



“In fact, the issue is always between two points”

# Weekly Political and Geopolitical Developments

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Prepared by: Hakan Çalışkantürk

2twoblackdots@gmail.com

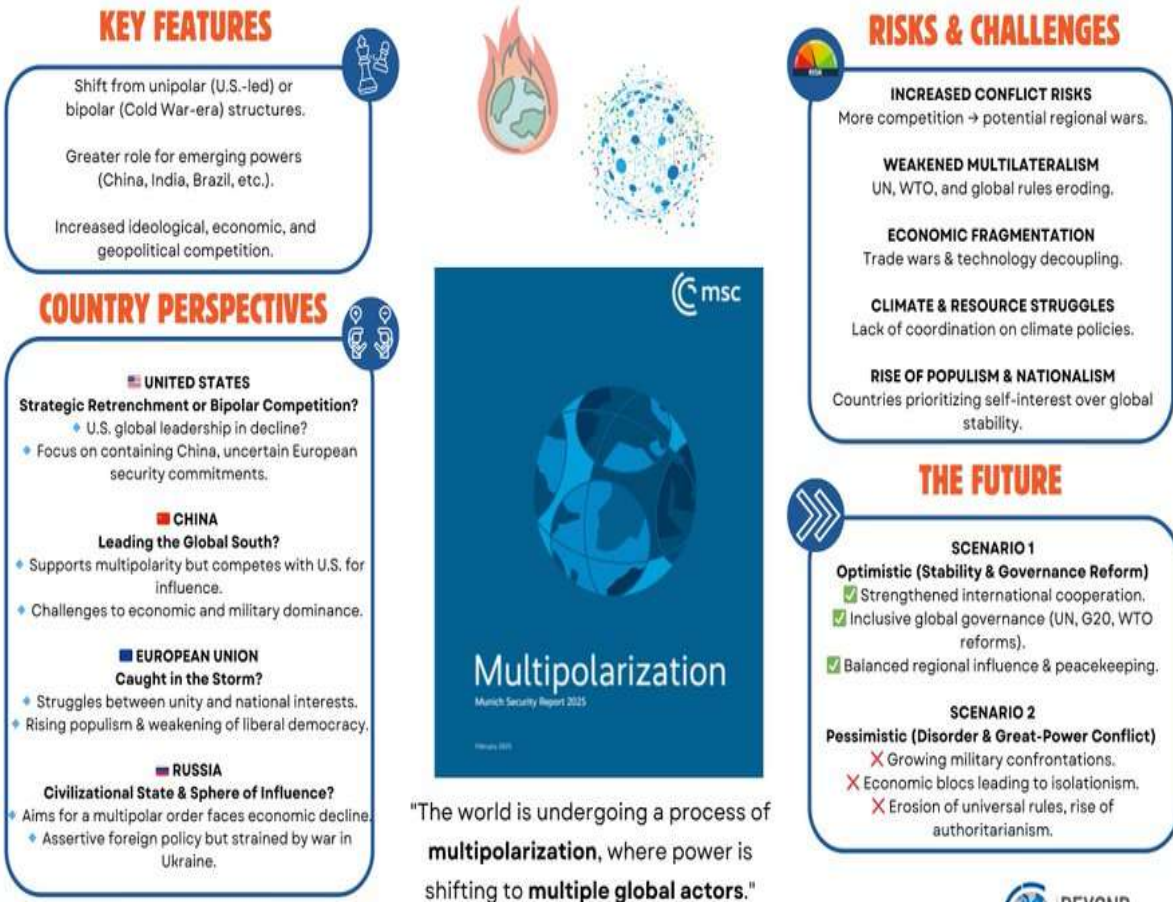
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**MUNICH SECURITY REPORT 2025: MULTIPOLARIZATION AND THE END OF PAX AMERICANA**

**MULTIPOLARIZATION: THE CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER**

Key Insights from the Munich Security Report 2025



**KEY FEATURES**

- Shift from unipolar (U.S.-led) or bipolar (Cold War-era) structures.
- Greater role for emerging powers (China, India, Brazil, etc.).
- Increased ideological, economic, and geopolitical competition.

**COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES**

- UNITED STATES**  
**Strategic Retrenchment or Bipolar Competition?**
  - U.S. global leadership in decline?
  - Focus on containing China, uncertain European security commitments.
- CHINA**  
**Leading the Global South?**
  - Supports multipolarity but competes with U.S. for influence.
  - Challenges to economic and military dominance.
- EUROPEAN UNION**  
**Caught in the Storm?**
  - Struggles between unity and national interests.
  - Rising populism & weakening of liberal democracy.
- RUSSIA**  
**Civilizational State & Sphere of Influence?**
  - Aims for a multipolar order faces economic decline.
  - Assertive foreign policy but strained by war in Ukraine.

**RISKS & CHALLENGES**

- INCREASED CONFLICT RISKS**  
More competition → potential regional wars.
- WEAKENED MULTILATERALISM**  
UN, WTO, and global rules eroding.
- ECONOMIC FRAGMENTATION**  
Trade wars & technology decoupling.
- CLIMATE & RESOURCE STRUGGLES**  
Lack of coordination on climate policies.
- RISE OF POPULISM & NATIONALISM**  
Countries prioritizing self-interest over global stability.

**THE FUTURE**

- SCENARIO 1**  
**Optimistic (Stability & Governance Reform)**
  - Strengthened international cooperation.
  - Inclusive global governance (UN, G20, WTO reforms).
  - Balanced regional influence & peacekeeping.
- SCENARIO 2**  
**Pessimistic (Disorder & Great-Power Conflict)**
  - Growing military confrontations.
  - Economic blocs leading to isolationism.
  - Erosion of universal rules, rise of authoritarianism.

**Quote:** "The world is undergoing a process of multipolarization, where power is shifting to multiple global actors."

www.behorizon.org



The **Munich Security Report 2025** states that the world is entering a period of increasing tension and uncertainty as it shifts from U.S.-led unipolarity toward multipolarity.

Today's international system exhibits trends of unipolarity, bipolarity, multipolarity, and nonpolarity. Regional power shifts, involving numerous states and their attempts to form new power blocs, are becoming increasingly evident. In this context, it remains uncertain whether global dynamics will continue to be dominated by U.S.-China rivalry or evolve into a broader multipolar system. However, the process of "multipolarization" continues to gain momentum.

***"We are moving toward a multipolar world, but we are not there yet. We are in a limbo of polarity. And in this limbo, more and more countries are filling geopolitical gaps, doing as they please without accountability."***

**António Guterres, UN Secretary-General,  
UN General Assembly, September 24, 2024**

The belief that unilateral actions by major powers and increasing defense expenditures will escalate geopolitical tensions and trigger conflicts among competing power centers and alliances is deepening existing concerns. A growing number of states are competing for influence.

This transformation suggests that the global order will become increasingly complex in the future. As ideological divisions widen, liberal values are losing their dominance both within nations and across the global system. The political and economic liberalism that shaped the unipolar post-Cold War era is weakening in the face of nationalist populism. The possibility of a second Trump presidency accelerating multipolarity is becoming more tangible, as his approach prioritizes U.S. interests over global cooperation. This scenario is likely to strain alliances in Europe, deepen tensions with allies, and intensify Washington's focus on containing China.

### **The Decline of Pax Americana?**

Having emerged victorious from both World Wars in the 20th century, the United States (U.S.) also won the subsequent Cold War. During this period, it played a crucial role in ensuring peace and stability in Europe, which had been significantly disrupted in 1945. The U.S. laid the foundation for multilateral trade and international legal systems, institutionalizing them under the United Nations (UN). As decolonization progressed, the UN expanded its membership and authority.

However, with the rise of China and other global actors, the imperfect Pax Americana has facilitated the emergence of a more multipolar world. The MSC 2025 Report suggests that Trump's potential return to the White House could accelerate this shift, potentially marking the end of Pax Americana. Despite many Americans, particularly elites, adhering to the concept of American exceptionalism, they may be failing to recognize the world's transformation unfolding before their eyes. After nearly 70 years (or even longer) of Pax Americana shaping international relations, we may be approaching its final chapter.

One significant factor contributing to this shift is the growing divergence in perceptions between citizens of Western industrialized nations and those of rising Global South powers, particularly in response to global migration and the climate crisis. Millions of people in the U.S. and other wealthy democracies feel left behind by globalization. Beyond that, they sense a decline in the legitimacy of their governments and leaders.

While these social transformations unfold, the fundamental dynamics of global power transition—encompassing human capital, financial resources, military capabilities, energy, and information—have significantly evolved since the extraordinary period between 1989 and 1991, when the collapse of the Soviet Union reinforced American exceptionalism and the notion of an unchallenged unipolar moment. Today, however, there are "power vacuums" too vast for any hegemon to fully fill.

### **The U.S. as a Source of Instability?**

The MSC 2025 Report highlights that Trump's reported plans to purchase land in Greenland and Panama for the U.S., as well as his proposed takeover of Gaza and forced displacement of Palestinians, signify a shift in global perception—Washington is increasingly seen not as a stabilizing force but as a risk that needs to be contained. For the United States, the greatest challenge ahead lies in its relationship with China, which sees itself as having regained its former glory after the First Opium War (1839-1842). Potential flashpoints for U.S.-China conflict include the unstable Korean Peninsula, Taiwan's contested status, competition over control of natural resources (such as oil), and intensifying maritime rivalry. The likelihood of these tensions escalating and power vacuums expanding remains high.

However, due to financial constraints, the U.S. may be forced to reduce some of its national and international commitments. This necessity is pushing the U.S. toward an "offshore balancing" strategy—a foreign policy approach that seeks to preserve power and influence by maintaining a balance of power in key strategic regions.

### **Offshore Balancing: A New Strategy for the U.S.?**

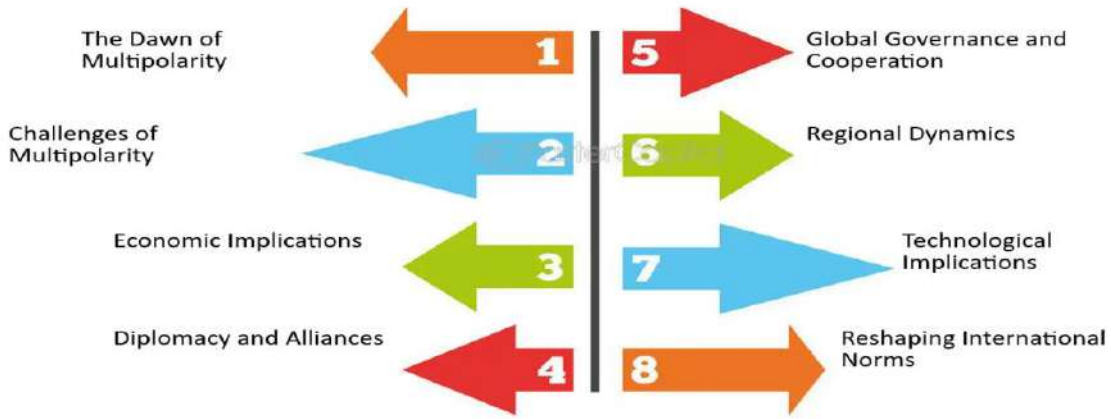
Although proponents of offshore balancing differ in their exact interpretations, they share common principles. The strategy assumes that the U.S. will reduce its presence in some regions and prioritize its commitments. Europe and the Middle East are increasingly viewed as areas requiring less U.S. intervention, whereas East Asia is emerging as a "strategic concern".

Second, as the U.S. reduces its overseas military footprint, other states will need to take on greater responsibility for regional stability. Thus, offshore balancing is a strategy of shifting, rather than sharing, burdens. The logic is that once the U.S. clearly signals that it will do less (e.g., in Europe), others will be compelled to do more to ensure stability in their own regions.

### **The Rise of Proxy Wars and "Franchised Conflicts"**

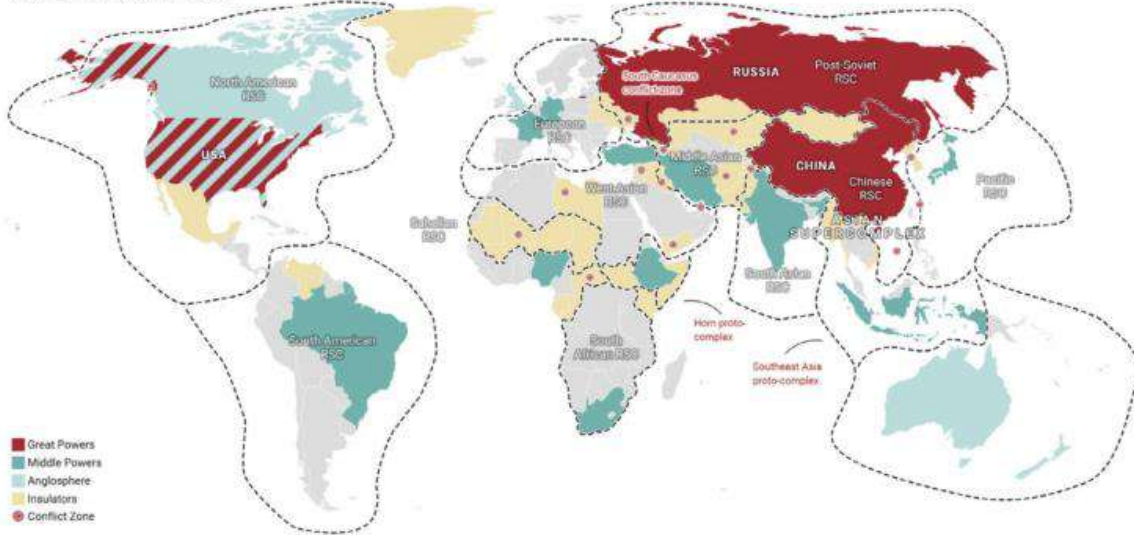
This shift implies more proxy wars and additional proxy war mechanisms, including franchising. In Europe, the idea of forming an independent European military force may gain momentum within this framework. This strategy is expected to have far-reaching consequences, influencing threat perceptions, security responses, and securitization policies.

## New World Order



### Regional Security Complexes

Reconceptualized with Middle Powers



Note: This map marks Russia as a great power. Moscow's relative power status, however, is in a state of flux and far more ambiguous. A compelling case could be made that Russia is the world's strongest (revisionist) middle power, as evidenced by its recent behavior in Ukraine and Syria.

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**Prof.Dr. Murat KOÇ / Çağ University Regional Security Studies Application and Research Center**