

The Conflicting Rebirth of Multipolarity in International Relations¹

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The process of constructing a new multipolar world, which will probably take decades to complete and whose boundaries *may* only become clear by 2020, is just as important as the process which ended the Cold War some 20 years ago. The United States, as the only global superpower, is increasingly confronted by the growing influence of Asia, with a clear dominance of China and the mounting importance of India. After the chaos of the first post-Soviet decade, Russia is resuming its role as an important, influential actor in international relations; while determined regional powers, such as Indonesia, Iran and Brazil – which will want to significantly influence developments in Latin America – are emerging in the world political arena. Japan remains an influential actor and its military ambitions are growing. In the western part of Eurasia is the European Union with 27 members, a population of almost half a billion and a single currency – the Euro – which has begun to compete with the dominant US dollar. The Middle East will also become an important player not only due to the vast raw-material resources located in its territories, but also because of the growing political impact of radical Islam, which has its home-base in the region.

Trends could be documented by means of forecasting the development in terms of the GDP of the main actors of world development (see table below).

This work sets out to identify and explore some of the more important trends in current international relations and projects them over a twenty to thirty year period. The main argument resounds around the mounting evidence that international relations is moving towards the re-establishment of a multipolar system, with many new states and other political communities joining the more established powers in both setting the limits and boundaries within international relations as well as providing new pressure points and avenues of contrast and competition.

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Table: Forecast of GDP development for main actors

	GDP In billions of USD in fixed 2005 prices, with the use of PPP		GDP per capita In thousands of USD in fixed prices, with the use of PPP	
	2005	2020	2005	2020
Asia in total, of which:	21.260	48.270	5.970	10.530
China	8.110	19.370	6.200	13.580
India	3.718	8.797	3.400	6.700
Japan	4.008	4.497	31.460	36.420
Total EU-27, of which:	12.816	17.752	26.200	35.640
EU-15	11.479	15.528	29.780	39.100
France	1.909	2.545	31.480	40.350
Germany	2.432	3.233	29.420	39.520
Italy	1.633	1.914	28.110	33.700
Netherlands	525	759	32.130	44.260
Poland	483	798	12.670	21.140
United Kingdom	1.965	2.787	32.730	43.820
EU candidate coun- tries, of which:	744	1.406	7.750	12.800
Croatia	56	93	12.380	21.050
Serbia & Montenegro	56	108	5.140	10.030
Turkey	576	1.110	7.860	13.140
Brazil	1.568	2.516	8.650	12.060
Russia	1.556	2.549	10.920	18.750
U.S.A.	12.457	19.040	42.120	56.660
World	59.858	100.283	9.320	13.500

PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) is the ratio of prices of the same products or services in national currencies.

Source: Economic Intelligence Unit – reprinted from M. Leonard’s publication *Divided World: The struggle for primacy in 2020*. London: Centre for European Reform, 2006

To explore the potential future of international relations, this work takes several snap-shots of some of the more important international actors (the US, China, Russia, India and the EU) and assesses what actual and potential roles these actors will play in international relations. Also, this work looks the Middle East, as a region, to highlight some of the impacts it is currently having and may continue to have on international affairs.

Finally, this work provides an account of global governance over the next decades. It reviews some new international actors and their geopolitical

importance in this globalising multipolar international system. Issues surrounding international organisations, regional organisations and transnational corporations are dealt with to provide a comprehensive account of the future of international relations.

Developmental Trends

The main trend in international relations over the next 20 years will resound around the competition between states to secure sufficient resources of raw-materials, especially crude oil, gas (global use of sources of energy is to increase by 50% by 2020) and water, which has become a strategic commodity.³ Intellectual capital (knowledge and technical innovation) will be another point of international friction. Also, attention will be re-centred as a “battle of ideologies,” emanating from the increased self-confidence of emerging powers as well as political and religious forces. These actors may be unwilling to accept western universalisms such as liberal democracy, but rather endeavour to espouse their own ideological and religious concepts.

Unique and very old civilizations, notably China and India, may aspire to their own interpretations of notions such as ‘democracy,’ ‘freedom,’ and principles of the ‘rule of law.’ Rivalry in the globalised, budding multipolar world may assume two forms. Provided there exists a broader and functional multilateral framework of global governance, based on respect for international commitments and rules – especially on the basis of the United Nations (UN) Charter and the influential power of economic groupings such as the G8 or, in the future, G20⁴ – it may be possible to prevent or minimize the impact of conflicts generated by clashes over resources, intellectual capital, and political or ideologies. According to the EU Institute for Security Studies, this could

³ Forty percent of the world population lives in 260 watersheds shared by two or more states. The effort to gain more water sources for one state to the detriment of another to supply inhabitants, industries and agriculture or to pollute water sources because of these efforts could lead to multilateral and regional conflicts. NATO’s “Future Security Environment” study indicates 20 risk areas where conflicts might occur. They are the Tigris and Euphrates, the Nile, the valleys of La Plata, Lempa, Orange, Incomati, Limpopo, Okavango and Zambezi rivers; the Kunene, Lake Chad, the Senegal Plateau, the Jordan, the Kura-Araksi, Obu, Aral Lake, Ganges-Brahmaputra, Mekong, Yellow River, Hanu and the Tyumen Plateau (see Future Security Environment, Draft 1.3.—Symposium FSE-04, Apr. 2006, p. 25)

⁴ G20 refers to an informal platform of the 20 most economically advanced and dynamically developing countries. It consists of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union (represented by its presiding country and the European Central Bank). The G20 was inspired by the former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin.

result in a “concert of great powers.”⁵ Alternatively, conflicts between great powers may lead to an unmitigated struggle for resources and the carving out of spheres of influence. In such a scenario regional armed conflicts may become more common and inevitably have global impacts; although a truly *global* conflict is unlikely due to the interconnectivity and dependency between large, middle and small states, on economic, political and social levels throughout the international system. Both variants are possible in the future.

The conflict potential of the modern world, however, is best evidenced by growing military spending, which in 2006, for the first time in the post-Cold War period, exceeded the Cold War figures of 1988. According to the estimates of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), military spending in 2006 equalled one trillion two hundred and four billion USD (\$1,204,000,000,000), a 3.5% increase from 2005. Over the past ten years, military spending has risen 37%. The United States significantly contributed to the increase; its defence budget having reached 528.7 billion USD, or 46% of the global figure. China’s budget of 49.5 billion USD for the first time exceeded Japan’s (43.7 billion USD), until then Asia’s biggest arms spender.⁶

These figures testify to the growing importance of military power to attain the broad strategic goals of all the main players in the global competition. However, other political, diplomatic and economic tools of comparable impact will play no less of an important role.

The Geopolitical Priorities of the Main International Actors

The United States

The US will seek to maintain its position as global superpower in the political, economic, military and cultural realms. Its projected demographic situation will assist this ambition. The US expects a 17% population growth, estimated to reach 364 million by 2030, due especially to Hispanic immigration,⁷ a steady three-percent annual economic growth, its lead on technological innovation, research and development (R&D), the use of high quality education potentials (37 of the world’s most prestigious universities are located in the US) and finally, the constant recruitment of university-educated experts and scientists

⁵ See Long Term Vision, Strand One, Global Context study for an initial ESDP Long Term Vision (LTV) (2006): European Union Institute for Security Studies Paris, p. 36.

⁶ The second-largest defence budget is reported by the United Kingdom (59.2 billion USD) and France comes third (53.1 billion USD). See <http://yearbook2007.sipri.org/>

⁷ Hispanics currently account for 14.5% (45 million) of the population of the US. Based on a census of 300 million, Hispanics are to form a quarter of the US population by 2050. This could influence US policy on Latin America.

from all over the world.⁸ The US is home to one in four transnational corporations (TNC). Also, the US popular and entertainment industry still has a major impact on mass culture around the world.

From a geostrategic perspective, it is crucial for the US to maintain its influence over the Middle East; currently the world's most important source of vital energy resources; and to contain the global ambitions of China and resource-rich Russia. The US chiefly relies on its own military capabilities and political leverage in prioritising and achieving its objectives. The failure of the US to meet some of its central international objectives could result in a dangerous geopolitical situation not only for the US but also Europe and the US's other key allies. To be sure, the EU (and its 27 members) remains among the US's closest allies despite the fact that not all EU members share *all* aspects of the US's strategic priorities. Such variance is largely due to divergent international economic interests, especially provisions of energy security and different interpretations of political and security priorities vis-à-vis Russia, China, the Middle East, and Africa. Some EU members (e.g. Britain and the majority of the EU-10), have maintained, and probably will continue to maintain close relations with the US, which would result in closer cooperation for asserting their main, mutual strategic goals.

Since the EU may be 'less than reliable' in some ways (as the EU divisions over Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003, illustrate), the US is likely to step-up its reliance on, and use of, its non-European allies, especially in the Asian and Pacific regions, including: Australia; New Zealand; Japan; and South Korea. It is worth noting efforts by the United States' key East Asian ally, Japan, to achieve greater military independence – in its 1947 constitution, Japan, as a defeated nation in World War II, forever relinquished plans to solve conflicts by force. Japan's US-supported new defense strategy relies on the development of more mobile multi-purpose armed forces and a missile defense system. For the first time, this strategy explicitly identifies the security risks facing Japan. These include North Korea and its nuclear and missile programs, as well as China and its ever growing army.

US failures in Iraq,⁹ serious problems in Afghanistan and the collapse of the

⁸ See *The New Global Puzzle. What World for the EU in 2025* (2006). European Union Institute for Security Studies. Paris, <http://www.iss-eu.org/books/NGP.pdf>, p. 141.

⁹ The failure is documented by many facts in the Oxfam report, *Rising to the humanitarian challenge in Iraq* (www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/conflict_disasters/bp105_iraq.html), compiled with the help of another 80 agencies directly involved in Iraq. According to this report, 43% of Iraqis live in dire poverty, four million Iraqis cannot afford to buy food regularly, 50% of them suffer from inadequate water supplies, 28% of children suffer from malnutrition, 92% of children face difficulties in obtaining education because they cannot venture out due to street violence, half of the population is unemployed, 80% of the people have no access to sanitary facilities, the incidence of diarrhoea and infectious diseases is rising, more than two million Iraqis, mainly women and children are on the run, scattered all over Iraq's refugee camps, another two million people have fled across the border to Syria and Jordan, and many of them live in dire poverty. Eight million Iraqis—a third of the country's population—are in need of urgent humanitarian aid. The report also speaks about an "intellectual genocide": since 2003, about 40% of engineers, teachers, physicians and other professionals have left Iraq.

project of “democratizing the greater Middle East”¹⁰ revealed some limitations of the US’s unilateral approaches to its foreign affairs. The future therefore might yield a more pragmatic approach to the principles of multilateralism, that is, multilateralism “a la carte.”¹¹

The US’s security strategy is expected to continue to be based on the maximization of its military capacity to ensure its ability to respond to any type of (even hypothetical) threat mostly on a unilateral basis. Internal budgetary problems however, are likely to severely limit the maintenance of the US’s position of global superpower. Its 2005, current account deficit was just under 800 billion USD (6.4% of GDP) and its budget deficit amounted to 4.2% of GDP – something which rendered the US economy vulnerable to market forces in the global economic system. Also, the US’s fiscal balance strongly depends on external resources as the US must import roughly one billion dollars to finance its budget deficits.¹² Much will depend on the US’s ability to achieve a balanced budget over the long-term and, under these conditions, on whether such balance will be impaired by, for example, the consistent increase of its defense budget.

Facing the impact of potential economic problems, the US may begin to lose its global hegemony over the next two decades. Nevertheless, its military edge¹³ will make it possible for the US to continue to influence the international security situation even in light of growing economic and military prowess among other actors. Thus, the emerging multipolar world may find itself facing an “asymmetrical multipolarity” in the sense that the US will still maintain a military and strategic advantage over other potential challengers.

¹⁰ US political scientist Francis Fukuyama’s monograph *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power and Neoconservative Legacy*, is critical of U.S. hegemonic tendencies under the guise of spreading democracy after the end of the Cold War. In his opinion, the US should use its influence in the UN, NATO and other international organizations to pursue the agenda of “equitable development” on global scale. This is associated with the struggle against mass poverty in the developing countries and establishing the middle class that could subsequently lay solid foundations to democracy there. It should be noted that that the US is trying to do the very opposite in the Middle East as it plans to supply 63 billion dollars’ worth of weapons, over the next ten years, especially to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

¹¹ See *The New Global Puzzle: What World for the EU in 2025* (2006). EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris <http://www.iss-eu.org/books/NGP.pdf>, p. 152.

¹² Ibid. p. 141. The data coincides with the sustainability of the US dollar as the world’s number one reserve currency. If the US coinage (money issuance) profits record a loss (the US currency returns from the world circulation), the dollar will significantly weaken and this will undermine the confidence in investing further assets in the U.S.A. Enormous assets could flow to other power centres (such as China, Japan, India, South Korea, the EU, Russia and Brazil) that would attain enormous investment stimuli and thus also economic power. The struggle to stop these transfers could lead to many serious conflicts between the United States and these centres.

¹³ This currently ensues not only from military expenses but also from the fact that, according to experts, the US has a 30-year edge on Europe in regard of military technologies.

China

China, aware of changes to the global system, has established long-term strategic priorities to: re-impose direct rule on Taiwan,¹⁴ gain ‘free’ access to energy sources and markets, and the efficient prevention of US attempts to curtail Chinese influence through containment.¹⁵ This is occurring mainly in traditional Chinese spheres of influence such as the Far East and South East Asia, and importantly, not through direct confrontation, which would be counterproductive owing to current US military power. Instead, China sees the realisation of its goals chiefly tied to the strengthening of economic cooperation and diplomatic ties.¹⁶

This ‘soft power’ policy approach¹⁷ is also being applied in China’s relations in Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. China has been (successfully) peddling its development model, often referred to as the “Beijing Consensus.”¹⁸ Its basic elements combine government controls with partial liberalization and guarantees of economic growth, even in non-liberal conditions, defiance of the International Monetary Fund/World Bank dictums, respect for the inviolability of national sovereignty, together with respecting commitments to international institutions, especially the UN.

¹⁴ The political and security strategy on Taiwan is defined by the *legislation to prevent the fission of the state* adopted by the China National People’s Congress on March 17, 2005. According to official Chinese sources, the purpose of this legislation is to prevent the “fission of the homeland” by applying measures such as preventing and suppressing the efforts of Taiwan’s separatists to fission the state, contribute to the peaceful reunification of the homeland, maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state and defend the basic interests of the Chinese people.” Paragraph 8 of the resolution is crucial as it says that if separatist forces vying for an independent Taiwan or under any other disguise undertake action to separate Taiwan from China or there occurs a serious incident that could lead to Taiwan’s secession from China or mar for good the possibility of peaceful reunification, China may, in the interest of preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity, adopt measures of non-peaceful character and other necessary measures.

¹⁵ One of the strategic priorities is to eliminate potential separatist tendencies in China’s peripheral regions, including the Uyghur autonomous region of Xinjiang, where there is a direct link to the priority of safeguarding energy resources.

¹⁶ China’s position is quite strong because the Chinese Diaspora controls 85–90% of the Asian market.

¹⁷ This policy should have been modelled on the *Concept of Peaceful Advancement*, formulated by the Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Zheng Bijan in 2003. His concept should have helped to define Chinese ambitions, convince the world (mainly China’s neighbours) about China’s peace-loving intentions, and dispel international concerns over its growth. However, this concept was not as much of a doctrine as an unclear and incomplete proposal. It was criticized for its poor compatibility with the possible threat of use of military force against Taiwan. Although it has ceased to be used in official conduct, it is still the subject of academic debate. The term “peaceful advancement” was replaced by “peaceful development” because the former evidently could have suggested connotations associated with an aggressive policy.

¹⁸ For more details see Leonard, M. (2006). *Divided world: The struggle for primacy in 2020*. Centre for European Reform. London, p. 23.

China will likely continue to apply ‘soft power’ tactics as it acknowledges that it requires time, wealth and technologies to further develop and strengthen its international position. However, ‘hard power’ should not be underestimated as China continues to embark on efforts to modernize its armed forces which have been made possible by a massive growth in military spending.¹⁹

China’s global ambitions may be adversely affected by internal political, economic and social problems. Social tensions largely stem from the contrast between the wealthy coastal regions and the poverty of the inner country,²⁰ which results in massive internal migration. In 2004, the movements of 114 million people – half of China’s urban workforce – were registered. Another problem is a very weak pension system coupled with an ageing population (due partly to the one-family-one-child policy). By 2020, there will be 265 million citizens over 65. Additionally, China’s environment is steadily worsening. Some thirty percent of the country is affected by acid rains, owing to the lack of environmental regulations on the use of fossil fuels and the ongoing process of industrialization. The problem is further aggravated by continuing economic growth.²¹ A quarter of Chinese territory is affected by desertification and 200,000 hectares of farmland are lost every year.

Russia

Similar to China, Russia will attempt to make use of its growing economic strength. Russia’s core asset is its strategic autonomy stemming from almost complete autarky in energy supplies. This autonomy, enhanced by political and economic consolidation in the first decade of the 21st century, enables Russia – which according to the 2007 “Outline of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation” has regained its “foreign policy independence”²² – to act more confidently in its relations with the EU and the United States in pursuit of its foreign policy interests.

The whole post-Soviet space, which is of key geopolitical importance to Russia, will continue to breed conflicts. Russia is, in a way, the center of gravity in the post-Soviet space, which may strengthen and grow, depending on how the

¹⁹ The average growth is 15.3% over the past 15 years, significantly more than the average growth of the Chinese economy. According to the forecast of the U.S. National Intelligence Council, *Mapping Global Future* (2004) China’s military budget may be up to 250 billion USD and become the second biggest only to the United States.

²⁰ In his article, *The Chinese Shadow*, Robert Skidelski notes that the income gap between China’s coastal areas and inner regions is bigger than between the United States and North Africa (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/18437>).

²¹ Chinese emissions are largely due to coal-firing power stations whose number is growing steadily for at least two plants are inaugurated every week.

²² See *Obzor vneshnei politiki Rossiyskoy federatsii*, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/690A2BAF968B1FA4C32572B100304A6E#%D0%92%D0%92%D0%95%D0%94%D0%95%D0%9D%D0%98%D0%95

Russian economy fares. Russia will play a leading political, economic and (due to extensive use of the Russian language) cultural role. Another multinational alliance, under the aegis of Russia as a key Eurasian power, will probably emerge in the space between the EU and Asia or China.²³

Like China, Russia has many serious internal problems to tackle before re-emerging as a truly great power. For instance, Russia is plagued by high unemployment. Its economy is heavily dependent on the mining industry, especially the extraction of crude oil and natural gas. This sector generates 20% of Russia's GDP, but employs only one percent of the workforce. In contrast, small and medium enterprises make up only 13% of the GDP. The quality of public administration is poor, protectionism is wide-spread, law enforcement is poor and the crime rate is high. Thirty million citizens live in poverty, which leads to social tensions and may threaten the stability of the country. Furthermore, danger associated to demographic decline is quite imminent. According to a World Bank report (December 2005²⁴), Russia has lately experienced a dramatic slump in population, which dropped by six million in 1992–2003 (from 149 million to 143 million). Due to social and health problems that number could drop to 129.2 million over the next 20 years.²⁵ This could have adverse impacts on labour mobility and Russia's security.²⁶ The trend is quite evident in vast portions of Siberia, with a population of only 19 million and likely to drop to 17.5 million by 2025, according to various forecasts.²⁷

If Russia wishes to preserve its status of great Eurasian power, it must maintain balanced relations with China and other influential actors in the Eurasian region. One of the important instruments to foster such relationships is the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (SCO), which brings together dominant states, such as Russia and China, with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan

²³ (Former) President Putin's Russia intensified also its relations with countries outside the Euro-Asian space. Putin visited South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Venezuela and Mexico and important economic agreements were signed. Russia will supply nuclear fuel to South Africa by 2010 and Russian companies will help to develop the energy sector, uranium, aluminium and manganese processing plants and provide liquefied natural gas supplies to Mexico as of 2007, in addition to supplying fighter planes and helicopters to Venezuela. During his visit to Brazil, Putin expressed interest in striking a "technological alliance" between Russia and Brazil and doubling or trebling mutual trade exchange (which amounted to two billion dollars in 2004).

²⁴ See *Eastweek*, Issue 21, 15 December 2005 (Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw).

²⁵ At present, 70% of deaths in Russia are due to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, alcoholism, tobacco smoking, traffic accidents and violent crime. Many Russians are infected by HIV. According to some scenarios, 11 million people in Russia will be HIV-positive and 8.7 million of them will die by 2025.

²⁶ Russia's former army chief of staff, General Anatoly Kvashin said his country should have multiples of its present population to safeguard its territorial defences.

²⁷ See Primakov, Y. (2007): *Rossiia vostanavlivaya svoi bolshoi i perspektivny potentsial, vozvrashchayetsya k polozheniyu vekikoi derzhavi*, *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, no. 1–2/2007, p. 35

and Tajikistan, and includes observer states, such as India, Iran, Pakistan and Mongolia.²⁸ SCO members and observers together comprise nearly half the world's population and a crucial part of Eurasian territory; three dynamically growing large economies, and four countries possessing nuclear weapons.

The chief objective of the SCO centres on security cooperation in combating three main security challenges to the region: terrorism, separatism and extremism. The SCO has been strengthening its political and military dimensions in order to minimize regime change in the post-Soviet space (i.e. Ukraine and Georgia) and to establish a counterweight to NATO and the US in Central Asia. Also significant is the intensification of trade and economic cooperation, currently concerning mainly the extraction and transport of oil and gas. It should be noted that (former) Russian President Putin has called for the establishment of an SCO energy club to coordinate producers, as well as customers.²⁹

In contrast, the potential of the SCO could be limited by the fairly differentiated goals of its members and observers, stemming from their different strategic policy priorities, bilateral relationships, economic strength, military power, geographic situation and possible historical resentments.

India

India – the second-largest Asian power and an SCO observer – is a case in point of a state with a different strategic outlook from its regional neighbours. Unlike the US, China and Russia, India harbours no ambitions to become a global actor, but rather concentrates on defending its economic and security interests primarily in the Middle East³⁰ and Central, South East, South and East Asia. This applies also to relations with India's traditional rival, Pakistan.³¹ Economic cooperation with China is of crucial importance to India,³² but both countries will compete for access to the same energy sources, found primarily in the Middle East. Moreover, Indo-American relations have deepened since the beginning of the century. For example, the US has offered India its non-military nuclear technologies, which, in effect, enabled the modernization of India's

²⁸ President of the Russian Academy of Geopolitical Problems Leonid Ivashov said the Shanghai Cooperation Organization could be the nucleus of a "continental geopolitical alliance" (see Ivashov, L. Geopoliticheskie gorizonty Rossii, *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, no. 5/2007, p. 46).

²⁹ Putin presented this proposal to the SCO's Shanghai summit in June 2006, saying that Gazprom was prepared to take part in the construction of a gas pipeline to connect Iran, Pakistan and India.

³⁰ The importance of the Middle East for India is documented by the fact that 3.5 million Indians work in the Persian Gulf countries and send home four billion dollars per year.

³¹ This issue exceeds the limits of our report. In Kashmir, a civil war has intermittently raged for half a century and incessant violence has gripped the region since 1989. Muslim radicals, fighting for the independence of Kashmir or its union with Pakistan have killed over 65,000 people; see www.encyklopedie.seznam.cz, Týdeník Rozhlas 3/2007.

³² China will shortly replace the EU as India's leading trade partner.

nuclear capacities.³³ This amounts to a de facto recognition of India as a nuclear power, even though India has not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The US's new attitude towards India is dictated, above all, by the effort to *win* India over to support US efforts to contain China's growing influence in Asia.³⁴ India pursues, however, an 'all-azimuth' policy based on balanced cooperation with all the main Asian actors; China, the US and Russia.

The European Union

The European Union enjoys a special position in the process of shaping a new model of multipolarity. As Leonard argued, "Today's EU is a microcosm of the world order the European countries would like to see in 2020."³⁵ This may perhaps sound overly optimistic in a situation where the EU faces many internal political, economic and institutional problems. However, the EU's greatest strength emanates from its own experience with continental political integration and stabilization, which sets a cogent example globally. EU policies, based on respect for international law, democratic principles and human rights, together with the maximum respect and use of multilateral institutions such as the UN, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), sets it apart from the other main actors in international relations. The same applies to its defense of principles of good governance, its approach to protection of the environment, the prevention of conflicts with the help of 'soft security' (i.e. 'civilian power') instruments, as well as its concern for human security and the standard of development and humanitarian assistance.³⁶ All these factors can help create conditions for the 'Europeanization' of international relations as a positive alternative of the functioning of a multipolar world.

For the EU to be able to assert this positive alternative over the next decade or two, further European integration will be necessary in the political, economic and military spheres. The delay in the implementation of reforms designed to improve the EU's internal and external decision-making procedures until 2017, after the summit in June 2007, must be seen as potentially limiting the EU's

³³ President George W. Bush made this offer during his visit to India in March 2006.

³⁴ The United States also supports the construction of Indian nuclear power stations, which would help India to reduce its search for external energy sources and largely neutralize that country's potential to compete with America in this field.

³⁵ Leonard, M. (2006) *Divided world: The struggle for primacy in 2020*. Centre for European Reform. London, p. 35.

³⁶ According to the Human Security Doctrine, Europe does need armed forces but they must be conceived and used in a novel way. They must be able to prevent or contain violence in various parts of the world by methods significantly differing from the classic defence and warfare. These forces should be able to meet the real security requirements of the people in dire danger and make the world safer for Europeans (Doctrine of Human Security for Europe. In *Bezpečné Česko v bezpečné Evropě*. 2006. Úřad vlády ČR, p. 16).

capacity to act on the international stage vis-à-vis other main world actors with a higher degree of strategic policy cohesion. It is therefore expected that the larger EU member states (France, Germany, the UK, Italy and Spain), which have a clearer idea of meeting global challenges and which want to actively share in shaping a new model of a multipolar world, will speed up the pace of mutual integration in comparison with some other members. This could help establish better controls on a whole spectrum of internal and external economic and security problems. Chief among them is to maintain a traditionally high level of social cohesion in contrast to the demographic decline and ageing of the European population, the ability to compete in the field of technical innovation, R&D and energy security of the EU, as well as to find a functional model of the strategically essential relationship with Russia.

If the EU wishes to play a relevant international security role, especially in the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa, and to emancipate its foreign and security policies, it will have to boost its military potential. It is no longer tenable for the EU to dispatch only around 100,000 troops, a mere five percent of the total number of its combined forces, to the wide range of operations around the globe.³⁷ It is also important to further boost the EU's internal security structures, whose main aim is effectively challenge the threat of terrorism and organized crime.

The EU's internal security is closely linked with the stability of its neighbours, including: Eastern Europe; the Caucasus; the Middle East; and North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Thanks to its close political and trade relations with these regions, as well as the humanitarian and development aid it provides them, the EU has considerable leverage there and works to press the advantage by means of special policies and agendas, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Barcelona Process. With the help of these instruments, the EU could work to assert its standards of human rights and good governance, even though this is a long-term and doubtless also complex task. In the case of the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, this is further complicated by the need to prevent illegal migration, which is regarded by some as a grave security threat. The Southern EU states are acutely aware of this danger. As shown by an expert study conducted by the Spanish Ministry of Defense, half of the population of non-European Mediterranean countries is under 25. Qualified calculations show that every year until 2010 the number of employable people will increase by 4.2 million.³⁸ If, however, these young people feel socially frustrated by the unsatisfactory socioeconomic situation in their countries, predominantly led by autocratic regimes, they will in all likelihood choose to migrate to Europe. Such massive migration waves may threaten social order, cohesion and public

³⁷ For the sake of comparison, this proportion was 50% for the United States Army.

³⁸ See *Strategic Panorama 2005/2006*. Ministerio de Defensa. Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies. Real Instituto Elcano, p. 182.

security. Such trends have already become apparent in connection with illegal immigration to the western and southern parts of Europe.

The Middle East

The Middle East will likely remain a chief source of international instability. One document of the EU Institute of Strategic Studies amply described the main reason for this as there being “more people, no jobs and no vote.”³⁹ In absence of multiparty democratic systems, and facing conditions of economic stagnation, growing unemployment and demographic collapse, there continues, in the Arab World, to be growing influence of radical Islam – a combination of militant jihad against the West⁴⁰ and a very conservative interpretation of Islam – directed against the ruling elites in Arab states.

Growing insecurity and social instability in the Middle East, spurred on by the seemingly intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict, coalition presence and ensuing civil war in Iraq (which could lead to the disintegration of the Iraqi state and reconfiguration into separate Shia, Sunni and Kurdish states) and the conflict in Afghanistan, could lead to further destabilization of the key Middle East countries – Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Particularly in the case of Saudi Arabia, which controls 22% of the global oil reserves, the repercussions could be quite severe for global stability.⁴¹ The situation in the Middle East could be complicated also by the continued destabilization of Pakistan, which has nuclear weapons and has recently been wrought by political and religious extremists’ use of violence. Furthermore, the future course of Turkey with its brewing affinity for Islamism, albeit presently in its moderate form, remains an open question. Following the failings of the US-led coalition’s involvement in Iraq, the Middle East, will be the focus of heightened interests of other important world actors, notably, the EU, China, Russia and India.

For China and India, the Middle East is a prime source of crude oil and natural gas. By 2020, China will probably be the biggest single buyer of Saudi

³⁹ See *Long Term Vision, Strand One*, Global Context study for an initial ESDP Long Term Vision (LTV) (2006): European Union Institute for Security Studies, Paris, p. 27.

⁴⁰ Terrorist attacks and activities are ever more frequent especially in Western Europe. The 2005 radical Islamist attacks in Britain and countless other assaults there and in other West European countries show that the new generation of Muslim immigrants, who fail to adopt the values of the Western society, tend to build their own identity, which often leans towards radical Islamism. This is a major security challenge to Western Europe, considering the size of Muslim communities in some countries: France—5–8 million (of 60.7 million of inhabitants); Britain—1.6 million (60.4 million); Germany—over three million (82.4), Netherlands—just under one million (16.4); Italy—one million (58.1); Belgium—just under 400,000 (10.4 million).

⁴¹ One of the sources of internal instability in Saudi Arabia is a remarkable growth of population from seven million in 1980 to 27 million at present, resulting in potential social tensions. The rate of unemployment is 20% while young people form a majority of the kingdom’s population.

oil and an important buyer of oil and gas from Iran.⁴² China's support for Iran internationally is easy to understand, and the granting of observer status to Iran by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was a manifestation of this support.

Russia also strives to increase cooperation with Saudi Arabia, in addition to Iran and Syria, and is strengthening its position in the Middle East, as demonstrated by the continued intensification of mutual political and economic relations with these countries, culminating with (former) Russian President Putin's visit to Saudi Arabia in February 2007.⁴³ Russia's Lukoil Company will be involved in the extraction of Saudi natural gas and Russian Railroads will build a railway from Mecca to Medina.

Seven Saudi space satellites have been launched by Russia since 2003, and another six spacecraft will be put in orbit in the near future. Russia also wants to sell weapons and nuclear reactors to Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Saudi business circles are keen to become active actors in the Russian economy, as evidenced by a proposal to establish a Russian-Saudi bank.⁴⁴ Importantly, both countries may coordinate their energy policies in the world markets, focusing primarily on oil extraction quotas, as Russia wants the Saudis not to increase their oil output and to help maintain high prices.

Cooperation with Saudi Arabia is part of Russia's broader effort to establish friendly relations with Islamic countries. In 2005, Russia gained observer status in the influential Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), comprised of all countries of the Muslim world. Russia will strongly use that in its foreign and security policy, as it may help Moscow to act as a 'bridge between civilizations.' This role of Russia could ensue also from the fact that Moscow's foreign and security policy is now influenced by the ever growing proportion of Muslims among its population.⁴⁵

By and large, more intensive cooperation with the Middle East on the part of Russia and China could foreshadow Saudi Arabian efforts to diversify its foreign policy and reduce its current dependence on the US.

⁴² In the 2000 *Memorandum on Mutual Understanding between Iran and the People's Republic of China*, the Chinese oil and gas company SINOPEC undertook to buy 250 million tons of liquefied natural gas annually over a period of 30 years. The contract is worth 70 billion USD.

⁴³ In addition to Saudi Arabia, Putin visited also Qatar and Jordan. It should be noted that had previously made state visits to other Arab countries—Algeria (March 2006) and Morocco (September 2006).

⁴⁴ Intensification of Russia's political relations with Saudi Arabia could persuade that country to curb or halt its aid to anti-Russian Islamic groups in Chechnya.

⁴⁵ Russia's Muslims have the highest birth rate. According to some experts, Russia's Slavic and Christian character could start changing around 2050 due to the growth of its Muslim population.

Global Governance

The complexities of the modern world, enhanced in many ways by actual and potential conflicts between the main actors within the international system, underscore issues of global governance.⁴⁶ The existing framework of international relations is not sufficient as it has been crisis-prone since the end of the Cold War and bipolar world divisions.

Paradoxically, the international relations ‘crises of modernity’ has become more profound in connection with the shaping of a new, multipolar world system. In this ‘transitional period,’ the international situation will be marked by an ever increasing heterogeneity, and global governance will have to adjust to the fast-changing balance of forces and interests. Numerous key problems have gained prominence, including the (questioned) legitimacy of existing global governance institutions, especially the UN, as opposed to the legitimacy of alternative forms of global governance, such as the G8 or G20 platforms; the US’s imbalanced approach to multilateral policies and institutions; the inclusion of new powers (China, India and Brazil) in decision-making processes on the international level; the growing influence of regional organizations; and last but not least, the influence of nongovernmental actors on global governance.

Over the next two or three decades, institutionalized global governance will probably be a mixture of reformed existing and new groupings, without telling whether this changing configuration can really tackle the growing global problems of political, economic, security and environmental characters.

United Nations

The complexity of future developments in international relations is duly indicated by the current state of the UN. 2005 saw the failure of an attempt to reform the UN in general and the Security Council (SC) in particular, whose impact on solving international security issues has been waning. It is simultaneously quite obvious that the present shape of the UNSC has long ceased to reflect the political and economic facts of the world, which have significantly changed since the UN’s creation, under the aegis of the World War II victors. In terms of their political and economic influence and sheer size of population, it is legitimate for India, Japan, Brazil and Germany to claim seats on the Security Council. However, this is not accepted by the current permanent members for a host of political reasons.

⁴⁶ For details, see Potůček, M. (2006): Globální vládnutí. In *Studie pro oblast kritických infrastruktur v rámci projektu přípravy výzkumného centra pro EU*, Ústav jaderného výzkumu Rež, a.s., p. 86–91.

This situation is hardly tenable in the long run as it limits the UN's legitimacy and thus hampers its ability to act in defence of its charter.⁴⁷ The UN's ability to act is also influenced by the fact that a serious disconcert emerged in the UN and SC, when the Cold War ended, over the interpretation and application of international law, especially over the use of force, the interpretation of threats to world peace and security, and striking a balance between legitimate humanitarian intervention and national sovereignty. This came to the fore especially in connection with the NATO action in Kosovo (1999) and with the US-led intervention in Iraq (2003).

The intervention versus sovereignty debate continues to overshadow international relations, as evidenced also by the NATO study entitled: "Future Security Environment," which reads that international law will be softened in cases when outside force can be used to interfere in internal policy matters, if such intervention is justified on obvious humanitarian grounds.⁴⁸ It is to be expected that determining when such conditions apply will be the subject of many international disputes, especially between the US and parts of the EU, as well as between some EU members on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other.

In parallel with the UN, new platforms have been formed that give new impulses to global governance. Chief among them are the annual G8 summits of the most developed Western nations and Russia that discuss a wide range of critical global issues. The efficacy of this platform is limited, however. The G8 is an exclusive club, "primarily representing the Western culture,"⁴⁹ but is not representative of global realities, especially the positions and interests of China and India. The Chinese economy is in many ways larger and more diverse than those of G8's Italy or Canada, while China and India combined have a population three times the G8 countries taken together. This anachronism results in a limited ability to put in practice the goals and tasks agreed on by the G8 summit conferences, such as to halt environmental degradation, limit global poverty, the fight against AIDS and to combat terrorism.

In addition to international organisation, regional organizations have proliferated over the past years and tend to be ambitious enough to assist in

⁴⁷ The British Defence Ministry study, *The DCDC Global Strategic Trends Programme 2007–2036* predicts that unless the United Nations reforms itself, various powers or groups may attempt to "fill in" the vacuum left behind by the UN. However, they will probably not succeed as there will be no consensus on "expressing their joint will". Consequently, every actor will pursue its own interests, which could increase the risk of wider confrontation and conflict (see <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/Organisation/AgenciesOrganisations/DCDC>, p. 51).

⁴⁸ For details, see *Future Security Environment*, Draft 1.3. – Symposium FSE-04 Apr. 2006, p. 50–52.

⁴⁹ See Hoge, F. Jr. (2004): A Global Power Shift in the Making, *Foreign Affairs* no. 4/2004, p. 4 <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040701facomment83401/james-f-hoge-jr/a-global-power-shift-in-the-making.html?mode=print>

the process of global governance. Regional organisations have been highly motivated in part by emulating the EU as a successful model. Groups such as APEC,⁵⁰ ASEAN, SOC, the African Union, ECOWAS⁵¹ and Mercosur have a pronounced economic and political impact on their respective regions, and this is, in many ways, projected onto the global level.⁵² Doubtlessly, this also applies to NATO, still the strongest international security organization within the global governance structure, which can and does, effectively work with the UN.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NATO has lately been divided by disputes about its future role in the world. The US as the strongest ally strives for a “global alliance” which – unlike NATO’s current *modus operandi* that limits the scope and spatial dimensions of NATO actions – would be able to address security concerns on a more global scale. According to the US, this “global alliance” should be cemented in closer cooperation with the countries that share NATO’s geopolitical and strategic values, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea.⁵³

Some European NATO members are divided over this idea of extending NATO’s operational horizons. They tend to site the loss of Europe’s influence within NATO, and the raising of tensions between the West and the rest of the world in the UN, as well as between the West, China and Russia.

German Defence Minister Jung indicated at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, that NATO does not have the will to become a truly global alliance because of its Euro-Atlantic foundations. He explained that “NATO is not a global police.” Jung outlined the need for NATO’s strategic partnerships with the EU and the UN.⁵⁴ Such partnerships would work only if the US accepts

⁵⁰ The Asian Pacific Economic Community (APEC) is an economic forum of countries of the Pacific region. Its members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua-New Guinea, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam. Its member countries generate 60% of the world’s GDP.

⁵¹ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is an organization for economic and security cooperation, comprising 15 West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo).

⁵² The impact of international organizations could be the basis of a positive alternative to the UN, in accordance with the ideas of leading U.S. futurologist Alvin Toffler, who suggested that the UN become a federation of various treaties and pacts and change its structure of permanent vertical bureaucracies to horizontal, problem-focused units.

⁵³ Spain’s former Prime Minister Aznar also cites Israel (see his article, *Reforming NATO: The focus must be terrorism*, *Europe’s World*, spring 2006, http://europesworld.link.be/europesworld/PDFs/Issue2/EW2_2.10_Aznar_Reforming_NATO.pdf).

⁵⁴ Speech by German Defence Minister F. J. Jung, see <http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?sprache=en&id=185&>.

that NATO can not be a central platform for the assessment of security issues in their broadest context (energy safety, fighting environmental degradation and combating terrorism) within the transatlantic region while the EU-US platform is better suited. If, however, the United States pursues its ‘multilateralism a la carte’ strategy, this will be hardly probable. It should be noted that this strategy is being applied to Afghanistan with less than remarkable results.

Nongovernmental Actors and the Economic Dimension of Multipolarity

Together with international institutions and platforms and with regional organizations, the role of nongovernmental actors in the process of constructing a basis for global governance has increased despite the continued dominance of states in international relations. Nongovernmental actors are “more of influence to impact the context within which operate states and international organizations.”⁵⁵ This is especially evident in the commercial sector, which has recorded, in the last decade, a significant growth, of economic influence, of supra-national corporations from China, India, South Korea, Russia and Mexico. 48 companies tied to these nations made the Fortune Global List of the world’s 500 largest companies⁵⁶ (in comparison to 20 in 1995⁵⁷). In 2007, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China became the world’s leading bank and its market value of 254 billion USD exceeded the American giant Citigroup.

Another global economic actor, Russia’s Gazprom, controls 16% of global natural gas reserves, 20% of its extraction and has an estimated market value of 200 billion USD. It is to be expected that multinational corporations established by emerging great and middle powers may be used as political leverage reinforcing their home countries’ foreign policy interests. This trend will probably continue in the case of Chinese and Russian companies as the state is a leading owner or majority shareholder of transnational corporations and there are strong cooperative ties between them and the government.⁵⁸ The profits of these corporations will project also into the state funds administering trade balance surpluses amounting to 300 billion USD in China and 100 billion

⁵⁵ See *Long Term Vision*, Strand One, Global Context study for an initial ESDP Long Term Vision (LTV) (2006): EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, p. 29.

⁵⁶ See http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/global500/2007/full_list/index.html

⁵⁷ Twenty companies are from China, 12 from South Korea, six from India and five each from Russia and Mexico (see *The Rise of the Multi-Polar World*. Accenture, http://www.accenture.com/NR/rdonlyres/FDE9A8E7-6839-472B-8C9E-957DD6DF1B76/0/MultiPolar_World_final.pdf, p. 14.).

⁵⁸ According to leading Russian industrialist Anatoly Chubais, these companies should be emissaries of Russia as a “liberal empire” that supports aggressive economic expansion, which would help Russia to become an important regional power—a democratic and peaceful successor to the Soviet Union. He believes that Russia must secure its foreign influence more by trade and enterprise and less by its foreign policy.

USD in Russia, which could be invested in bonds in other countries. The China Central Bank's 1.2 billion dollar portfolio helps to finance the US federal debt by purchasing US government bonds. In real terms, China owns about 10% of the US federal debt.⁵⁹ This boosts China's global political influence more than any other foreign policy instrument. It also shows that the transition to multipolarity has a strong economic dimension, with the world progressing from the era of geographically concentrated economic power to an era symbolized by the existence of many centres of economic and trade activity. It follows that although the risks associated with this 'transition' period are not negligible, the interdependence of the main actors within the global market, whose 'rules' are basically respected, provides a guarantee, albeit limited, for the prevention of militarised conflicts which would fundamentally threaten international security.

⁵⁹ See Pavel Kohout, *Komu bude patřit svět*, *Lidové noviny* 27.07.2007.

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