

# The US Influence in Decline within a Changing World Order

تراجع نفوذ الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية داخل نظام عالمي متغير

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## Abstract:

During the First and the Second World Wars, world politics was characterised by multipolar world order in which several powers had enjoyed a superpower status. Great powers' struggle for dominance and influence affected world order. However, since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has emerged as the only superpower that enjoyed an undisputed leadership. The U.S. political, economic and military strategic weight has enabled Washington to play a vital role in international affairs. Nevertheless, the U.S. involvement in several issues has weakened its international position, particularly, War against terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction WMD. Moreover, the U.S. engagement in war in Afghanistan and Iraq further demonstrated the U.S. vulnerabilities. While Washington was occupied in these wars and their and suffered several setbacks, China and Russia were seeking great power status. They underscored political and economic reforms to tackle domestic and external issues. This study provides a more in-depth analysis of the scramble between major world powers over hegemony in a changing global order. It seeks to answer the following questions; Can the current system be maintained over the next decade as China continues to rise economically and militarily and Russia increases its interventions abroad? Will the US see China and Russia primarily as strategic competitors whose economic, military, and tech capabilities must be limited? In this regard, this study will give awareness on how superpower rivalry affect the current political context.

**Keywords :** World Order, Political, Economic And Military Strategic, The US Influence, Powers, Decline.

## Introduction

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the U.S enjoyed a position of unparalleled strength and influence worldwide. However, this influence has been in steady decline in the last decades, notably in the Middle East and Asia. America experienced serious limitations and constrains to influence critical events. This decline has been the result of the U.S foreign policy of interventions abroad. The host of internal and external problems constrained the U.S role at the international level. Moreover, Russia and China strive to identify their position in a changing world order in which the US has encountered limitations in exercising its power with the rising superpowers and its failure to cope with critical security issues. This paper endeavours to provide an assessment of the U.S and power, strength, and limitations. It aims to show some of the symptoms of the decline of American influence in the region and to

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investigate the reasons or causes behind such decline. It reveals the complicated nature of superpower rivalry. It also seeks to answer the following question; how would superpower rivalry between these powers shape the future world order. Such circumstances and events have given rise to hard and controversial questions. Some of these questions may include, why has the U.S become limited and constrained in the exercise of its influence and power in the Middle East? Why have the U.S rivals assumed a more prominent role in the region?

### **1. Limits of American Diplomacy:**

Unlike his successor, President George W Bush devoted much of the foreign policy agenda to sustain American leadership all over the world through different means, including diplomatic and military ones. Secretary of Defence, Dick Cheney, formed a new defence strategy to maintain the U.S. as the only hegemonic superpower by opposing collective nationalism and ensure "a world dominated by one superpower whose position can be perpetuated by constructive behaviour and sufficient military might to deter any nation or group of nations from challenging American primacy."<sup>1</sup>

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush launched his war against terror by adopting a new doctrine in the national security of the U.S. that stressed on a preemptive war to deter international terrorism and rogue states. This doctrine necessitated the use of force against any existential threat to maintain the U.S. national security. The U.S. launched war on Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban-led government, which was accused of supporting al Qaeda.<sup>2</sup>

The US has encountered several crises all over the world, such as the Syrian security conflict when the US foreign policy has experienced constraints.<sup>3</sup> During the Iraqi War, Bush approach to the crisis resulted in a sharp decline of the US influence in the region. His resort to military power and increased expenditures of the war deeply damaged the US economy. The Iraqi War costed Washington its international credibility and standing.<sup>4</sup> The US influence steadily decreased as range of urgent issues, such as the nuclear controversy of Iran and North Korea required the US intervention.<sup>5</sup>

Under the allegations of nurturing international terrorism and seeking the acquisition of WMD, the U.S. waged war on Iraq. The U.S. believed that overthrowing Saddam Hussein it would guarantee national security of its key ally in the region, Israel. The war was also intended to regime change in Iraq from dictatorship to democracy.<sup>6</sup> In 2005, officials in Washington referred to the tense situation and chaos in Iraq as the war on Vietnam. The U.S. endeavours to establish a democratic, stable, and secure country in Iraq failed. After the several setbacks of the American military, American public opposed their country's involvement in the war.<sup>7</sup> In his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in August 2008, President Obama expressed his opposition to the U.S engagement in the war, claiming that the war was costly and misguided. Moreover, his election came as a response to the Bush's foreign policy.<sup>8</sup>

Many diplomats and foreign policy critics believed that the Iraqi War diminished the U.S influence in the Middle East. The U.S interventions provoked Arabs hostility.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the U.S credibility and prestige in the region diminished because of its military intervention in Iraq. The U.S appeared as an unreliable partner.<sup>10</sup> The U.S setbacks and the gravity of the situation in Iraq had sharply damaged the U.S regional and international standing and influence. Furthermore, the war demonstrated the U.S strains at a time when pressing issues required careful consideration, particularly North Korea and Iran's pursuit for nuclear capabilities.<sup>11</sup>

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However, as the Obama Administration was preoccupied with domestic issues resulted by the Bush's foreign policy, other regional powers' influence was rising sturdily, such as China and Russia. Therefore, experts advised President Obama to create a balance between domestic priorities and foreign policy as well as the U.S might abroad.<sup>12</sup> The U.S had devoted considerable efforts and time to the Middle East. Thus, the Obama Administration pursued the policy of "Pivot to Asia" as an endeavour to restore its influence and leadership in the region and more precisely to restrain the Chinese rising power.<sup>13</sup>

The US has been involved in Middle Eastern affairs that consumed its power and influence in the region and abroad. The US has decided to direct its attention to Asia Pacific region that has witnessed the emergence of rising powers, such as China and Russia. Under the Obama administration, the US had pursued the so-called policy "*pivot to Asia*" to restrain the Chinese increasing might and restore its influence in the region. Washington has sought to face the new challenges of rising powers to its leadership.<sup>14</sup>

When he came to office, President Obama adopted the policy of "pivot to Asia" to counterweight China's growing presence in the Asia-Pacific region and to comfort its key allies. The former Security of State Hillary Clinton argued that this century would be "America's Pacific Century", as the U.S would diminish its presence in Iraq and Afghanistan and give more importance to the Asia-Pacific region in which the U.S would sustain its leadership and promote its national interests.<sup>15</sup>

Experts advised that President Obama should create a balance not only between the domestic and the foreign, but also to wisely distribute American power abroad to cover more focal regions. In his book "Foreign Policy Begins at Home", Richard Haas argues that because American foreign policy has been consumed and overreached in the past two decades with "remaking larger parts of the greater Middle East." For this reason, "there is a strong case to be made that the U.S attention and efforts should be better distributed around the world, with greater focus on the increasingly critical Asia-Pacific region and the Western Hemisphere, and somewhat less on the Middle East."<sup>16</sup>

Richard Haas argues that the U.S is now overreached abroad and underperformed at home. In his book "Foreign Policy Begins at Home", he explains that America's domestic problems like old infrastructure, huge deficit and debt, and low economic growth would directly threaten "America's ability to project power and exert influence overseas". Therefore, "the ability of the U.S to act and lead in the world is diminishing".<sup>17</sup> In his book "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers", the historian Paul Kennedy reflects on the possibilities of American declining power in light of the fate that previous world powers went through. The premise of Kennedy's stance is the idea of "imperial overstretch". The idea dictates that: "the sum total of the United States' global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country's power to defend them all simultaneously".<sup>18</sup>

The journalist and foreign policy commentator Farid Zakarya argues that America is now challenged not only by limited resources at home but also by what he calls "the rise of the rest". In his book, "the Post-American World", Zakarya argues that "over the past few decades, countries all over the world have been experiencing rates of economic growth that were once unthinkable".<sup>19</sup>

Richard Haas argues that in today's world there is a tension between the forces of order and disorder with the balance of power shifting to the latter. In this context, the Middle East was "the chief cauldron of contemporary disorder."<sup>20</sup>

From the previous assessment of the US policies, one can argue that deterrence posture of the US is the core tenet of its foreign policy. As an endeavour to preserve its posture of hegemonic power, the US underscores on its military superiority and increase its military expenditures to counterbalance military might of its rivals. However, the US reliance on military force to international conflict

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resolution and denial of multilateral actions has affected its international credibility and sharply decreased its influence. Moreover, the US humanitarian interventions, interference in sovereign states' internal affairs and resort to coercive measures and military force has damaged its human rights values and makes it prone to international condemnation. In addition, the U.S influence abroad started to wane due to several factors that have contributed to its declining influence, such as the economic crisis, its costly engagement around the world, and its public opposition to their country's involvement in trouble spots worldwide.

## **2. Russia Foreign Policy**

In the 21st century, Russia energy resources, economic, and military development has encouraged Russia to regain its international standing that had been lost under the Cold War. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation (RF) had sought to establish a close tie to the US under the West leadership. This foreign policy had been pursued by president Yeltsin and the early years of President Vladimir Putin. After the attacks of September 11, there had been a military intelligence cooperation between both countries to counter terrorism. However, many representatives in foreign policy believe that the core of world system is multilateralism.

*According to some representatives of this strand, the concept of 'multipolar world' should be used as a bargaining chip in relations with the West in order to obtain a more important position in a de facto unipolar world. Others, on the other hand, believe that the international reality is truly multipolar.*

In the mid-1990s, Russia started seeking a more active role and assertive foreign policy to restore its superpower status. At a security conference in Munich in 2007, president Putin confirmed Russia's national interests and stated that the Russian foreign policy does not rely on that of the West and that Russia is not constrained by the unipolar world order. President Putin underscored on the multilateral global system and the Russian role and sovereign authority. Moreover, he believes that Russia is a superpower and has a leverage over international events.<sup>21</sup>

Russia strongly criticises the US intervention in domestic affairs of states to deal with revolutions. Furthermore, Russia has always opposed the global order based on unipolarity by condemning the US resort to force to cope with some issues. The Russian foreign policy has been altered after the 2012 presidential elections. Russia underscored on a multilateral international system, in which it appears as a power, governed by institutions that are not dominated by the US. In addition, Russia advocates human rights and calls for world order change. The Russian foreign policy appeared more pragmatic. The West East tensions revolve around the West increasing influence and conflicts among international organisations. The West believes that Russia's superpower standing declines after the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War.

Russia believes that a multipolar world order is the most effective in which Russia along the US deem two superpowers that could face global challenges. However, the Russian share of global economy is not sufficient to appear as a superpower, Russia resort to developing its armed forces to influence events. The Russia security policy relies on its military potential to ensure its foreign policy interests. However, its military force remains inferior to those of the US.<sup>22</sup>

The Russian military expenditures have increased since 2000. Russia was concerned with its military inferiority comparing to the West, the NATO military forces on its borders, and the U.S. expanding influence in the region. All these factors have shaped Russia's foreign security approaches and strategies. Moreover, Moscow has endeavoured to advance its military capabilities. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union after the Cold War, Russia has pursued several foreign security

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policy principles. First, it sought to survive in a hostile environment led by the West. Second, it sought to enhance its security by cooperating with organisations, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Furthermore, it established a security partnership with China in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Third, Moscow seeks to restore its superpower posture that the Soviet Union had enjoyed and gain influential status by interfering in world politics.

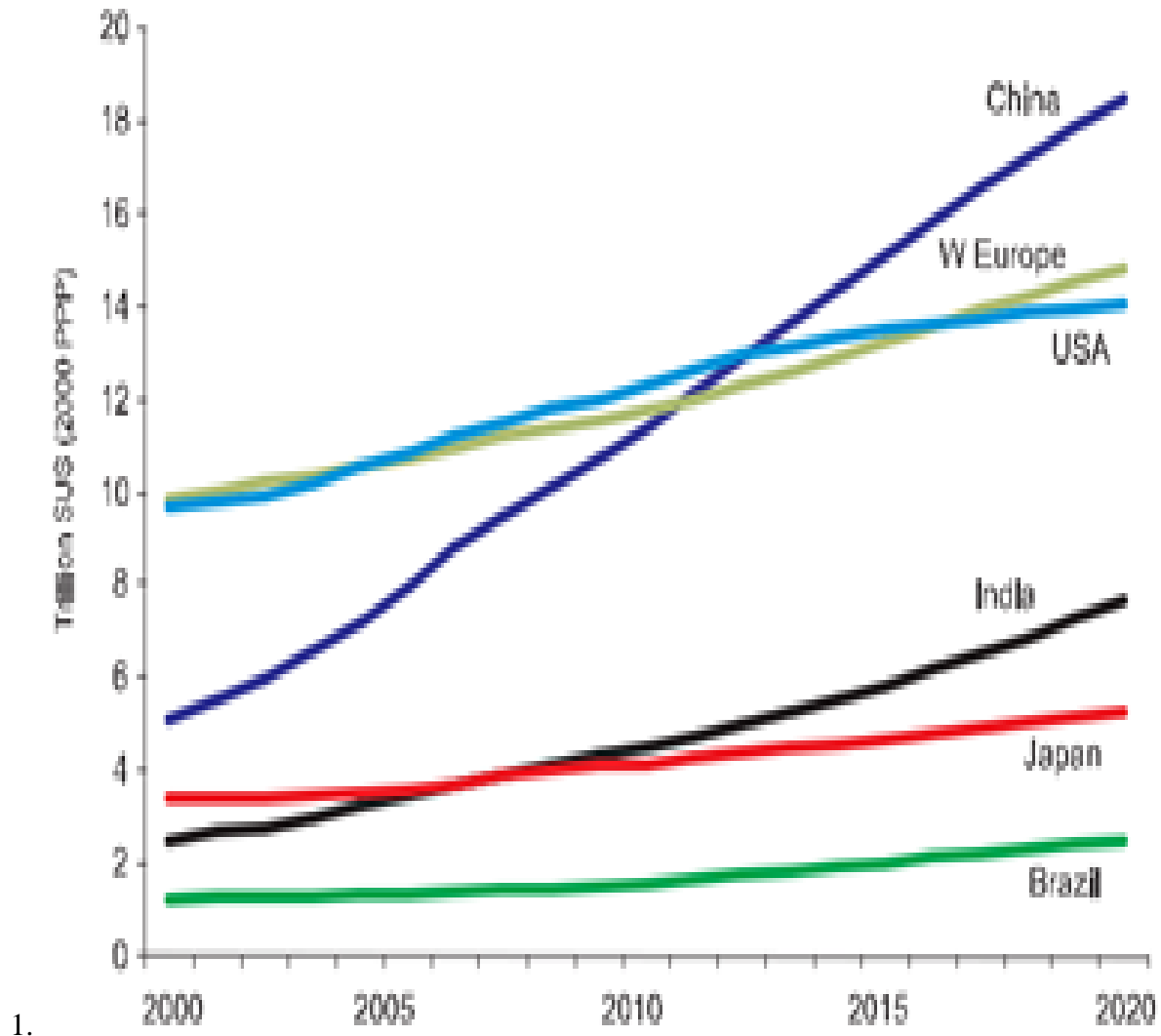
In the 1990s, Russia's domestic social unrest and economic hardships dominated its foreign policy security. However, by the end of the 1990s, Russia concentrated on foreign cooperation and military superiority. The hostile environment that surrounded Russia compelled it to abandon its peaceful development and resort to military advancement to cope with the security challenges. Restoring its superpower status was the top priority of Russia. Therefore, it underscored on economic development to support its military spending.<sup>23</sup> Russia accessed international, such as the UNSC to strengthen its international standing and contribution to international politics.<sup>24</sup> After the terrific attacks of 11 September, Moscow pursued a pro-Western policy seeking economic development. Moscow believed that the superpower status that it seeks required an economic growth. President Putin advocated foreign cooperation to ameliorate the Russian economy while insisting on military modernisation as the principles for regional as well as global influence. However, seeking to strengthen military power contradicts the U.S. interests. Russia emphasised on its economic ties with the EU to reanimate its economy, and thus, consolidate its international posture.

Furthermore, Moscow benefited from tensions between the EU and the U.S. This was clearly demonstrated during the U.S. invasion to Iraq in 2003 when Russia strongly condemned the invasion along with Germany and France. By taking such a stance, Russia advocated multipolarity as the main aspect of international politics and proving its superpower status. In his first term, President Putin adopted a less assertive stance compared to his second term. Rapid economic growth supported its international security policy and harsh stance against the West. Moscow strongly denounces NATO power expansion, the deployment of a missile shield, and the U.S. unilateral strategies. Instead, Russia concentrated on establishing relations with members in the Collective Security Treaty Organization CSTO<sup>25</sup> and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization SCO and consolidating cooperation with China. Moreover, the U.S. missile shield compelled Moscow to modernise and advance its nuclear deterrent strategy. Russia perceives NATO as a serious security challenge to its national security.<sup>26</sup>

The discussion of Russia's policies indicates that the core tenet of the Russian foreign policy is regaining the superpower status that used to enjoy during the Cold War. Moscow strives to be an active player in international affairs and a reliable partner. Moreover, Moscow seeks to recruit allies in different areas to extend its sphere of influence and establish a footprint. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia was concerned with its economic hardships and domestic issues. Its foreign policy was dependent to that of the West. However, with his coming to power, President Putin has radically altered the priorities of foreign policy. He stresses on the pursuit of strategic superiority. Russia is concerned with the NATO forces near its borders that aimed at restraining its leverage. In addition, Russia strongly opposes the current structure of international system based on the US hegemony and calls for a more stable and legitimate global order. Russia's inferior military capabilities urges Moscow to seeks the modernisation of its military force to secure its national security. Its strategies range from diplomacy to assertive stance toward critical security issues. However, Moscow condemns the US resort to military force and military interventions to conflict management.

### 3. Word order and the Distribution of Power

**Figure 1: Size of the Main Economies in 2020**



**Source:** Francis Cripps, A Global Realignment by 2020: U.S. Decline, Emerging Economies Rise. International Poverty Centre. August 2008 Number 63.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5128945>

This figure shows that in the recent years, the U.S. economy has encountered several hardships, including a falling dollar and a U.S. recession and the 2008 financial crisis. However, China has witnessed a rapid economic growth. Beijing's rising economic power would reshape the realignment of the global economy.<sup>27</sup> The outbreak of Covid-19 has deeply damaged the economy of many countries, including the U.S. Washington has adopted several strategies to lessen the effect on its economy and deal with the economic stagnation.<sup>28</sup> The 11 September attacks of 2001 had deeply shaped world order that had continued since the end of the Cold War. Although the U.S.A

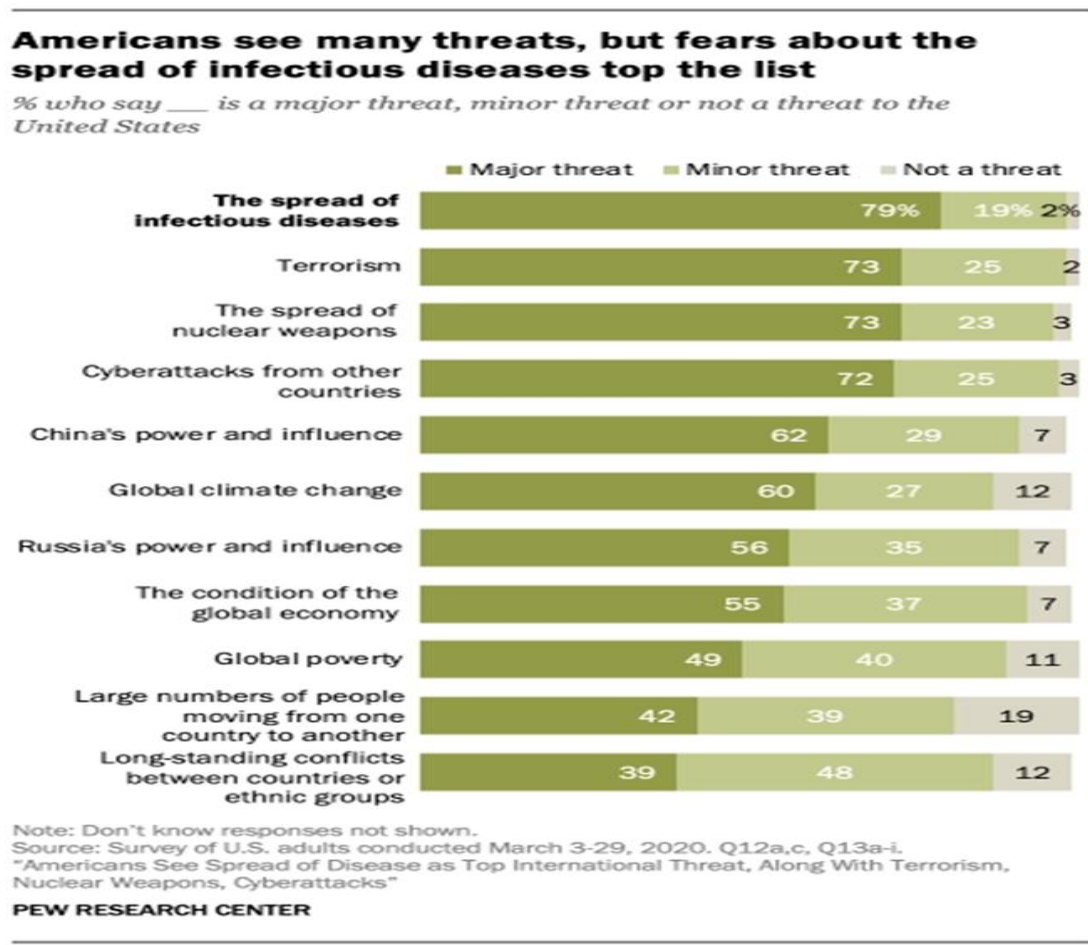
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still enjoys a hegemonic status, many other competitors’ quest for power and influence challenges the U.S. status. World order witnesses the emergence of a new world order characterised by multipolarity.<sup>29</sup>

In an interview on CNN, James Fallows said that he mentioned that social unrest and economic hardships have contributed to the decline of the US influence in his book “Our Towns; A 100,000-MILE JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF AMERICA”. In his book “Tailspin: The People and Forces Behind America's Fifty-Year Fall—and Those Fighting to Reverse It”, Steven Brill added that the core elements and values that make America a hegemonic power seems to be in decline. It has lost its capabilities to manage key issues in international politics.<sup>30</sup>

In an interview on Aljazeera TV, Professor Abdullah Al-Nafisi said that the U.S. resort to military force and denial of the efficiency of diplomacy and negotiations to conflict resolution would contribute to the decline of its influence. Washington believes that coping with terrorism requires military power, therefore, it increases its military expenditures. He stressed that any country that emphasises on military power only without other aspects of life, such as economic power would inevitably fall.<sup>31</sup>

**Figure2:Top International Threat for the US**



Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/04/13/americans-see-spread-of-disease-as-top-international-threat-along-with-terrorism-nuclear-weapons-cyberattacks/>

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Figure 2 demonstrates Americans' perception about the top fears that challenge the U.S national security. The analysis of their concerns regarding China's power and increasing influence comes before serious security challenges that might face the U.S., such as the spread of diseases, terrorism, the spread of WMD, and Cyberattacks.

The transformation from unipolar to multipolar world system is influenced by the decisions of rising powers, especially China. These emerging powers could play a constructive role with the U.S. or could seek leadership at the expense of the U.S. The rivalry between great powers for a hegemonic status has increased recently and could lead to international power distribution. The rising economic and military status of the emerging powers has further intensified rivalry between them and the U.S. for energy resources and markets, military power, political dominance, and status.

Power transition undergoes several stages, such as depriving the current superpower from the leadership status, creating international alliances, and calling for a new world system. It is unlikely that superpower would engage in a hegemonic-war in a nuclear age. Global balance of power is the pole of a multipolar and bipolar world order. However, a unipolar system global equilibrium does not exist.

The emergence of a multipolar system passed through many phases. The first one is delegitimation in which rising powers would prove the inability of the hegemon to cope with issue in international politics and its declining influence. Deconcentration is the second phase. It requires the creation of alliances. In the perception of the hegemon, the state that seeks to overthrow the current unipolar structure is a security challenge to its interests. Power transition requires resistant states to possess the necessary capabilities to balance against the hegemonic power. Otherwise, these states would resort to resistance to hegemonic ideologies. Adversaries could raise the cost for the U.S. hegemonic posture by depriving Washington from its military basis, sponsoring non-state actors against the U.S. strategic areas of interest, contradicting U.S. policies in international institutions, threatening U.S. allies, and promoting the spread of nuclear weapons among U.S. rivals.<sup>32</sup>

#### **4. China's foreign policy: Rising and Contesting within the Order**

China's steady economic growth will enable it to emerge as the U.S. major competitor. Although China realises the U.S. hegemony, it denies its legitimacy. China pursues a policy of boosting its economic development, playing a vital and global political role, and increasing its political sphere of influence. At the meantime, Beijing expresses its intentions of not competing the sole hegemonic power. Beijing relies on cooperation rather than direct confrontation in international theatre. China adopted a soft power diplomacy, promote multilateralism, establishing new international organizations, and opposing the U.S. decisions in international institutions. China's grand strategy relies on avoiding direct opposition to the U.S. since a stable partnership with Washington is crucial for China's rising status. Moreover, the U.S. has relinquished its containment to Beijing since the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, Chinese leaders realise and assess their country's power.

Chinese leaders argue that they have to accept the U.S. hegemonic status while concentrating on strengthening their position and securing their interests. China's economic and military powers are still inferior to those of the U.S. but Beijing is able to undermine the U.S. hegemonic legitimacy in several ways. The most effective policy is to advocate multilateralism by joining international institutions, such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus Three (ASEAN plus China, Japan, and South Korea), and ASEAN plus One (ASEAN



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plus China), and promoting regional collaboration. China's participations in these international institutions is intended to extend its political and economic might.

To challenge the U.S. hegemony, China resort to economic power to achieve political and diplomatic leverage. Beijing has also sought to gain legitimacy through playing an active role in multilateral institutions, such as the UN. Moreover, China and Russia have enhanced their human rights status by advocating state sovereignty and diplomatic efforts at the UN. However, the US. Position on human rights has encountered limitations.

China has pursued soft power diplomacy to achieve its stated objectives and avoid direct competition with the U.S. China's soft-power diplomacy manifests itself in establishing cooperative economic ties with foreign countries and providing economic assistance. China pursues these critical approaches to challenge the American domination under the current global order. Material and ideational bases are the cornerstone of the process of achieving leadership. The inability of competitors to directly challenge the US compelled them to adopt several alternative strategies such as denying Washington legitimacy the approach that the US has pursued to influence world politics. The US promotes capitalism and democracy against socialism and dictatorship. Rising powers have different perceptions to these bases.

During the 1980s and 1990s China's vulnerable position compelled it to accept the Western-led order. However as China's power has remarkably increased it assumes the role of a superpower and seeks to attain legitimacy for its political and economic systems at the expense of those of the US. According to some Chinese philosophers such as Zhao Tingyang China's model of world governance called the Chinese theory of Tianxia (literally, "all under Heaven") provides a vital way to cope with international issues. According to him the US principals in global politics contradict its policies the US has been involved in several wars while calling for peace has restrained the freedom of some countries while advocating freedom of nations therefore its legitimacy has diminished.

From rising powers perspective to global order, the capacity to resolve global conflicts is a critical determinant of hegemony. However, Chinese scholars of world affairs believe that conflict resolution is insufficient to emerge as a global hegemon. In addition, some scholars argue that the future world system will experience evolution rather than transformation. Global balance of power will shift to either a US China bipolar system or a multipolar world system in which power will be distributed between several players. To ensure a stable and peaceful global system these powers have to engage in cooperative policies and managed competition and restrain power.

Some Western strategists are concerned with the rising power of China while Chinese scholars are more concerned with the unpredicted consequences of the US declining influence on Chinese interests. There is much debate about the nature of a rising China. It is unclear whether Beijing would alter the current global order or integrate into it. Moreover, it is unpredictable how would world system be shaped and if unipolarity would be transformed into bipolarity, multipolarity, or nonpolarity.

There are two theories that debate about international order. Power transition theory argues that world order will encounter the challenge of rising powers that lead to system change. However, power diffusion theory believes in the peaceful nature of rising powers that will preserve the current world system. Conflicting interests and different objectives and Beijing's hesitation to take part in global governance are the major factors contributing to the tense relationship between the US and China. Washington does not deny the vital role that China plays neither it complains about its noncooperative stance.<sup>33</sup>

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The US should reanimate its ties with Beijing in order to promote regional peace and stability. The US Sino relations are critical therefore *"there will be no important challenge for US diplomacy over the next generation than working to integrate China into regional and global arrangement since China's help is needed to reunify Korea peacefully, prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons, and get Pakistan to change its ways."*<sup>34</sup>

China has advocated peaceful resolution to the Syrian conflict and rejected several sanctions and military involvement.<sup>35</sup> China has established economic partnership with several Middle Eastern countries and formed cultural and educational ties to the region. Beijing has also provided economic and financial assistance to these countries. China's initiatives have strengthened its presence in the region. Moreover, its non-intervention policy in domestic affairs of these countries reflect its good intentions. China's economic, cultural, and diplomatic influence in the region has intensified but the US military presence and involvement are strong and long standing.<sup>36</sup>

In an interview on Aljazeera TV, CHOI Jongmoon, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that Beijing is concerned with cultivating strong political and economic ties with Arab States based on mutual interests. He added that Arab States need these type of relations to achieve development. He also declared that the U.S. concern with China's development is unjustified since Beijing underscores on coping domestic issues and economic growth. He added that China promotes international peace and stability and opposes all kinds of hegemony. Moreover, he said that China seeks economic development and doesn't compete for hegemonic status.<sup>37</sup>

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia lost its standing in the Middle East. However, as president Vladimir Putin took control, he has sought to restore the Russian influence in the region and establish a footprint. Moreover, the US declining leverage paved the way for Moscow to assume an active role in key regional affairs, such as the Syrian conflict and the Iraqi invasion. Russia benefited from the US setbacks and invaded Georgia in 2008 and joined Crimea in 2014.<sup>38</sup>

As an endeavour to enhance its standing in the region, Moscow supported the Palestinian case and opposed the Israeli invasion to Lebanon in 2006. Russia strengthened its relations with Iran after the Iraqi invasion in 2003. Moscow played a vital role in the nuclear negotiations and refused military action against Tehran. In addition, Russia opposed military intervention to resolve the Syrian crisis. These initiatives represent Moscow's international weight and role in global politics.<sup>39</sup>

Assessment of China's policies indicates that Beijing relies on economic growth as its top foreign policy priorities. China seeks to expend its economic and trade dealings with foreign states to advance its economic might. Moreover, it focuses on recruiting partners. The PRC thirst for energy resources is the driving force for its foreign policy. From China's vantage point, promoting peace and stability is required for its vested interests in critical areas. As a critical world player, Beijing favours diplomacy and peaceful resolution to international sensitive security issues. Its peaceful approach and conciliation efforts are devoted to extend its economic influence abroad and secure energy resources and foreign markets. China plays a vital role in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to avoid destabilizing events and the disruption of energy prerequisite to its economic development. As noted previously, Beijing strongly condemned the US use of military force and intervention in internal affairs of states to resolve security issues. Beijing supports diplomacy and political discussions to conflict management. Furthermore, the PRC strongly opposes the US military presence in critical areas, such as the Middle East and East Asia, that is intended to counterbalance the rising China.

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**Conclusion:**

One can conclude that the US declining influence in critical areas paves the way for other rising powers to assume the role of superpowers. Russia and China are deemed the US major adversaries since they challenge its international status when pursuing their strategic interests. China is a rising economic power that seeks to extend its international posture. It relies on recruiting allies in the Middle East and Asia and increase its influence in these regions. These regions are vital in Beijing's foreign policy agenda since they are the major source of energy and new markets required for its economic growth. For its part, restoring the glory of the Soviet Union and its spheres of influence is the cornerstone of the Russian foreign policy. Moscow has addressed its economic hardship and domestic issues to concentrate on its role as a superpower at the international stage. Furthermore, Moscow has been a vital player in several security issues. In this concluding chapter, a distinction between paleo-hegemony and neo-hegemony is worth analysing. The evaluative analysis of great powers' strategies demonstrates which approach to hegemony each state adopts.

The reasons behind America's limited ability to influence events in the Middle East are manifold. The Bush legacy and its ramification forced the new President to act cautiously as public opinion in the region became sceptical of the U.S interventionist approach. Domestic problems, especially economic crisis did much to tie the hands of the new administration to act boldly in foreign affairs. Such problems made the task of sorting them out more urgent than any foreign policy agenda and presented the new president with few resources to serve the build-up of his country's role abroad.

The rise of other regional powers to prominence and their adoption of more assertive foreign policy agendas was also a key factor to constrain the U.S role abroad. China's growing presence in the Asia Pacific region urged the president to rebalance America's presence in the region largely at the expense of its commitments in the Middle East. China has also made a considerable economic foothold in the Gulf. The emergence of China as an economic power and the Russian endeavours to restore the glory of the former Soviet Union are the perceives by Washington as a menace to its national security interests. In addition, both, Russia and China oppose the current international order that is based on U.S. hegemony. The U.S. perceives the Chinese and Russian actions as a challenge to its hegemonic status. China and Russia are emerging as global contenders for the only global world power. Their interests and policies often contradict with the U S with respect to global conflicts. In international institutions, both China and Russia call for diplomacy weaken the U.S. legitimacy. Their diplomacy paves the way for restoring a form of global balance of power. Since conflicting interests between America and the rising powers are the major drives for their tense relationship and global order change, it is hypothesised that the U.S maintains its hegemonic posture and these rising powers lack the combination of political, economic, and military aspects to challenge American influence.

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