



From European Order to the Current Flux

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Abstract

The current form of the international system as the foundation to govern the relations between states began to take shape in the sixteenth century Europe when strategic and diplomatic relations were formed between great powers. The treaty of Westphalia signed in 1648, also known as 'Peace of Westphalia', has provided legitimate principles and ground for the formation of an international system and introduced the concepts of state sovereignty, mediation between nations, and diplomacy which ultimately ended the devastating Thirty Years War in Central Europe. After the two World Wars, the baton of global leadership was transferred from Europe to two non-European states i.e. the United States and the Soviet Union, an era of bipolarity where the two super powers jostled for world hegemony. After the demise of the Soviet Union, United States became the sole super power with all the major powers of western Europe gathered under its leadership. Once again, the existing global order is rapidly melting down and as the world is shifting from unipolarity to multipolarity, the international system is exposed to instability and chaos. The emergence of major powers such as China and Russia, is representing a geopolitical change which implies the resurgence of Asia in the global system. The continuous and sustainable economic growth of China will influence the future layout of the system and help China to enhance its economic, political, and strategic influence across the globe.

Keywords: Westphalia, bipolarity, resurgence, European order

Introduction

Not long after World War I when the League of Nations (LON) was established, the US President Woodrow Wilson used the term “new world

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order”, deeming that it would be conceivable to develop a framework and an international political system which will help to enhance peace and security across the globe¹. Historically, an accurate picture of the international order is referred to a period when the European order was replaced by the global order. At that time the concentration of power shifted to non-European states that marked the emergence of the US and Russia in the global political arena as two major powers. However, the notion of the global order is quite amorphous and may require searching through the ancient times to understand the phenomenon.² It is extremely crucial to analyze the global order on the basis of its formation, and how it has developed, in order to forecast the imminent changes that are going to take place within the system.

The foundation of the existing global order has established gradually with a number of steps involved. Inside the political domain, globalization significantly influenced the sovereignty of the states and propagated the establishment of a global order where the states are not bound within their territorial boundaries, thus, blurring the concept of state’s sovereignty³. However, when we refer to the global order it is mainly accredited to the rise of the US, as a non-European power, relegating Western European states to a secondary power status and subsequent competition between the US and USSR commonly referred to as the Cold War. The world has witnessed a practical manifestation of the balance of power between both nuclear rivals during this era⁴.

Since 1945, the global liberal order has served as a keystone for maintaining international peace and stability. This liberal order was designed by the US and its Western allies predominantly European states⁵. The basic purpose

¹ Stephen A. Kocs, *International Order: A Political History*, *Foreign Affairs*, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2019-12-10/international-order-political-history>

² Orfeo Fioratoes , “The syncopated history of the liberal international order”, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2018

³ Robert M. Cutler, “The Complex Evolution of International Orders and the Current International Transition,” *Inter-journal Complex Systems*, 1999, 515–522, <http://www.robertcutler.org/download/html/ar00ij.html>

⁴ G. John Ikenberry, *The Rise, Character, and Evolution of International Order*, Oxford Handbook Online, (2016), <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199662814.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199662814-e-32>

⁵ Robert Latham, “History, theory, and international order: some lessons from the nineteenth century”, *Cambridge University Press*, 23(1997), <https://www.cambridge.org>

was to prevent armed conflict among states by mitigating economic nationalism and introducing a transnational economic system that will help to increase economic integration. International organizations, for instance, the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), World Trade Organization (WTO), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have also become a part of it⁶.

Background

During the time period of the Upper Paleolithic Revolution*, politics was primarily seen within the context of the distribution of power and resources. The concept of foreign policy and governing relationship between different states is much older than the formulation of domestic policies. Study of history has revealed that the relations between states could establish only after these states were bound within a specific system of states which happened distinctly in the third millennium BC⁷.

Since its inception, the study of the political hegemony and power struggle has always been complicated. One of the classical examples of power struggle prevailing in the Afro-Eurasian region (in the Near East) related to the rise and falls of various kingdoms and their clashes among themselves for hegemony and dominance over natural resources as well as their rivals at various points in time. This includes the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian Kingdom, the New Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Empire, and the conflict between the New Kingdom of Egypt and the Hittite Empire. Despite all their clashes, their mutual relations later served as a basis for the formation of new global order. This struggle for power and dominance without a doubt upgraded the connections inside the world system and upheld its solidarity

/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/history-theory-and-international-order-some-lessons-from-the-nineteenth-century/DE8177EBE7848147EAF92FE797CE098D

⁶ "International Order", *encyclopedia. Com*, (2020), <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/international-order>

* The transition from the Middle Paleolithic to the Upper Paleolithic is considered one of the major revolutions in the prehistory of humankind. Ofer Bar-Yosef, *The Upper Paleolithic Revolution*, 363. www.jstor.org.

⁷ "The New World Order: Features and Concepts", *Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research*, (2014), pp: 92-179, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/prospects-for-the-american-age/new-world-order-features-and-concepts/564492C68B76C589CEF4AFF02F0445FA>

regardless of the conflict among the antiquated states⁸. It additionally added to speedy dissemination of technological advancements among various tribes such as iron metallurgy, which helped these tribes to gain more power than their rivals. The struggle for power between nomadic tribes is also one of the key factors defining the political landscape of the prehistoric time period as well as global order that has been formulated in the later parts of the history⁹.

During the transitional period, from the Middle Ages to the Age of Discovery, when the entire world system was engulfed by the concept of globalization where states were rapidly moving towards a transnational system, the political landscape of the forming global order has undergone a lot of transformation. Ideas, norms, and principles that surfaced as a result of this ongoing transformation have ended up in underlying the foundations for the existing global political order. It is pertinent to mention that one can scarcely overlook the changes associated with the foundation or upsetting of a specific level of influence and balance of power among different conflicting parties which could have significant impact on the outcomes¹⁰.

Beginning from the Greco-Persian wars, one can easily identify the clashes and confrontation between European and Asian states. The clash was much about the diffusion of their ideology and culture. Asian States were considered to be cultural centers and European on the other hand pursuing expansionist ideology¹¹. In the middle Ages, because of logical inconsistencies among Islam and Christianity, the ideological factor would make a significant and perpetual commitment to the establishment of global order. Samuel P. Huntington's thoughts later in *The Clash Of Civilizations And Making Of The World Order* could be referred to as the best suitable

⁸ Joseph S. Nye, "What New World Order?", *Foreign Affairs*, (1992), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1992-03-01/what-new-world-order>

⁹ Umair Haque, "The New New World Order", (2017), <https://umairhaque.com/the-new-new-world-order-71c913887082>

¹⁰ Marcus Vinicius de Freitas, "A New World Order with Chinese Characteristics", *Policy Center for the New South*, (2019), <https://www.policycenter.ma/opinion/new-world-order-chinese-characteristics>

¹¹ Hanns W. Maull, *The Rise and Decline of the Post-Cold War International Order*, Oxford University Press, (2018), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-rise-and-decline-of-the-post-cold-war-international-order-9780198828945?lang=en&cc=in>

interpretation of this phenomenon¹². Even today, these patterns of policy formulation and governing the foreign and domestic relations are practically implemented and reinforced but with certain variances that are caused by the changing nature of the international political system¹³.

The Age of Discovery has introduced new variables. To begin with, the field of international relations has extended across the globe with a number of new concepts being added to it and the emergence of unprecedented threats and global issues. Secondly, the foundation and redistribution of natural resources and assets has characterized the global policy approaches that accompany the policy formulation of the states for at least four centuries. Thirdly, the conceptual development of core and periphery states implied the formation and functioning inside the existing international political realm. As for Europe, the second half of the fifteenth century is occupied with inequality and chaos after various destructive wars being fought between different European powers. In any case, the stability of the world was undermined for more than a century by various developments during the age of discovery and particularly due to the political reforms¹⁴.

The Creation of the Global Order

The current form of the international system as the foundation to govern the relations between the states began to take shape in the sixteenth century when strategic and diplomatic relations were formed between great powers in Europe. The treaty of Westphalia signed in 1648 also known as ‘Peace of Westphalia’ has provided legitimate principles for the international system and introduced the concepts of state sovereignty, mediation between nations, and diplomacy which ultimately ended the devastating Thirty Years War in Central Europe¹⁵.

¹² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, (1996), <https://www.beyondintractability.org/bksum/huntington-clash>

¹³ Hanns W. Maull, “The Future of International Order”, *Fritz Thyssen Foundation*, (2018), <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/projects/completed-projects-compl/the-future-of-international-order/>

¹⁴ Michael J. Mazarr, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, “Understanding the Current International Order”, *RAND Corporation*, (2016), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1598/RAND_RR1598.pdf

¹⁵ Suisheng Zhao, and Josef Korbel, “China and the Evolving World Order: A Stakeholder or a Revolutionary Power?”, (2016), <http://www.theasanforum.org/china-and-the-evolving-world-order-a-stakeholder-or-a-revolutionary-power/>

Although the Thirty Years War was more like European religious wars fought during the sixteenth century, yet it introduced two new policy frameworks which were actively pursued by political leaders around the globe and became an essential parameter for developing foreign policies by many states. The first strategy was to maintain the balance of power by engaging in different forms of alliances and coalitions to support fragile states against their strong competitors. The second was to give more importance to the national interest of a state rather than other issues such as religion and ideology etc.¹⁶

The Main Factors Influencing the Formation of the European/Global Order

As explained earlier, the balance of power is one of the major factors influencing the development of foreign policy of a state within the prevailing international political order. European states also followed the same framework. Some European states deliberately pursued a foreign policy in which they created several military alliances and political coalitions that helped them to control and maintain favorable outcomes to achieve their national interests. Keeping all this in view, it can easily be assessed as to what sort of coalitions and alliances were formed during the 18th and 19th centuries¹⁷. Undoubtedly, the geopolitical factor is one of the major reasons behind the development of such political landscape which comprise of various powerful states yet without the presence of any hegemon. Contrary to that, a geopolitical environment led by China, where China is the major player in the political realm of the region, may hamper the development and maintenance of perplexing diplomatic relations with practically equivalent powerful states. However, it is pertinent to mention that the European model of international relations has been adopted by the world leaders to later transform into new global order¹⁸.

The advent of gun powder and 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA) led to the creation of an advanced and stronger army that was created to enhance

¹⁶ Douglas Zuvich, "Global trade: The evolving world order", *KPMG International*, (2019), <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2019/05/global-trade-the-evolving-world-order.pdf>

¹⁷ Schweller, Randall L., and Xiaoyu Pu. "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline." *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 41-72, www.jstor.org/stable/41289688.

¹⁸ Grinin Leonid, "Evolution Of World Order", *Social Sciences*, https://www.sociostudies.org/almanac/articles/evolution_of_world_order/

the defense capabilities of a state and to ensure its security and survivability. The technological development provides an edge to the states to enhance their security, for instance, France and Britain won the Crimean War due to their technological superiority over Russia. Although having a large and well-equipped army has a decisive impact on the outcomes of war, however, other elements of national power such as the economic power of a country together with its huge economic resources is also one of the major determining factors to define the outcomes of war. For instance, it was the absolute economic superiority of the allied forces (France, Great Britain, USSR and the US) against Germany that prompted Germany's annihilation in both World Wars. A number of economic indicators are present in today's international system that can assist with characterizing the patterns of the balance of power in the future¹⁹.

Since the ideological factor plays a crucial role in changing the perception regarding the actions of government and how legitimate they are, the perceived balance of power could be occasionally disturbed by a changing ideological worldview and may also prompt wars between ideological rivals. The consequences of such infringement have been witnessed in the reemergence of the religious wars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and later in the division of Europe on the basis of two ideological beliefs that are Protestants and Catholics²⁰. The French Revolution (in the late eighteenth century) has highlighted another ideological crisis that has not only sabotaged the powers of the monarchy but also encouraged people to get rid of this aristocratic culture prevailing in the country for long. As a result, the country has witnessed a chain of endless wars and alliances that lasted for almost a quarter of a century and ultimately resulted in the fall of Napoleon's Empire and the reclamation of governments²¹. The period after the First and Second World Wars witnessed a new era of ideological differences between communism and capitalism that determine the shape

¹⁹ Sardar Masood Khan, "The Evolving Global Order", (2018), <http://cpsd.org.pk/monograph-13.php>

²⁰ Leonid Grinin, Ilya Ilyin and Alexey I. Andreev, "World Order in the Past, Present, and Future", *Social Evolution and History*, 15(1):58-84, (2016), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306286327_World_Order_in_the_Past_Present_and_Future

²¹ Muzaffer Ercan YILMAZ, "The New World Order": An Outline of the Post-Cold War Era", *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 7 no 4, (2008), <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/19517>

of the new global order during the Cold War and caused the evolution of existing global order²².

From Concert of Europe to the World Wars

The Concert of Europe, a term referring to the balance of power between great European states that shaped the global order of that time was in two phases, the first phase was from 1815 to 1860 and it was dominated by five great powers of Europe at that time: United Kingdom, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and France. Prussia joined the Concert under the kingship of Frederick II²³. These powerful states used this system to oppose revolutionary movements by weakening the nationalistic approach and enforcing the balance of power. However, the system collapsed by the reemergence of nationalism in the form of unification of Italy and Germany in the year 1871. With Germany resuming power, the concert of Europe entered into its second phase that was from 1880 to 1914. It was recreated by Germany to avoid any future conflicts that may escalate into full-fledged wars. This phase of the Concert has an additional power that was Germany which had become a military and economic power by then. In the year 1914, the concert of Europe had been divided into two groups which ultimately served as two belligerent parties in World War I where on one hand there was Germany (supported by the Austria-Hungary) and on the other hand there was an alliance of Russia and Great Britain to counter Germany²⁴.

A number of factors were involved in offsetting the balance of power among European countries such as; rearrangement of armed forces, development and implementation of effective foreign policy, growing trade and economy, technological developments in fields of economy and military. Agrarian revolution and industrial revolution in Britain during the eighteenth century is one such example of technological development that assisted Britain to control and shape the balance of power and power structure in Europe in

²² Cold War History, *History.com*, <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history>

²³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, (1996), <https://www.beyondintractability.org/bksum/huntington-clash>

²⁴ Stephen A. Kocs, "International Order: A Political History", *Foreign Affairs*, (2020), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2019-12-10/international-order-political-history>

the second half of the eighteenth century²⁵. On the other hand, former leading European powers like Spain and Portugal witnessed a decline in their powers. Lagging behind in transforming their social and economic conditions, both the countries lost their former glory. Furthermore, the technological incompetence and lack of their interest in keeping up with technological development and innovation caused many states like France, Holland and the Austrian empire to considerably lose their political prestige²⁶.

The 'Congress of Vienna' in 1814–1815 and the formulation of 'Holy Alliance' between monarchs of Austria, Prussia, and Russia were significant turning points in the development of norms and principles for the distribution of power in the international political order. The monarchs at that time tried to maintain the status quo in the region by suppressing any potential revolution against their rule²⁷. This ideological step provided the basis for legitimizing their power as monarchs. However, with the dissolution of 'The Concert', a culture of multipolar diplomacy prevailed in the system that provided a lot of opportunities for smooth and regular continuation of international relations. The involvement of Third World countries, predominantly Asian states such as Burma, China, and Japan, etc. into the world affairs brought a lot of change in the existing global political order but still Europe remained the main determining factor²⁸.

For more than three decades, the political environment of Europe was overshadowed by the policy of preserving legitimate governments rather than pursuing the national interests of the states. Nevertheless, European industrial revolution of 1848-1849 and the regime change in France had undermined this ideology and replaced it with a more rational thinking

²⁵ Orfeo Fioratoes , "The syncopated history of the liberal international order", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, (2018) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1369148118791415?journalCode=bpia&>

²⁶ Robert M. Cutler, "The Complex Evolution of International Orders and the Current International Transition," *Interjournal Complex Systems*, No. 255 (1999); pp. 515–522, <http://www.robertcutler.org/download/html/ar00ij.html>

²⁷ G. John Ikenberry, *The Rise, Character, and Evolution of International Order*, Oxford Handbook Online, (2016), <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199662814.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199662814-e-32>

²⁸ Robert Latham, *History, theory, and international order: some lessons from the nineteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, 23(1997), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/history-theory-and-international-order-some-lessons-from-the-nineteenth-century/DE8177EBE7848147EAF79098D>

regarding political maneuvering and alliances formation for the attainment of their national interests which may provide them with countless benefits regardless of whatever cost they have to pay. German Chancellor – Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) called this policy a “Realpolitik”, which later on became the most prominent aspect of the alliances and coalitions of great European powers formed between the 1870s and 1900s²⁹.

When the Holy Roman Empire met its fate at the hands of Napoleon, Congress of Vienna replaced it by establishing German Confederation in the year 1815. Despite the fact that German confederation started losing its state and reduced from three hundred states to only three dozen, even then Central Europe was not able to confront it and remained weak before the German might. In the meantime, France, Britain, and many other major powers had considered maintaining a balance of power with Germany as an essential component of their national security objectives. Austria and Prussia also developed their national policy in accordance with their competition and rivalry with Germany³⁰. In the 1870s, Europe witnessed a significant change in its political situation, for example, unification of Germany under Prussian rule which was mainly accredited to wars between great powers like Austria and Prussia, shrewd policies of Bismarck and various slip-ups made by Austria and France³¹.

The new emerging state was much stronger than any other existing powers in Europe, which changed the balance of power in Europe drastically. Fearing war on two fronts, Bismarck sought an alliance with Russia. However, after his resignation, things set forth in a different way because Russia had a conflict with the Austro Hungarian Empire that pushed Russia to camp with anti-German states³². In the year 1892, Russia and France made an alliance

²⁹ “International Order”, *encyclopedia. Com*, (2020), <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/international-order>

³⁰ George Lawson, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford University Press, (2016) , pp. 37-51, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68644/1/Lawson_The%20rise%20of%20modern%20international%20order.pdf

³¹ Glenda Sluga, “The Beginning(s) and End(s) of the International Order”, *E-International Relations*, (2017), <https://www.e-ir.info/2017/05/22/the-beginnings-and-ends-of-the-international-order/>

³² “The New World Order: Features and Concepts”, *Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research*, (2014), pp: 92-179, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/prospects-for-the-american-age/new-world-order-features-and-concepts/564492C68B76C589CEF4AFF02F0445FA>

against Germany, and then in the year 1904, France and Britain also made an agreement known as the “Entente Cordiale” which then later transformed into a trilateral alliance between France, Britain and Russia in the year 1907³³.

The growing economic and military strength of Germany had compelled Britain to adopt a strategy of joining an alliance of weaker states. Britain was deemed to counter Germany’s power. Other factors like industrial development, technological innovations to enhance economic and military growth, and Revolution in Military Affairs had forced warring parties especially Germany to utilize its military means in order to achieve victory and change the balance of power in Europe³⁴.

From the Balance of Power to Bipolarity

In the wake of all the political developments in Europe, new military alliances emerged which divided Europe into two contradicting power blocks that ultimately led to World War I from 1914 to 1918 which altered the global political order at that time. The League of Nations (LON) was established in 1920³⁵. Nevertheless, League of Nations failed to achieve its objectives.

The development of hi-tech and lethal weapons, the economic great depression of the 1930s, the hesitance of Germany to foresee the developments and different other variables exacerbated the relations among world leaders and unleashed another war and world entered into World War II (1939-1945) which is the most deadly war in the world till now³⁶. Soon after WWII, a brief period of relative tranquility prevailed in the shape of a new and stable global order which was significantly different from the global order existing previously. The foremost difference was that the world entered into the era of bipolarity where there were only two major power blocs that were North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and

³³ Joseph S. Nye, “What New World Order?”, *Foreign Affairs*, (1992), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1992-03-01/what-new-world-order>

³⁴ Umair Haque, “The New New World Order”, (2017), <https://umairhaque.com/the-new-new-world-order-71c913887082>

³⁵ Marcus Vinicius de Freitas, “A New World Order with Chinese Characteristics”, *Policy Center for the New South*, (2019), <https://www.policycenter.ma/opinion/new-world-order-chinese-characteristics>

³⁶ Hanns W. Maull, *The Rise and Decline of the Post-Cold War International Order*, Oxford University Press, (2018), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-rise-and-decline-of-the-post-cold-war-international-order-9780198828945?lang=en&cc=in>

Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) under the leadership of the US and the USSR respectively³⁷. The important feature of this balance of power was the balancing of their nuclear might and deterrence strategy. Furthermore, the ideological factor again played a crucial role in deciding the shape of global order at that time which had been vanished from statecraft and foreign policy formulation of European powers³⁸.

It is generally speculated by many world leaders that a stable global order lasts for three to four decades or even less. A practical manifestation of this theoretical perception can be referred to as the international political system that existed before the French Revolution (1789-1799) which prevailed for less than thirty years. This system was established after the Seven Years War (from 1756 to 1763) and obliterated in 1790-1791³⁹. Another example is of the order established after the Napoleonic wars and the Congress of Vienna which existed for less than thirty-five years and was culminated because of 1848-1849 revolutions against the European monarchs followed by Crimean War. The global order which followed was established after the rise of the German Empire in 1871 that prevailed for a relatively longer period and was wrecked by the First World War. Consequently, it prevailed for less than two decades⁴⁰. All these examples of established global orders at different points in history support the hypothetical assumption regarding the life span of stable global order⁴¹.

Cold War: Towards a New Global Order

The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was a political, economic, and ideological conflict between two superpowers of that time. It was more ideological in nature

³⁷ Hanns W. Maull, "The Future of International Order", *Fritz Thyssen Foundation*, (2018), <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/projects/completed-projects-compl/the-future-of-international-order/>

³⁸ Michael J. Mazarr, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, "Understanding the Current International Order", *RAND Corporation*, (2016), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1598/RAND_RR1598.pdf

³⁹ Suisheng Zhao, and Josef Korbel, "China and the Evolving World Order: A Stakeholder or a Revolutionary Power?", (2016), <http://www.theasianforum.org/china-and-the-evolving-world-order-a-stakeholder-or-a-revolutionary-power/>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Douglas Zuvich, "Global trade: The evolving world order", *KPMG International*, (2019), <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2019/05/global-trade-the-evolving-world-order.pdf>

because both the US and USSR aimed to curtail the spread of Communism and Capitalism respectively.

The Cold War was mainly about the nuclear arms race, balance of power, alliance formation for the growth of their respective ideological beliefs, and above all deterrence between two nuclear super powers⁴². The Cuban Missile crisis of 1962 was an incident during the Cold War when both the US and USSR were at the brink of nuclear confrontation, however, due to reasonable diplomatic channeling, a potential nuclear war was averted⁴³.

Throughout the 1960s and '70s, the ideological split between the US and Soviet bloc's gave rise to an increasingly muddled international order where the core issue of ideological differences was left behind and the split between China and the Soviet Union intensified the weakening strength of the communist bloc⁴⁴. Meanwhile, the economic development of Western Europe and Japan during the 1950s and 60s reduced their financial inadequacy vis a vis the US. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union signed many nonproliferation treaties to reduce, eliminate, and stop the future proliferation of nuclear arms. Several economic, political and social problems within the communist bloc and the weakening economic and political structure of the Soviet Union ultimately led to its collapse in 1991 and the Soviet Union disintegrated into fifteen sovereign states leaving Russia as the main proponent of the communist ideology and the bearer of the Soviet legacy⁴⁵.

Post-Cold War: A Unipolar Order

The collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by the reemergence of many serious conflicts that had been taking place even during the Cold War, for instance, the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, and the fighting in Chechnya. Some new conflicts that erupted and

⁴² Schweller, Randall L., and Xiaoyu Pu. "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline." *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 41-72, www.jstor.org/stable/41289688.

⁴³ Sardar Masood Khan, "The Evolving Global Order", (2018), <http://cpsd.org.pk/monograph-13.php>

⁴⁴ Hanns W. Maull, *The Rise and Decline of the Post-Cold War International Order*, Oxford University Press, (2018), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-rise-and-decline-of-the-post-cold-war-international-order-9780198828945?lang=en&cc=in>

⁴⁵ Grinin Leonid, "Evolution Of World Order", *Social Sciences*, https://www.sociostudies.org/almanac/articles/evolution_of_world_order/

intensified were not formerly present and if they did they did not have much involvement of the great powers into it but post-Cold War era had significant incidents of such involvement of superpowers.⁴⁶

By the end of the 1990s, the US was a political and economic hegemon that had started asserting multifaceted influence in nearly every field including science and technology, economy, military, and even culture. However, the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 on the twin towers had turned the tables for the US⁴⁷. It was a defining moment after which the US altered and even abandoned many of its domestic and foreign policy principles and commenced a global war against terrorism.

In order to preserve the status quo in the era following the Cold War, the dominant powers started cooperating on a number of pressing issues that are of mutual concern, mainly for maintaining international peace and security. In order to maintain peace and to avoid conflicts, a drastic increase in the peacekeeping operations has been witnessed⁴⁸. For instance, the number of peacekeeping missions during 1948-1978 was only 13 that rose to 63 UN peacekeeping missions in the year 2008 out of which 18 missions are still active involving approximately 112660 civilian and military personnel⁴⁹.

The post- Cold War era reflects a global order which comprises of both unipolar and multipolar systems where on one hand the US was accepted as a global hegemon and on the other hand four other veto powers that are China, Russia, France, and UK were also playing their role as major economic and political powers in shaping the global order. However, the lopsided economic progress and technological development of many emerging states

⁴⁶ Leonid Grinin, Ilya Ilyin and Alexey I. Andreev, "World Order in the Past, Present, and Future", *Social Evolution and History*, 15(1):58-84, (2016), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306286327_World_Order_in_the_Past_Present_and_Future

⁴⁷ Muzaffer Ercan YILMAZ, "The New World Order: An Outline of the Post-Cold War Era", *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 7 no 4, (2008), <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/19517>

⁴⁸ G. John Ikenberry, *The Rise, Character, and Evolution of International Order*, Oxford Handbook Online, (2016), <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199662814.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199662814-e-32>

⁴⁹ Robert Latham, *History, theory, and international order: some lessons from the nineteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/history-theory-and-international-order-some-lessons-from-the-nineteenth-century/DE8177EBE7848147EAF92FE797CE098D>

offset the balance of power thus, shifting the existing global order. In the course of the last three or four decades, globalization has been continually and fundamentally influencing the adjustments of the world order⁵⁰. In this way, during the two decades beginning from 1991, at the foundation of debilitating Europe and proceeding with stagnation in Japan one watched the ascent of major economic powers in Asia (China and India) just as the rise of various rapidly growing and developing states from other parts of the world⁵¹.

From Unipolar Order to Global Disorder

The post-Cold War era was a transition from a classic inter-states war period which was overshadowed by the policy of direct confrontation between the conflicting parties to a policy of indirect confrontation. Cold War policies were extremely expensive for the states because in order to maintain the balance of power and to deter their enemies, states had to maintain huge defence budget. Two main factors that emerged in the post-Cold War era were the widening North-South gap (may also referred to as North-South conflict) and, more importantly, economic competition and fight for economic resources among various major powers⁵². The threat to international peace and security posed by religious extremism somehow highlighted the fact that in the post-Cold War era ideological conflicts are replaced by religiously driven conflicts⁵³.

According to some experts, the cultural difference also plays a significant role in deciding the world order and power distribution among the states. As Samuel P Huntington argued that, "The most important differences among

⁵⁰ Orfeo Fioratoes , "The syncopated history of the liberal international order", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, (2018) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1369148118791415?journalCode=bpia&>

⁵¹ Robert M. Cutler, "The Complex Evolution of International Orders and the Current International Transition," *Interjournal Complex Systems*, No. 255 (1999); reprinted in *Unifying Themes in Complex Systems*, ed. Y. Bar-Yam and A. Minai (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2004), pp. 515–522, <http://www.robertcutler.org/download/html/ar00ij.html>

⁵² George Lawson, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford University Press, (2016) , pp. 37-51, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68644/1/Lawson_The%20rise%20of%20modern%20international%20order.pdf

⁵³ Glenda Sluga, "The Beginning(s) and End(s) of the International Order", *E-International Relations*, (2017), <https://www.e-ir.info/2017/05/22/the-beginnings-and-ends-of-the-international-order/>

peoples are not ideological, political, or economic but cultural"⁵⁴. The north-south economic confrontation is a phenomenon that is not new and has a significant impact on the world order. The concept dates back to the early 1970s where developing countries demanded the establishment of a new international economic order that will help periphery states to overcome their poverty and dependency upon other powerful states.

However, the economic globalization and the integration of various actors within the international economic system has altered the outlook of international economy⁵⁵. Only a few are able to break out of the low growth income in the world system. The US had managed to increase its area of influence to those areas which were formerly under the influence of Russia for instance, the energy-rich Caucasian region including Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Georgia. NATO also increased its military involvement in other countries⁵⁶.

The emergence of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) as a major economic alliance is believed to be the future dominant suppliers of manufactured goods, services, and raw materials by 2050 and is a matter of concern for the US⁵⁷. Also the rise of China and the resurgence of Russian power cannot be overlooked in this regard.

Globalization and the Crisis of the Unipolar World

Since 2008, an expanding number of political and economic analysts anticipated the decline of the US supremacy over the world economy and concurrent rise of Asian economies predominantly China and India⁵⁸. They speculated that the US is losing its power and is no longer a world leader and

⁵⁴ "The New World Order: Features and Concepts", *Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research*, (2014), pp: 92-179, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/prospects-for-the-american-age/new-world-order-features-and-concepts/564492C68B76C589CEF4AFF02F0445FA>

⁵⁵ Joseph S. Nye, "What New World Order?", *Foreign Affairs*, (1992), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1992-03-01/what-new-world-order>

⁵⁶ Umair Haque, "The New New World Order", (2017), <https://umairhaque.com/the-new-new-world-order-71c913887082>

⁵⁷ Hanns W. Maull, *The Rise and Decline of the Post-Cold War International Order*, Oxford University Press, (2018), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-rise-and-decline-of-the-post-cold-war-international-order-9780198828945?lang=en&cc=in>

⁵⁸ Hanns W. Maull, "The Future of International Order", *Fritz Thyssen Foundation*, (2018), <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/projects/completed-projects-compl/the-future-of-international-order/>

also the unipolar world is now transformed which will result in a drastic change of the geopolitical landscape. The world does not seem to be interested in the dictatorial ambition of the US anymore. The US on the other hand tried to subvert the power of its rivals by manipulating their resources and at the same time preserving its position as a superpower. However, there are still some analysts who continue to believe that the US will stabilize its economy and will resume its status as a hegemon.⁵⁹

The transition to the new world order will increase turbulence and instability and will further augment the struggle for power between different countries⁶⁰. On the basis of economic and political influence in the international system, it can be said that the world is not unipolar anymore but multipolar. It can be said that the US is not the only superpower in the international system but other states and power centers are also very close to challenging the US hegemony across the globe for instance, China, Russia and the European Union.

Another important aspect is that this global disorder is not only accredited to the rise of other states as contenders to the US global hegemony but also to US actions and its unnecessary military involvement in a number of conflicts that are more domestic or bilateral in their nature. This has not only compromised the US prestige as a global leader but also increased worldwide tensions⁶¹. The turmoil in the Middle Eastern countries and severe political and geopolitical crisis in different regions across the globe have made the transformation and transition of the world order even riskier. The US losing its position as a global hegemon is evident but still a complete overtake is not imminent in the near future. It will take at least a decade or two⁶². Rather than being called as a superpower or hegemon, the US is more

⁵⁹ Michael J. Mazarr, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, "Understanding the Current International Order", RAND Corporation,(2016), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1598/RAND_RR1598.pdf

⁶⁰ Suisheng Zhao, and Josef Korbel, "China and the Evolving World Order: A Stakeholder or a Revolutionary Power?", (2016), <http://www.theasanforum.org/china-and-the-evolving-world-order-a-stakeholder-or-a-revolutionary-power/s>

⁶¹ Douglas Zuvich, "Global trade: The evolving world order", *KPMG International*, (2019), <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2019/05/global-trade-the-evolving-world-order.pdf>

⁶² Schweller, Randall L., and Xiaoyu Pu. "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline." *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 41-72, www.jstor.org/stable/41289688.

likely to attain the status of "First among equals"⁶³. In this situation the US will be left with two options; first is that the US will preserve its maximum possible influence and will leave its role as a dictator and second will be that the US will try to maintain the status quo by manipulating and weakening its opponents. Although the first option is more favorable for the US, however, it seems to be following the second one. From a realistic point of view, the world order will undergo some transformations and the US must learn how to co-exist with the other major powers who have somehow offset the balance of power in their favor. The US has to settle all the pressing issues in order to be tension free only then the US can achieve its potential goal of maintaining the status quo⁶⁴.

Conclusion

The new global order will be marked by contradictory developments where on one hand the fragmentation of power is likely to happen and on the other hand globalization will entrench its roots deep inside the international political system. Intense communication, economic interdependence, population explosion, and ethnic and cultural exchanges are some of the major factors contributing to intensifying the globalized side of the international system. Balance of power and national interest will be two defining characteristics of the new global order. The world politics is likely to be shaped by the potential powers in the new global order like US, Europe, Russia, Japan, and China. Cooperation among the major, primarily western, powers will continue in trying preserve the status quo and discouraging any emerging contenders in the near future.

As explained earlier, the US will remain the most prominent and most influential power, however, its absolute economic and political hegemony will gradually decline. Some developing countries will see rapid economic progress, however, the North-South gap is likely to remain and become one of the potential causes triggering international conflicts. It is speculated that there will be a resurgence of the Cold War between the US and Russia on one hand and between the US and China on the other hand for the global dominance and examples can be extracted from developments in South Asia, Syria, Ukraine, Georgia and other parts of Europe. China's Belt and

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Schweller, Randall L., and Xiaoyu Pu. "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline." *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 41-72, www.jstor.org/stable/41289688.

Road Initiative is also perceived as a geostrategic challenge to American hegemony.

Despite having the potential and prospects for the multilateral cooperation among various world powers, clash of national interests and their diverse vision regarding the international system will be evident. The global political order is changing, creating new challenges and opportunities in the arena of global governance for the world's leading states⁶⁵.

It is speculated that this transitional phase will have a great impact on the resulting world order and there will be much more difficulties faced by the powerful states such as the US, Japan, European Union in negotiating their issues of mutual concern with emerging states such as China, India, Brazil. Above all, the relationship between China and the US will be decisive in shaping the new world order⁶⁶.

Furthermore, in the wake of growing religious extremism and terrorism, the complex and intertwined dichotomy between religious ideology and political views is a matter that needs to be explored. The threat of nuclear proliferation and arms buildup is another important aspect of the new world order that cannot be ruled out.

Growing instability and lust for power have always pushed states to acquire deadly weapons and go for military maximization. The new global order will follow the same mindset of the political leaders across the globe which will be challenging for international peace and stability as well as security of human rights. Therefore, despite all the anticipation regarding the troubles associated with the installation of the balance of power between different countries, globalization will create the foundation of the new global order.

⁶⁵ "Cold War History", History.com, <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history>

⁶⁶ Jeff Wallenfeldt, "Toward A New World Order", *Britannica*, <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-rise-and-decline-of-the-post-cold-war-international-order-9780198828945?lang=en&cc=in>