

# The World: Economically Bicentral, Geopolitically Multipolar

The new international order can be described as geopolitical multipolarity within a dual-centered capitalist system

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*Recently, international relations have become increasingly chaotic. The chaotic environment, which sometimes manifests itself as hot conflicts and sometimes as technology wars, is actually an indicator of a great change. This is actually a situation that is often seen in transition periods when the old system is being deconstructed, as seen in the early nineties. The obsolescence of the unipolar system that emerged after the Cold War and the birth pains of the new order that will replace the old one are the main reasons for the current turmoil. However, there are other structural dynamics that make the process we are going through unique.*

It is an undeniable fact that the balance of power in the world economic system has shifted from Europe-Atlantic to Asia-Pacific compared to the past. So much so that even the West's technology production monopoly, which has been going on for three centuries, has now been broken by Asian countries. The breakthroughs made by countries such as Taiwan and South Korea, as well as China, are dazzling. Unlike China, the political closeness of these countries with the USA takes the situation to completely different levels.

The USA, which is also a Pacific country, sees that its biggest challenge may come from China and targets this country as a global rival. Because when it comes to all military, economic and geopolitical parameters, only China can compete with the once hegemon USA in every field. As a matter of fact, the EU, which has a large and functional economy, is a military dwarf, while Russia, which has the advantage of a huge geography as well as its significant military power, is economically weak.

For now, trade and technology are at the focus of the increasingly intense competition

between the USA and China, one of which is the largest economy in the world in terms of current dollar price and the other in terms of Purchasing Power Parity. Additional customs tariffs, which started with the Trump period and aim to close the hundreds of billions of dollars of foreign trade deficit of the USA against China, continue to increase during the Biden administration.

The USA, which focuses on financial capital in the unipolar order and regrets losing the manufacturing industry to China, the 'workshop of the world', is making protectionism in trade a rising value in order to reverse the trend. In line with its aim of re-industrialization, it implements incentives to attract investments, especially in current technologies such as semiconductors/chips. Such policies, of course, mean deindustrialization for many countries, especially European ones.

For example, having lost access to cheap raw materials, German chemical giant BASF and South Korea's Samsung are shifting their investments to Texas, while Taiwan's famous chip manufacturer TSMC is shifting its investments to Arizona. Of course, Beijing does not sit idle and can sometimes launch its own high technology products, from five-nanometer chips to operating systems, at a surprising speed.

Chinese companies, which have taken the lead in the fields of electric vehicles, renewable energy and telecommunications, can compete with their American counterparts in every field of the digital age, from artificial intelligence to space exploration.

Currently, phenomena such as the shaking of the petro-dollar system and the internationalization of the yuan constitute the commodity and financial flows dimension of the rivalry.

Moreover, in contrast to international organizations such as the US-based World Bank and IMF, organizations led by China such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank confirm that the capitalist system is bicentric with different models.

In the military field, it seems that different actors have developed capabilities at different scales.

In addition to conventional forces, concepts such as first/second strike capability which are proportional to number of nuclear warheads, new generation air weapon systems are now coming to the fore. Rather than the size of defense expenditures, the sustainability of production in some types of lethal weapons and the field applicability of new generation technologies are becoming increasingly important. In this context, perhaps the most striking development in recent years is seen in hypersonic missiles. It is even commented that as these missiles become more widespread, aircraft carriers will lose their former importance in the deployment of overseas forces.

While China takes the lead in this field with its 'Dongfeng' systems and transfers some basic missile technologies to various countries, Russia makes an important claim with its own hypersonic missiles. The USA is trying to close the gap. Air defense and UAV systems also appear as another area where countries compete fiercely. It is accepted that much lower-cost but effective UAV elements are more functional in today's conflicts, instead of extremely costly fighter jets.

Although the USA and China are not in direct conflict, the parties indirectly confront each other in conflicts in different regions. Balancing the intense US aid to Ukraine, Moscow has the significant financial support of China, while it is known that China protects Palestine through Iran and its proxy forces in the face of the US's open support for Israel. These wars can have global consequences beyond regional geopolitics, affecting even international trade routes. As a matter of fact, the first closure of the Red Sea by the Iran-backed Houthis in response to Israel's Gaza massacre does not seem to be independent of the above-mentioned missile technologies and the interests of the relevant great powers. If these wars are considered as precursors, it seems realistic to state that the world is moving step by step towards the final confrontation between the USA and China in the Pacific. A confrontation does not necessarily mean a direct military conflict.

Another point that should be underlined is that every development is not shaped only by the interests of the two giants, but other states have also become important actors that can shape the course, unlike the Cold War bipolarity. This is the original character of the renewed world system.

To sum up, the era when the USA was riding alone in the world is over, and international relations have become increasingly chaotic with the spread of regional conflicts during the transition period. Great power rivalry has become the new norm. Instead of a unipolar system, a new international order with multiple equations is developing in which the USA and China are dominant in all power elements, some regional or supra-regional powers are aligned behind them, and other countries are positioned accordingly. In our opinion, it would not be misleading to define this order as *geopolitical multipolarity within the dual-centered capitalist system*. Unlike previous experiences, in this order, periodic collaborations are likely to come to the fore instead of permanent alliances that enable the greatest power within a camp to control the others.

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