of being the architect of U.S. foreign policy that led to Cuba falling under Soviet influence.

The Cuban government, especially in its early stages, relied heavily on Soviet aid.

Although not initially planned, on April 16, 1961, the parliament declared Cuba a socialist state, and the following day, the Bay of Pigs invasion took place.

The plan to invade the Bay had been devised by the Eisenhower administration, which strongly wanted it kept secret; when Kennedy ascended to the presidency he agreed with his predecessor and continued to keep the plan confidential.

Despite some misgivings, he initiated the operations on April 15 and 16, which led to an expected outcome. As a result, the United States stumbled into one of the most humiliating defeats in its history.

Defeat was actually the best-case scenario for Americans, as Kennedy stood up for the anti-communist ideal, as he was right to do, even though he failed; but on the other hand, he did not have to deal with the consequences that a victory would bring, which plausibly could have been similar to those seen more than forty years later in Iraq<sup>90</sup>.

The attack had a direct consequence of increasing support for the Cuban government across the continent. Additionally, Russian nuclear missiles were installed on the island. The order faltered at this point.

After lengthy U.N. mediation, Khrushchev withdrew the missiles from Cuba in exchange for Kennedy's commitment not to attempt to invade the island again. In turn, Kennedy agreed to withdraw the NATO missiles that had been installed in Turkey, close to the Iron Curtain. The Cuban revolution remains intact, but it now owes a debt to Moscow, which has resulted in a loss of sovereignty.

Cuba had become a symbol of the potential for a social revolution that could alter the course of Latin American history over the next two decades.

The construction of the wall and the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba had restored order. After bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war Kennedy and Khrushchev disappeared one after the other.

The legacy of Kennedy's assassination in 1963 is ambiguous. On one hand, he expressed optimism about achieving peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union. On the other hand,

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<sup>90</sup> Staff, N. (2011, April 17). 50 years later: Learning from the Bay of Pigs. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2011/04/17/135444482/50-years-later-learning-from-the-bay-of-pigs?t=1618305142030>

during a visit to Berlin, where he declared 'Ich bin ein Berliner', he denounced the system on the other side of the wall, rebuking those who thought they were cooperating with the Communists. And shortly before his death, he increased Washington's involvement in South Vietnam with new aid and outposts.

In October 1964, Khrushchev was overthrown by a Politburo dissatisfied with his foreign policy of seeking peaceful coexistence.

Despite their differences, Kennedy and Khrushchev were both hardened Cold Warriors. Their successors, who were less experienced in diplomacy and more focused on domestic reforms, created a dangerous pause in the Superpowers' search for détente<sup>91</sup>.

During the half-decade from 1963 to 1968 the Cold War underwent a fundamental change.

By 1960, the American leadership was no longer unchallenged, although the Castro regime could continue to rely on Latin America, but the NATO countries in Europe had less and less confidence in the American shield, leaving more room for their independent views.

In 1961, the final break between the two communist giants occurred<sup>92</sup> at the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Party, and by 1963 they were vying for leadership of the revolutionary movements in Asia, Africa and South America.

The 1960s were classified by the United Nations as the first decade of development<sup>93</sup>. The agricultural revolution, with the introduction of technology, pesticides, and farming techniques, had increased the world's food supply.

The implementation of transportation networks, a more agile capacity for movement had contributed to produce strong population growth.

Economic growth went hand in hand with the technological revolution. The technological earthquake<sup>94</sup> had three basic consequences: first, it changed the daily lives of people all over the world, from the rich industrialized countries to the poorest Third World countries, where in the 1960s radio had the ability to reach the most remote villages; second, "research and development" were the key words of the time, because they were the engine of economic growth; everyone wanted to do research.

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<sup>91</sup> Fink, C. K. (2021). *Cold War: An International History*. P.114. Routledge.

<sup>92</sup> The rupture had been caused by Soviet opposition to atomic development in China.

<sup>93</sup> *Research guides: UN Documentation: Development: 1960-1970, 1st Development Decade*. (n.d.). <https://research.un.org/en/docs/dev/1960-1970>

<sup>94</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. P.312. Bur.



The third consequence was that new technologies were capital intensive and labor saving<sup>95</sup>.

A major contributor was the huge increase in the consumption of fossil fuels, new deposits were being discovered at an incredible rate, a barrel of oil cost less than \$2 on average between 1950 and 1973, making the cost of energy absurdly low, consumption of which tripled<sup>96</sup>.

Keynesian economists had become advisors to governments, and their macroeconomic policies succeeded in transforming the cycle of expansion and depression that had characterized the interwar period into a series of smooth fluctuations.

Other countries, especially in the West, did not pursue new reforms, but adapted their production systems to those of the United States. There was a substantial restructuring of capitalism, which had inherited the system of economic planning from the socialist systems. It was a kind of economic marriage between liberalism and social democracy. The Cold War prompted U.S. leaders to invest in the economic and industrial development of poorer countries, which became an integral part of a new international division of labor.

In 1960, the term "offshore" entered the popular lexicon, referring to the practice of outsourcing operations overseas, usually by companies from industrialized countries to less-developed countries<sup>97</sup>.

It was recognized that Third World labor was just as skilled as Western labor at a lower cost.

During the post-World War II period, Europe's material and psychological capacity to bring order to the world had all but vanished.

In the 1960s, the center of gravity of consensus shifted to the left, with the return of the moderate left to government in many Western European states, combined with the more important phenomenon of the emergence of the welfare state.

The decline in military spending meant that a majority of government spending could be invested in social welfare, the phenomenon grew exponentially in the decade of the

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<sup>95</sup> Ibidem

<sup>96</sup> Rostow, W. W. (2014). *The world economy: History and Prospect*. P.256. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>97</sup> *Britannica money*. (n.d.).

<https://www.britannica.com/money/modern-portfolio-theory-explained>

1970s, when more than 60 percent of government spending was devoted to social services in Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, West Germany, and the Netherlands.

The economic order was totally dependent on the United States, which became its guarantor. This is the case of Japan, which emerged from the war in ruins and saw in the United States a new ally, the priority for the latter was in fact to bury old grievances to make it an integral part of the anti-communist strategy in Asia, with substantial economic aid from the Americans, especially during the years of the Korean War, and thanks to the excellent ability of the managerial class to turn to the technological sectors, Japan experienced a period of splendor that is remembered as the *Japanese economic miracle*. It was because of its leading role in the world economy that the United States, for the first time, began to falter, especially internally, when the upheavals of the late 1960s disrupted the order.

Kennedy's assassination had raised questions about the moral legitimacy of the American adventure<sup>98</sup>, especially among young people.

But 1968 was the year that really shook America. 1968 saw the unfolding of socially diverse mass movements: students, workers, intellectuals, and ethnic groups, had touched all the three worlds<sup>99</sup>, from Mexico to Egypt and back to Bolivia, to Australia, China with Hong Kong, Peru, Europe and the United States.

Within the latter, the struggles were polarized in the struggles for civil rights, for the recognition of the rights of the African American community, 1968 was the year of the assassination of Martin Luther King, on the other hand, the struggle involved public opinion in demanding an end to the Vietnam War, a conflict that had officially been going on since 1955.

The US intervention in Vietnam had complex roots, stemming from the vacuum left by the collapse of Japan's Asian empire, the communist victory in China, the Korean stalemate, and France's defeat in 1954. The three US Presidents that followed the World War II made pivotal Cold War decisions that influenced the trajectory of events<sup>100</sup>.

Divided along the 17th parallel, North Vietnam in 1963 aligned with China, in order to have support against an aggression from the US.

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<sup>98</sup> Kissinger, H. (2014). *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*. P.293. Penguin UK.

<sup>99</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. P.517. Bur.

<sup>100</sup> Fink, C. K. (2021). *Cold War: An International History*. P.131. Routledge.

The decision came after the growing political crisis in the South, that reached its peak with the coup d'état in November and the murder of the President of South Vietnam Ngô Đình Diệm. Hanoi was forced to choose between a cautious infiltration policy and intervention to aid the Viet Cong, risking conflict with the US. In early 1964, hard-liners in Hanoi prevailed, leading to large-scale operations.

President Johnson, Kennedy's deputy who won 1964 elections, initially a peace candidate, escalated US involvement after the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution granted Johnson authority to use military force in defense of South Vietnam. By 1965, Johnson launched Operation Rolling Thunder, a massive bombing campaign against North Vietnam, and deployed 180,000 combat troops. Johnson's assumptions about public support, international endorsement, and the Soviet Union's neutrality proved problematic. The Tet Offensive in 1968, while a military setback for North Vietnam, had a significant political impact, revealing the challenges of the war. Faced with mounting criticism, Johnson decided not to seek reelection, announced a halt to bombing, and offered unconditional peace negotiations.

After the Tet offensive the antiwar movement intensified its actions, in the US and around the world. The Soviet Union increased support for North Vietnam, hindering efforts for détente with the US. China's role was complicated by its rivalry with North Vietnam and strained relations with Moscow. In 1969, Mao Zedong, facing domestic challenges and strained relations with Hanoi and Moscow, decided to normalize relations with the United States.

Meanwhile, Richard Nixon had risen to the presidency with the task of restoring cohesion to the American state and its foreign policy<sup>101</sup>.

Despite Richard Nixon's promise of a peace plan, the US remained in Vietnam for several more divisive and costly years.

Richard Nixon was the first American president to address world order as a global concept in an abstract way.

He had a vision of the world with five centers of power, each with different ambitions that if pursued with restraint would lead to a balanced state. In a 1971 interview with *Time*, his idea is very clear "We must remember the only time in the history of the world that we have had any extended periods of peace is when there has been balance of power.

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<sup>101</sup> Kissinger, H. (2014). *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*. P.300. Penguin UK.

It is when one nation becomes infinitely more powerful in relation to its potential competitor that the danger of war arises. So, I believe in a world in which the United States is powerful. I think it will be a safer world and a better world if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other, not playing one against the other, an even balance<sup>102</sup>”.

For the first time, the United States was not in the privileged position of guardian of a balance, but an integral part of it, all part of a strategy that brought a U.S. president to Beijing for the first time in more than two decades; indeed, a relationship with China would progressively isolate Moscow, or at least lead it to more cautious relations.

During the Nixon presidency indeed a period of détente developed, partly through cooperation with the Soviet Union. Under the direction of Henry Kissinger in 1971 the SALT agreements were signed, but the United States continued to have a strategic advantage. Nixon and Brezhnev, who had succeeded Khrushchev as the first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, also signed a Basic Agreement in Moscow, laying out the principles of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Despite good intentions, challenges to their commitment arose from all corners of the globe.

Unrest in the Third World continued to cause tensions; moreover, in 1971 the monetary system established with Bretton Woods at the end of World War II was withdrawn by the United States. The key decision was the unilateral abandonment of the convertibility of the U.S. dollar into gold. Prior to this decision, countries could exchange dollars held in their reserves for gold at the U.S. Federal Reserve. The abandonment of dollar convertibility to gold led to a monetary system completely based on fiduciary currencies, in which currencies fluctuated freely against each other without a fixed peg to gold<sup>103</sup>. Postwar economic development had also become increasingly dependent on oil both as a main source of energy and for its use in the production of new materials such as plastics, dyes and detergents.

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<sup>102</sup> *The Nation: An Interview with the President: The Jury Is Out.* (1972, January 3). TIME.com. <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,879011-5,00.html>

<sup>103</sup> *From the history books: The rethinking of the international monetary system.* (2021, August 16). IMF. <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2021/08/16/from-the-history-books-the-rethinking-of-the-international-monetary-system>

In 1973, at the outbreak of the Fourth Arab-Israeli War<sup>104</sup>, the Arab member countries of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), founded in 1960, decided to impose an embargo on pro-Israeli Western countries, especially the United States and Holland. This measure resulted in a gradual reduction in oil production. Within a few months, world reserves decreased by 10 percent, while oil prices doubled and, within a year, quadrupled from \$3 to \$11.5 per barrel<sup>105</sup>.

This rise in oil prices contributed to the deterioration of the favorable economic conditions that had contributed to the prosperity of developed countries in the postwar period. The economic issue became intertwined with political problems related to the escalation of conflicts between the Arab world and Israel. It was necessary to resolve the conflict that had pitted oil-producing countries against the cartel of Western companies, which until then had been considered immune in controlling the oil market.

The 1973-1974 oil crisis had large-scale impacts on the economies and society of the countries involved. Industrial production declined, and inflation reached unprecedented levels. This led to a phase of economic stagnation with inflation, which became known as stagflation<sup>106</sup>. The consequences also extended to the international financial system, with the "petrodollar" phenomenon creating problems of currency disorder and fostering a resurgence of financial integration, especially for less developed economies.

This is why Hobsbawm identifies the 'Landslide' period as beginning in 1973: the story of the two decades after 1973 is one of a world that lost its reference points and slipped into instability and crisis<sup>107</sup>.

In 1975, détente was permanently abandoned. The Helsinki Accords<sup>108</sup>, signed on August marked the climax of a string of Soviet gains<sup>109</sup>, The American retreat in Vietnam

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<sup>104</sup> 1948–49: Israel's War of Independence and the Palestinian Nakba; 1956: Suez Crisis; 1967: Six-Day War; 1973: Yom Kippur War

<sup>105</sup> *La crisi petrolifera - Treccani - Treccani*. (n.d.). Treccani. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-crisi-petrolifera\\_%28Storia-della-civilt%C3%A0-europea-a-cura-di-Umberto-Eco%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-crisi-petrolifera_%28Storia-della-civilt%C3%A0-europea-a-cura-di-Umberto-Eco%29/)

<sup>106</sup> *La crisi petrolifera - Treccani - Treccani*. (n.d.-b). Treccani. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-crisi-petrolifera\\_%28Storia-della-civilt%C3%A0-europea-a-cura-di-Umberto-Eco%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-crisi-petrolifera_%28Storia-della-civilt%C3%A0-europea-a-cura-di-Umberto-Eco%29/)

<sup>107</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. P.471. Bur.

<sup>108</sup> The final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Helsinki in July and August 1975. The declaration was signed by thirty-five states, including the U.S., the USSR, Canada, and all European states except Albania and Andorra, and was an attempt to improve relations between the Communist bloc and the Western bloc. The Helsinki Accords formed the basis for the subsequent creation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

<sup>109</sup> Fink, C. K. (2021). *Cold War: An International History*. P.171. Routledge.

encouraged Moscow to stand up to the United States in other parts of the world. In the 1980s, it became clear how irreparably the foundations of the golden age had crumbled<sup>110</sup>. The détente not only ended, but a new phase of the war began.

In early 1975 the war was concentrated in Africa, the superpowers intervened in Angola between 1975 and 1976, in the Ethiopia-Somalia war, and the United States intervened in South Africa in 1975 and promoted a settlement in Rhodesia and an independent state in Zimbabwe in April 1980.

Although ideological issues such as stopping the advance of communism and defending Africa against U.S. imperialism were also factors, the superpowers' interest was primarily related to Africa's abundant oil and mineral resources.

Precisely because the United States was now dependent on oil imports, it could not leave the Middle East areas uncovered, the Soviet Union in turn sought to build a buffer zone to limit Western expansion.

1979 was a key year for the balance in the region. On March 26, Israeli Prime Minister Menachen Begin and Anwar al-Sadat signed the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in Washington, ending the long-standing conflict between the two countries that had been marked by four wars and by which for the first time an Arab state recognized Israel as a sovereign state. Although the treaty was a great achievement for U.S. President Jimmy Carter, a few months later, it was overshadowed by unrest in Iran.

The Iranian monarchy was a key ally of the US and a major purchaser of American weapons and armaments, in 1963 it had initiated the "White Revolution" a series of transformations encouraged by the Kennedy administration in anticipation of a communist takeover by the opposition.

The reforms were perceived as an imposition of westernization. Iranian expected to see an improvement in the country's economic conditions, as well as reforms to curb corruption within the monarchy. However, this did not happen, and in 1976 a rise in unemployment and inflation led to intellectual protests, which were joined by religious ones. By 1979 the revolution had absorbed religious and secular, students and communists, and the shah was forced to flee.

Ruhollah Khomeini, a political opponent of the Shah who had been exiled in 1963, had inflamed the crowds with taped messages from Paris, in 1979 returned triumphantly to Tehran and established an Islamic regime.

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<sup>110</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. (2011). *Il secolo breve*. P.471. Bur.

Tehran became suspicious of American sympathies for the old regime and Carter's attempt to support Prime Minister Shapour Bakhitar, who was appointed at the last minute by the Shah. Khomeini mobilized Iranian sentiment against the Great Satan<sup>111</sup> and on 4 November, when the Shah was admitted to the US for medical treatment, in a planned action, hundreds of Iranian demonstrators scaled the walls of the US Embassy in Tehran and kidnapped around 70 hostages.

The resulting 444-day crisis had a significant impact on the US both domestically and internationally. Khomeini became the supreme leader of Iran, replacing Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism with pan-Islamism. He positioned himself as the voice of all Muslims oppressed by Soviet and American imperialism. The new leader embraced the Palestinian cause, opposed US client Saudi Arabia, and caused concern in neighboring Iraq.

The American collapse in Iran opened a possibility for Moscow in Afghanistan, which turned out to be Soviet Vietnam<sup>112</sup>.

In the early 1970s, Afghanistan was a neutral territory accepted as such by both superpowers.

In 1973, the monarchy was overthrown and replaced by a republican regime under Mohammad Daoud Khan. Towards the end of the decade, in 1978, a new coup d'état took place. This was backed by a friendship pact with the Soviet Union, which had been alarmed by the repression of pro-Moscow leftist political groups and the possibility of a rapprochement with the West.

The new regime headed by Nur Muhammad Taraki immediately imposed a drastic change of course but was soon replaced by the coup d'état of a far more independent leader: Hafizullah Amin. During Amin's twenty-month rule, it is estimated that over 20,000 people were killed, many of whom belonged to the Communist Party itself, subjected by Amin and his colleagues to ferocious and periodic purges. To those who advised him to take a gradual approach, Amin showed the portrait of Stalin he kept in an office and reminded them that the only way to modernize a backward country was to use the same relentless ferocity applied throughout Soviet territory<sup>113</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> As they defined in Iraq the US

<sup>112</sup> Jazeera, A. (2003, April 23). Afghanistan: The Soviet Union's Vietnam. *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/4/23/afghanistan-the-soviet-unions-vietnam>

<sup>113</sup> L'invasione sovietica dell'Afghanistan. (2019, December 27). *Il Post*. <https://www.ilpost.it/2019/12/27/invasione-sovietica-afghanistan/>

His brutal methods produced equally brutal reactions, the insurrections were supported by Pakistan, but immediately suppressed, at first without help from the Soviet Union and then, according to the reconstruction by Braithwaite, the author of *Afgantsy*, Moscow mindful of the lesson of Vietnam was reluctant to intervene, but then had to give in. Following the assassination of Nur Muhammad Taraki, power was concentrated in the hands of Amin, a bloodthirsty and unpredictable leader, and between 25 and 26 December 1979, Soviet troops arrived near Kaul with the intention of conducting a rapid counter-insurgency operation to remove Amin from power. Despite this, Amin remained convinced that the Soviet troops were on his side.

On 28 December, the new Soviet-backed leader of Afghanistan, Babrak Karmal, announced over the radio that Amin's 'torture machine' had been destroyed and that the country was heading towards a new era of peace and prosperity. In reality, a brutal occupation began that lasted until 1989. Although the Soviets never suffered a real military defeat (just like the Americans in Vietnam), at the same time they never managed to tame the insurgency. The insurgents, known as the mujaheddin, were skilled and courageous guerrilla fighters. They were experts in the terrain and could always disappear into the mountains after making an attack.

The Soviet invasion, guerrilla warfare, and significant funding from the United States, Pakistan, and Arab countries transformed Afghanistan, leading to the radicalization of its politics and the systematic favoring of the most extremist and violent groups.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan for ten years had a profound impact on the nation, leaving it traumatised and wounded. This led to a civil war that only ended with the rise of the Taliban regime, led by Mullah Omar.

For the Soviet Union it was the last great international adventure before its fall.

During the 1980s a new phase in the conflict that pitted the two powers against each other opened up.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan had been elected in the US, who saw the Soviet Union not as a piece of the international chessboard, but as an incorrigible adversary that he was determined to vanquish<sup>114</sup>.

He announced the end of the détente and the beginning of a “global campaign for democracy”. It was not only the USSR that was impressed by Reagan's aggressive policy, but also the NATO allies.

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<sup>114</sup>Fink, C. K. (2021). *Cold War: An International History*. Routledge.



The KAL007 incident on 1 September 1983 marked the reopening of hostilities between the two superpowers. US Secretary of State George Shultz informed the press that a missile fired from a Soviet aircraft had destroyed the South Korean airliner, causing the loss of 269 passengers and crew members, including 62 Americans<sup>115</sup>.

The 007 flight deviated from its course and violated Soviet airspace, flying over highly classified missile and submarine bases, and was accidentally shot down. The US referred to the incident as a deliberate 'mass murder', while the Kremlin, surprised by the mistake and the US reaction, did not apologise and constructed a weak cover, claiming that the plane was conducting a US-inspired espionage mission. In November 1983, NATO military exercises caused concern in Moscow, leading to a pause in negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union. However, in January 1984, US President Ronald Reagan changed course and called for renewed negotiations with Moscow. The death of Soviet leader Yuri Andropov in February and the infirmity of his successor, Konstantin Chernenko, resulted in a further pause in relations between the superpowers.

Mikhail Gorbachev, one of the most active members of the politburo accepted a mandate in 1985 to reform the Soviet Union.

Although he did not have widespread consensus at home, Gorbachev achieved tangible results abroad. In 1987, the leaders of the two superpowers agreed to an arms reduction. However, by then, the crisis in the USSR was already clear.

After the Brezhnev doctrine<sup>116</sup> had silenced both Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Solidarnosc in Poland in 1980, the arrival of Gorbachev gave hope to the revolutionaries.

Mikhail Gorbachev initiated the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, which aimed to bring about a period of openness and reform. However, not all were enthusiastic about these policies. In particular, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), one of the most conservative countries in the Soviet bloc and one of the most threatened by the Western advance, did not look favorably on the opening-up policies. In Berlin, protests for opening up to the West had been mounting for months. The open reformist figure of Gorbachev clashed with the closure of GDR President Honecker. On 7 October 1989, during the 40th anniversary of the GDR, East Berlin crowds praised Gorbachev. Young people protested

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<sup>116</sup> Brezhnev Doctrine, foreign policy put forth by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in 1968, calling on the Soviet Union to intervene—including militarily—in countries where socialist rule was under threat. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2018, February 13). Brezhnev Doctrine | Definition, Significance, & Facts. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Brezhnev-Doctrine>

from Dresden to Leipzig. On 4 November, 1 million Berliners gathered at Alexander Platz to demand the dissolution of the Stasi. On 9 November 1989, the Wall fell.

The fall of the Wall, both physical and symbolic, marked the beginning of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This event instilled renewed confidence in all the countries of the bloc to initiate the process of reorganization.

The erosion process continued unabated, the communists were never overthrown, but they themselves surrendered power, which was even more symptomatic of failure.

On 8 December 1991, the Presidents of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine founded the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

During the Minsk conference it was declared that "the Soviet Union as a subject of international law and as a geopolitical reality ceases to exist"<sup>117</sup>.

## 2.4 Legacies of the Cold War

### 2.4.1 New States

In 1991, the 45 years of the Cold War came to an end. The hitherto known bipolar order finally crumbled, leaving the world with enormous legacies.

One of the most notable outcomes was the emergence of new states. At the end of the Second World War, 51 states joined the UN. By 1991, there were 169 states<sup>118</sup>, among which were a number of political subjects in demographic, economic and, above all, strongly ideologized growth that would soon be candidates for domination of the international scene.

In 1971 China had been admitted to the United Nations, a great international recognition, under Dieng Xiaoping foreign policy had opened up to international relations. In 1972 for the first time in decades an American president, Richard Nixon visited China and in 1979 it was Dieng Xiaoping who visited President Carter in the United States. During those years, economic growth was inexorable, from an agricultural country at the end of the Cold War it had become an industrial country and from a peripheral power, a global power.

The countries of South America had undergone democratization, the dictatorships that had characterized the history of South America until 1970 disappeared from 1980

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<sup>117</sup>La dissoluzione dell'URSS e il riconoscimento degli stati post-sovietici | Dodis. (n.d.). <https://www.dodis.ch/it/30-anni-fa-la-dissoluzione-dellurss-e-il-riconoscimento-degli-stati-post-sovietici>

<sup>118</sup> United Nations. (n.d.). Growth in United Nations membership | United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/growth-in-un-membership#1990s>

onwards. The process of dissolution of military and dictatorial regimes was accompanied by a neo-liberal turn in the economic sphere, leading them to greater dependence on the international market.

Africa, which had also undergone a wave of decolonization that saw the emergence of some 30 independent states, was a more cohesive continent at the end of the Cold War, all but extremely poor, non-industrialized and dependent on external aid.

The Middle East was an area in profound transformation. The collapse of the USSR had taken away the support of the communist and socialist countries in the region, leading to the US being the new dominant power in the area. But the West's heavy dependence on energy reserves in the Middle East made it an area of strong geopolitical interest.

India was an incredible demographic power, experiencing significant economic growth that would lead it to be a major player in the third millennium.

The process of European integration in 1991 almost reached its climax, in 1992 the Maastricht Treaty was signed that would establish the birth of the European Union that would absorb the ECSC, EURATOM and the EEC.

The Soviet Union dissolved, giving rise to 14 independent republics, including Ukraine. The legacy of the Cold War extends beyond the emergence of new international actors. It was during this period that human rights doctrine experienced its greatest development. Following the Nuremberg Trials at the end of World War II, a path towards shared protection of human rights was established.

On 10 December 1948, the 58 countries of the United Nations General Assembly approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that marked the starting point for the construction of a world order built on peaceful international relations, in turn founded on respect for human rights.

The text was born - let us simplify its complex gestation - as an attempt at compromise between two visions of the world that were already clearly opposed: that of the USSR, hostile to the bourgeois values of the western tradition, which considered Human Rights not in universal terms but as the historically determined expression of a social class that had produced them and used them to impose and consolidate itself; that of the United States, England and France, strong in a consolidated democratic and parliamentary tradition, which they wanted to project on a world level. One can say that the Declaration paradoxically represents the start of the Cold War: many proposals from the socialist bloc countries were rejected and the final text, a substantial victory for liberal ideals, was approved with the USSR abstaining.

The following years in which the ideological blocs opposed each other more and more openly, effectively prevented both the necessary construction of a shared set of rules of international law and the definition in the UN of the necessary legal instruments for their application<sup>119</sup>.

#### 2.4.2 Space and Technology

Every age has its own leitmotif, a set of beliefs that explains the universe, inspires and comforts the individual by providing him or her with a justification for the multiplicity of events with which he or she struggles. In the Middle Ages religion, during the Enlightenment reason, in our age science<sup>120</sup>.

The Cold War with its associated need to overcome the adversary in every field, to impose itself on land, on the seas and even in space, played the role of a catalyst for scientific and technological progress. To control the enemy's activities required the development of increasingly sophisticated instruments, transistors, microchips, computers, machines invisible to traditional control instruments.

Furthermore, it was already understood in the aftermath of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings that control of space was a crucial element for those seeking to establish a global order. The conquest of space was "the terrain" on which the scientific superiority of a community belonging to a certain ideology was at stake, but also the strategic position essential for imposing military supremacy. Celestial space appeared as the place of manifestation of a superiority of an almost metaphysical nature, which would in fact legitimize the will to power and the imposition of its own world order. The race to conquer space was also joined by the United Kingdom, France, Japan and China, which over time would help to rebalance the tension<sup>121</sup>.

For decades, scientific and technological research was subordinated to military needs, resulting in an unbridled arms race that led to the maturation of the realization that a nuclear conflict would lead to the destruction of the planet and that therefore peace could be maintained through the so-called "balance of terror."

This balance, which was unstable but also extremely solid because of mutual awareness of the risks, was altered on March 23 by President Ronald Reagan 1983 in a televised

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<sup>119</sup> The main text we refer to here: Cassese, A. (1994). *I diritti umani nel mondo contemporaneo*.

<sup>120</sup> Kissinger, H. (2014). *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*. P.327. Penguin UK.

<sup>121</sup> Pivato, S., & Pivato, M. (2017). *I comunisti sulla luna: l'ultimo mito della Rivoluzione russa*. Intersezioni.

address to the country in which the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program was announced in which a "Space Shield" was to be built to protect territories under its control from enemy missile attacks<sup>122</sup>.

If the U.S. could achieve such a defensive system, it would be able to protect itself permanently from the Soviet threat. Moscow protested against such a prospect, as it challenged the proven balance of terror. Tension between the blocs seemed to rise again just as the season of renewal was opening in the USSR.

However, after the initial bewilderment before the loss of the reassuring balance of atomic terror, the announcement of the Space Shield was scaled down, both on the scientific level concerning its actual implementation and on the political level, and with the Reykjavík talks in October 1986 Reagan and the new Soviet leader Michail Gorbačëv said they were willing to do a drastic reduction of armaments. The following year, in Washington on December 8, 1987, the two political leaders initialed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which symbolically ended the Cold War period.

In the late 1980s, then, with the end of bipolar opposition and the so-called collapse of ideologies, it seemed that the space available for the exercise of individual freedoms was dilating. States, freed from the imminent danger of conflicts, often waged on behalf of the two superpowers, were able to divert resources to the development of new technologies that were decoupled from military purpose.

Countries that had hitherto been forced to accept the tutelage of the superpowers in the name of peacekeeping were asserting themselves rapidly, bolstered by large, young populations and engaged in a rapid catch-up of the knowledge gap.

The sophisticated scientific and technological apparatus that had been built up for military purposes since World War II and throughout the Cold War period constituted an enormous asset that was rapidly repurposed for new purposes, producing the most radical transformation of individual and collective behavior ever known to humanity.

What emerged from the ashes of Cold War research and technology enabled the creation of transistors, microprocessors, integrated circuits, and computers of ever smaller size. Celestial space was transformed from a military battleground into a dimension in which communications could travel in real time, into a very powerful vehicle of knowledge and information. The "global village," foreshadowed almost prophetically in the 1960s,

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<sup>122</sup> Canuto V.M., *Il paradosso nucleare. Dalla mutua distruzione assicurata allo scudo spaziale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2017.

became a planetary metropolis where geographic and cultural barriers were eliminated. The Arpanet network, established for military defense purposes, became the backbone of the Internet, the place for instant sharing of information, ideas and cultures.

The "imperfect globalization" that humans have experienced throughout the ages through the establishment of empires, discoveries and conquests of distant and unknown territories has been fully accomplished.

### 2.4.3 Invention of the west

Speaking of inventions, just as the Middle East was invented on the basis of a European view of the world<sup>123</sup>, so the Cold War consolidated the invention of a West.

The political concept of the West was the work of the United States, which created a counterbalance to the East, which was instead under the rule of Moscow.

While the poles have an objective criterion of North and South, West and East are two more vague concepts, west of what?

The West shifted from time to time according to circumstances. The Russians who saw themselves during the Cold War as the vanguard of the anti-Western front, in 1905 saw themselves as the last bastion of Western civilization, against the danger of the Japanese<sup>124</sup> for example.

Nel 1924, Karl Haushofer proposed a cartographic representation of the "große Antichese West-Ost in Zukunft" ("great future antithesis between West and East"), in which Europe and European Russia represented the heart of the West, and the United States represented the heart of the East<sup>125</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup> Marshall, T. (2016). *Prisoners of geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World. Chapter 6.* Simon and Schuster.

<sup>124</sup> Graziano, M. (2019). *Geopolitica. Orientarsi nel grande disordine internazionale.*p.260. Il Mulino.

<sup>125</sup> Ibidem

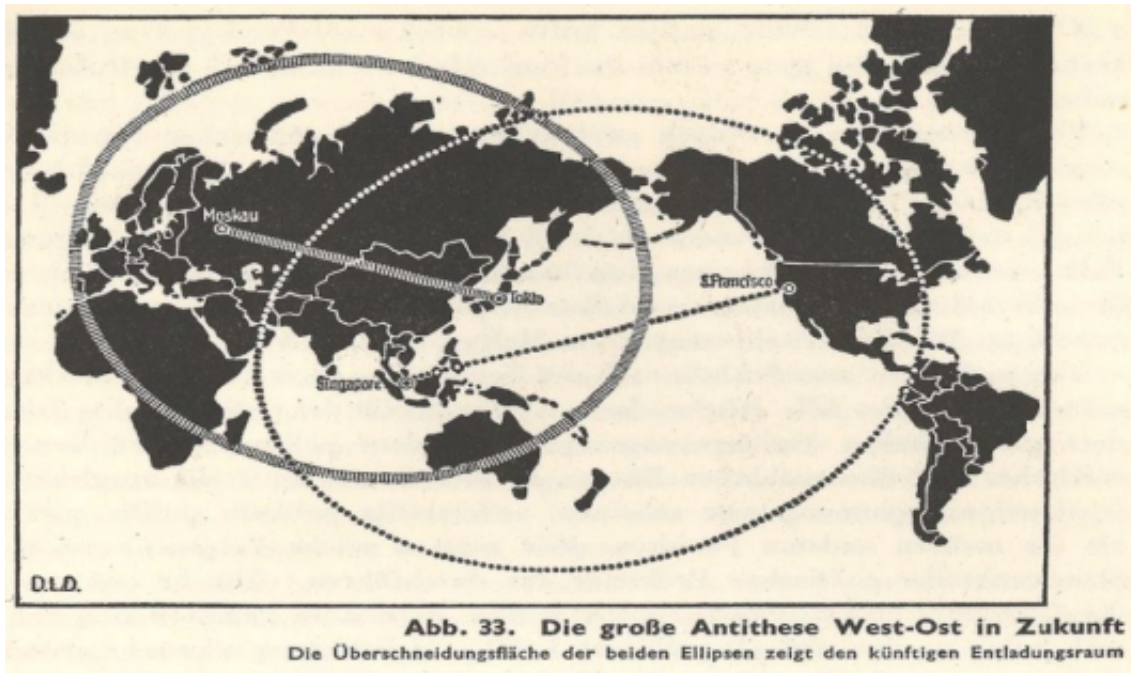


Figure 4- The Great Antithesis West-East in the future<sup>126</sup>

The U.S. conception overturned Haushofer's thesis, and in 1996 Huntington with the Clash of Civilizations proposed the representation of the world into different "civilizations" with well-defined personalities, separated by demarcations at least as precise as those of the Cold War, which allowed "us" and the "others" to be distinguished. However, this thesis was criticised for its lack of objectivity and potential for bias towards a privileged U.S.-EU relationship to cope with the rise of Asia. Huntington predicted the borders of NATO ten years later to define the West, excluding countries with Orthodox or Muslim populations, such as Turkey.

<sup>126</sup> Le Monde Diplomatique: Les atlas, un nouvel engouement de l'édition française . 2011

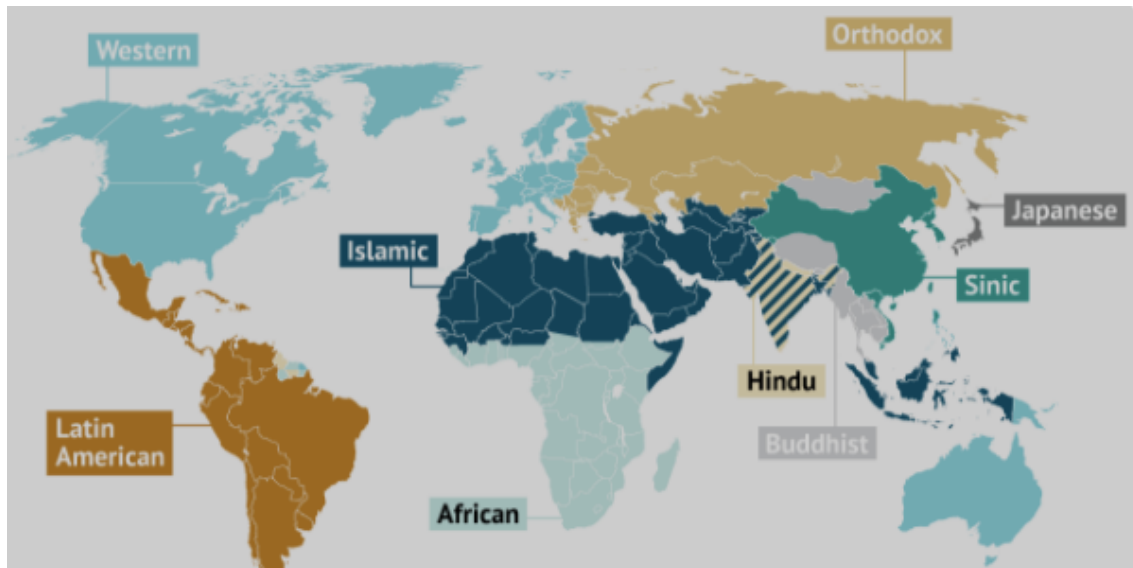


Figure 5- Huntington Map of Clash of Civilizations<sup>127</sup>

Huntington frequently references the “Judeo-Christian roots” as if to trace the matrix of the West.

Opposite to his idea for some the characteristic of the West is precisely that of secularism, just think of the French political debate.

cita più volte le “radici giudaico cristiane” come per ricondurre ad esse la matrice dell’occidente.

During the Cold War, the divide was sharper, an iron curtain dividing the West from the East, but with the fall of the wall it will no longer be such a clear demarcation, since the West is not only what is beyond the curtain, but above all what belongs to the United States of America, with which it shares common values based on democracy, human rights and the free market.

The Cold War's most significant legacy is America's leadership in the World Order.

After World War II, it was believed that the Soviet Union and communism were the only obstacles to a peaceful world order. However, with the Soviet Union's collapse, would a phase of peace and stability truly emerge?

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<sup>127</sup> *Why civilizations really clash.* (n.d.). Stratfor. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/why-civilizations-really-clash>



### 3. The Liberal International Order

Until 1941, the order had a European matrix linked to Westphalia principles and was Eurocentric. From 1941 with the entry of the United States into World War II a new order sought to establish itself as sovereign, opposed to the Soviet order. During the Cold War a 45-year-long bipolar order had established itself, finding its own equilibrium despite being traversed by periodic crises.

During the Cold War a 45-year-long bipolar order had established itself, finding its own equilibrium despite being traversed by periodic crises. At the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the interpretation that had the most prominence and was most shared by the Western world was that of American political scientist Francis Fukuyama: "history is over."

Published in 1992 *The End of History and the Last Man* was based on the simplistic assumption that capitalism had triumphed against communism, and it had consequently spread throughout the world through the force of its free market under U.S. leadership. This assumption disregarded the geopolitical contradictions, the antagonisms that existed between capitalism and communism, as well as the proliferation of religious radicalism that would soon put the fledgling world order in crisis.

The U.S. order was certainly not newborn; it had been consolidated during the 45 years of bipolarity, but when the long-awaited unipolar moment arrived in 1991, the United States, in the absence of antagonists ready to run for global leadership, thought it could substitute its own order for the old one, like changing a flat tire<sup>128</sup>.

The order at the end of the Cold War is sometimes mistakenly referred to as a "liberal international order," was neither liberal nor international. It was a bounded order that was limited mainly to the West and was realist in all its key dimensions<sup>129</sup>.

In August 1990, when Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait during the first Gulf War, U.S. President George Bush Sr. seized the opportunity to create a coalition of 35 countries whose task would be not only to liberalize the small petromonarchy, but also to create a New World Order<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>128</sup> Graziano, M. (2019). *Geopolitica. Orientarsi nel grande disordine internazionale*. P.310. Il Mulino.

<sup>129</sup> Mearsheimer, J. J. (2019). *Bound to fail: the rise and fall of the liberal international order*. *International Security*, 43(4), 7–50. [https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00342](https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00342)

<sup>130</sup> Kessler, B. R. (2012). *Bush's New World Order: The meaning behind the words*. <http://freedom-school.com/new-world-order-plan.pdf>

The new liberal international order had congenital weaknesses. The lofty goal of wanting to spread democracy worldwide was extremely ambitious and often encountered opposition from fervent nationalisms.

The liberal order's tendency to favor international institutions and deep commitment to open borders was not received with favor by all states. These policies clashed with nationalism on key issues such as sovereignty and national identity<sup>131</sup>.

The fervent nationalism presents in some areas of the planet, as well as the conflicts in the former Soviet Union, the Balkans and Africa, did not bode well for a world in peace and harmony. The U.S. fulfilled its role as the 'first citizen' of the order, intervening in various critical scenarios, the Oslo Accords, the war in Bosnia and Kosovo, pursued the expansion of NATO to the East, and championed a capitalism ready to solve all the world's problems, but this did not prevent the crises that would set it back from the beginning of the 21st century.

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<sup>131</sup> Mearsheimer, J. J. (2019). Bound to fail: the rise and fall of the liberal international order. *International Security*, 43(4), 7–50. [https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00342](https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00342)

### Chapter 3: Deconstruction

As stated in the previous chapter, the Cold War order can be classified as a bipolar realist order.

Realist orders are typically either multipolar or bipolar. The reason lies in the realist assumption that if there are two or more powers, they will inevitably engage in security competition with each other. Their goal will always be to gain ground over their opponent, or at least, prevent the balance of power from shifting to their disadvantage.

During the Cold War, ideology was subordinated to security, this did not exclude cooperation, as the world was already extremely interconnected.

A unipolar world order, such as the one created at the end of the Cold War, may not be realistic, as a single power no longer has security as its primary concern. Rather a unipolar order can be classified as either ideological, based on specific ideology and embracing the goal of spreading this ideology to the rest of the world, or agonistic, not committed to shaping global politics on a global scale.

The order that emerged at the end of the Cold War is clearly ideological in nature.

During the decade 1991-2001 the United States has not only been a powerful state operating in a world of anarchy. It has been a producer of world order<sup>132</sup>, the American realist order, which has always been presented to the world as a liberal order, can now fully embody its characteristics.

The order it created revolved around open market, security alliances, multilateral cooperation, and democracy.

The liberal order had goals, and the United States had tasks to accomplish them. First, it was necessary to create an open, inclusive and accessible economy involving all countries.

Second, it was necessary to spread liberal democracy; in this task they were joined by the allies, both in Europe and Asia.

The third task was to extend membership in the institutions that regulated the order. Both in terms of existing institutions, such as the UN, whose membership at the end of 2001

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<sup>132</sup> Ikenberry, G. J. (2005). Power and liberal order: America's postwar world order in transition. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 5(2), 133–152. <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lci112>

was 189<sup>133</sup>, the International Monetary Fund had 183, compared with 190 today<sup>134</sup> and the World Bank 184<sup>135</sup>.

In 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was established to fill the institutional void left by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and it was joined by 112 members, which by 2001 had grown to 142, including the raising China, toward which the US attitude had changed from the approach it had taken with the Soviet Union during the Cold War; in fact, it did not seek to contain its advance, but to engage with it<sup>136</sup>.

NATO began expanding eastward to cover the countries left unprotected by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The expansion was not solely aimed at deterring a possible Russian comeback, but one of NATO's primary goals for its eastward expansion was to integrate Eastern European countries into the security community that was established in the area during the Cold War. Enlarging NATO was actually the core element in a broader strategy that also included expanding the European Union and promoting the so-called color revolutions in Eastern Europe to spread democracy<sup>137</sup>.

The years of the American unipolar world order up to 2001 were extremely successful, two things combine to produce US hegemony. First, in terms of both military and economic, the United States hold a dominant position. Second, no other superpower has surfaced to threaten American dominance since the fall of the Soviet Union. In this view, objective material conditions are what lead to U.S. hegemony. The maintenance of American primacy is a matter of policy, but since the early 1990s, the administrations of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush have all pursued a grand strategy meant to thwart the rise of new great powers that might challenge American hegemony<sup>138</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> United Nations. (n.d.). Growth in United Nations membership | United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/growth-in-un-membership#1990s>

<sup>134</sup> *List of members' date of entry.* (2010, December 9). <https://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/memdir/memdate.htm>

<sup>135</sup> *Member countries.* (n.d.). World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/members>

<sup>136</sup> Secretary of State Albright maintained that the key to sustaining peaceful relations with rising China is to engage with it, not try to contain it the way the US had sought to do with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, "American Principle and Purpose in East Asia," 1997 Forrester Lecture, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, April 15, 1997.

<sup>137</sup> See John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (September/October 2014), pp. 77–89, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24483306>.

<sup>138</sup> See, Mearsheimer, J. J. (2019). Bound to fail: the rise and fall of the liberal international order. *International Security*, 43(4), 7–50. [https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00342](https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00342)

In order to achieve this, even countries with distant ideological positions have gradually joined the institutions of the liberal order: Russia joined the IMF and the World Bank in 1992, but not the WTO<sup>139</sup>, unlike the aforementioned China, which joined the WTO in 2001 and had been a member of the IMF and the World Bank since 1980. Despite debates over human rights and the Taiwan crisis between 1995-96, in which the United States decided to intervene, relations between the two powers were normalized, the Clinton's administration passed the US-China Relations Act in 2000, in which the US Congress granted China permanent normal trade relations (NTR) status, a formerly considered as most-favored nation (MFN).

Relations with Russia were a time of absolute détente, Russia needed to focus on domestic politics rather than external challenges, during the 1990s disarmament agreements were signed between the U.S. hyperpower and Russia, START I, in 1991, when the Soviet Union had not been formally dissolved and the second SART II, in 1993, in the former the number of weapons each faction could have were provided for, while the latter signed between U.S. President Bush and Russian President Yeltsin banned the use of MIRVs, Multiple Independently targetable Reentry Vehicles<sup>140</sup>.

As relations with Moscow relaxed, Washington launched the *Iniciativa para las Américas* announced by President George H.W. Bush on June 27, 1990, a plan aimed at the creation of a continental free trade area, which provided for debt relief with the U.S. in exchange for the adoption of economic consolidation measures indicated by the IMF and the World Bank. The plan served as a stimulus for the creation of new regional free trade areas: MERCOSUR, between Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay and, most importantly, NAFTA, between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico or to expand to neighboring countries those already existing MCCA, the Central American Common Market formed between Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In 1994, representatives of all Western Hemisphere countries, meeting in Miami with the sole exception of Cuba, decided on the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas, extended from Alaska to Argentina, but in 2005 this project was rejected by five Latin

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<sup>139</sup> It joined it in 2012.

<sup>140</sup> The treaty was later surpassed by SORT, also known as the Moscow Treaty, was signed on May 24, 2002 by the Russian Federation and the United States of America. This agreement limited the number of warheads for each side to 1700-2200 and prohibited the use of multiple warheads (MIRV)

American governments, including Argentina and Brazil, fearing it would further strengthen U.S. economic power on the continent.<sup>141</sup>

Europe was the United States' staunchest ally on the Mediterranean, and since the end of the Cold War, the European integration process had entered a positive, albeit challenging, period.

In 1992 the Maastricht Accords had been signed, the ratification of which was as they say a baptism of fire for the newly formed European Union<sup>142</sup>. Denmark ratified it only after a second referendum following an initial failure, and a series of waivers, in France a referendum by a small margin approved ratification, while in the United Kingdom a real struggle for the trust of Prime Minister John Major, and in Germany ratification was postponed until approval by the Constitutional Court.

Nevertheless, the Maastricht Treaty and its three pillars: European Communities, Justice and Home Affairs and Common Foreign and Security Policies, allowed the EU to implement significant new policies to better serve and safeguard its citizens<sup>143</sup>.

In the post-Cold War years, the United States found in Japan another important ally, although their relations went through fluctuating periods, overall, the strategic partnership between the two countries remained solid.

Poverty rates have significantly decreased in developing countries. For example, in China, they dropped from 33% in 1978 to 7% in 1994, and in India, they decreased from 54% to 39%. Additionally, the infant mortality rate has decreased from 110‰ to 64‰, although there are regional differences<sup>144</sup>.

The Human Development Index has also shown marked improvement. Life expectancy in developing countries has increased by 10 years since 1970, from 55 to 65. Adult illiteracy has also decreased from 52% to 28%<sup>145</sup>.

Hyper globalization was generating prosperity all around the world, it had created new balances, relations between states were part, for the first time in such an all-encompassing

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<sup>141</sup> See Bertaccini, T. (2018) *Stati Uniti e America Latina dalla fine della Guerra Fredda all'avvento di Trump*. In Quarenghi, A. (2018). *Trump e l'ordine internazionale: Continuità e discontinuità nella politica estera statunitense del xxi secolo*, EGEA spa.

<sup>142</sup> Christiansen, T., Duke, S., & Kirchner, E. (2012). Understanding and assessing the Maastricht Treaty. *Journal of European Integration*, 34(7), 685–698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2012.726009>

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/maastricht-treaty/#navigation>

<sup>144</sup> Graziano, M. (2019). *Geopolitica. Orientarsi nel grande disordine internazionale*.

<sup>145</sup> United Nations. (1994, January 1). *Human Development Report 1994*. Human Development Reports. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-1994>

way, of an interplay between politics, markets and technology, fostering the presence of bodies relatively independent of states and endowed with autonomy and logic of their own.

It seemed that the end of history had indeed come, the process of development seemed unstoppable, but if one widens the field of vision not all areas of the planet were homogeneous.

Africa had gone through a wave of democratization, in 1989 only 5 of the 47 states of Sub-Saharan Africa had a multi-party political system, in 1994 there were 38, nevertheless conflicts raged in Congo, Somalia and Sudan, and in 1994 a genocide was carried out in Rwanda, about which, four years later President Clinton, visiting the Rwandan capital Kigali, acknowledged that "the international community, together with the nations of Africa, must bear its share of responsibility for this tragedy."<sup>146</sup>

Developments in the Middle East were more mixed, it seemed that the area was gradually becoming integrated into the liberal international order. With the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization raised hopes that by the end of the decade, their conflict may find a peaceful resolution. Operating under a UN Security Council mandate, the US led a large coalition of partners to an incredible military success over Iraq in early 1991, exposing Saddam Hussein's covert nuclear weapons program and leading to its closure. Nevertheless, the Baathist regime-maintained power. Afghanistan represented, the most trouble spot.

Al Qaeda, the paramilitary terrorist group that would later put a damper on the American dream on September 11, 2001, was actually born and developed in Afghanistan.

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<sup>146</sup> Text of Clinton's Rwanda speech. (1999, December 13). *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/text-of-clintonrwndaspeech/#:~:text=We%20cannot%20abolish%20that%20capacity,enough%20after%20the%20killing%20began.>

### 3.1 Crisis from the outside: 9\11 and a Newborn Terrorism

On September 11, 2001, a group of 19 terrorists from the core of al-Qaeda hijacked four United Airlines and American Airlines airliners<sup>147</sup>.

The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York were hit by two planes, one crashed into the side of the Pentagon in Virginia, and the fourth crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers revolted against the hijackers.

The 9/11 attacks were a shocking event that not only affected the United States but also had a significant impact on the public imagination, changing world politics and shaking the foundations of the jihadist galaxy itself.

In response, President Bush and Congress immediately declared "war on terrorism," Article 5 of the NATO Treaty was activated for the first and last time, creating in world opinion a confusion and overlap between acts of war and acts of terrorism<sup>148</sup>.

Following the 2001 attacks, there was widespread questioning of the causes of an attack that appeared unexpected. The most commonly suggested explanation was: "they hate our way of life", "they detest democracy", "this is a war of freedom-loving people against evil barbarians".

Although the attacks were heinous and to date represent the largest terrorist attack ever, 3,212 victims in total, it was not a bolt from the blue, between 1991 and 2001 America sustained 6 major assaults by Al Qaeda<sup>149</sup> which over time had made the United States its main target.

The origins of Al Qaeda traces back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. During this time, groups of Arab fighters, known as mujahidin, gathered under the name Al Qaeda, meaning the base, to oppose the Soviet invasion. The leader of this group was Osama Bin Laden, a wealthy Yemeni who arrived in Afghanistan at the age of 23 to aid the resistance.

At the ideological level, the group referred to leading figures in the militant galaxy active in the 1960s and 1970s in the Middle East and North Africa, who focused on a local

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<sup>147</sup> *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*. (n.d.).

<https://www.9-11commission.gov/report/>

<sup>148</sup> Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*.

<sup>149</sup> 26 February 1993 first World Trade Center operation; 23 November 1995 bombing of a Saudi American base in Riyadh; 25 June 1996 attack on the Al Khobar towers, Saudi Arabia, housing the site for the crews enforcing no-fly zone over Iraq; 7 August simultaneous bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; 12 October 2000 attack against the USS Cole warship in Yemen and the operation against the World Trade Center and Pentagon on 9 September 2001.



strategy by prioritizing armed struggle against the neighboring enemy. In the years that followed, developments on the international stage led to profound consequences for the militant galaxy and its evolution.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Bin Laden's long-term goal was the liberation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen from communist forces, the Egyptian core, which was headed by al-Jihad, on the other hand, had Egypt as its priority. The strategies, as well as the goals were fragmented<sup>150</sup>, until in the early 1990s, in the wake of the failures of Islamist armed struggles in countries such as Algeria and Egypt, Al Qaeda led a strategic revolution, the ultimate and ideal goal of which had become the creation of a global caliphate governed by Islamic law, sharia, and the removal of governments and institutions considered hostile to Islam.

Among the reasons leading Osama bin Laden to declare war on the U.S. in 1996 were ideological reasons, based on radical jihadist ideas, which advocated the need for a holy war against the "enemies of Islam," bin Laden and his followers believed that the method of terrorism against the U.S. would inspire and mobilize Muslims around the world, other reasons lay in the American presence in the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia, the custodian of Islam's holy places, as well as, to trigger the violence of al Qaeda cells contributed the military actions of the U.S. and its allies in other countries in the region, especially the American involvement in Palestine, in support of regimes considered illegitimate and/or oppressive in the Muslim world, such as the Saudi, Egyptian and Israeli regimes.

Oltre tutte le motivazioni strategiche, come ha evidenziato anche la risposta dell'America agli attacchi dell'11 Settembre, revenge has been one of the most powerful motivations<sup>151</sup>. The decision to expand the conflict to international theaters, particularly the execution of the 9/11 attacks, was highly controversial and the subject of much debate. Figures associated with Al Qaeda predicted that such attacks would result in massive retaliation by the United States, which would have devastating effects on the jihadist movement. As had been predicted, in the aftermath of the attacks President Bush launched a series of operations against "nations, organizations or persons" accused of having "planned,

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<sup>150</sup> Hamming, T. (2021). Al-Hazimiyya: The Ideological Conflict Destroying the Islamic State from Within. *ICCT Research Paper*. <https://doi.org/10.19165/2021.1.04>

<sup>151</sup> See Mohamedou, M. O. (2011). *Casus Belli in Understanding Al Qaeda: Changing War and Global Politics, Second Edition*. Pluto Press.

committed or aided the 9/11 attacks,"<sup>152</sup> which have gone down in history as the "war on terror," an expression first used on Sept. 20, 2001, by President Bush, and later abandoned by the Obama administration in 2009, preferring expressions such as "overseas contingency operations" and "countering violent extremism."<sup>153</sup>

Operation Enduring Freedom was initiated as part of the war on terror, leading to the immediate invasion of Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. The Taliban regime collapsed, and al Qaeda's leaders and militants took refuge in the region between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Al Qaeda faced great difficulties, but this did not prevent it from perpetrating its goal, it coupled a strategy of regional expansion by "branching out" and organizing terrorist attacks abroad, the most notable of which include the Madrid attacks in 2004 and the London attacks in 2005.

On December 20, 2001, the UN Security Council authorized the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The Taliban had been defeated in November 2001, and NATO officially took control in August 2003. The main goal of ISAF, under the U.N. mandate, was to enable the Afghan government to provide effective security within its territory and to develop new Afghan security forces to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a "safe haven" for terrorists, yet another attempt to export democracy<sup>154</sup>.

U.S. attention to Afghanistan decreased in 2003 when the Bush administration launched military operations to topple Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, starting the second Gulf War. With the election of Barack Obama, the United States' approach to the war on terror underwent a significant shift; during the first year of his presidency, 2009, a Taliban insurgency prompted the deployment of an additional 17,000 troops, bringing the total number of troops to 54,000. The following year, the NATO summit set 2014 as the date for transferring control of the country to the government in Kabul<sup>155</sup>.

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<sup>152</sup> Congressional Research Service. The 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force: Background in Brief (PDF).

<sup>153</sup> Ambinder, M. (2010, May 20). The new term for the war on terror. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2010/05/the-new-term-for-the-war-on-terror/56969/>

<sup>154</sup> See Nato. (n.d.). *ISAF's mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014)*. NATO. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_69366.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm)

<sup>155</sup> Comitato Atlantico Italiano. (2013b, January 17). *Le priorità del Vertice NATO - Comitato Atlantico Italiano*. <https://www.comitatoatlantico.it/documenti/le-priorita-del-vertice-nato/>

In 2011, a turning point was reached when Osama Bin Laden was killed, and President Obama pledged to withdraw the additional 30,000 troops and in Washington the debate began to focus on ending the mission.

However, the situation is so volatile that it will be another three years before the U.S. president styles a timetable for the withdrawal of the bulk of the troops. The withdrawal was largely completed by the time Donald Trump took office.

Talk of troop withdrawal from Iraq began during the Obama administration. On June 30, 2009, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from major cities began with Operation Iraqi Freedom. The goal was to maintain a contingent of no more than 35,000 to train the local army and manage the transition<sup>156</sup>.

On August 31, 2010, the U.S. President declared the end of combat operations after seven years of war that claimed the lives of more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians. On December 18, 2011, the last soldiers of the mission returned home.

Twenty years ago, it was almost inconceivable that America could disregard the Middle East. If only because dependence on oil imports to meet domestic demand were at an all-time high, more than 10 million barrels of oil per day in 2003, 15 percent of world production, but also because they were still growing until a peak in 2006 when they would hit a record 13 million barrels per day. It was therefore unthinkable that, at a time when other "giants" were also growing and world demand was under severe upward pressure, with oil surpassing \$147 a barrel in 2008, Washington would think about serious disengagement from the Middle East. The economic crisis and the shale revolution<sup>157</sup> have drastically transformed the current landscape. The United States has become a net exporter as imports have significantly decreased. Although the region's stability remains a top priority for America, the reduced dependence on Middle Eastern energy has expanded Washington's flexibility compared to the recent past. It is crucial to maintain a balanced approach to the region and reassure our allies. In 2014, Beijing surpassed the United States as the largest importer of energy from Middle Eastern countries. Additionally, in 2017, Beijing became the largest global importer of energy<sup>158</sup>.

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<sup>156</sup> Carney, S. A. (2011). *Allied participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Department of the Army.

<sup>157</sup> It refers to the combination of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing that allowed the US to greatly increase its production of gas and oil, especially from tight oil formations, which currently provide 36% of the country's crude oil. The United States' reliance on foreign oil imports has decreased thanks to this increased production capability, which also continues to be a major economic engine as the nation emerges from the 2008 crisis.

<sup>158</sup> See, *11 settembre: il mondo 20 anni dopo* | ISPI. (2022, December 9). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/11-settembre-il-mondo-20-anni-dopo-31597>

However, the American mission in the Middle East had a dark side that the whole world is now learning about.

In December 2006, Wikileaks, an international nonprofit organization led by Australian citizen Julian Assange, was launched on the internet. The site debuted by publishing a document that proved a plot to assassinate members of the Somali government, signed by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys.

In 2007, after announcing its preparation to publish over 1.2 million classified documents, it provided users with a confidential manual titled "Camp Delta Standard Operating Procedures."<sup>159</sup>

The 238-page report revealed the inhumane actions committed by the United States at the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba. In 2002, the government was forced to close Camp X-Ray, the prison camp where the detainees were held, after photographs taken inside the prison were published in the Washington Post. The photographs, which were taken with the collaboration of Fidel Castro, showed men in orange jumpsuits, kneeling, bound, and hooded. Within days public opinion mobilized, as the "guests" at Camp X-Ray multiplied and in April 2002 the camp was closed and the prisoners moved to Camp Delta and Camp Iguana which became increasingly crowded, there were about 800 prisoners held at Guantanamo prison from 2002 to the present, all prisoners believed to be connected to Islamist terrorism<sup>160</sup>.

Wikileaks will release official documents exposing the classification of detainees, the strict procedures governing life inside the prison, and the interrogation techniques, On December 14, 2008, new documents were posted on the site containing a report from a member of the U.S. military regarding their involvement in the services and specifically their time spent at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, as well as the subsequent coverage of the abuses committed there<sup>161</sup>.

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<sup>159</sup> Fletcher, L. E., & Stover, E. (2009). *The Guantánamo effect: Exposing the Consequences of U.S. Detention and Interrogation Practices*. University of California Press.

<sup>160</sup> Ibidem

<sup>161</sup> *Abu Ghraib whistleblower Samuel Provance statement, unredacted, 13 Feb 2006 - WikiLeaks*. (n.d.). [https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Abu\\_Ghraib\\_whistleblower\\_Samuel\\_Provance\\_statement\\_unredacted\\_13\\_Feb\\_2006](https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Abu_Ghraib_whistleblower_Samuel_Provance_statement_unredacted_13_Feb_2006)

This was not the first report of abuses and human rights violations committed by the U.S. at Abu Ghraib<sup>162</sup>, but since 2008 it has been that abuses constituted criminally punishable crimes<sup>163</sup> and the perpetrators were prosecuted.

In April 2010, the American public was shaken when Wikileaks released a 17-minute video during a press conference in Washington. The video, titled 'Collateral Murder', showed the killing of twelve Iraqi civilians, including two Reuters reporters, in an attack by two U.S. Apache helicopters. The helicopters had mistaken the journalists' camera for a weapon on July 12, 2007. In May of that year, Chelsea Manning, a U.S. Army soldier accused of leaking the video along with hundreds of other classified documents, was arrested.

In October 2010, more than 300,000 classified U.S. military documents are released revealing serious failures by U.S. authorities to prosecute abuse, torture, and violence perpetrated during the Iraq war<sup>164</sup>.

On July 25 of the same year, Wikileaks released 91,731 military documents covering the period 2004-2009 to the Guardian, New York Times, and the weekly Der Spiegel, which have been verified as authentic. The release of these classified documents, considered one of the most extensive in U.S. military history, reveals information about the killing of civilians by U.S. and British troops, as well as the support of Pakistan and Iran to the Taliban. The revelations, which highlight an underestimation of Taliban forces, come at one of the worst times for the U.S. military since the beginning of the occupation in terms of casualties: in June 2010 alone, 100 U.S. soldiers were killed<sup>165</sup>.

The publication of the truth about what the U.S. mission in the Middle East was hiding raised a worldwide and internal U.S. debate especially about the effectiveness of the war and its morality. The revealed information highlighted the seriousness of human rights violations, war crimes and miscalculations by U.S. forces and their allies, leading many to question the wisdom and legitimacy of ongoing military operations.

It became clear that it was not only the U.S. and its allies, targets of a new, unpredictable, and violent terrorism, but especially the MENA region that was drawn to this new

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<sup>162</sup> CBS in April 2004 had published photos of the prisoners.

<sup>163</sup> Guiora, A. N. (2008). *Constitutional limits on coercive interrogation*. Oxford University Press, USA.

<sup>164</sup> Nick Davies, Jonathan Steele, David Leigh, Iraq war logs: secret files show how US ignored torture, in The Guardian, 22 ottobre 2010.

<sup>165</sup> Foley, S. (2010, July 25). Whistleblower's leaked US files reveal state of Afghan war | The Independent. *The Independent*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/whistleblower-s-leaked-us-files-reveal-state-of-afghan-war-2035547.html>

"terrorized" world. The attack on the Twin Towers represented a watershed for the region, forcing member countries to take sides "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."<sup>166</sup>

Since that phrase, the perception of the other has emerged blossoming into Islamophobia, which has appeared as a structural threat to the balance of all countries, reinvigorated by the rise of ISIS.

The context of the Arab Spring in the MENA countries between 2010 and 2012 had fostered the growing focus of jihadist militant groups on elements of territorial governance, jihadist groups were actively involved in service delivery, maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, they replaced the state in many areas of the region, but if until then Al Qaeda represented the hegemonic actor and the model to follow, in those years new alternative paradigms emerged, especially in the area of Syria. New models of militant Islamism developed, one of the best-known cases being the Syrian group Hayat Tahir al-Sham (HTS) or Ahrar al-Sham, now part of the pro-Turkish coalition National Front for the Liberation<sup>167</sup>.

One significant development during this time is the emergence of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) as a legitimate rival to Al Qaeda. This has created a strategic differentiation between the two groups<sup>168</sup>.

ISIS was not a completely new actor. Once affiliated with al Qaeda, it underwent various transformations and took on different names. By the 2000s, differences had already arisen between bin Laden and al-Zarqawi, the leader of the Iraqi branch. However, the official break between the two would only come later. In April 2013, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi unilaterally announced the formation of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), which absorbed both the former 'Islamic State of Iraq' and its Syrian branch Jabhat al-Nusra li Ahl al-Sham, thus claiming the power to control it. In 2014, al-Zawahiri formalized the break between al Qaeda and ISIS.

The main difference between the two paramilitary terrorist organizations lies in the target, Al Qaeda's target is the Western world, of which the United States is the emblem and therefore represents the first target, but Al Qaeda is against Western principles wherever

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<sup>166</sup> *President Declares "Freedom at War with Fear."* (2001, September 20). <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

<sup>167</sup> *Global Jihadism after the Syria war / by Tore Refslund Hamming.* (2019). [https://doi.org/10.29171/azu\\_acku\\_pamphlet\\_bp182\\_h366\\_2019](https://doi.org/10.29171/azu_acku_pamphlet_bp182_h366_2019)

<sup>168</sup> *Jihadi competition and political preferences on JSTOR.* (n.d.). [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26295957>

they are implemented. The IS can be classified as a local target organization, since its goal is to create an Islamic state, in the territory between Syria and Iraq, space that has borders, citizens over whom Sharia law can rule.

Although IS has expressed a strong aversion towards the Western nation-state, it has adopted some of the characteristics of what is commonly referred to as the 'modern state'. These characteristics include waging war, recruiting individuals, imposing taxes, creating institutions, and claiming sovereignty and legitimacy over its authority. These actions are similar to those taken by states in the past to establish and maintain control over a given territory<sup>169</sup>.

L'idea di califfato IS non si discosta molto da tali posizioni e anche la questione nazionale è in fondo presente, sebbene non su base etnica, ma religiosa.

The goal is quite different from fighting Western modernity, which is why IS's first target is not limited to the United States, but also targeted are countries in the Middle East that prevent the Islamic State from forming.

IS's attacks like those of AL Qaeda are also part of what is called the "fourth phase" of terrorism according to David C. Rapoport, after the anarchist phase of the late 1800s in Europe, the United States, the anti-colonial phase in Asia and Africa in the 1920s and 1930s in the 1900s and the guerrilla phase in Latin America, the Middle East and Europe in the 1960s-70s<sup>170</sup>.

The fourth phase is characterized mainly by a religious influence, with Islamic fundamentalism playing a dominant role. This has had an impact on the United States, particularly with the emergence of IS, as well as on Europe.

Europe has been a primary target for IS operations, with France and Belgium being the epicenters of multiple attacks over the years. One of Europe's greatest challenges is the lack of a unified intelligence service. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) is responsible for coordinating efforts to counter transnational crime within the EU. However, coordination alone is insufficient. The European Union lacks a coherent foreign policy dimension.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Bonarota, A. M. C. E. F. (2015, August 13). Se lo Stato Islamico diventa davvero uno Stato. *Limes*. <https://www.limesonline.com/da-non-perdere/se-lo-stato-islamico-diventa-davvero-uno-stato-14671716/>

<sup>170</sup> Rapoport, D. C. (2022). *Waves of global terrorism: From 1879 to the Present*. Columbia University Press.

<sup>171</sup> Keohane, D. (2007). The Absent Friend: EU Foreign Policy and Counterterrorism. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46(1), 125–146. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2007.00770.x>

Over the past decade, the fight against terrorism has had unintended consequences, including increased social and political polarization, xenophobia, Islamophobia, tensions between ethnic and religious groups, and resentment in European society.

It has also challenged the American-led world order. Terrorism is not the only factor contributing to these challenges.

### 3.2 Crisis of the Liberal Economic World Order<sup>172</sup>

Terrorism was not the only factor that undermined the leadership of the United States, making it appear weak in the eyes of the whole world and incapable of dealing with a crisis of such magnitude, and, more importantly, it was not the only crisis that originated in the United States and affected all other countries of the world order. One of the accelerators of the shift of the geopolitical axis from the United States to the East was the financial crisis that developed from 2008.

Although the crisis was concentrated in the West, its consequences affected and still affect the whole world.

As in 1929, the crisis began in the United States in 2008; what triggered it was not the collapse of the stock market, but a cocktail of causes<sup>173</sup>, among which the collapse of the subprime mortgages<sup>174</sup> offered for the purchase of houses in the belief that their price would continue to rise and thus repay the money given on credit. Those who benefited from this rush to buy a home were mainly the middle and lower middle classes, but in 2006, after fifteen years of uninterrupted growth, the price of homes began to fall and in some cases collapse, forcing the banks to find a solution since the value of homes was now less than the mortgages given.

The banks' choice was to rely on "derivatives," complex financial instruments whose value is derived from an underlying asset or business<sup>175</sup> whose future price changes are the possibility of profit. Since they are, in effect, a bet on the future performance of the price index of securities, currencies, interest and exchange rates, and commodities, they

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<sup>172</sup> All the data comes from the ECB.

<sup>173</sup> Weber, A.A. (2008). Financial market stability review. Financial Markets Group Research Centre, 78, 1-2.

<sup>174</sup> Subprime mortgage, a type of home loan extended to individuals with poor, incomplete, or nonexistent credit histories. Because the borrowers in that case present a higher risk for lenders, subprime mortgages typically charge higher interest rates than standard (prime) mortgages.

<sup>175</sup> Flores, M. (2021). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*.



can be bought. Through derivatives, the banks transferred the consequences of their crisis to the economy of real companies and public institutions, to private savers and to all those who, convinced of easy profits or insured against a risk, were instead severely affected. The complex network built around the process of securitization, i.e. the sale of mortgages by banks, multiplied the total debt by forcing some of them into bankruptcy: the most famous and important was Lehman Brothers, bankrupt with 600 billion in debt.

It was the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers announced on September 15, 2008, using Chapter 11<sup>176</sup>, resulting in the closure of its London headquarters and other international subsidiaries that caused shock waves in global financial markets with a widespread ripple effect<sup>177</sup>.

While banks and financial firms cut off credit to businesses, turning the financial crisis into an economic crisis, the mechanisms created under the New Deal after 1929 limited bank failures to only 6 percent of the entire U.S. credit system. The U.S. Treasury, moreover, precisely to avoid a scenario similar to that of the 1930s, injected a huge amount of central bank money (\$7.7 trillion), while newly elected President Obama granted companies \$1 trillion to cope with unemployment. The U.S. federal debt, which was 39 percent of GDP in 2007, had risen to 72 percent by 2010, while unemployment remained below 10 percent. In 2010, Obama promoted financial reform that included a series of check and balances to limit speculation and secure markets and customers<sup>178</sup>.

A not insignificant aspect of the spread of the crisis was the high level reached by technology, which allowed not only an exponential increase in the buying and selling of securities, currencies and derivatives, but also the reduction of their implementation time thanks to algorithms capable of playing on price differences not only of days, but of seconds, minutes, hours.

While the U.S. crisis was resolved quickly, it lasted longer in Europe, where it peaked in 2010 and for some countries even longer. The more limited role of the European Central Bank compared to its U.S. counterpart has accentuated the differences within the EU between financially sound countries and those with high public debt and trade deficits.

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<sup>176</sup> Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code, frequently referred to as a “reorganization” bankruptcy.

<sup>177</sup> HBS Baker Library. (n.d.). *Global impact of the collapse*. Harvard Business School - Baker Library | Bloomberg Center. <https://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman/exhibition/global-impact-of-the-collapse>

<sup>178</sup> For more details see: Gillén, M. F. (2015). *The architecture of collapse: The Global System in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Clarendon Lectures in Managemme.

Greece is the country most affected by the crisis in 2009, in part because it has been manipulating its balance sheets for years by hiding heavy losses<sup>179</sup>, despite the fact that the ECB has gradually raised interest rates to 3.75, 2.5 and 1 percent, and is forced to adopt a drastic reform plan (privatizations, fight against tax evasion and privileges, cuts in pensions and salaries of public employees, tax increases) in order to access aid in 2010, accompanied by strikes and growing social tensions. In 2011, a new "bailout" is needed, which Europe grants by further tightening austerity measures and public spending, but in 2015 Greece fails to repay the first installment to the International Monetary Fund. Although a referendum promoted by the new left-wing government led by Alexis Tsipras rejected the debt restructuring proposal put forward by the creditor countries, the government was forced to accept it and received an additional 86 billion euros in aid, bringing the total amount received by Greece since 2009 to 326 billion euros, the largest bailout operation carried out, higher than the 150 billion bailout that saved Southeast Asian countries in the late 1990s. Over the next four years, Greece managed to slowly recover and in June 2018 received the last part of the loan with the possibility of repaying it over a longer period (until 2032), thus returning to "independence" in the management of its economy, no longer under the control of the troika formed by the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union. Meanwhile, other countries needed help: Ireland in 2010, Portugal in 2011 and Cyprus in 2012, while Spain and Italy remain under observation and the subject of international speculation. The appointment of Mario Draghi as President of the ECB in November 2011 allows the institution in July 2012 to "do whatever is necessary to defend the euro", according to the now famous phrase uttered by Draghi himself, giving greater dynamism to the ECB's fiscal and monetary policy and prompting the European Commission to grant it supervisory powers over European banks, capable of avoiding or limiting the failures and dangers that the 2008 crisis had made possible. In Italy, the economic recession resulting from the financial crisis led to a resurgence of public debt in 2009, exacerbated by international speculation on the yield differential between Italian and German bonds. The collapse of international confidence in the Italian government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and Finance Minister Tremonti forced him to resign in November 2011, giving rise to the "technical" government headed by Mario Monti, which, with a policy

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<sup>179</sup>*Greece condemned for falsifying data.* (n.d.). Financial Times.  
<https://www.ft.com/content/33b0a48cff7e-11de-8f53-00144feabdc0>

of austerity (budgetary discipline, public spending cuts, increased labor flexibility, privatizations, pension reform), succeeded in overcoming the crisis, although it will not be able - for lack of incisive reforms - to restart a revival of productivity and growth, thus keeping Italy perpetually poised between stagnation and recovery. If the crisis that began in 2008 did not have the devastating effects of the 1929 crisis, and if it remained largely confined to the most advanced countries, this was mainly due to the ability of Asian countries to reduce their economic growth only partially, to keep the exchange rate high and to use the accumulated foreign exchange to buy part of the US public debt (in 2015, China and Japan each held around 10% of it). China was assuming an increasingly central role in the world economy, but it was also beginning to show some contradictions that had remained hidden during its rise at the beginning of the century<sup>180</sup>.

Using its own capital to finance the United States was necessary to keep the dollar strong and to be able to continue selling its goods in the US market, which accounted for 30 per cent of Chinese exports. Meanwhile, the domestic market was also beginning to grow, while large infrastructure investments (highways, skyscrapers) seemed to have gone too far for a society still struggling with domestic growth. The relationship between China and the US, while still politically contentious, seemed to become more and more interdependent, with the Chinese increasingly buying US Treasuries and the Americans buying Chinese assets in return. Between 2007 and 2010, the key years of the US crisis, the number of US Treasuries in Chinese hands doubled, accentuating the economic interdependence between the two countries. Between 2000 and 2014, Chinese government spending grew from 23 per cent to 55 per cent of GDP, still low by Western standards but significant, and accompanied by much stronger growth in corporate debt. Millions of social housing units were financed, reinforcing the urbanization drive that had already begun in the early years of the century, while investment in education and research increased sharply, the number of companies listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange grew, and the great international project of the New Silk Road was launched in 2014.

The relative strengthening of China's economy and its growing role in international dynamics showed that in the 21st century, beyond the setbacks or reversals that occurred, especially in the West, with the 2008 crisis, almost all the parameters and indicators that

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<sup>180</sup> For details: Banfi, A., & Di Pasquali, F. (2014). *Le banche centrali negli anni della crisi. L'operatività della Banca Centrale Europea, della Banca d'Italia e della Federal Reserve*.

allowed us to understand the economic and social history of the 20th century and, to some extent, of the previous century, were changing. The difficult and contradictory issue of inequality offers an opportunity to take a fresh look at the complex and changing reality that has engulfed the world since 2000<sup>181</sup>.

The financial crisis “turbocharged today’s populist surge, raising questions about income inequality, job insecurity, and globalization... Policymakers have made the economy safer, but they still have plenty of lessons to learn.”<sup>182</sup>

### **3.3 Crisis from within: How the Liberal International Order faces inequalities**

The economic resilience of the U.S., thanks to Washington's pragmatism, has prevented the collapse of the entire system, but it has left the U.S. with incredible responsibilities that challenge its leadership as an economic power and exporter of liberal values.

Europe has been confronted with seemingly insurmountable inequalities among its member states, just as the rest of the world has been confronted with growing inequalities within and between countries.

The debate on inequality became central to the public debate, both in economic and political terms, and especially because of the concept of world order it carried with it, which was championed by the Americans.

The financial crisis has challenged this order from within, leading to a surge in inequality between countries.

In historical terms, it can be said that since the industrial revolution, the development gap between the West and the rest of the world has widened, while the process of globalization, which has seen the economies of Asian countries grow especially, has been accompanied by a decrease in inequality. It is thus predominantly to globalization that hopes for improved living conditions and the defeat of poverty, particularly for the Third World, are entrusted<sup>183</sup>.

The countries that first experienced industrialization saw inequality rise, both within themselves and with non-industrialized countries, throughout the nineteenth century and up to World War I, and then saw it decline until the late 1970s.

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<sup>181</sup> For more details: Vasconi, S. (2021). *La crisi finanziaria immobiliare americana del 2008. Dai mutui subprime al contagio globale*.

<sup>182</sup> *Has finance been fixed? Sep 8th, 2018, The Economist*. (2018, September 8). The Economist.

<sup>183</sup> Flores, M. (2021b). *Il mondo contemporaneo: 1945-2020*.

The reduction in inequality in advanced countries between 1918 and 1980 was due to a number of factors. The most important were the expansion of education, minimum wages and the growth of labor unions, the presence of leftist parties that curbed pro-capital policies, and female labor force participation. The upswing in inequality kicks off with the second technological revolution of the 1980s-1990s, driven by telecommunications, finance and pharmaceuticals, and increases significantly in the 21st century. The shift of labor from manufacturing to services, which increases wage and income disparities, is one cause, accompanied by the decline in unionization, which contracted sharply between 1999 and 2015 in both the U.S. and the European Union, and the reduction in corporate taxation. In the U.S. and Britain, inequality grows more than in Germany or Sweden, due to high compensation to skilled labor and the spread of services where labor is instead de-skilled and paid less. It would seem that the cause of inequality is precisely globalization. It is necessary to look at this process in a comprehensive way, trying to understand how technological progress has caused a substitution of routine jobs in many cases. For example, technology has replaced jobs or reduced wages in the travel industry, hotel workers, administrators, clerks, etc. All of this has led to unbalanced progress, also made possible by the production of cheap hardware by taking advantage of the availability of low-wage Asian labor. Thus, in a parallel and related way, the per capita income of the poor and middle classes in Asia has risen, while the growth of the lower and middle classes in the advanced economies has declined or stopped. Hyperglobalization has done little to raise the real income levels of the middle and lower classes in the liberal West. At the same time, it has greatly increased the wages and wealth of the upper classes. The result is staggering economic inequality almost everywhere, which shows little sign of abating<sup>184</sup>.

Inequality between nations declines over this period, especially between 1988 and 2008, with a sharp acceleration after 2000. Inequality peaked around 1970. Then the gap between the US, China and India was about 20 to 1, while in 2011 it would be 4 to 1. This reduction is basically due to the growth of incomes in China and India, and in Asia in general, and the stagnation of incomes in the rich world, leading to a "convergence" of incomes worldwide, which seems to anticipate a return to a situation similar to that before the great "divergence" that arose between the West and the rest in the aftermath of the

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<sup>184</sup> Mearsheimer, J. J. (2019). Bound to fail: the rise and fall of the liberal international order. *International Security*, 43(4), 7–50. [https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00342](https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00342)

Industrial Revolution. It is the period considered to be the waning of globalization, the last decade of the 20th century and the first of the 21st, the most accelerated arella i pria in the world, which lifted about 2 billion people out of poverty. It benefited the people of Asia (China, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia), where the "emerging middle class" was born, reducing inequality worldwide, while the lower and middle classes of the rich countries suffered, almost exclusively and increasingly affected after the crisis of 2008. As might be expected, these festering problems have led to widespread dissatisfaction with the liberal international order and growing sentiment for governments to adopt protective economic policies that would undermine the current system. The threat to the liberal world order came from the deepest core when then-presidential candidate Donald Trump spoke of the U.S. economy in "dismal state" and that the world saw it as "disrespected, mocked and ripped off," spoke of "America carnage,"<sup>185</sup> and in this wake launched the slogan "Make America Great Again,"<sup>186</sup> catalyzing hatred for the existing order by railing against international institutions.

The election of President Trump not only failed to improve the image of America and its economy, which remained the world's leading economy, albeit with many limitations compared to the inauguration of the liberal world, but the Trump administration also challenged the role of the U.S. as an ally in all other global challenges.

The challenges of the century that the U.S. must face to maintain its leadership are not only economic, but also include issues such as dealing with pandemics and climate change, accompanied by a growing number of wars.

### **3.4 Climate Change**

Although there has been international discussion of environmental and ecological issues since the 1970s, it was not until the 1990s, coinciding with the explosion of globalization, that a widespread awareness began to emerge of the need for action to prevent the effects of climate change from producing too great or even irreversible damage. It is especially in the new millennium that attempts to actually make concrete the measures established in Rio and Kyoto at the end of the previous century with more drastic but deemed realistic targets are accelerating. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Ipcc), created

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<sup>185</sup> *Full text: 2017 Donald Trump inauguration speech transcript.* (2017, January 20). POLITICO.

<sup>186</sup> Volle, A. (2024, January 16). *MAGA movement | Meaning, Beliefs, Origins, Donald Trump, & Facts.* Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/MAGA-movement>

by the United Nations in 1900 and grouping 195 states, is the instrument that, especially in the last 15 years, has done an enormous amount of analytical and in-depth work leading to the proposals discussed and approved in Paris in 2015 and then at the various UN conferences on climate change, the latest of which has been the COP28 in Dubai.

An accelerant of inequality, climate change and its management are the challenge of our century, and at stake, as always, is global leadership. Global warming is, by definition, a phenomenon shared by all humanity. Unlike particulate matter, for example, which poisons the air locally, greenhouse gases accumulate in the atmosphere and raise the average temperature of the planet, regardless of where they are emitted. Yet the most vulnerable populations are still at a disadvantage. They have fewer resources to prevent climate impacts, to cope with them, and to repair the damage.

A study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has outlined a list of four categories of people considered vulnerable: those with low incomes, ethnic minorities, the elderly, or those with less than a high school education. In the climate scenario considered most likely, the average global temperature rises by two degrees Celsius and sea levels rise by half a meter<sup>187</sup>. A harsh but realistic prospect, as the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) fears that we will even break through the three-degree Celsius ceiling by the end of the century.

The report identifies the areas of the United States most exposed to six different consequences of the climate and environmental crisis: deaths due to extreme temperatures, respiratory illnesses triggered by atmospheric particulate matter, traffic jams due to heavy rainfall and flooding, hours of outdoor work lost due to intolerable temperatures, and flooding indoors due to rising sea levels or, alternatively, flooding. The intersection of these two data shows that the most vulnerable people live in such areas.<sup>188</sup> The study holds true on a global scale, if we look at extreme weather events, for example, these fall on the poorest areas of the world <sup>189</sup>. The people who have the least responsibility for climate change tend to be the most targeted victims of it.

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<sup>187</sup> *Social Vulnerability Report* | US EPA. (2023, April 24). US EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/cira/socialvulnerability-report>

<sup>188</sup> Ibidem

<sup>189</sup> Schäfer, D. E. V. K. L. (2021, January 25). *Global Climate Risk Index 2021*. Germanwatch e.V. <https://www.germanwatch.org/en/19777>

We are used to thinking of climate change as a cross-cutting phenomenon, but this is a half-truth. If one investigates responsibility, one sees that those with the most responsibility suffer the least from the effects of the change they produce. Tim Gore's report published by Oxfam looks at two different metrics. The first is cumulative greenhouse gas emissions over a given period of time. The second is the carbon budget, i.e., the CO<sub>2</sub> that can still be generated in the future while keeping the rise in average global temperatures within the threshold desired by the Paris Agreement, i.e., 1.5 degrees Celsius more than in pre-industrial times. The time horizon considered is 1990-2015, twenty-five years in which annual emissions have grown by 60 percent and cumulative emissions have doubled. On both dimensions, the world appears split down the middle. The richest 10 percent of the global population, which amounts to about 630 million people, is responsible for 52 percent of cumulative emissions and has consumed 31 percent of the carbon budget. Conversely, the poorest half of humanity (3.1 billion individuals) generated just 7 percent of CO<sub>2</sub>, "making do" with 4 percent of the available carbon budget. The gap becomes even deeper if we focus on the narrow elite of the privileged. On their own, the 63 million individuals at the top of the pyramid caused 15 percent of cumulative emissions by taking advantage of 9 percent of the carbon budget. In other words, the richest 1 percent generated twice as much greenhouse gas as the poorest half of the population. One might also think that CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is the inevitable price to be paid for economic development and poverty alleviation. This argument fails, however, if one examines the graph of emissions growth between 1990 and 2015. Those generated by the poorest half of the population have remained virtually unchanged, contributing a meager 6 percent to overall growth. Conversely, to the wealthiest 5 percent (about 315 million people) we owe more than a third of the increase in emissions that occurred over the 25 years under consideration. This means that the global carbon budget is being rapidly depleted not to ensure a decent way of life for all of humanity, but mainly to enable a minority of the over-rich to consume more and more. One could have taken advantage of the collapse in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during the 2020s due to strict containment measures, but this was not the case, Earth's average land and ocean surface temperature in 2023 was 2.12 degrees F (1.18 degrees C) above the 20th century the highest global temperature<sup>190</sup>.

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<sup>190</sup> Among all years in NOAA's 1850-2023 climate record. <https://www.noaa.gov/news/2023-was-worlds-warmest-year-on-record-by-far#:~:text=Earth's%20average%20land%20and%20ocean,0.15%20of%20a%20degree%20C>.



In 2020, with the election of Democrat Joe Biden, the U.S. was to rebuild everything Donald Trump had destroyed both in terms of credibility and leadership since in June 2017 he announced the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, which Biden rejoined in 2021, restarting the climb back up the ladder to leadership in the fight against climate change. The U.S. obsession with military buildup needs to be matched by a smart power buildup, which began precisely with the attempt to rebuild global consensus around the implementation of the Paris Agreement<sup>191</sup>.

### 3.5 Covid 19 Pandemic

Una sfida inaspettata che ha coinvolto a cavallo sia l'amministrazione Trump che l'amministrazione Biden è stata la pandemia del 2020. The largest worldwide epidemic since the Spanish flu was recognized in 2020. The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus slowly took over the world, leaving a path of devastation in its wake.<sup>192</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a stark light on the vital role of leadership during global health crises. Since March 11, 2020, Tedros Adhanom, director of WHO officially announced that it was a pandemic<sup>193</sup>, countries' diverse reactions to the outbreak have starkly demonstrated the profound influence of political decisions and communication strategies wield on the course of a pandemic and the well-being of society.

Not all the administrations conveyed the same urgency in their message to the action. On March 11, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen declared that the nation's borders would be temporarily closed<sup>194</sup>. She said that although the government was "painfully aware that this will have severe consequences" on families and businesses, it was the appropriate course of action given the current situation. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand issued a warning to "act now or risk the virus taking hold as it has

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<sup>191</sup> Murphy, C. (2021, January 19). America must reclaim the global lead on climate change. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/19/america-biden-climate-change-global-leadership>

<sup>192</sup> AlQershi, N. (2020, October 19). *Coronavirus COVID-19: the bad leadership crisis and mismanagement*. <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/coronavirus-covid19-the-bad-leadership-crisis-and-mismanagement-9616.html>

<sup>193</sup> *WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020*. (2020, March 11). <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

<sup>194</sup> Olagnier, D., & Mogensen, T. H. (2020). The Covid-19 pandemic in Denmark: Big lessons from a small country. *Cytokine & Growth Factor Reviews*, 53, 10–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cytogfr.2020.05.005>

elsewhere,"<sup>195</sup> calling the lockdown the most serious in the nation's history and advising citizens to return home. Chancellor Angela Merkel cautioned that following the guidelines was mandatory after Germany declared stringent lockdown measures: "The state has not recommended these," she declared. "We must abide by these rules for the benefit of our entire community."

China's government withheld important information about the illness from the public in January, which made it more difficult for the WHO to react appropriately. Even after the WHO classified the new coronavirus as a "public health crisis,"<sup>196</sup> President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil compared it to a common cold or the flu. Iran's health minister contracted the coronavirus during a press conference, while senior health officials attempted to conceal some of the initial deaths caused by the illness.

In the United States, the Trump administration's handling of the crisis drew significant scrutiny and criticism. The initial period of the pandemic was riddled with inconsistent messaging, underestimations of the virus's severity, and a lag in executing critical containment strategies like expansive testing and contact tracing. Such shortcomings led to a swift escalation in case numbers, placing the U.S. among the nations hardest hit by the pandemic.

Amidst the crisis, a palpable tension emerged in U.S. leadership between enforcing stringent health measures and mitigating economic repercussions. This dichotomy produced mixed messages about masks, social distancing, and the closure of businesses, which, in turn, deepened political and social divides regarding preventive health actions. The pandemic brought to the forefront the essential need for coherent, scientifically grounded communication from those in power. The dissemination of conflicting and unsupported information sowed confusion among the public, thereby hampering efforts to control the virus.

Surveys conducted around the world show that people have been paying attention to how their leaders have handled the epidemic. According to an IPSOS Mori study released in August of 2020, leaders of the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, and Australia all saw a spike in their ratings during the first few months of the pandemic, which co-author

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<sup>195</sup> De Jong, E., & Doherty, B. (2021, January 11). Have Australia and New Zealand stopped Covid-19 in its tracks? *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/09/have-australia-new-zealand-stopped-covid-19-in-its-tracks-coronavirus>

<sup>196</sup> *WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020*. (2020, March 11). <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

Will Jennings referred to as a "rally-around-the-flag" effect. However, as things in their respective countries deteriorated, leaders in these countries soon saw a decline in trust. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison was the only leader in that group to have seen an increase in approval ratings as of June; this is probably because Australia has fared better than other countries in terms of virus containment<sup>197</sup>.

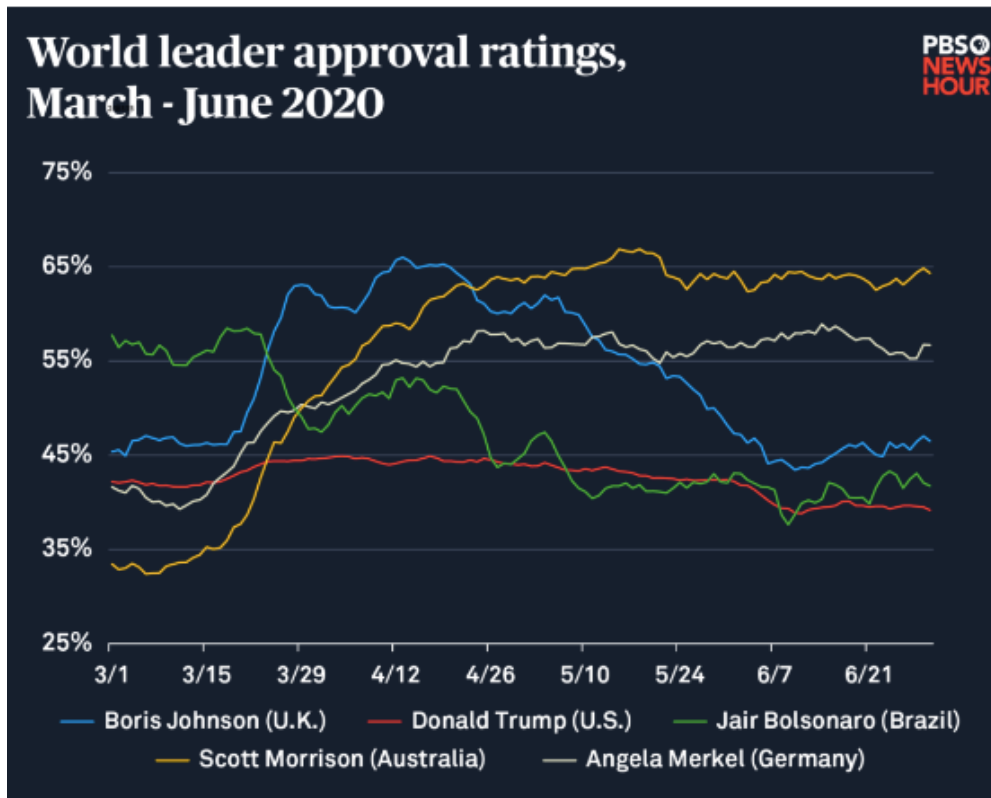


Figure 6- Trends in approval rates of world leaders from March to June 2020. Retrieve dfrom: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/what-weve-learned-about-leadership-from-the-covid-19-pandemic>"

The situation is different today, partly because none of the 2020 leaders are in office yet. The most popular leader in January 2024 is Narendra Modi, with 74 per cent support, compared to 37 per cent for Biden<sup>198</sup>.

Effective leadership was shown to be crucial for rallying public support and promoting responsible behaviors that aligned with health recommendations. The implications of the U.S. pandemic response have been vast, with significant human and economic tolls and altered perceptions of U.S. governance. The approach taken by the Trump administration

<sup>197</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/competence-matters-perceptions-leader-competence-handling-covid-19-tend-mirror-country-experience>

<sup>198</sup> For more details: Frisbie, S. (2024, February 6). Global Leader Approval Rating Tracker. *Morning Consult Pro*. <https://pro.morningconsult.com/trackers/global-leader-approval>

was a pivotal issue in the 2020 presidential election, where the public's concern over the health crisis was a significant factor. Joe Biden's subsequent election victory was widely interpreted as a call for a more rigorous, science-aligned, and federally guided approach to the pandemic. Upon taking office, the Biden administration introduced decisive changes, such as a national mask-wearing mandate in certain contexts and an expedited vaccination campaign, indicating a heightened commitment to public health and scientific guidance. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of leadership in managing health crises. The response to the pandemic in the United States has had significant political, social, and economic repercussions, emphasizing the need for informed, responsible, and transparent governance. The capacity to swiftly assimilate new information, communicate clearly with the citizenry, and enact decisions based on scientific evidence is critical for effectively navigating future health crises and restoring confidence in the efficacy of U.S. leadership. This approach, contrasting with other countries' experiences, highlights the global lessons learned about leadership's role in health emergencies.

The COVID19 pandemic, which ended on 5 May 2023<sup>199</sup>, has left a great legacy in terms of leadership, not least because it may not be the last pandemic our century will face<sup>200</sup>.

*"[...] ...he knew what the crowd ignored and what one can read in books, namely, that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears, that it can remain for tens of years asleep in furniture and linens, that it waits patiently in rooms, cellars, suitcases, handkerchiefs, and wrappers, and that perhaps the day would come when, misfortune and teaching of men, the plague would awaken its rats to send them to die in a happy city."<sup>201</sup>*

### 3.6 War in Ukraine

The conflict in Ukraine in 2022 represents a major turning point in geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West, rooted in a complex web of historical, political, and ethnic issues that have their roots well before that year. This escalation is the culmination of a series of events that formally began in 2014, but actually long before, when Russia

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<sup>199</sup> WHO chief declares end to COVID-19 as a global health emergency. (2023, May 6). UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136367>

<sup>200</sup> For more details: *Preparing for pandemics*. (n.d.)

<https://www.who.int/westernpacific/activities/preparing-for-pandemics>

<sup>201</sup> Camus, A. (1948). *La peste*. Bompiani.

annexed Crimea, an internationally unrecognized move that led to conflict in Ukraine's eastern Donbass region between Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists. The conflict that erupted in Ukraine in 2022 represents one of the most significant and dramatic geopolitical events of recent decades, marking a turning point in international relations and European security. This crisis is rooted in a complex mixture of history, politics, and territorial ambitions, enriched by tensions that have dragged on for years between Ukraine, Russia, and Western powers.

Vladimir Putin is responsible for Russian aggression in Ukraine and is responsible for how the war was conducted, but the reason lies in Western faults.

Vladimir Putin's responsibility must be shared with the West and especially America. In Bucharest in April 2008 the NATO summit had announced, pushed by the Bush administration, that Ukraine and Georgia would become members<sup>202</sup>.

Since then, according to some sources, Putin has said that if Ukraine ever joins the Atlantic Pact, it will be without Crimea and the eastern regions.

The U.S., ignoring Moscow's warning, continued to push Ukraine closer to the Western front in order to bring it closer to the European Union and make it a pro-U.S. democracy. In February 2014, the first conflict broke out in Ukraine after the uprising, remembered as Euromaidan, supported by the United States<sup>203</sup>, had led to the flight of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich.

Russia had at that time taken Crimea from Ukraine and supported the civil war that was brewing in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine.

The trigger for the most recent confrontation was Ukraine's annexation to NATO, a process that began in December 2017 with America and other NATO countries giving arms to Ukraine, arms that could pose a threat to Moscow. In July 2021, Ukraine and America hosted a major naval exercise, Operation Sea Breeze, in the Black Sea region involving the navies of 32 countries. Ties between Ukraine and America have continued to grow under the Biden administration. This commitment is reflected in an important document, the "Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership," signed in November 2021 by Antony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State, and Dmytro Kuleba, his Ukrainian counterpart.

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<sup>202</sup> Nato. (n.d.-a). *Bucharest Summit Declaration issued by NATO Heads of State and Government (2008)*. NATO. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm)

<sup>203</sup> See for more details: *Leaked audio reveals embarrassing U.S. exchange*. (2014, February 7). [Video]. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/video/multimedia/100000002694352/leaked-audio-reveals-embarrassing-us-exchange.html>

In response, Putin in December of that year began mobilizing his army on the border but received no backtracking from the United States. This led Russia to precipitate a full-fledged diplomatic stand-off in December, Russia had reached a "boiling point."<sup>204</sup>

Russia had demanded an assurance that Ukraine would never join NATO and that NATO would remove military assets deployed in Eastern Europe since 1997, there was no change, and in February 2022 Putin launched a full-scale invasion.

The Western narrative predominantly removes this important piece of history from its narrative, arguing that NATO being a defensive alliance did not raise serious concerns for Russia, even though the U.S. Secretary of Defense at the time of the Bucharest summit, Robert Gates acknowledged that "trying to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was really going too far," and during the summit both the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, opposed proceeding with Ukraine's NATO membership because they feared it would infuriate Russia.

As of today, the war is in a "political quagmire" whose outcome is difficult to interpret, and a major game will be played in November with the U.S. elections.

Indeed, Donald Trump has said that should he be reelected, a NATO ally that "does not pay," that does not invest 2 percent of GDP in defense, will not be defended should Russia attack it<sup>205</sup>.

### **3.7 Israeli-Palestine Conflict**

Along with the shock of the war in Ukraine, a new-old conflict has flared up again as of Oct. 7, 2023, between Israel and Palestine. The resumption of hostilities between Israel and Palestine has once again thrust the Middle East into the international spotlight, presenting a formidable challenge to the global community. This conflict has particularly tested the diplomatic influence and leadership of the United States, which has historically played a key role in mediating in the Middle East. The crisis has highlighted the difficulties that U.S. global leadership faces in navigating the complex dynamics of the region, raising questions about its ability to serve as an effective peacemaker and maintain the balance between different regional forces in an era of rising geopolitical tensions.

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<sup>204</sup> Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

<sup>205</sup> Helmore, E. (2024, February 12). Trump says he would encourage Russia to attack Nato allies who pay too little. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/feb/11/donald-trump-says-he-would-encourage-russia-to-attack-nato-countries-who-dont-pay-bills>

The frantic U.S. diplomatic action provoked by this new Israeli-Palestinian crisis is moving in several directions and has several objectives. First and foremost, it is vital for the Biden administration to prevent a regional escalation of the conflict that would risk dragging the United States itself into it and then spreading to an even wider scale. Hence the strengthening of the U.S. military presence and the messages sent to Iran. Second, Washington tries hard to contain the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and condition the disproportionate Israeli reaction to the massacre perpetrated by Hamas on Oct. 7. It is also doing so, thirdly, to try to reknit the threads of a dual diplomatic process that it had mistakenly thought it could keep separate: negotiations aimed at extending the Abrahamic Accords to Saudi Arabia and those, long frozen, between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority with the ultimate, and perhaps chimerical, goal of two states.

There is a close interdependence between these different elements of the U.S. initiative. Avoiding regional contagion and seeking to alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza are indispensable preconditions of any diplomatic solution. Washington's strong and ostentatious commitment on this also serves as an attempt to regain a credibility that has been partly lost in the face of large majorities of Arab public opinion that impute to the U.S. a position that is too squashed on that of Israel. But it also serves with respect to an internal front that is now a further critical issue for Biden and the Democrats. Numerous polls point to the dissatisfaction of a majority of the electorate with the president and the real risk of electoral defeat in 2024 against any Republican candidate. Much can change in the year between now and the vote. And the factors explaining these polls are diverse and largely unrelated to the current Middle East crisis: the President's age and obvious fatigue; the tail end of a partially tamed inflation without consumers yet having a full sense of it; immigration and the difficult handling of the border with Mexico; and urban petty crime. And yet foreign policy also affects, and what is happening in Gaza does not help. Public hostility to onerous and interventionist foreign policies weighs. The long wave of both the failed American wars of the 21st century and the 2008 crisis and subsequent contestation of globalization still acts on this. This is certainly not an entirely unrealistic isolationist retreat for the one, true global superpower. As much as it is an urge to delegate responsibilities to third parties (e.g., Europe with respect to the Ukrainian front) and use sparingly a foreign aid policy that has long been highly unpopular. Solicitation, this, against which little seems to be able to do the rhetoric of democratic interventionism and U.S. exceptionalism on which Biden seems to draw heavily in an attempt to reactivate a domestic consensus that has become increasingly feeble.

Alongside this, however, there is an entirely intra-Democratic dimension, which in electoral terms is perhaps the most worrying. Polls also show a sharp decline in support in some crucial electoral segments for the president's party, young people and minorities in particular. In a hyper-polarized environment marked by very low electoral mobility, it is critical for both parties to fully mobilize their base and bring them to the polls, as the 2020 vote has well illustrated. The participation rate of these segments, especially under-30 voters, is historically lower. Convincing them to vote is, in other words, more difficult, and doing so requires a surplus of attention. Biden has actively courted this vote, including with initiatives not devoid of demagoguery such as student debt relief, later partly blocked by the Supreme Court. On an already partly skeptical or disillusioned electorate is now grafted this Middle East crisis.

Recent years have witnessed in the U.S. a partial shift in public opinion toward Israel. According to annual Gallup surveys, the percentage of Americans who sympathize with the Palestinian cause has more than doubled in a decade, from 12 percent to 26 percent between 2012 and 2022<sup>206</sup>. This is a change that is manifested through what appears to be a clear generational as well as partisan divide: the positions that are decidedly most critical of Israel are those of the Democratic left and young people. From where these days come the harshest denunciations of Israeli military action in Gaza and the administration's alleged acquiescence to it.

The risk, in short, is that what is happening will exacerbate the possibility of a potentially decisive electoral defection in a context in which it is likely that everything will be decided by a few tens of thousands of votes in a few crucial swing states. Swing states include Michigan where the largest Arab American community is located - concentrated mainly in the Detroit metropolitan area. Between 250 and 300 thousand inhabitants who are expressing all their displeasure with Biden these days. According to recent polls, in the span of a few days, the president's approval rate among Arab Americans would have plummeted to 29%, from 75% three years ago, and only 17% would be willing to vote for him today<sup>207</sup>. They are unlikely to prefer Trump. However, they too could defect to the polls, making Biden's confirmation to the White House even more difficult.

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<sup>206</sup> Saad, B. L. (2024, February 7). Americans still Pro-Israel, though Palestinians gain support. *Gallup.com*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/390737/americans-pro-israel-though-palestinians-gain-support.aspx>

<sup>207</sup> Aai. (2023, November 1). *Arab Americans Special Poll: Domestic implications of the most recent outbreak of violence in Palestine/Israel*. Arab American Institute. <https://www.aaiusa.org/library/arab-americans-special-poll-domestic-implications-of-the-most-recent-outbreak-of-violence-in-palestineisrael>



### 3.8 Conclusions<sup>208</sup>

The United States made inexcusable mistakes in the decade 1991-2001 and in the years that followed, which led to it no longer being at the helm of the desired unipolar order.

The country of dreams no longer believes in itself, the percentage of "satisfied" Americans has not exceeded 50 percent for 20 years and as of today stands at 20 percent. In 2016, the election of the most pessimistic candidate in American history helped corroborate this view of America from within.

Donald Trump claimed that America was in a "bleak state," that the world was a "total mess."

Joe Biden, while extolling the virtues of the United States, during the 2020 presidential campaign, repeatedly reciting the slogan "Our best days are still ahead of us," led much of the governing strategy by basing it on the idea that the country had been on a wrong course, even under Democratic presidents, even during the Obama-Biden administration. In an April 2023 speech, Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, criticized "much of the international economic policy of recent decades," blaming globalization and deregulation for hollowing out the country's industrial base, exporting American jobs and weakening some basic industries, "although the United States has remained the world's preeminent power, some of its most vital muscles have atrophied".

This is a familiar criticism of the neoliberal era, in which a few have prospered but many have fallen behind.

Another mistake shared by the Trump administration and the Biden administration has been on foreign policy. Both assume that the U.S. has been the great casualty of the international economic system it has created and both assume that the country cannot compete as it once did in a world of open markets and free trade, hence China's restrictions on access to U.S. high-tech exports and the overreaching, overreaching imposition of tariffs on its closest allies on products and goods ranging from lumber to steel to washing machines.

Recent policies adopted by the United States have accentuated a protectionist trend, imposing restrictions on the purchase of foreign goods and promoting the purchase of domestic products through the "Buy American" initiative. These measures have been

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<sup>208</sup> All data and quotations of the paragraph come from: Zakaria, F. (2023, December 21). The Self-Doubting Superpower: America shouldn't give up on the world it made. Foreign Affairs.

criticized for their rigidity, which goes beyond the effect of traditional tariffs, as they completely prevent the purchase of foreign goods. Efforts toward green energy are also being undermined by this protectionist policy that risks alienating international allies and partners.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, director-general of the World Trade Organization, argued that rich countries are now engaged in acts of supreme hypocrisy. After spending decades urging developing countries to liberalize and participate in the open world economy and criticizing countries for protectionism, subsidies and industrial policies, the Western world has stopped practicing what it has long preached. Having achieved wealth and power through this system, rich countries have decided to climb the ladder. In the author's words, "they now no longer want to compete on an equal footing and instead prefer to move to a system based on power rather than rules."

The rules-based order is not limited to trade. It is also about international treaties, procedures and norms, a vision of a world that is not characterized by the laws of the jungle, but rather by some degree of order and justice. Again, the United States has been better at preaching than practicing. The war in Iraq was a gross violation of UN principles against unprovoked aggression. Washington routinely chooses which international conventions to observe and which to ignore. It criticizes China for violating the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea when Beijing claims sovereignty over East Asian waters, without considering that Washington itself has never ratified that treaty. When Trump pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal signed by all other major powers, despite confirmation that Tehran was abiding by its terms, he dashed hopes for global cooperation on a key security challenge. It then maintained secondary sanctions to force other major powers not to trade with Iran, abusing the power of the dollar in a move that accelerated efforts by Beijing, Moscow and even European capitals to find alternatives to the dollar payment system. American unilateralism was tolerated in a unipolar world. Today, it is creating a search-even among close U.S. allies-for ways to escape it, counter it and challenge it.

Today, the United States faces a world with real competitors and many more countries forcefully asserting their own interests, often in defiance of Washington. To understand the new dynamic, think not of Russia or China, but of Turkey. Thirty years ago, Turkey was an obedient ally of the United States, dependent on Washington for its security and prosperity. Whenever Turkey went through one of its periodic economic crises, the United States helped bail it out. Today Turkey is a much wealthier and politically mature

country, led by a strong, popular and populist leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He routinely challenges the United States, even when demands are made at the highest level.

Washington was unprepared for this change and has faced challenges that have not, however, downgraded it to the role of a minor power; it remains No. 1 in many areas.

In 1990, U.S. per capita income was significantly higher than that of Japan and Western Europe, and this disparity has increased in the years since. While the U.S. and eurozone economies were similar in size in 2008, today the U.S. economy has nearly doubled that of the eurozone. This calls into question criticism of Washington's policies accused of causing stagnation, suggesting that the United States would have no advantage in changing its economic situation with any other advanced economy of the past three decades.

In terms of technological and industrial capacity, the United States also maintains a leading position. Compared with the past, when global competition was more pronounced, today the leading valuable technology companies are American, dominating key sectors such as digitization, the Internet, artificial intelligence and bioengineering. The United States is also the largest recipient of venture capital investments for artificial intelligence startups and holds a significant share in global biotechnology revenues.

U.S. leadership extends beyond technology, being the world's largest producer of oil and gas and advancing in green energy production. The U.S. financial sector is equally dominant, with a significant number of banks considered globally important and the dollar remaining the predominant currency in international transactions.

Demographically, the United States stands out among advanced economies for a relatively healthy profile, supported by a robust immigration flow and assimilation capacity, countering the trend of population decline observed in other major economies such as China, Japan and Europe. This favorable demographic scenario suggests that the United States will continue to grow and maintain its global influence in the coming decades.

Measure by measure, the United States remains in a commanding position relative to its major competitors and rivals. However, they face a very different international landscape. Many powers around the world have grown in strength and confidence. They will not meekly bend to U.S. directives.

## Chapter 4: Reconstruction

In 1991, the UN had 166 member states; by the end of 1992, partly as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, membership had grown to 179, as of today there are 193<sup>209</sup>.

The number of states is growing, as is the influence and power of many of them, both as individuals and as regional areas, and the United States faces the demise of the Washington Consensus globally and the interface with new powerful states.

The assessment of a state's power in 2024 is based on an evaluation of a growing number of factors that include economic, military, political, technological, and cultural aspects. These factors are interdependent and help define a state's influence and ability to project power internationally.

Among the most important criteria to be evaluated are the more classical ones, such as a state's economic capacity, measured by GDP, its financial stability, and the size of its domestic market. There is the more traditional hard power, the military strength and the quality of its equipment, and the possession or not of nuclear power always have a privileged place in the assessment of power, closely linked to the ability to maintain internal security. Soft power, the ability to influence other countries through cultural or ideological means, such as the spread of a language, includes the ability to attract foreign talent and capital.

In addition, we find increasingly present the political and diplomatic influence of states and their ability to influence decisions at the international level, their participation and role in international and regional organizations.

In today's world, technological and innovative capabilities are becoming more and more important, R&D is the watchword of our time, the ability to know how to make maximum use of technology and artificial intelligence and apply them in as many fields as possible is crucial for leadership at the global level.

The ability to sustainably manage natural resources and address challenges such as climate change, food and water security, which can affect long-term stability and a state's ability to maintain or expand its power.

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<sup>209</sup> Italia, U. (2021, February 17). *Gli Stati Membri delle Nazioni Unite*. ONU Italia.

<https://unric.org/it/gli-stati-membri-delle-nazioni-unite/>

Not forgetting demographics, an important weapon of developing countries to outclass the old powers.

On the basis of the criteria, we have listed and in light of what has been said so far, the United States remains a leading power, but one that no longer convinces even its most loyal allies as it once did. The most important challenge to the United States comes from the BRICS and the Global South, although they are not the only players to be considered.

The appearance with which the 21st century has presented itself is that of a "long century," deeply rooted in the last two decades of the century that preceded it. It is precisely in this two decades that we can trace the elements that led to the formation of the embryo of the New World Order that today appears to be in advanced gestation. The candidates involved in the process are many, several appear to be candidates to play an active and decisive role, many leverage their own history, established traditions, models of development and organization of society, tables of values, and the strength of their economy. Pure ideology, the founding element of bloc opposition, appears to be in disuse and not very determined in defining positions on the international chessboard.

#### **4.1 BRICS**

It was analyst Jim O'Neill who, in late 2001, identified, in a paper prepared for investment bank Goldman Sachs, a new geoeconomic aggregate based on the common characteristics of: the status of developing economies, a large population, vast territory, abundant strategic natural resources, and have been characterized over the past decade by strong growth in GDP and share in world trade. The countries initially considered were Brazil, Russia, India and China. According to O'Neill, these nations were likely to dominate the world economy of the century just beginning, and it was therefore necessary to incorporate them into the world economy hegemonized by the Western system. South Africa joined in 2010, making it "BRICS".

Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were invited to become members with effect from 1 January 2024. Argentina was also invited to join, but President Javier Milei pulled out in December 2023, shortly after taking office<sup>210</sup>.

The BRICS countries now comprise more than 42 percent of the world's population, 25 percent of the Earth's total land area, 20 percent of the world's GDP, and about 16 percent

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<sup>210</sup> BBC News. (2024, February 1). Brics: What is the group and which countries have joined? *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-66525474>

of international trade<sup>211</sup> and in 2014, the BRICS created the New Development Bank to finance loans for emerging economies and developing countries, particularly in the areas of construction, infrastructure and energy supply<sup>212</sup>.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the BRICS gained more worldwide attention as tensions between China and Russia and their exclusion from Western international institutions grew. China and Russia have proposed that the organization act as a check on what they see as a global order that advances American interests. The BRICS nations, which, with the exception of Russia, were all subjected to European colonization, have presented the alliance as a means of assisting postcolonial states in the Global South in becoming self-sufficient and developing. However, some contend that BRICS is really a make-believe alliance whose participants actually have quite different geopolitical viewpoints and areas of interest. According to analysts, Chinese leaders want to quickly grow BRICS in order to further their geopolitical objectives. The Russian Kremlin, which is in dire need of allies and commercial partners after its invasion of Ukraine was widely denounced, supports expansion. Instead of seeing the group as an anti-Western geopolitical bloc, India and Brazil, who are both far closer to the US than the other two states, see it as a mechanism for maintaining neutrality in a multipolar world. India has also fought multiple times with its neighboring Asian giant along their highly contested border and is cautious of Chinese aspirations at self-aggrandizement through BRICS, even if it has allied itself with China in certain areas. The organization's true power is further hampered by serious internal issues that are afflicting its main member states. The geopolitical ascent of major member states and economic growth could be slowed or even reversed if deep political and economic concerns remain unaddressed, according to analysts. However, the future of BRICS and its position in the global system are still up in the air as more nations compete for membership and tensions with the West mount. Let us now analyze some of the members specifically.

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<sup>211</sup> *Camera.it - Documenti - Temi dell'Attività parlamentare.* (n.d). <https://leg16.camera.it/465?area=2&tema=760&BRICS+%28Brasile%2C+Russia%2C+India%2C+Cina+e+Sudafrica%29>

<sup>212</sup> New Development Bank. (2024, February 22). *Home - New Development Bank.* <https://www.ndb.int/>

#### 4.1.1 Russia

Let us start by naming an old antagonist of Washington that for a long time seemed to have slumbered and instead since the 2000s has returned fully to the international scene: Russia.

In 1982, with the death of Brezhnev, who had led the Soviet Union for two decades, the period of high tensions with the Western bloc, of dramatic displays of force, such as the repression of the Prague Spring in 1968 or the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, enacted to reaffirm the stability of a crystallized and unchangeable planetary geopolitical order, came to an end. The Soviet Union seemed to be able to set itself on the road to renewal and the building of new relations. In reality, the period that followed was marked by severe ideological disorientation and a power vacuum filled, in 1985, by the election of Mikhail Gorbachev as secretary of the CCP. The years of Gorbachev's rule were marked by "perestroika" and "glasnost," a set of political and economic reforms that would lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Communist Party's power. In 1991, with the newly formed Russian Federation began the era of Boris Yeltsin and the attempt to introduce liberal-style reforms with a gradual rapprochement to the Western bloc. From the ashes of the USSR was born, on December 21, 1991, the Commonwealth of Independent States, which, however, due to the heterogeneity of the participants carrying different national interests that were difficult to harmonize, immediately manifested itself as a mere "paper integration." The legacy of the USSR in the management of international relations (e.g., in UN representation) was picked up by Russia. Yeltsin's reformism took place in the particular context of a severe economic crisis that led to the formation of powerful and violent oligarchies that effectively brought about the end of Yeltsin's leadership and the handover of power to his designated successor Vladimir Putin<sup>213</sup>.

Wladimir Putin, whose era began with a period of rapid economic expansion, came to terms with the collapse of the USSR's ideological backbone from which he derived an awareness of the need to build a new national project. The initial interest in the West (culminating in the so-called 2002 Pratica di Mare agreements with the United States on arms reduction) soon waned and, after the parenthesis of the 2008-2012 years of

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<sup>213</sup> For an in-depth discussion of Russian foreign policy in the post-1989 period, see: Giannotti A. (2016). *Fra Europa e Asia. La Politica Russa Nello Spazio Post-Sovietico*. Giappichelli Editore.

Medvedev's shadow-government (the Constitution provided for a two-term limit), Putin accelerated the realization of a new/antique idea of Russia, claiming the need to reunite the Slavic peoples of the post-Soviet space and embracing the more radical nationalist theses. The tools the recomposition project has used have been many, from strengthening the economic, energy and bureaucratic dependency ties of the peripheral territories and the now-independent republics, to the constellation of local conflicts (the most significant the one with Georgia in 2012), annexations (Crimea in 2014), and pervasive propaganda. "Playing on interdependencies is increasingly easy and advantageous for the former imperial center, and it is also possible to do so by emphasizing the priority of Russian 'vital interests' in the near abroad and independent states, giving rise to a kind of new Monroe Doctrine, justified with a "political and moral responsibility" of Russia to the countries and peoples that for centuries have been variously encompassed in the Empire"<sup>214</sup>.

Putin has thus been able to re-propose, at home and abroad to new potential partners (China and Iran first and foremost), the idea of the possibility of a new world order alternative to the liberal and liberalist one.

Within the framework of the Federation's international relations, several phases can be distinguished marked by the "Foreign Policy Doctrines" promulgated in 1993, 2000, 2008 and 2013. These documents, on the one hand, highlight the changing domestic political balances and, on the other, reflect Russia's perceptions of major events in international politics. In particular, the comparison of the 1993 doctrine with the 2000 doctrine marks a profound discontinuity between the choices of the first Yeltsin and his young Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, epigones of a strongly pro-American line, and that of the new President Vladimir Putin, a proponent of cooperation with the West hinged on Russian national interests.

What emerges most distinctly is the role of Evgenij Primakov - who succeeded Kozyrev in 1996 and was later appointed prime minister in 1998 - in defining a new approach in the country's foreign policy. The so-called "Primakov doctrine" or "multi-vector doctrine," unlike his predecessor's line, is based on the rejection of the unipolar vision

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<sup>214</sup> Vitale A. (2008), *Il sistema politico della Russia e lo "specchio" del Caucaso*, in *Il Politico* LXXIII, n. 2, pp. 77-91, cit. p. 87. Russia's version of the Monroe Doctrine, the so-called "Kozyrev Doctrine," from the surname of Andrey Kozyrev, Boris Yeltsin's first foreign minister, was born out of the fear that increasing NATO border pressure would destroy cooperation with the West and stifle any development of Russian democracy, triggering an encirclement syndrome that would refuel nationalist and authoritarian impulses.



and proposes the coexistence of a plurality of centers of gravity capable of compensating for each other: the United States, Europe, Russia, and China.

With specific regard to Russia, according to Primakov an indispensable condition for achieving international power status and acting as one of the cornerstones of the multipolar system was the recovery of centrality in the post-Soviet space. This goal has been embraced by Putin, who has made it one of the priority directions of his foreign policy, especially since his second presidential term, especially by giving considerable impetus to the process of Eurasian integration.

It must be said that the very end of the Soviet Union had been marked by the birth of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which of any future integration was supposed to be the embryo. However, the heterogeneity of the members and their respective national interests and the action of actors outside the post-Soviet area had severely limited its impact, to the point of making it a mere "bumažnaja integracija" (paper integration). With the recovery of the Eurasian vector, Moscow therefore specifically targeted those countries more inclined to greater cooperation—beginning with Kazakhstan and Belarus—proposing different formulas for deepening cooperation in various spheres. The CIS was not dismantled, but the new approach made it possible to overcome the opposition of the republics less inclined to greater integration. On this basis, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (ODKB), the Customs Union (TS), the Common Economic Space (EEP) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAES), which other countries in the post-Soviet space also joined, were gradually established.

The process of Eurasian integration has also resurrected the Churchillian dilemma. What is Russia. Europe stretched to the Pacific or the westernmost offshoot of Asia? These are anthropological questions before they are political, but they are necessary to solve the Russian conundrum and understand certain choices of the country's ruling classes. This question, moreover, invests a plurality of planes, from the historical to the philosophical, religious and literary<sup>215</sup>.

In this sense, the war in Ukraine had a deflagrating and catalyzing effect on the processes underway to build these new balances and an order that for several decades had seemed ineluctably unipolar. The war and the subsequent Western trade sanctions prompted the definition of the Putinian idea of a multipolarism formed by macro-areas fed by

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<sup>215</sup> Giannotti A. (2016). *Fra Europa e Asia. La Politica Russa Nello Spazio Post-Sovietico*. Giappichelli Editore.

economic, military forms of cooperation. Exemplary is the evolution of relations with Turkey, Iran, China and other BRICS countries.

The alliance with Turkey seemed to be one of the most curious species in the geopolitical bestiary<sup>216</sup>, the result of a "counter-nature" relationship, yet the union was achieved by overcoming, at least temporarily, misunderstandings and historical open questions.

Double-tied to the Atlantic bloc by its decades-long membership in NATO, Ankara has in fact maintained strong economic and diplomatic relations with Moscow since the 1990s. This Special Relation between the two sides of the Black Sea is rooted in the desire of both countries to reshape their foreign policy in the post-bipolar world.

Analyzing the factors that help measure the power of a state Russia in the more traditional criteria, military and economic power Russia is a great power.

Its hard power is among the top in the world, and after two years of war it has managed to avoid an economic crisis, with a growing GDP, albeit at the expense of subsidies and welfare<sup>217</sup>.

The notion of Russian soft power, a concept that embraces the ability to persuade and attract rather than coerce, is complex and multifaceted. Russia, under current leadership, has sought to project its influence beyond national borders not only through military or economic force, but also through the more subtle avenues of soft power. This effort manifests itself in a variety of ways, from media outreach and culture to sports and international diplomacy. Russia has invested in international media channels, such as RT and Sputnik, with the intention of offering an alternative narrative to global events, a move that has raised debates about the actual nature of these efforts, which are often labeled as propaganda tools.

In 2024 there are two events that could reposition Russia, for better or worse, on the chessboard, elections and the BRICS presidency.

For the elections scheduled for March 17, 2024<sup>218</sup>, it is now clear that no candidate opposed to the invasion of Ukraine will be allowed to participate. The Kremlin canceled the candidacy of politician Boris Nadezhdin, who had managed to rally opposition forces

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<sup>216</sup> Ibidem

<sup>217</sup> *L'economia russa è sempre più un'economia di guerra* | ISPI. (2023, October 5). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/leconomia-russa-e-sempre-piu-uneconomia-di-guerra-14664>

<sup>218</sup> Sauer, P. (2023, December 9). Vladimir Putin to run for Russian president again in March 2024. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/08/vladimir-putin-to-run-for-russian-president-again-in-march-2024>

around him, including sympathizers of Alexei Navalny, the biggest opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin who died on Feb. 16, 2024.

With Navalny's alleged assassination<sup>219</sup>, the ouster of any opponent from the elections will contribute to give strength to the image of Russia that the United States is pursuing<sup>220</sup>. For the BRICS presidency, the motto under the Russian presidency will be "Strengthening multilateralism for equitable global development and security." Reporting what President Putin said, Moscow will focus on positive and constructive cooperation with all countries concerned following the motto<sup>221</sup>.

Russia will hold the presidency for the first time with the new participants, the proposals are many, including those put forward especially by Iran and Brazil for the introduction of a new currency, "R5" currency i.e., a new crypto-currency based on the five currencies of the BRICS countries: Brazilian real, Russian ruble, Indian rupee, Chinese renminbi and South African rand, but convertible to other currencies. The timeframe for putting these projects into practice is long, but how Russia will coordinate the BRICS will be crucial to its image and that of the entire group.

#### 4.1.2 China

Talking about BRICS, the world order, without mentioning China is impossible.

China, in the world unified by globalization, appears an eccentric entity whose behavior in international politics is not infrequently cryptic or difficult to understand. Today's China is, using the famous expression that Winston Churchill coined in 1939 to define Russia, "a rebus wrapped in a mystery that lies within an enigma."<sup>222</sup>

Reconstructing, albeit briefly, the history and political evolution of China even from the post-Cultural Revolution onward would require in-depth studies beyond the scope of this paper, however, it can be argued that the opening of the Chinese economy to the free international market and its growth since the mid-1970s is both a development made

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<sup>219</sup> For more details: Roth, A. (2024, February 17). Western leaders point finger at Putin after Alexei Navalny's death in jail. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/16/russian-activist-and-putin-critic-alexei-navalny-dies-in-prison>

<sup>220</sup> Sauer, P. (2024, February 8). Russian anti-war candidate Boris Nadezhdin banned from election. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/08/russian-anti-war-candidate-boris-nadezhdin-says-he-is-barred-from-election>

<sup>221</sup> *Putin says BRICS attracting further support from countries sharing bloc's underlying principles*. (2024). <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/putin-says-brics-attracting-further-support-from-countries-sharing-blocs-underlying-principles/3097701>

<sup>222</sup> Churchill, W. (1939). Speech broadcast by the Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill, October 1, 1939.

possible by the legacy left by Mao Zedong and a clear break from his Soviet-inspired political line<sup>223</sup>. Mao owed victory in the revolutionary war to the peasant masses, so when he succeeded in building a solid state (1949) he initially took care of the rural population by suppressing the latifundia and initiating a health and literacy program Mao built a mass of healthy and educated workers, invaluable for the development of the industrial economy: it is due to Mao and his rule that the Chinese should rely only on themselves that China did not go into external debt like the Soviet Union and that Mao's successors found a country not bound by obligations imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The Cultural Revolution caused much damage, but it weakened the resistance of the party bureaucracy and the conservative old guard.

Mao's real successor (died 1976) was actually Deng Xiaoping, although formally the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party was Hua Guofeng, assisted by the ultraconservative Li Xiannian as economic adviser. After a brief internal struggle, the two were dismissed from all positions (1981) and Deng, strong in the prestige he derived from his revolutionary past (political commissar of the army in decisive battles against the Japanese and the Kuomintang) and endowed with a practical spirit little inclined to ideology (famous was his phrase "it doesn't matter whether the cat is gray or black, it matters that it catches the mouse") came forward with a clear idea about the direction to be taken by the country's government. In a speech on August 18, 1980, he declared, "As for the direction of the party and government, the biggest problems are bureaucracy, excessive concentration of power, patriarchal methods, lifetime tenure of leadership positions, and privileges of all sorts." A rule was established that the post of party general secretary as well as the post of head of government and other major posts in the regime should no longer be for life, and Deng named Hu Yaobang as party general secretary and Zhao Ziyang as head of government. Hu shared Deng's ideas of the need for economic reforms in a liberal direction; Zhao had distinguished himself as the party chief of Sichuan Province: he had adopted (1975) measures that in practice repealed collectivization and had the effect of increasing agricultural production and the income of peasant households. The measures were extensive and enabled an immediate and rapid prosperity of the agricultural economy, that is, of the whole of China. Household incomes improved

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<sup>223</sup>In this quick excursus we constantly refer to: Castaldo, M. (2017). La Cina e l'ordine mondiale. *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali*, 84(4), 493–512. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44686102>.

largely to the extent that the United Nations hailed China's new economic policy as the first to have successfully addressed poverty in the world<sup>224</sup>.

Over the past three decades, a series of constitutional reforms have been implemented in the People's Republic of China, but they have not in fact undermined the leading role of the Communist Party, the main center of power that exercises tight control of all political activity in villages as much as in small towns and cities.

The constitutional "changes" have taken place in the context of great economic development of Chinese society and a remarkable opening to the outside world, both in terms of trade interchange and the acquisition of tools, technologies, and know-how. The Chinese economy has applied economic liberalization measures by allowing the development of "private" enterprises but within an overall context of the state owning ownership of land, control of large industries and the financial and credit system. Within the WTO, China has, until 2016, the status of a "non-market economy" which, however, in reality coexists with "a socialist market economy."

The dizzying economic development, however, has not fundamentally altered society and politics, and even in the area of human rights, although social control by the authorities is now more difficult, the restriction on the exercise of political and civil liberties continues to be strong, bordering on repression.

This series of concessive propositions, though-they reveal to us a country in which changes, even those that from the outside might appear radical and epochal, are reabsorbed within a dominant culture, a worldview, that constantly models change on a Chinese version. On the other hand, it should equally be pointed out how the Western world often struggles to shed established interpretive categories that end up preventing a lucid understanding of the Chinese universe.

In 2013, with the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping (vice-chairman since 2011) came to the top of the party and thus the government. The son of a hero of the Long March who was a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party from which he was later expelled by Mao Zedong, he was sent to the poor provinces in the northwest to "learn from the masses." The hardships of those years led him to become "redder than the reds."<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> In the article *Life of Xi, the Outcast Who Conquered China* at [www.micromega.net/life-of-xi-jinping-the-outcast-who-conquered-china/](http://www.micromega.net/life-of-xi-jinping-the-outcast-who-conquered-china/) Xi Jinping's personality is sketched and defined in his main goal the *Zhōngguó mèng*, the Chinese Dream of the Great National Revival: To restore China to the center of the

China, especially since Xi Jinping's rise to power, has articulated its own vision of the international order, an alternative to the liberal vision promoted by the United States and the European Union. China aims to build a post-Western and post-liberal order in which sovereignty and non-interference take priority over individual rights. In this context, Beijing presents itself as a benevolent leader, able to offer "Chinese solutions" to global problems and oriented toward building a "community of common destiny." The majority of concrete initiatives are concentrated in the areas of development, investment and infrastructure. In the early years of his leadership, Xi promoted the Belt and Road Initiative (Bri, or New Silk Road) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (Aiib). In 2022, he added the Global Development Initiative (Gdi), which aims to strengthen China's role in development cooperation and poverty alleviation. In the security sector, Xi promoted the Global Security Initiative (Gsi), still a very vague project that emphasizes Chinese opposition to U.S.-led alliances and strategic polarization between democracies and authoritarianism. The G20, the BRICS summit, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are important forums for Beijing to seek consensus for its policy proposal. As Western states increasingly view China as a "systemic rival," the emphasis on development and economic cooperation, coupled with non-interference and sovereignty attract numerous endorsements in the global South.

China's world order project is the result of a complex ideological and political development influenced by three political traditions<sup>226</sup>.

The first is "post-colonial nationalism," which keeps international politics competitive and emphasizes memory. the "century of humiliation," during which China's weakness allowed European powers and Japan to subdue, divide and exploit China<sup>227</sup>.

From this perspective, the Communist Party's task is to protect the country and make it modern, prosperous and strong. This tradition, however, pits China against the West and Japan, which are seen as a brake on China's rise. On the other hand, it encourages relations with countries in the Global South that have a colonial past with China and are seen as natural partners. It also means a strong emphasis on the principles of peaceful

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World by 2049, regaining the position lost as a result of what the Chinese call the "Century of Shame and Humiliation," a period from the mid-1800s to the mid-2000s when the country was attacked and invaded by both Western powers and Japan.

<sup>226</sup> Strina, V. (2022). Dian, Matteo, La Cina, gli Stati Uniti e il futuro dell'ordine internazionale. *ERIS – European Review of International Studies*, 9(2), 332–336. <https://doi.org/10.1163/21967415-09020011>

<sup>227</sup> The century of humiliation corresponds to the period between the First Opium War (1839-1942) to the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949.

coexistence, namely. respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-alignment and interference in the domestic politics of other countries.

The second tradition is the Marxist-Leninist tradition. In contemporary China, "class struggle" is no longer the prism through which the leadership interprets international politics. Nonetheless, Marxist-Leninism remains important and is reflected primarily in two principles: the essential role of the Communist Party and the principle that confrontation with forces opposed to China is an integral part of international politics, although it need not translate into military conflict.

The third fundamental tradition is the neo-Confucian tradition, which is based on principles such as merit, harmony, hierarchy, and respect for authority. At the domestic level, Party leaders present themselves as wise and meritorious administrators who can provide prosperity and stability. Even at the international level, Xi's China recovers the Confucian cosmology, in which the Heavenly Empire was the center of the world and guaranteed benevolent hegemony to states that recognized its authority, as well as stability, prosperity, and harmony, i.e., cooperation while respecting differences.

These three traditions crucially influence the proposed international order developed during the Xi Jinping era. First, China tends to prefer forms of governance based on the primacy of sovereignty over individual rights and neutral to domestic political regime and standards. The second key aspect concerns China's status as a leading power in Asia with a status equal to that of the United States globally.

In this context, Xi redefined China's international role, described as that of building "communities of shared destiny for all humankind."<sup>228</sup> This concept emphasizes the need for inclusion and respect for political diversity for non-democratic countries and places a strong emphasis on the primacy of economic development and the rights of individuals. It also implies a new centrality of Beijing in building a just and stable order. China no longer intends to be seen as a country that must integrate itself into the Western-led international order. Instead, it claims a status as a leading power in an increasingly plural global context and advocates offering "Chinese solutions"<sup>229</sup> to the political and economic problems of the contemporary world.

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<sup>228</sup> The National Bureau of Asian Research. (2022, February 19). *China's vision for a new world order - the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)*. The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR). <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-vision-for-a-new-world-order/>

<sup>229</sup> Breslin, S. (2021). *China risen?: Studying Chinese Global Power*. Policy Press.

This vision is presented as the antithesis to the so-called "Cold War mentality," that is, the alleged U.S. attempt to polarize the system along ideological and strategic lines. The Chinese alternative would be the "new kind of relations between great powers," based on mutual respect for different values, political systems, sovereignty and core interests.

China-U.S. relations are indeed polarized, but incomparable to a return to the Cold War for two main reasons.

The first is that China makes multilateralism one of the main aspects of its order. China regards the United Nations Organization (UN) as the key institution for the contemporary order, both because Beijing holds a permanent seat on the Security Council and because the UN is considered a neutral institution not dominated by Western powers, unlike many other multilateral institutions<sup>230</sup>. As a result, China has promoted a twofold effort: to expand the representation of the non-Western, non-democratic world within existing institutions and to create what it calls "new-type institutions." These are presented as neutral to the political regime of the states that join them, respectful of the principles of sovereignty and non-interference, and characterized by strong Chinese leadership.

BRI and AIIB are the most prominent examples of this approach. Between 2021 and 2022, Xi Jinping launched two new initiatives: the GSI and the GDI. These two initiatives are the most recent evolution of China's proposed international order. As was the case previously with the BRI, here again, the initial announcement did not define in detail the contents of the Chinese proposal, and the more concrete initiatives will take shape only in the following months and years<sup>231</sup>.

To date, GSI reiterates many of the founding concepts of the Chinese position, from respect for sovereignty to non-interference, combined with a renewed emphasis on the role of the United Nations and the centrality of the concepts of "comprehensive security" and "indivisible security." The former concept refers to issues already on China's foreign and security policy agenda, such as food security, counterterrorism, humanitarian disaster assistance, cybersecurity, climate change and energy security<sup>232</sup>.

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<sup>230</sup> Foot, R. (2020). *China, the UN, and human protection: Beliefs, Power, Image*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>231</sup> Zeng, J. (2020). *Slogan Politics: Understanding Chinese foreign policy concepts*. <https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/id/eprint/144442/>

<sup>232</sup> "Comprehensive National Security" unleashed: How Xi's approach shapes China's policies at home and abroad. (2022, September 15). Merics.



The second, originally coined by the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, has been taken up by both Moscow and Beijing in recent years to criticize the expansion of NATO and the growing cooperation between U.S. allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. Indeed, from the Chinese perspective, promoting indivisible security means considering "the security of each country as inseparable from that of other countries in the region and never at the expense of that of another."<sup>233</sup>

This is presented in contrast to the alleged "hegemonism" and "Cold War mentality" (i.e., polarization between democratic allies and authoritarian opponents), proposed by the United States.

The GDI presents itself as complementary to the BRI and as functional to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. GDI will reorganize and expand Chinese initiatives in areas such as poverty reduction, food security, Covid-19 vaccines, development aid, climate change, and connectivity.

The second main reason why there will not be a return to a bipolar order, according to this analysis, is that as Professor Sergio Fabbrini points out, the Chinese leadership cannot build a coalition of states in an anti-American function, it does not have sufficient soft power, nor is it easy for nationalists to ally, rather it can deconstruct the alliances that America seeks to foster<sup>234</sup>.

This concept is very clear when we look at the other two founding members of the BRIC, Brazil and India, which can be considered non-allied partners of China, given also their proximity to the United States, but both are nonetheless consciously part of the Chinese project.

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<sup>233</sup> *China's global Security Initiative: When the Process Matters More Than the Content.* (2023).

<sup>234</sup> Fabbrini, S. (2023, February 27). Nel nuovo disordine mondiale la Ue deve cambiare pelle. *Il Sole 24 ORE*.<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/nel-nuovo-disordine-mondiale-ue-deve-cambiare-pelle>  
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### 4.1.3 Brazil

As we have said Brazil, along with India, are part of the BRICS, they are partners with China, but still remain very close to the US. Brazil represents the major non-NATO ally since July 2019, it is an active member in the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation<sup>235</sup> launched in September 2023, in March 2022, the Brazilian Congress ratified the Research, Development, Test and Evaluations (RDT&E) Agreement with the United States, allowing for potential partnerships between U.S. and Brazilian defense technology companies. The U.S. Department of State's Bureaus of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Forest Service, and other partners, provide law enforcement and justice sector training for Brazilian counterparts to support their efforts to combat nature crimes that impact the United States, Brazil, and the region.

The United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the G20, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization are just a few of the international organizations in which Brazil and the United States are committed to multilateral engagement.

Brazil and the United States have collaborated for the past two years to offer pre-deployment training to the Malawi Defense Force Battalion, which is deploying to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for a peacekeeping mission. Their instructors have improved Malawi's performance in the mission and pre-deployment training.

The Latin American Association of Training Centers for Peacekeeping Operations (ALCOPAZ) designated Brazil as its 2023 Presidency. ALCOPAZ, led by Brazil, created a course on Environmental Management in Peace Operations, which it began offering regionally in September<sup>236</sup>.

Nevertheless, the partnership between Brazil and China has also become increasingly cooperative.

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<sup>235</sup> The 38-country Partnership enables Atlantic coastal states to collaborate on common challenges to advance a peaceful, stable, prosperous, open, safe, and cooperative Atlantic region and promote a healthy, sustainable, and resilient Atlantic resources.

<sup>236</sup> All the information is from: U.S. Embassy in Brazil. (n.d.). Fact Sheet: U.S. Relations With Brazil. Retrieved <https://br.usembassy.gov/fact-sheet-u-s-relations-with-brazil/#:~:text=Brazil%20became%20a%20Major%20Non,and%20Brazilian%20defense%20technology%20companies>.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's April 12-15, 2023, trip to Beijing marked a pivotal moment in Brazil's international relations, demonstrating a clear intention to strengthen and deepen political and economic ties with China. This visit, which is part of the broader context of the BRICS group, highlighted Brazil's desire to reconnect with its strategic partners and explore new opportunities for cooperation. During this bilateral meeting, the presidents of Brazil and China signed a series of agreements spanning a variety of sectors, from agriculture to aeronautics, underscoring a significant revival of bilateral relations following Lula's inauguration in January. The Brazilian president laid out his vision for the country's future, aiming for re-industrialization that promotes economic growth and job creation, with China as a key partner in this journey.

The visit ushered in a new phase of challenges for Brazil, which aspires to transform its economy through Chinese direct investment, overcoming its traditional dependence on commodity exports. Brazil, over the years, has emerged as a major exporter of natural resources to China, with the latter absorbing a wide range of Brazilian products, from soybeans to oil, thus contributing to an intense trade exchange between the two countries. China, which became Brazil's main export market in 2009, is an insatiable consumer of Brazilian raw materials, but this visit marked the intention of both countries to diversify and deepen their economic cooperation. In terms of political and economic relations, Lula's visit to Beijing represented an attempt to realign Brazil with China after a period of strained relations under the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, who had shown a preference for closer alignment with the United States under the Trump administration. Lula, on the other hand, exhibited a willingness to position Brazil as an influential player on the international stage, promoting strong relations not only with the global South but also with major Western powers, thus signaling a foreign policy that seeks to balance and strengthen ties globally. During the visit, the two presidents signed 15 bilateral agreements, many of which focused on technological cooperation and innovation, as well as pacts covering trade and agriculture. These agreements marked a shared commitment to facilitating bilateral trade by removing unnecessary barriers and expediting procedures such as customs clearance of goods. In addition, a new protocol on sanitary requirements for animal protein exports from Brazil to China and a work plan on electronic certificates for animal products were signed, marking a commitment in strengthening and simplifying trade relations. Lula also visited the headquarters of Huawei, one of China's technology giants, where he discussed the potential of the 5G network and how this technology can contribute to a digital revolution in Brazil, with significant implications for areas such as

telemedicine and education. This aspect of the visit underscores the importance Brazil places on technological innovation and digital cooperation with China, despite concerns expressed by the United States about security and espionage.

The appointment of Dilma Rousseff, former president of Brazil, as head of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) signals a strengthening of Brazil's role within this institution, which is proposed as an alternative to Western financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This move highlights Brazil's ambition to promote more balanced global governance and support the economic development of emerging countries through infrastructure financing and sustainable development projects.

Finally, the visit highlighted the vision of a multipolar world shared by Brazil and China, with Lula expressing a willingness to reduce the dominance of the U.S. dollar in international trade by favoring the use of local currencies such as the renminbi in trade among BRICS countries. This approach reflects a desire to diversify global economic relations and reduce dependence on Western currencies, although significant challenges remain in terms of practical implementation.

In conclusion, Lula's visit to Beijing represents a watershed moment for Brazil, marking a renewed openness to China and the world, with the goal of strengthening its international presence and promoting an agenda of cooperation, sustainable development and multipolarity. With an eye on future G20 presidencies in 2024 and the potential hosting of COP30 in 2025, Brazil is positioning itself as a key player in the global scenario, seeking balances and synergies in an increasingly interconnected and complex world<sup>237</sup>.

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<sup>237</sup> Source of all the data: Planalto, P. D. (2023, April 21). *Brasile: non-allineato a trazione cinese* | ISPI. ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/brasile-non-allineato-a-trazione-cinese-126183>

#### 4.1.4 India

The Financial Times suggests that by 2050 India's purchasing power will be 30 percent greater than that of the United States<sup>238</sup>, Goldman Sachs has predicted that by 2075 it will be the second largest global economy<sup>239</sup>, these are not the first optimistic projections being made about India, but this time there are several positive trends that are converging<sup>240</sup>.

According to the study by Bhaskar Chakravorti and Gaurav Dalmia these trends are demand, supply and the facilitating systemic factors.

On the demand side, booming consumption, context-appropriate innovation and green transition are India's strengths.

"Context-appropriate innovation" refers to the ability of companies to deeply understand and effectively respond to the cultural, economic and social specificities of a given market. In the case of India, this means recognizing the diversity and complexity of its "middle class" and adapting products, services and marketing strategies to meet the unique needs of various consumer segments within the country.

Despite broad definitions of "middle class," most Indians fall into low-income categories, with only a small portion fitting global middle-income standards. However, even those in lower income brackets have consumer aspirations that companies can meet with targeted value propositions. This requires significant adaptation of operations, from manufacturing to supply chain, to offer affordable products while maintaining quality and attractiveness. Examples of success in this regard include Suzuki with its Wagon R, an affordable vehicle that has gained a strong presence in the Indian automotive market, and global giants such as Netflix, Amazon, and Disney, which have had to adapt their content and service strategies to resonate with local audiences. McDonald's has also realized the importance of customizing its menu to meet Indian culinary preferences, introducing vegetarian options and local snacks.

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<sup>238</sup> *India is well placed to be a global economic force.* (n.d.). Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/6e28446c-4a38-11e9-bde6-79eaea5acb64>

<sup>239</sup> How India could rise to the world's second-biggest economy. (2023, July 6). *Goldman Sachs*. <https://www.goldmansachs.com/intelligence/pages/how-india-could-rise-to-the-worlds-second-biggest-economy.html>

<sup>240</sup> From this point the only reference will be: Dalmia, G. & Bhaskar C. (2023, September 13). *È l'India la prossima grande potenza economica del mondo?* Hbr Italia. <https://www.hbritalia.it/homepage/2023/09/13/news/e-lindia-la-prossima-grande-potenza-economica-del-mondo-15652/>

In parallel, India is seen as a fertile ground for the green transition, with ambitious national targets for renewable energy and reduced carbon emissions. This opens additional opportunities for companies to innovate sustainably, offering products and services that not only meet the economic and cultural needs of Indian consumers but also contribute to the country's environmental goals.

Lastly, the consumption boom is linked to a positive force on the supply side: the demographic dividend.

India's demographic advantage is a key component of its growth story. By 2030, it is estimated that India will have more than 1 billion people of working age, with the dependency ratio at its lowest point (31.2 percent), contributing to nearly a quarter of the increase in the global labor force. This period of abundant labor force, expected to extend to 2055, has already played a crucial role in the economic development of other Asian nations, such as Japan, South Korea and China. In addition, India boasts the largest number of English-speaking STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) graduates in the world.

In terms of access to finance, India's financial markets are well placed, attracting investors looking for alternatives to China. The MSCI India stock index has seen remarkable growth, and Indian banks show strength and high valuations, with HDFC Bank emerging as one of the largest financial institutions globally. The informal sector, which comprises most of the workforce, is also seeing improvements in access to credit, expanding opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Another area where India is making significant progress is in infrastructure, both physical and digital. The current government has increased investment in this sector, resulting in rapid expansion of highways, doubling the number of airports, and modernizing the railway system. In parallel, India has made great strides in developing its digital infrastructure, becoming the second largest country in the world in terms of internet users. This has led to the creation of a robust public digital infrastructure that facilitates access to public services and credit for a wider range of citizens, positioning India as a leader in digital payments globally.

India is at a crucial juncture in its development, a turning point marked by a number of facilitators that promise to accelerate its path to economic growth, but also by obstacles that threaten to slow or divert this path.

First, policy and regulatory reforms undertaken in recent years have created a more fertile ground for business. The introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in 2016

and the reduction of tens of thousands of regulations have simplified the business landscape, making India a more attractive place for domestic and international investment. This momentum is being reinforced by state governments, which are actively working to make their regions more welcoming to businesses through incentives and easier business start-ups.

In parallel, the global geopolitical environment is working in India's favor. Tensions between China and Western economies have opened new doors for India, allowing it to position itself as an alternative base for manufacturing and innovation. Examples of this trend include Apple's decision to manufacture millions of iPhones in India and Micron Technology's investment in a new assembly and testing facility, signs that India is becoming an attractive hub for global supply chains.

Another pillar of this transformation is the Indian diaspora, a global network of individuals of Indian origin who hold prominent positions in business, technology, and other key sectors. This diaspora serves as a bridge between India and the world, facilitating trade, investment and knowledge transfers that are vital to India's integration into the global economy.

However, the road to progress is strewn with challenges. India's economic growth, while impressive, has not been evenly distributed among the population. A significant disparity in wealth and unequal access to essential services such as health and education raise concerns about inclusive development. Regional and language tensions, along with increasingly divisive politics, add further complications to the country's social and political landscape.

Moreover, despite a large demographic potential, India has yet to fully utilize its workforce. Informal employment, inadequate vocational education and training systems, and declining female labor participation are significant obstacles to fully exploiting the country's human potential.

Finally, while India has made great strides in improving the ease of doing business, structural challenges remain. Issues such as land acquisition, slow judicial processes, and regulatory barriers continue to hinder innovation and entrepreneurship.

In sum, India faces a historic opportunity to consolidate its role in the global arena. By leveraging its strengths and proactively addressing its challenges, it can chart a course toward a future of prosperity and inclusion. However, this will require a clear vision, wise policies, and a collective commitment to overcome the obstacles in its path.

#### 4.1.5 South Africa

South Africa leads the continent with the most advanced economy, diplomatic clout, and relations with other states. Pretoria is adamant about remaining at least nominally non-aligned with any major power, although the BRICS, increasingly seen as challengers to the West, remains a cornerstone of its foreign policy.

It is prevented from taking sides by its economic connections with both China and the US. More trade occurs between China and South Africa than with any other nation worldwide. Of its overall products trade, around 24% comes from trade with China.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, the nation exports a sizable portion—roughly 11%—to the US, where the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) grants it access to tariffs for a number of industries<sup>241</sup>.

South Africa's membership in BRICS is also a key factor in its approach to competing with the United States and China. From the time of its 2010 admission to the BRICS (at China's invitation), Pretoria has seen cooperation with China and the other BRICS nations as a way to advance a multipolar global order<sup>242</sup>.

Pretoria's perspective on geopolitical rivalry is also influenced by its larger understanding of the global order. The ideal international order, as perceived by South Africans, would neither resemble the unipolarity of the post-Cold War era or the bipolarity of the Cold War era, in which NATO intervened in Libya in 2011 against the will of the African Union. Rather, they favor the emergence of several power centers within a framework that provides developing and weaker nations with additional authority<sup>243</sup>.

Pretoria's victory over apartheid lends it moral credibility and encourages it to back an international system that allows developing nations to be heard more clearly. South Africa, however, has emphasized that it does not view the BRICS as an anti-Western alliance, in part because of growing differences with the US over Israel's and Ukraine's wars.

Due to the Soviet Union's past support of the anti-apartheid movement, the African National Congress has historical links to Moscow.

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<sup>241</sup> ZAF. *Trade | WITS Data*. (n.d.). <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountrySnapshot/en/ZAF>

<sup>242</sup> CNBC. (2023, 26 gennaio). Russia, South Africa, and a redesigned global order. <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/01/26/russia-south-africa-and-a-redesigned-global-order.html>

<sup>243</sup> Goba, T. (2023, August 20). Brics growth evidence of 'multipolarity' of the times, says Ramaphosa. Eyewitness News. <https://ewn.co.za/2023/08/20/president-ramaphosa-trumps-sa-as-epicentre-of-multi-polo-era>



The friendship between the two caused a diplomatic incident with Washington,<sup>244</sup> Despite this, it is evident that South African officials do not share their Western counterparts' perspective on the conflict in Ukraine. Pretoria has called its stance on the conflict "actively non-aligned," declined to ally with the West against Russia, and refrained from voting in favor of any UN General Assembly resolution pertaining to Ukraine. Although his nation cannot "condone the use of force and the violation of international law," South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa has said that his nation will not adopt "a very adversarial stance toward Russia."<sup>245</sup> South Africa is now more friendly toward Russia than the majority of other growing nations, such as Brazil, Indonesia, and Nigeria, all of which have expressed disapproval of the invasion at the UN.

On Dec. 29, 2023, South Africa filed a petition with the International Court of Justice to initiate proceedings against Israel over alleged violations in the Gaza Strip by referring to the 1948 Genocide Convention<sup>246</sup>.

In analyzing the case, the court indicated some interim measures including: Israel shall take all measures in its power to prevent the commission of all acts falling within the scope of Article II of the Convention; The State of Israel shall take immediate and effective measures to enable it to provide urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the living conditions of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip; The State of Israel shall submit a report to the court on all measures taken to give effect to this effect of this order within one month from the date of this order<sup>247</sup>.

The trial constitutes point of confrontation between U.S. and South Africa, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, on a visit to Israel a day before the start of the court proceedings, said South Africa's charges are "without merit" and that the case "distracts the world" from efforts to find a lasting solution to the conflict.

It will have to be seen whether the moral law will be above the laws of the marketplace.

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<sup>244</sup> For more details: Reporter, G. S. (2023, May 12). US accuses South Africa of providing arms to Russia. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/11/us-accuses-south-africa-of-providing-arms-to-russia-reports>

<sup>245</sup> S Africa's Ramaphosa: NATO to blame for Russia's war in Ukraine. (2022, March 18). *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/18/update-1-s-africas-ramaphosa-blames-nato-for-russias-war-in-ukraine>

<sup>246</sup> International Court of Justice. (2024, January 26). Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel). <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-sum-01-00-en.pdf>

<sup>247</sup> *Ibidem*

## 4.2 MENA

An important game for the reconstruction of a new world order is being played in the MENA region.

The MENA region is not considered among the United Nations Regional Groups, nor by the United Nations Geoscheme, some UN agencies have tried to define the region by giving conflicting definitions.

In 2003, the World Bank stated that 21 territories were part of the MENA region, but from which Turkey, one of the bastion countries of the Middle East and Greater Middle East, was excluded<sup>248</sup>.

A more recent FAO definition from 2015, counts 21 states excluding both Turkey and Iraq from the country count<sup>249</sup>.

While the UNSD definition we refer to includes 24 territories, including both Turkey and Israel<sup>250</sup>.

While exceptional actors, they are still part of a geographical area whose membership they cannot ignore.

Indeed, the MENA region has a strategic geographic location, serving as a bridge between Asia, Africa and Europe. It controls crucial sea passages such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant percentage of the world's maritime trade and oil transits. This position makes it a focal point for international trade and military strategies, with which Israel and Turkey cannot fail to reckon.

The area is rich in energy resources which further makes it a strategic point for a world order that cannot fail to come to terms with the climate and energy crisis that our century is experiencing.

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<sup>248</sup> Six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates [UAE]), and 15 other countries or territories: Algeria, Djibouti, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, the Republic of Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza.

Dipak D. & Kamel N. M. (August 2003). "*Trade, Investment, and Development in the Middle East and North Africa*" (PDF). [documents1.worldbank.org](https://documents1.worldbank.org). World Bank.

<sup>249</sup> The 21 MENA countries are Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

*Publications | FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (2015) Publications. <https://www.fao.org/publications/en>

<sup>250</sup> Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara, Yemen.

The focal point are the countries of the Persian Gulf, which are themselves united in the international organization Cooperation Council for the States of the Arab Gulf, abbreviated GCC.

For the world's major oil producers, the main objectives are expressed in Article 4 of the Cooperation Council Charter: to attain unity among Member States, to improve and expand the current areas of collaboration, ties, and depth that exists between their peoples in a variety of fields, to create a comparable laws in a number of areas, such as financial and economic matters, trade immigration, and costumes and communications; to create scientific research to foster joint ventures and private sector cooperation for the benefit of their peoples, and to promote scientific and technology advancement in the areas of industry, mining, agriculture, water resources, and animal resources<sup>251</sup>.

Recognizing the need for a global energy transition, countries such as the UAE have launched ambitious plans such as "Vision 2030," aimed at positioning themselves as leaders in renewable energy and advanced technology. These efforts not only show a commitment to sustainability but also signal a shift toward more diversified and resilient economies. In addition to their wealth in natural resources, these countries manage some of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, such as the Saudi Public Investment Fund and the Abu Dhabi Investment Fund, investing in key global sectors including real estate, technology and renewable energy. These investments not only expand their economic influence but also help diversify their economies beyond oil dependence, a crucial step toward future sustainability and innovation.

Through investments in media and entertainment, as well as the promotion of cultural and sporting events with global resonance, Gulf countries aim to expand their soft power. Events such as Expo 2020 in Dubai and the FIFA World Cup in Qatar in 2022 have offered unique platforms to influence global public opinion and strengthen international relations.

In sum, through their wealth in natural resources, control of strategic geographic locations, global financial investments, and commitment to innovation and sustainability, Persian Gulf countries are playing a key role in restructuring the new world order. Their ability to maintain regional stability, navigate global economic and environmental challenges, and influence international geopolitics will continue to be vital in the coming

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<sup>251</sup> *The charter*. (n.d.). <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/AboutGCC/Pages/Primarylaw.aspx>

years. Sources such as the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and various geopolitical think tanks and research centers provide in-depth analysis and data that support this overview, highlighting the crucial importance of the Gulf countries in the current global context<sup>252</sup>.

The Gulf countries also have a great responsibility regarding the entire MENA region for the ecological transition.

COP28 held in Dubai in November 2023 was a platform for MENA countries to express their concerns and needs regarding the climate crisis, which is manifesting its effects through heat waves, droughts, and natural disasters in the region. There is a clear need for a collective response to this common threat, which requires a shift from an ideological to a pragmatic approach in managing the transition to green energy.

The conference was also an opportunity for the UAE to consolidate its image as a leader in the fight against climate change and to promote the interests of the global South, emphasizing the importance of access to clean energy in developing countries and seeking to position itself as a strategic mediator between East and West.

However, it emerged at the very occasion of the Summit, the great difference between all countries in the area, where only Kuwait, Sudan and the Palestinian Authority have developed National Adaptation Plans.

Morocco and Tunisia also stand out for their commitment to ambitious carbon neutrality and energy efficiency targets, underscoring the diversity of strategies in the region in the face of the common challenge of climate change.

While the fragility of some countries, exacerbated by conflict and instability, limits their ability to respond effectively to climate impacts, as demonstrated by the devastating consequences of storms and floods in Libya<sup>253</sup>.

Speaking of the MENA region, it is indeed impossible not to refer to the turmoil that runs through it, both politically and religiously, the scene of the most heinous consequences of Islamic terrorism<sup>254</sup>, is one of the crucial points for global stability.

Within the MENA region an important focus should be made on Turkey.

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<sup>252</sup> *Golfo Persico* | ISPI. (n.d.). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/tag/golfo-persico>

<sup>253</sup> All data from: *COP28: Where does the MENA region stand on climate change?* | ISPI. (2024). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/cop28-where-does-the-mena-region-stand-on-climate-change-156010>

<sup>254</sup> See p.82 of the following work

#### 4.2.1 Turkey

It is important to devote a space, albeit a small one, to Turkey.

Turkey is today one of the most active players in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. From Syria to Libya via the eastern Mediterranean, Ankara plays a leading role in the region's major conflicts and crisis contexts. The ambition to establish itself as a regional power has guided the foreign policy of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) since it came to power in 2002. However, Turkey's external strategy has undergone significant transformations, shifting from an approach based on soft power, mediation, and economic integration, known as the "zero problems with neighbors" policy, to a more militarized and interventionist policy since 2015. This shift was influenced both by external factors, such as the deteriorating situation in the post-2011 Middle East neighborhood, and by a changed perception of internal and external security threats in the country. Turkey has thus found itself militarily involved in numerous crisis theaters, often turned into proxy wars by other regional actors vying for supremacy.

Ankara has faced progressive isolation due to its political choices, including support for the Muslim Brotherhood, which has deteriorated relations with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates but strengthened ties with Qatar. This Turkey-Qatar alliance has proved mutually beneficial, with Qatar supporting the struggling Turkish economy and Turkey offering military support to Qatar.

Turkey's relations with Iran continue to oscillate between cooperation and competition, while tensions with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates add complexity to the regional landscape. Turkish foreign policy is also used as a tool to strengthen domestic consensus by emphasizing threats to national security and promoting nationalism<sup>255</sup>.

Turkey maintains a complex and multifaceted position vis-à-vis the United States, China and Russia, seeking to balance its economic, strategic and political interests without compromising relations with any of these key global players.

In relation to the United States, Turkey is a NATO member and has historically anchored its foreign policy to Western institutions, which has benefited its security and economic development. However, it has also shown interest in alternative organizations dominated less by the West, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS group,

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<sup>255</sup> *Nuovo protagonismo della Turchia nello scacchiere regionale* | ISPI. (2022, December 9). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/nuovo-protagonismo-della-turchia-nello-scacchiere-regionale-28164>

highlighting some distance from U.S. policies, particularly regarding China and international sanctions.

Toward China, Turkey has a relationship that varies from caution to cooperation. Although it has withdrawn its decision to purchase a Chinese missile defense system, Turkey seeks to take advantage economically and infrastructurally of its relationship with China. It is part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and hopes to use Chinese support to become a transcontinental transportation hub. However, there are tensions related to Beijing's treatment of the Uyghur population<sup>256</sup>, and Turkey is wary of the "debt diplomacy" associated with the BRI<sup>257</sup>.

In relation to Russia, despite having a history of conflict and competition for influence in strategic areas, Turkey has developed significant economic and energy ties with Russia. These ties include tourism and natural gas imports, making Ankara cautious in managing its relationship with Moscow to avoid retaliation. Turkey has shown some openness in mediating between Russia and other international actors, despite past and current tensions.

Turkey exercises a flexible and pragmatic foreign policy, seeking to maximize its strategic and economic interests by maintaining balanced relations with major world powers, exploiting its unique geopolitical position to strengthen its role on the international stage<sup>258</sup>.

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<sup>256</sup> Wong, K. (2022, November 17). China-Turkey ties tipped for growth under belt and road but Nato, Uygur issue stand in the way. *South China Morning Post*. <https://www.scmp.com/economy/global-economy/article/3199562/china-turkey-ties-tipped-growth-under-belt-and-road-nato-uygur-issue-stand-way>

<sup>257</sup> Gürel, B., & Kozluca, M. (2022). Chinese investment in Turkey: the Belt and Road initiative, rising expectations and ground realities. *European Review*, 30(6), 806–834. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1062798721000296>

<sup>258</sup> The Economist. (2023, January 16). Turkey has a newly confrontational foreign policy. *The Economist*. <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2023/01/16/turkey-has-a-newly-confrontational-foreign-policy>

### 4.3 European Union

So far, we have talked about new actors, new developments, how these may or may not influence a new global order, but the old continent is always there.

What Europe will be part of the new world order?

If we were to take as a reference the reaction, albeit slow, that Europe has had to the pandemic, we should be optimistic. Compared to the immobility of the previous decade, it has had a sprint like a hundred-metre runner<sup>259</sup>.

Examining the current economic and geopolitical challenges, it becomes evident that, beyond appearances, the reality reflects a growing sense of fatigue. Take, for example, geopolitical issues, such as the latest conflict between Israel and Hamas. Although the European Council seemed united in its call for humanitarian pauses and corridors on Oct. 27, on the same day European countries showed divisions in voting on a resolution for a humanitarian truce at the United Nations. This shows a disunity hidden behind a facade of unity.

Similarly, Europe appears united in supporting Ukraine, with the European Council approving the start of accession negotiations. However, reality suggests an uncertain future for Ukraine, with accession negotiations that will be lengthy and complex, and with uncertainties about financial and military support, especially considering internal EU divisions and general weariness toward the conflict.

On the economic front, tensions between appearance and reality are evident in the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, with splits between northern and southern Europe. Although a compromise has been reached, deep divisions remain, reflecting the lack of a common vision for Europe's economic future. These rifts are further exacerbated by differences in the ability to provide state aid and industrial and trade policy ambitions that risk widening divisions between member countries.

As European elections approach, the risk of immobility increases, with decisions made on an ad hoc basis that offer only a semblance of unity. This short-term approach risks neglecting broader strategic issues that would require clear visions and ambitious economic measures. Against this backdrop, the EU is faced with the challenge of not wasting future crises in order to move forward on a more strategic and united path, although meeting this challenge will be difficult before and after the elections.

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<sup>259</sup> *L'Europa è tornata. O forse no* | ISPI. (2023, December 22). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/leuropa-e-tornata-o-forse-no-158111>

For the European Union to assume a more significant role in promoting and protecting multilateralism and in forming and deepening alliances, a series of reforms are needed in three main areas to increase the credibility of its claim to a larger global role<sup>260</sup>.

First, addressing distributional concerns domestically is a key prerequisite for entering new trade agreements. The European social model plays an important role in reducing inequality and is rightly seen as a way to mitigate the impact of rapid change on citizens in an era of globalization and technological change. However, many EU countries still need to reform their social systems to ensure inclusive growth and better social protection. The EU's role should mainly be to empower its members to achieve the desired levels of redistribution by effectively combating tax evasion and social fraud related to the single market.

Second, the governance of EU trade and investment policy has become unwieldy. Recent difficulties in signing CETA have increased partners' doubts about the EU's ability to deliver on commitments. We believe it is imperative that the EU institutions regain the trust of the public to negotiate trade agreements on their behalf. It is good that the president of the European Commission has announced greater transparency regarding the way negotiations are conducted. The opinion of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement clarified which parts of the agreement fall under the exclusive competence of the EU (essentially everything related to trade) and which can only be concluded by the EU and member states jointly (essentially some clauses on foreign investment). Based on this view, the Commission decided to split the EU-Singapore agreement into two separate agreements: a trade-only agreement to be concluded only by the EU, and then to be ratified by the Council and the European Parliament, and an investment-only agreement to be concluded by both the EU and the member states, and then to be ratified by the Council and national parliaments. We agree that this is a sensible strategy, including for future trade agreements, in order to avoid a situation where individual member states hold the EU hostage in an area such as trade policy, where the EU has exclusive competence.

Third, the EU, as a large open economy, cannot sustain large current account surpluses on a sustainable basis. Large surpluses, and particularly Germany's surplus, are the result of imbalances in the euro area that must be resolved regardless of the global environment.

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<sup>260</sup> Demertzis, M. (2018). *Europe in a new world order*. Wirtschaftsdienst. <https://www.wirtschaftsdienst.eu/inhalt/jahr/2018/heft/13/beitrag/europe-in-a-new-world-order.html>



Structural reforms at the national level, such as addressing over-indebtedness and remaining banking problems in other countries, could further stimulate demand. Such actions in surplus and formerly deficit countries will help accelerate the normalization of European Central Bank policy and strengthen the euro, thereby also helping to resolve the euro area's large surplus.

European foreign policy is complex and multifaceted, resulting from the coexistence of member states' national foreign policies and a common foreign policy framework at the level of the European Union (EU). Internal and external dynamics strongly influence this structure, sometimes leading to divisions and dependencies. The EU tries to act collectively through the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the figure of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. However, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is primarily driven by national governments, which retain sovereign control over key decisions, often requiring unanimity for major decisions. EU member states often have different interests and strategic priorities, which can lead to divergent external positions. This is evident in issues such as relations with Russia, migration crisis management, and the weakening of the EU's effectiveness as a unified global actor.

European foreign policy is historically and strategically tied to the United States, particularly through NATO for collective security. This dependence has been highlighted on issues such as missile defense, international crisis response, and counterterrorism. Although the EU aspires to greater strategic autonomy, the reality often shows that European security is still closely tied to U.S. policies and actions.

In recent years, there has been a push for greater European "strategic autonomy," with the goal of reducing dependence on the United States and increasing the EU's ability to act independently. This includes the development of its own defense capabilities, such as the Permanent European Defense (PESCO) project<sup>261</sup>, and initiatives for greater integration in security and defense policy; these 2024 elections could be crucial for such a development.

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<sup>261</sup> For more details: Lucarelli, S. (2024). *The EU's "Strategic Autonomy": A Mixed Bag*. In A. Colombo & P. Magri (Eds.), *Europe in the Age of Insecurity* (ISPI Report 2024). [https://www.ispionline.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ISPIReport2024\\_Europe-in-the-age-of-insecurity.title\\_comp.pdf](https://www.ispionline.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ISPIReport2024_Europe-in-the-age-of-insecurity.title_comp.pdf)

The EU's divided foreign policy has been evident in the context of relations with China, where some member states have pursued bilateral agreements that sometimes conflict with a more critical common European position on human rights and security issues.

The departure of the United Kingdom from the EU has also had an impact on foreign policy, removing one of the most important military and diplomatic actors from the common decision-making process and potentially leading to greater fragmentation.

Challenges such as climate change, global pandemics and cybersecurity require a more coordinated and unified approach, but EU responses to these global threats continue to be influenced by national policies.

In conclusion, as the EU strives to strengthen its unique voice in foreign policy, internal divisions and historical dependence on the United States make this goal a complex and gradual process. The challenge for the EU remains to balance national sovereignty with the need for a more integrated foreign and security policy and strategic autonomy.

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

È chiaro che l'idea di una governance mondiale regolata dal Washington Consensus è tramontata.

Le crisi, insegna la storia del Trecento europeo, non portano la fine del mondo. Semmai introducono un nuovo ordine, dopo una fase di necessario disordine. Oggi siamo nella fase del disordine, ma a breve un nuovo ordine si ricostituirà.

I giochi geopolitici si compiono su tempistiche diverse, e comunque su due piani: uno tattico, che produce alleanze anche innaturali e comunque a scadenza; uno strategico, di lungo periodo, che invece produce a tendere conflittualità e, potenzialmente, future guerre. Oggi siamo nella fase tattica<sup>262</sup>.

La guerra tra Israele e Hamas rallenterà sicuramente la cristallizzazione di un nuovo ordine che secondo questa analisi si configurerà come un ordine multipolare.

Non si tratterà di un ordine bipolare che vedrà scontrare un Washington Consensus contro un Beijing Consensus, ma sicuramente queste due superpotenze avranno un ruolo chiave nella guida dei loro alleati.

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<sup>262</sup> *Nuovo ordine mondiale: tre sfide dal Global South* | ISPI. (2023, July 31). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/nuovo-ordine-mondiale-tre-sfide-dal-global-south-137631>

The most frequent objection to the "multipolarism" thesis is that the "poles," to be such, should all have a more or less equivalent weight; the objection, however, is weak, not only from an empirical point of view, but also from an equal scientific point of view.

If by "poles," we mean geopolitical masses capable of exerting a pull, that is, capable of exerting an influence on the totality of international relations such that the other "poles" are forced to take them into account in their calculations, then it will be necessary to recognize that the world has always been multipolar, at least since it constituted a totality<sup>263</sup>.

The idea of a multipolar world order is reminiscent of a global chess board, where moves are no longer monopolized by a single superpower, but are the result of a series of strategies pursued by different influential players. In this scenario, forums such as the G7, G20 and potentially a renewed G8 become the stages where crucial dialogues take place and alliances are woven.

Let's start with the G7, which traditionally brings together some of the most industrialized nations. In this club, decisions have often resonated through the global economy, but in a multipolar order, the G7 may seek to renew itself, perhaps by re-incorporating Russia and becoming a G8 again. This could symbolize a desire to bridge over past political divisions and work together to address shared challenges such as regulating new technologies and responding to climate change.

Now, imagine the G20, a broader circle that includes both advanced and emerging economies. This could become the preferred meeting place to discuss issues that transcend national borders. The participation of giants like China and India is a reminder of growing economic interdependence and distributed influence. Here, conversations could gravitate to how to manage the global economy in a way that is equitable and sustainable for all.

Outside of these forums, we might see smaller states and international organizations forming coalitions, seeking to exert their collective influence. Multinational corporations and NGOs are also joining the dialogue, sometimes leading conversations on issues such as human rights and the environment that transcend national borders.

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<sup>263</sup> Graziano, M. (2019). *Geopolitica. Orientarsi nel grande disordine internazionale*.

The digital domain and cybersphere emerge as areas where cooperation is critical. We may see the emergence of new international institutions dedicated solely to shaping the future of technology, with broad participation reflecting global interest.

And then there is defense and security, arenas in which historic alliances such as NATO could be complemented or challenged by new groups. These dynamics reflect the need to balance influence and address international security threats together.

Finally, we cannot ignore the urgent challenge of climate change. A multipolar order must find ways to join forces to combat this existential threat. We could see a strengthening of existing climate agreements or the creation of new international platforms to promote sustainable development.

In conclusion, the multipolar order toward which we seem to be heading represents a complex puzzle of national aspirations, regional alliances and global challenges. It is not a utopia without tensions, but a fabric of interconnected relationships that offers both opportunities for cooperation and potential conflicts. And as in any chess game, wisdom and foresight will be essential to navigating the game of international influence in this new global landscape.

## Closing remarks:

When I began this work almost a year ago, I thought I was contrasting the Washington Consensus, now in decline, with the Beijing Consensus, convinced that I could place Beijing as the new fulcrum of the geopolitical Axis.

The further my studies and research went, the clearer it became that it was impossible to place in Beijing the fulcrum of an order that had not yet been created, but whose assumptions could not make me ignore actors such as Russia, India, rather than Africa. Beijing was too "far away" anyway, and looking at the maps it is clear that a center has not yet been found.

Maps have always reflected not only the geographical knowledge of an era, but also the worldviews, ideologies and prejudices of their creators.

For example, although now considered distorted for modern use, Mercator's map of 1565 was revolutionary in its time, providing a representation in which lines of longitude and latitude intersect at right angles, useful for navigation.



Figure 7 Mercator's Europe map of 1565  
Mercatore. (n.d.). <http://dm.unife.it/matematicainsieme/matcart/mercat.htm>

The Hereford Map (circa 1300), on the other hand, was a medieval map depicting the history, geography and destination of humanity according to the Christian worldview. It is centered on Jerusalem with the East at the top.



Figure 8 Hereford Mappa Mundi (world map), displayed at the Hereford Cathedral, England.

Buckminster Fuller's Map "Dymaxion" (1943) was designed to reduce the distortion of continents and can be folded into a three-dimensional globe almost without interruption.

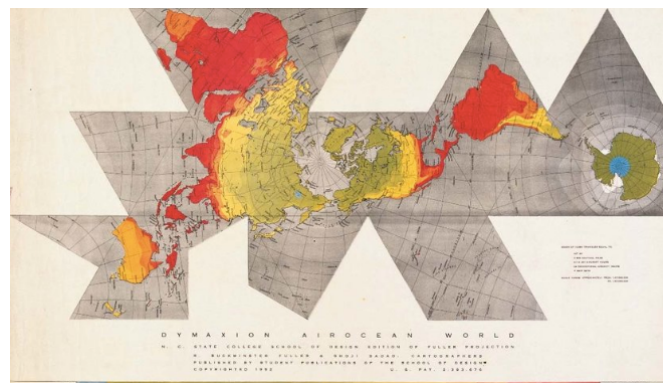


Figure 9 Dymaxion map. R. Buckminster Fuller (1943)

ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Dymaxion-map-R-Buckminster-Fuller-1943\\_fig2\\_331307454](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Dymaxion-map-R-Buckminster-Fuller-1943_fig2_331307454)

Opposed to Mercator's map we find Peters's Map (1974). Arno Peters introduced a projection that sought to represent the areas of countries more equally, as opposed to the traditional Mercator projection that distorts dimensions, especially near the poles.

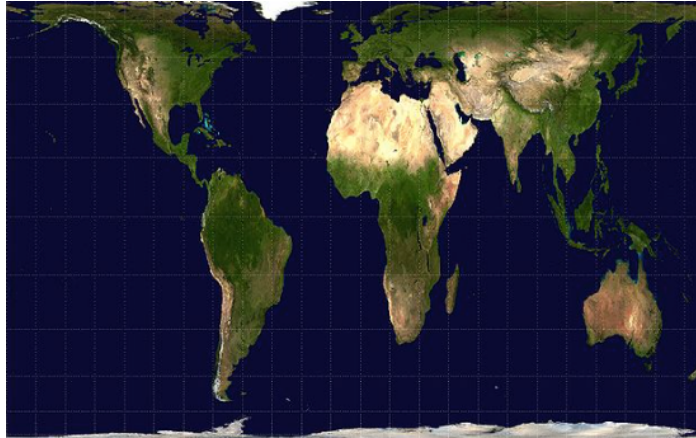


Figure 10A Gall-Peters projection of a *Visible Earth* image collected by the *Earth Observatory* experiment of the U.S. Government's *NASA* space agency. The reticle is 15 degrees in latitude and longitude. *Category:Images of map projectio*

On January 26, 1979, Stuart McArthur tried to change the world. Literally. He tried to turn it upside down like a sock. McArthur, an Australian, drew a map in which his country, the last to appear on Western maps, occupies the center of the picture, pushing Europe into a narrow space, squeezed, tiny as it is, between Africa and the Americas. The work, McArthur's *Universal Corrective Map of the World*, is disorienting it forces the old continent to put on the shoes of the rest of the world for a few seconds, to look at itself in a distorting mirror or, worse, ruthlessly truthful: we are small, ugly and crooked. Just like everyone else.



Figure 11 *MapCarte 38/365: McArthur's Universal Corrective Map of the World, Stuart McArthur, 1979*

Now it is looking at other map that I would like to draw the conclusions of my study.



Figure 12 - Brics+ Map (2023)  
BRICS PLuS. (n.d.). BRICS + | BRICS PLUS. <https://www.brics-plus.com/>

The fault line was longitudinal on the West-East axis at one point during the bipolar era. With the exception of the Oceanic continent, Japan, and Korea, it is starting to resemble a diagonal that poses a threat to shut off the Western world from the entirety of Southeast Asia. The BRICS sphere of influence seems to be involving South America, Africa, and even the Middle East more and more. Being composed of the nations that possess the majority of the world's natural resources—not only hydrocarbons, like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, but also rare earths, in which South America and Africa are rich—this diagonal has two very crucial qualities. Moreover, the countries that make it up are the most populous and, think of Africa, with a further prospect of strong population growth. Three key points of this future world order<sup>264</sup>:

1. The South matters

The New Development Bank (NDB), established in 2014 as an alternative to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, has been perceived by Beijing as a tool to counter U.S. influence. Over the years, the bank has included new members such as Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and is preparing to welcome other countries such as Argentina, Zimbabwe, Uruguay, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia.

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<sup>264</sup> The first two points' reference: *Nuovo ordine mondiale: tre sfide dal Global South* | ISPI. (2023, July 31). ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/nuovo-ordine-mondiale-tre-sfide-dal-global-south-137631>



The NDB, with Brazil among the founders, is a vehicle for Chinese influence in areas traditionally under U.S. hegemony. Today, under Brazilian leadership, the NDB aims to combine the Chinese-driven Third World approach with Latin American dependency theory, criticizing globalization led by Western multinational corporations that would favor the displacement of resources from the perimeter to the global economic core.

NDB President Rousseff highlighted the bank's goal of financing infrastructure to fight poverty and promote sustainable development, with an expansion plan that will include new members, possibly announced at the upcoming BRICS summit.

Brazilian President Lula is promoting Argentina's entry into the NDB, with the support of Argentine Economy Minister Sergio Massa, and Venezuela's entry is also being considered. These actions indicate Brazil's intention to be a leader in the multipolar context of South America.

Finally, the expansion of the NDB is part of the BRICS Plus and BRICS Outreach projects, with the goal of expanding influence over countries in the Global South, particularly those in sub-Saharan and southern Africa, while also leveraging the role of South Africa.

## 2. De-dollarization

De-dollarization aims to remove reliance on the dollar through two distinct but related goals: overtly political and simply financial. De-dollarization can help developing countries avoid painful exchange rate fluctuations, which can have a knock-on effect on accumulated foreign exchange (dollar) reserves, the risk of incurring heavy foreign debts, and a general lack of monetary autonomy, which often results in severe constraints on political autonomy, as some theories, such as those related to the so-called "Triffin paradox," highlight. The Fed is currently aggressively and gradually raising interest rates, which is exerting downward pressure on the currencies of several Global South countries and increasing the cost of paying off debt denominated in dollars and importing commodities from outside. As a result, the NDB wants to employ a variety of local currencies in place of the dollar to govern commerce. The NDB has already issued bonds denominated in the Chinese currency, the renminbi, and it is clear that the Chinese currency is a candidate to play a leading role in the new system. However, it is not in the interest of the other BRICS countries for the dollar to be replaced by the renminbi, an operation that would be a zero-sum operation generating no benefits for the system except for the main shareholder, Beijing. There is currently discussion on the de-dollarization trend in the West as well. Economist Zoltan Pozsar acknowledged in January in the

Financial Times that the dollar's opulent privilege—which he defined using Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's definition—is currently under threat. This threat stems from the BRICS' push through the NDB as well as the global trend, which includes the West, to introduce new digital currencies, or money circulation systems that do not require the SWIFT system. In example, Pozar explains, "The dollar-based monetary order has already been challenged in several ways, but two in particular stand out: the spread of de-dollarization efforts and central bank digital currencies (CBDCs)." As Pozar explained, beyond "third-worldist" goals, de-dollarization also and especially through CBDCs means being able to circumvent Western anti-Russian sanctions that also rebound on the interests of other BRICS. In fact, as stated by the Hungarian-born American economist, "The emerging network based on CBDCs-applied with bilateral currency swap lines could allow central banks in the East and South to act as foreign currency brokers [...] all without reference to the dollar and bypassing the Western banking system."

However, the ability of the BRICS to assert themselves, even in perspective, from a monetary standpoint is limited by several factors, one of which is related to the instruments to date that should allow them to counter or, at least, try to settle the leadership of the dollar and the so-called Washington Consensus: in addition to the NDB, in fact, the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) is active, designed as an antagonist of the IMF in order to cope with short-term pressures on the foreign exchange reserves of the BRICS countries. In this respect, China is the only country that has the financial and currency capacity to make this instrument a real opportunity, but this would require Beijing's willingness and capacity, which, at this stage, are severely tested.

3. The third is an idealistic warning. In the hope that all the ongoing conflicts will lead to a review of states' priorities that can put human rights first.

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