



Dipartimento di Studi  
d'Intelligence Strategica e Sicurezza

RESEARCH PAPER #2

# NATO AT SIXTY

## The Future Of An Alliance



# **NATO AT SIXTY THE FUTURE OF AN ALLIANCE**

**Department of Strategic Intelligence and Security Studies**

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## **Background**

The Link Campus University Department of Strategic Intelligence and Security Studies seeks to develop the innovative concepts proposed at three international conferences held in Italy in the past years: “The Battle for Hearts and Minds: The Role of Soft Power in the Struggle against Global Jihadism” (Rome, 26-28 November, 2007); “New Frontiers of Intelligence Analysis” (Rome, 30 March-2 April, 2004); “Intelligence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (Priverno, 14-16 February, 2001).

Two Italian academic organizations took the lead in setting up the Department: Link Campus University (Rome), and the Gino Germani Center for the Study of Modernization and Development (Rome). These two organizations have been active in Italy for many years in the fields of education and research on strategic intelligence and on global security issues, and have jointly organized the above-mentioned events, cooperating with Global Futures Partnership (a US Government think-tank), which sponsored and co-directed the “New Frontiers of Intelligence Analysis” conference in 2004. The initial management team in Rome is composed of Prof. Vincenzo Scotti (Italian Undersecretary of State of Foreign Affairs and former Italian Interior Minister) Commander Francesco D’Arrigo (executive director) and Prof. Sergio Germani (academic director)

## **Objectives and Activities**

The Department is also a non-profit research center and an educational organization dedicated to advancing strategic knowledge and insights on emerging and future transnational threats and risks, as well to contribute to the development of more effective and imaginative strategic intelligence analysis.

The objectives of the Department are:

- 1) To contribute to the improvement of knowledge and understanding of the global trends - scientific-technological, economic-financial, demographic, environmental, geopolitical, religious-ideological, socio-cultural - that are shaping 21<sup>st</sup> century threats and risks to the security and stability of contemporary societies.
- 2) To contribute to the development of strategic insights on emerging and future transnational threats and risks, including their impact on security (human security, national security and international security), on national economies, on governance (at the national, regional and international levels), and on the cohesion and stability of societies<sup>1</sup>.
- 3) To contribute to the development of creative methods and tools of strategic thinking and intelligence analysis in order to deal more effectively with the chaos, complexity and rapid change that characterize the current global threat environment.
- 4) To enhance opportunities for dialogue and analytical cooperation between government and non-government (corporate, academic, think tank, NGO) analysts, and between analysts from different nations and cultural traditions.

The Department conducts the following activities: (1) organize conferences and seminars; (2) conduct research projects; (3) publish analytical research papers; (4) set up a documentation center on strategic intelligence and transnational security challenges; (5) organize a Master and courses on strategic intelligence analysis and specific transnational issues and security threats.

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The Department international advisory council aims to involve leading innovative thinkers and experts - government, business, academic and think tank - in the field of strategic intelligence, strategic and analytical thinking, global and national security challenges.

The board includes distinguished experts from the US, Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, Israel,

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<sup>1</sup> Transnational threats and risks include the following: global terrorism, global illicit trafficking, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the political and security impact of emerging technologies (information technology, biotechnology and nanotechnology), strategic information warfare, the geopolitics of energy, environmental security, infectious disease, state collapse, mass migration, inter-ethnic conflict, transnational extremist religious and political movements, and the rise of new centers of global power.

the Arab world, India, Japan and other Asian countries.

### **Affiliated Experts**

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**NATO at sixty: the future of an Alliance**

What future does NATO have in international politics? And what problems, challenges and constraints is going to face in the near future. This work will try to answer these two intertwined questions. The main argument is that NATO, as an alliance – and as all alliances in history – is context-driven. Its future depends on its surrounding strategic environment. Hence, to understand the kind of role NATO has in the future, it is first necessary to see what kind of future NATO is entering in. Obviously, this does not suggest a deterministic path. Rather, NATO's success or failure will depend on its members' and its officers' understanding of the future ahead. This is why understanding the future strategic environment is so important. If NATO will be given greater and greater duties and tasks, while its external environment will permit the organization to have just a small role, then NATO's future will be troubled. In contrast, if the goals of the organization will be coherent with its future strategic environment, then NATO will work and fulfill its duties with ease.

The first part of this work will describe briefly how the international system changed from the Cold War onwards. The second part will show the ongoing political reactions to these changes. Finally, the last section will evaluate the policy implications of this whole transformation.

**Introduction**

What role and what future does NATO have? To answer this question, it is first necessary a generalization about alliances. NATO is an institutionalized alliance. Alliances emerge to counter a threat.<sup>3</sup> This is why NATO was founded. After the end of the Cold War, we had the alliances, but not the threat.<sup>4</sup> However, NATO did not disappear. The international environment was benign and the distribution of power favoured tremendously the West: maintaining NATO and giving it with more and more duties was hence not a problem. Nobody would and especially could

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<sup>2</sup> The author wishes to thank Claudio Neri and Mauro Gilli.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *The Origin of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University, Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Julien Smith and Michael Williams, *The Future Beneath: The Future of NATO through the ISAF Prism*, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, CSIS and RUSI <[csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/080331\\_nato.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/080331_nato.pdf)>.

complain.

So, while during the Cold War, when the structure of international politics was strictly bipolar, NATO had just mere defensive and deterrence duties, after the Cold War, when the configuration of world politics favoured the U.S. and the West more in general, NATO acquired new tasks, and expanded both in its operations and its membership. What then is going to be its future? Clearly, the answer depends on the structure of world politics in the years ahead. There is a big debate surrounding this issue. The first part of this work will try to solve any doubt: the future ahead will be multipolar. Recent trends in economics, demography and technology suggest this way.

This transition does not indicate how world politics will look like. A theoretical framework can. Without specifying too much my assumptions (grounded in neorealist theories),<sup>5</sup> I can say that this multipolar transition will have two main effects: regionalism and new rivalries.<sup>6</sup> In sum, globalization is favouring the current transition to multipolarity. Multipolarity will ignite new tensions and move world politics towards regional dynamics. The final outcome is an international system dominated by regional politics. The second section will deal with this issue.

What are the implications for the U.S., Europe, and NATO? This will be the focus of my last section. My point is quite straightforward: their relative position will weaken, and hence their space of *manoeuvre* in world politics will diminish. NATO challenges, in particular, depend very much on the task the organization will be given. If its member countries realize that its role cannot but diminish, then the Alliance can go on providing useful services, especially in collective regional security, in common defence organization and planning activities, and in issues like democratic

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<sup>5</sup> See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. For a critique, see Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams* (New York: Knopf, 2008); Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000): 1-41.

transition and civil-military relations reform in the new member states.<sup>7</sup> However, if the new Strategic Concept and the Alliance posture will go on asking for bigger, global roles and missions, then NATO will suffer major problems – not excluded frictions between the two sides of the Atlantic and within its Eastern and Western European members.<sup>8</sup>

## **I. Towards a multipolar world**

### **I.1 NATO evolution**

When NATO was founded in 1949, Western Europe was mostly a pile of debris. The United States emerged generally intact from the war: beside its human and economic costs, Washington did not have to bear any other significant loss. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, suffered massively the fight against Germany. However, the Yalta settlement awarded the country economic, natural and industrial resources that proved pivotal not only in its reconstruction but also in its further industrial growth. The world that emerged after World War II was hence bipolar. The two Super Powers had similar capabilities: no other country could match their combined demographic, economic, industrial and geographical resources.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of the Cold War, this situation was dramatically altered. The implosion of the Soviet Union coupled with the 1970s electronic and managerial revolution projected the United States at the peak of world power.<sup>10</sup> As it has been said several times, since the Roman Empire, no other country in history was ever so strong and powerful as the United States of America. However, as political scientist Robert Gilpin has brightly illustrated, hegemonic powers bear with them the

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<sup>7</sup> Charles L. Glaser, “Why NATO is Still Best: Future Security Arrangements for Europe,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Summer 1993); Jeffrey Simon, *Poland and NATO: A Study in Civil-Military Relations* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Layne, “It’s Over: Over There: The Coming Crack-up in Transatlantic Relations,” *International Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (May 2008):325-347.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Winter 2000/01): 5-53 <[http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/brooks\\_and\\_wohlforth\\_winter\\_00\\_01.pdf](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/brooks_and_wohlforth_winter_00_01.pdf)>; Andrea Principe, Andrew Davies, and Mike Hobday (eds.), *The Business of System Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

seeds of their own decay.<sup>11</sup> By maintaining peace, order, allowing trade and investments, these countries end up favouring their own adversaries' rise. This is what happened starting from the mid 2000s.

If just a decade ago, the American moment could not even be put into question, now the situation is dramatically different. China, India, Brazil and to a lesser extent also Russia are able to assert more freely and forcefully their interests in the international arena. What happened? What changed?

### **1.1 The Unipolar Moment**

In the past years, many international relations scholars have claimed the existence of a “Unipolar Moment” that will not wane soon.<sup>12</sup> According to William C. Wohlforth, the capabilities gap between the US and other countries is such that there is no chance to check US power.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, being the US a maritime power without dangerous and powerful neighbours, no enemy will be able to pose significant geopolitical challenges to its rule.<sup>14</sup>

Barry Posen has further strengthened this formulation by underlining a deeper and fundamental advantage enjoyed by Washington; namely its “command of the commons”.<sup>15</sup> Thanks to its

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment,” *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990/91); Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Revisited,” *The National Interest* (Winter 2002/03): 5-17; Michael Mastanduno, “Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and US Grand Strategy after the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Spring 1997): 49-88; Kei A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander, “Waiting for Balancing: Why the World Is Not Pushing Back,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005): 109-39.

<sup>13</sup> William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer 1999): 5-41.

<sup>14</sup> Robert S. Ross, “The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century,” *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Spring 1999): 81-118; Stephen M. Walt, “Keeping the World out of Balance: Self-Restraint and US Foreign Policy,” in G. John Ikenberry (ed.), *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002): 121-154.

<sup>15</sup> Barry R. Posen, “The Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of US Hegemony,” *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Summer 2003): 5-46.

technological and military excellence, the US would be the sheriff of the international system.<sup>16</sup> Its Navy controls the seas; its satellites and orbital stations the space; and its Air Force controls the air. Last but not least, the US can rely on the deployment of its military personnel and equipment in its different bases all over the world. As a result, no other Power has anything comparable to the US geopolitical grip over world politics.<sup>17</sup>

## **1.2 What next?**

That the US dominated the international system during the 1990s is no novelty.<sup>18</sup> The point of debate is whether this situation is changing in the foreseeable future. Wohlforth, Posen and Brooks suggest it is not.<sup>19</sup> However, according to others, the American era will be no exception in history.<sup>20</sup> As it rose, sooner or later, it will also decline. It is not possible to say when, and theory

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<sup>16</sup> This aspect has been further developed by Colin S. Gray, *The Sheriff: America's Defense of the New World Order* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in Twenty-First Century* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Son, 2004); Alexander Cooley, *Base Politics: Democratic Change and the U.S. Military Overseas* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> The most important documents favouring this unipolar posture are Donald Kagan, Gary Schmitt and Thomas Donnelly, *Rebuilding America's Defences: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century* (Washington, DC: Project for a New American Century, 2000) <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>; and Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadriennial Defence Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defence, 2001) <http://www.comw.org/qdr/qdr2001.pdf>; for the opposite view, see Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Spring 1993), pp. 5-51; Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment," *International Security* Vol. 31, N. 2 (Fall 2000): 7-41; Charles Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Knopf, 2002); Ivan Eland, "The Empire Strikes Out: The "New Imperialism" and its fatal Flaws," *Policy Analysis*, No. 459 (2002); Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War".

<sup>19</sup> Stephen G. Brooks, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> The debate about the end of the American superpower is long-dated. It started at least with Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987), and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

cannot help in this sense,<sup>21</sup> but it will.<sup>22</sup> This section will precisely show this ongoing shift in capability endowments at the international level.<sup>23</sup> Practically, its significance is that the gap between the United States, and the West more in general, *vis-à-vis* “the Rest” is narrowing.

### **1.3 Transition to multipolarity**

In international politics, power is the capacity to shape or influence one's own external environment.<sup>24</sup> Generally, it is measured through the factors grouped in the COW Composed Index of National Capability.<sup>25</sup> Simply put, material capabilities determine the capacity to influence other actors. Thus, enjoying a dramatic hedge in material capabilities implies a greater political role in the world scene. When the relative gap diminishes, so does one's political role. The most important factors this paper considers are economic size, technological capabilities, and demographic trends: their treatment permits a sufficient analysis of the current shift in capabilities endowments without going to much in detail with data and indexes.

#### **.1 Economic size**

The first sign of the rise of the Rest, as Fareed Zakaria has brightly described it, is the fast and

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<sup>21</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall 1993): 77-79; Kenneth N. Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War,” 27-39. For those raising doubts about the usefulness of such an indication, and thus of the theory formulating it, it is noteworthy reminding that Waltz's predictions is not about the occurrence of a storm, but it is about the change of the climate. The theory does not tell us whether tomorrow will rain or not, but it tells us that the future will be much more rainy.

<sup>22</sup> Whereas for historians this is a truism, political scientists seem still far from agreeing on this simple point. See for example the vast literature suggesting that world politics will not go back to multipolarity. Charles W. Kegley, Jr., “The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (June 1993): 131-146; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Barry Buzan, *The United States and the Great Powers: World Politics in the Twenty-First Century* (Malden: Polity Press, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).

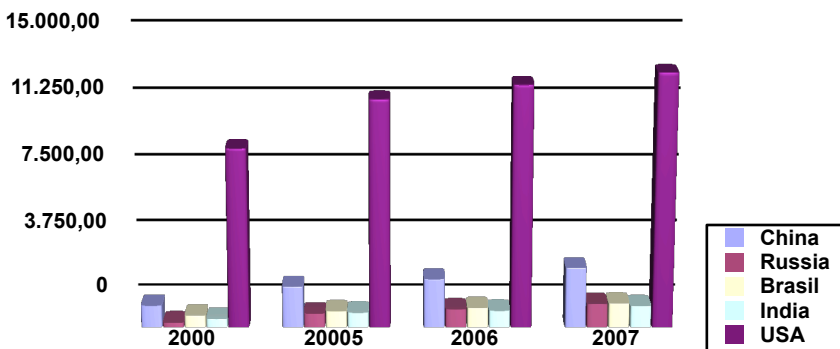
<sup>24</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>25</sup> Correlates on War Project, *Material National Capabilities* (v3.02) <http://www.correlatesofwar.org>; David J. Singer, Stuart Bremer, and John Stuckey, “Capability Distribution, Uncertainty, and Major Power War, 1820-1965,” in Bruce Russett (ed), *Peace, War, and Numbers* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1972): 19-48; David J. Singer, “Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816-1985,” *International Interactions*, Vol. 14 (1987): 115-32.

continued economic rise of the areas other than Western countries and Japan.<sup>26</sup> The implications are perfectly summarized in the consultancy group Accenture's report *The Rise of the Multi-polar World*:

“The Collective economic dominance of the United States, Europe and Japan – the so-called triad economies – is giving way to a greater dispersal of global economic power as developing economies contribute an ever-increasing share of the world's output, trade and investment.”<sup>27</sup>

Chart 1.1: *Emerging Great Powers' GDP growth (PPP\$).*



Source: World Bank, *Key Development Data and Statistics*.

This trend is particularly localized among some emerging Great Powers: Brazil, Russia, India and China (henceforth abbreviated as BRIC).<sup>28</sup> While in 2000, their combined GDP represented 26% of the US economy, in 2007 it was 51% and 58% in 2008.<sup>29</sup> This picture is further strengthened if one considers all developing countries. In 1990, they accounted for 39% of the world GDP. In 2006, they accounted for 49% and by 2015, their share is likely to exceed the one of the US,

<sup>26</sup> Fareed Zakaria, op. cit.

<sup>27</sup> Accenture, *The Rise of the Multi-Polar World (2007)* <http://www.accenture.com/NR/rdonlyres/BD275F6C-9E28-45F0-A8DB-7C1733D81BC2/0/MultiPolarWorld2007.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Chart 1.2 offers a telling information. In 2000, the combined GDP of the BRIC represented 26% of the US economy. In 2007, it represented 51% thereof.

<sup>29</sup> My calculation based on World Bank data.

Europe and Japan combined.<sup>30</sup>

The most important consequence of this transition concerns the loss of the monopsonic economic power the West has enjoyed in the last 50 years. Simply put, when the West was acquiring goods in international markets, it could rely on its massive economic strength to impose economic, political or social conditions. This situation will change: other buyers are emerging. Hence, if our terms will be too severe or strict, the sellers will always have the opportunity to turn to other buyers. Our recent employment of economic sanctions have exactly illustrated this pattern: Western sanctions against Iran, Burma or Sudan have just invited China, Russia and India to deal with these countries.<sup>31</sup>

## **.I Technology**

The West enjoys a significant advantage also in the technological domain. However, change is on the way. Economic Historians have found a certain consensus on the fact that technology spreads fast and widely.<sup>32</sup> While the West continues to be the site of the highest level of technological investment and development, the BRIC is achieving at the same time impressive results. In 2006, the US was responsible for 32 percent of global R&D spending. China scored only 13 percent instead. However, since 2000, “R&D spending in China has been growing at an annual rate of about 17 percent, far higher than 4 to 5 percent annual growth rates reported for the US, Japan and the European Union.”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, according to a recent report from the World Bank, the Total Factor Productivity – a measure for technological growth<sup>34</sup> – for East Asia and Pacific region

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<sup>30</sup> Accenture, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> See Andrea Gilli, “Multipolarismo, sanzioni e promozione della democrazia,” *Epistemes* (21<sup>th</sup> June 2009) <<http://epistemes.org/2009/07/21/multipolarismo-sanzioni-e-promozione-della-democrazia/>>.

<sup>32</sup> William H. McNeil, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Forces, and Society since A.D. 1000* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981); Nathan Rosenberg and L.E. Birdzell Jr., *How the West Grew Rich: The Economic Transformation of the Industrial World* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); David S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>33</sup> Accenture, op. cit., p. 27-28

<sup>34</sup> Charles R. Hulten, “Total factor productivity: a short biography,” in Charles R. Hulten et al. (eds.), *New Directions in Productivity Analysis: Studies in Income and Wealth* (Chicago: Chicago University Press for the NBER, 2001).

grew by 5.1% for the 1990-2005 period, as compared to 2.2 for Europe and Central Asia.<sup>35</sup> In this case, the consequence is that the non-Western world can progressively master new techniques of production and hence strengthen its industrial and economic base. Moreover, this has also a clear military dimension: these countries will possess the military means the West now enjoys. For example, China, Iran, India and Russia have all satellites in orbit and long-range ballistic missiles in their military arsenals.<sup>36</sup>

## **.1 Demographic trends**

A dramatic weakness of the Western world concerns its demographic trends.<sup>37</sup> While population is spiking in Brazil, and especially in India and China, it is moderately increasing in the US and is remaining stable in Europe. China has grown from 1,14 billion inhabitants it had in 1990 to 1,42 it will have in 2020. Similarly, India will witness its population increasing from 860 million to 1,37 billion; and Brazil from 149 to 219 million – the only exception will be Russia, whose population is going to shrink.<sup>38</sup>

On the opposite side, population in Europe is not changing – but it is ageing (from 721 to 722 million),<sup>39</sup> while in the US is increasing slowly from 270 to 342. The picture is not over, unfortunately. Indeed, simultaneously, BRIC countries are also seeing a dramatic improvement of their educational systems, and in particular a steep rise in the number of graduates in scientific disciplines (in contrast with Western countries).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects 2008: Technology Diffusion in the Developing World* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008): 54 <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/GEPEXT/EXTGEP2008/0,,contentMDK:21603882-menuPK:4503397-pagePK:64167689-piPK:64167673-theSitePK:4503324,00.html>;

<sup>36</sup> IISS, *The 2009 Military Balance* (London: Routledge, 2009).

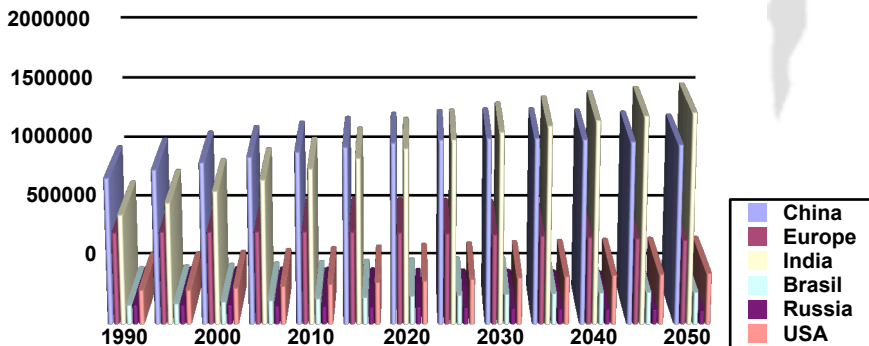
<sup>37</sup> Jeffrey Simon, “NATO’s Uncertain Future: Is Demography Destiny?,” *Strategic Forum*, No. 236 (October 2008).

<sup>38</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

<sup>39</sup> This data refer to Europe as a geographical entity, not as a political one. Hence, for Europe it is here intended Eastern Europe (including inter alia Belarus and Russia), Northern Europe, Southern Europe (including the Balkans) and Western Europe. See <http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp?panel=5#Europe>.

<sup>40</sup> Accenture, op. cit., 7-11.

Chart 1.2: *Population Growth.*



Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

These patterns will have several consequences. Two deserve special mention. The developing world will have plenty of young males to reinforce its armies, while NATO countries will not.<sup>41</sup> Second, these countries will have the human capital, both in quantity and in quality, to sustain their economic, technological and social development. Also in this case, NATO countries will not.<sup>42</sup>

## 2. The meaning of multipolarity

In the previous section, I have clearly shown how the structure of the international system is changing. And it is going without doubts towards a configuration of more dispersed power. This is not to say that we are entering a phase absolutely similar to the XIX century Concert of Europe, but nonetheless, the international system is clearly becoming less unipolar – and hence multipolar. Although the West will still enjoy a leading position, the simultaneous emergence of different Powers in different regions will render more and more difficult our attempt to guarantee peace, security, order and free trade in all the regions of the world. Indeed, these new centres of power are already emerging and will strengthen further in the future. They will have vast economies, industrial and technological capacities not inferior to the West, and the human capital to enter successfully the new millennium. This section will show some of the political consequences this transition is already causing. In my opinion, two clear trends can be identified: world politics will become more competitive, and eventually conflict-prone. New centres of power will obtain

<sup>41</sup> Barry R. Posen, “Command of the Commons,” 23. Some may wonder whether this matters in the post-industrial world. This article think it does, the reason is quite simple. The West’s enemies will try to play at their rules, not at ours. This means, they will try to fight in such a way to be advantaged. Hence, they will look for military clashes that favor the availability of great numbers of forces.

<sup>42</sup> Accenture, op. cit., 7-11.

greater influence in their own regions, moving in this way world politics towards a regionally-dominated context.

## **2.1 New rivalries**

With the emergence of new centres of power, international relations will turn more competitive and conflict-prone. In a unipolar era, no one dares to challenge the hegemon. This is counterintuitive. Because the hegemonic power of the system will have at its own disposal such a critical mass, that any opposition will be smashed.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, any conflict between third-parties will be halted by the stronger State's intervention: U.S. involvement in late 1990s, in the India-Pakistan nuclear crises, in Kosovo, in Haiti and so forth clearly shows this point. Not surprisingly, after the Cold War strong opposition towards the U.S. came either from non-state organizations (terrorist groups) or from outlaw states like Cuba, Iraq or Korea del North. The former could not be retaliated. While for the latter this was the only way to legitimize their internal authority. Nonetheless, they dearly paid these actions: economic sanctions, embargoes, and even the use of force.

In a multipolar era, international politics will look quite different. And especially, it will be much more competitive. This means, windows of opportunity to challenge, weaken or threaten the U.S., Europe, NATO or the West will be plentiful. The reasons are two-folds and mutually reinforcing. As both theory and history confirm, when states get stronger, they tend to expand their influence.<sup>44</sup> Secondly, by getting stronger, states need more resources.<sup>45</sup> If they cannot acquire them peacefully, they may use other means.<sup>46</sup> The result of this process is that while the Rest is

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<sup>43</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of the Unipolar World".

<sup>44</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Amongst The Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1948); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; Paul Kennedy, *op. cit.*; Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambitions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press); Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Interestingly, from these patterns are not immune democracies as Zakaria and Snyder show.

<sup>45</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American Era*. This is particularly true when the strongest state or empire declines. See on this Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; William C. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95): 91-129.

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Thomas J. Christensen, "Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy Towards East Asia".

becoming more assertive, the West is becoming weaker.

## 2.2 Regional sub-systems

The structural shift emphasized in the first section will have a second, relevant consequence: regionalization of world politics. By spreading wealth and power, globalization is bringing about multipolarity.<sup>47</sup> Multipolarity, in turn, is strengthening regional dynamics in world politics.<sup>48</sup> Since new centres of power are emerging, their peripheries will end up being less permeable to external influence: this is how regional politics re-acquires its lost salience. Interestingly, this outcome may be achieved in two ways, either through a process of cooperative or coercive regional integration. Cooperative integration, like the case of Europe demonstrate, occurs when a group of countries agree to institutionalize and solidify their cooperation in order to protect themselves from extra-regional externalities.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, for coercive integration this paper intends those patterns through which a certain region becomes more independent from world politics even though this is not the product of an agreed process. Usually, this occurs when a regional power emerges and the surrounding countries cannot do anything than acquiesce its rise – the case of East Asia with China is the paramount.<sup>50</sup> In this case, a major power establishes *de facto* a sphere of influence from which other Great Powers are excluded.

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<sup>47</sup> A perfect synthesis of the effects of globalization is Jonathan Kirshner, “Globalization, American Power, and International Security,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 123, no. 3 (2008): 363-289.

<sup>48</sup> Theoretical reasoning offers a compelling case, that is epitomized at best by Waltz conceptual framework according to which units are subjected to a sameness effects spreading from the anarchic nature of the international system. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 73-74. See also Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, “Who’s Keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Peace Operations,” *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Spring 2005): 157-195. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, *Region Orders: Building Security in New World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); T.V. Paul, James Wirtz and Michel Fortmann (eds.), *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004): “Part III Regional Subsystems and Balance of Power,” 179-334.

<sup>49</sup> Barry R. Posen, “European Union Security and Defence Policy: Response to Unipolarity?,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, no. 2 (2006): 149-186; Richard Stubb, “Asean Plus Three: Emerging East Asian Regionalism,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2002): 440-455; Roy Allison, “Virtual regionalism, regional structures and regime security in Central Asia,” *Central Asia Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2008): 185-202.

<sup>50</sup> This process is envisioned by John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 29-51. See also Robert S. Ross, “The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century”; Robert S. Ross, “Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (July-September 2006): 355-395; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

In sum, I claim that this shift in material capabilities will bring about new rivalries and a regionalization of world politics. To substantiate further these insights, the next sub-paragraphs will analyse some current phenomena showing that while competition is growing in world politics, regionalization processes are calling it. Hence, competition is mainly taking a regional dimension.

### **2.3 New regional rivalries**

Is the future going to be different? This paper argues in this way. While we cannot predict the future, at least we can monitor the present. And present trends suggest that the way ahead lays in the direction traced by this work and its theoretical framework. China, India, Brazil and Russia are growing, in relative terms, and they are more and more asserting forcefully their interests. Their growth in capabilities endowments is, indeed, already reflected in their policies. In a more or less direct way, they are all enlarging their spheres of interests – also at the cost of frictions and clashes with the U.S.

#### **2.3.1 China**

China is rising. We have known this for at least the last 20 years.<sup>51</sup> However, what matters to us is that the country is *now* using her growth to gain power and influence in international affairs. Till the early 2000s, China was cautious and prudent. Her main interest was to find a balance between her internal contradictions and her external aims.<sup>52</sup> However, more recently, her behaviour has slightly changed. Indeed, since the mid-2000s, the country has begun to grow more and more asserting – also at the cost of direct clashes with the US and, even when her internal stability was not directly threatened.

*Defense Planning.* China's defense budget is growing fast. Estimates vary, but the country defense

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<sup>51</sup> Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005).

<sup>52</sup> David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Yong Dend (ed.), *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004); Robert S. Ross and Zhu Fend (eds.), *China's Ascent: Power, Security and the Future of International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

budget seems to increase by 18% *per annum*, at least.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, these resources are devoted mainly to counter the American RMA and its power projection capabilities.<sup>54</sup> This means, enormous efforts are made to develop anti-stealth technologies, anti-access weapons, jamming and disturbing equipments aimed at disturbing the smooth functioning of net-centric warfare dogmas.<sup>55</sup> The direct implication is that the eventual use of force against Beijing will be much less easier than it could years ago. This relative progress in China's military balance (also in her naval fleet) has been accompanied by a growing effort devoted at enlarging her own sphere of influence. The clear goal is to dominate the South China Sea and East Asia, and indeed step by step, the country is exactly achieving this goal: through a mix of coercion, cooperation, and economic diplomacy, Beijing is asserting its rule in its surrounding areas. The U.S. is trying to counter these policies, but with scarce success.<sup>56</sup>

*Extra-regional intervention.* At the same time, China is playing hard in the Middle East, in Africa and in South America. In the Middle East and Africa, the country is developing strong links with Iran and all potential oil-suppliers, devoting when necessary massive resources to the construction of infrastructures in order to win local support – sometimes outflanking even World Bank-development projects.<sup>57</sup> In South America, the country is strengthening its ties with Venezuela and Bolivia, both for diplomatic, political and economic reasons. In sum, the country is now entering areas where the West has traditionally had strong influence. Clearly, China is working to influence these regions at her own advantage.

*Financial and economic role.* The financial and economic role China plays nowadays in international markets is often understood under a simple economic perspective. The picture is dramatic:

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<sup>53</sup> Keith Crane et. al., *Modernizing China's Military: Opportunities and Constraints* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2005).

<sup>54</sup> Eliot Cohen, "Change and Transformation in Military Affairs," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (September 2004): 395-407.

<sup>55</sup> Norman Friedman, "Globalization of Anti-access Strategies," in Sam J. Tancredi (ed.), *Globalization and Maritime Power* (Washington, DC: NDU, 2000).

<sup>56</sup> Robert S. Ross, "China's Naval Nationalism: Sources, Prospects, and the U.S. Response," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Fall 2009): 46-81; Robert S. Ross, "Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia".

<sup>57</sup> Klaus Naumann et. al, *Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World: Renewing Transatlantic Partnership* (Lunteren: Noaber Foundation, 2007): 51, <[csis.org/files/media/csis/events/080110\\_grand\\_strategy.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/events/080110_grand_strategy.pdf)>.

according to the International Monetary Fund, world economy is getting out of the recession thanks to China and India. However, a political look is even more frightening. In East Asia, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and Indonesia are more and more going towards a no-choice scenario: either they opt for not trading with Beijing, becoming in this way weaker and poorer.<sup>58</sup> Or they go for the Chinese option, that however will cost them their political autonomy, since they will become completely subjected and dependent on the Chinese economy. Karl Marx famously said that capitalism will break through any Chinese Wall. In Asia, the Chinese Wall is just moving to include the other countries surrounding China: this is the power of communist capitalism made in China. Moreover, one has to consider the financial weight that China has been able to accumulate against Washington – and that clearly endows it with an enormous political power.<sup>59</sup>

### **2.3.2 Russia**

Russia is playing no less hard on international politics. Her aim to regain the control of her Near Abroad has never been stronger since the end of the Soviet Union.<sup>60</sup> And the current transition to a multipolar era is clearly favouring her stances. In three areas, we can see this intertwined process of rivalry and regionalism: energy, Caspian and Central Asian regions, and Middle East. Interestingly, Russia used energy and her influence in Middle Eastern politics to weaken and soften the West, so to regain her control over the Caucasus and Central Asia that in turn was fundamental to strengthen her own relative position. Russia never gave up these ambitions, but only recently was able to achieve some successes. This temporal factor clearly shows what is the permitting cause: Western relative decline.

*Energy.* Russia possess the second biggest gas-reserves in the world, and sits over massive oil-reserves as well. In recent years, her government has then used gas and energy to weaken the Western bloc and gain new allies within it. In this respect, the country has played hard to sabotage the US/UK-sponsored Nabucco pipe-line running through Central Asia, in order to promote her own pipeline, the North/South-Stream project. Recent events suggest that if Moscow has not won the game yet, at least it got most of the matches. Italy, Germany, and even Turkey entered the

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<sup>58</sup> Robert S. Ross, "Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia".

<sup>59</sup> Daniel W. Drezner, "Bad Debts: Assessing China's Financial Influence in Great Power Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Fall 2009): 7–45.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Mandelbaum (ed.), *The New Russian Foreign Policy* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998).

project indeed, making Nabucco's rationale weaker and weaker, and so the opposition to Russia from (part of) the West.<sup>61</sup>

*Central Asia and the Caucasus.* While the successes on the energy side have been used to split the West on the Caucasus, Russia has been more blunt on Central Asia. A few years ago, Russia, in light of her weakness could, not tackle any external intervention in the Caucasus: this is the case of the Rose and Orange revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. In the most recent past, however, Moscow was able to turn the table upside-down. The country used its energy policy to convince Italy and Germany to block NATO from awarding Georgia and Ukraine its membership. And in the summer of the same year, Moscow attacked militarily Georgia in order to settle the ongoing crisis and moreover to show her resolve on the issue. The West was not able to react, to coordinate an answer, let alone to constrain Russia. Russia's relative rise could not be resisted. In Central Asia, Russia have been playing for several years a tricky game. Firstly, it decided to halt the permission to the U.S. and NATO to pass through her own territory to reach Afghanistan. This obviously complicated the logistics of the ISAF and Enduring Freedom missions. Then, it progressively put pressures on the big Central Asian countries, so to weaken the American position in the area. First Uzbekistan, than Kazakhstan, finally Kyrgyzstan.<sup>62</sup> In this latter country, in particular, the mounting Russian pressures were the more evident. In early January 2009, Russia granted economic aids and loans to the country. After a few days, the Kyrgyz Parliament decided to close the American military base in Manas.<sup>63</sup> A move that would result in rendering impossible the logistics for Afghanistan. Of the three other alternative roads, one was too dangerous and unstable: the one passing through the Pakistani border. One was Russia and the other was Iran. The issue would have ended with the base not being closed. Interestingly, this came after growing concessions from the United States, included the abandonment of the ballistic missile shield in

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<sup>61</sup> Keith C. Smith, *Russian Energy Politics in the Baltics, Poland and Ukraine: A new stealth Imperialism* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2004); Vladimir Milov, *Russia and the West: The Energy Factor* (Washington, DC: CSIS and IFRI, 2006); Dominique Finon and Catherine Locatelli, "Russian and European Gas interdependence: Could contractual trade channel geopolitics," *Energy Policy*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (January 2008): 423-42.

<sup>62</sup> Roy Allison, "Strategic Reassertion in Russia's Central Asia Policy," *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (April 2004): 277-93.

<sup>63</sup> Erica Marat, "Bakiyev wins new geopolitical game over Manas base," *CACI Analyst*, 01/07/09 <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5137>>; Stratfor, *Kyrgyzstan: A Deal on U.S. Military Flights, 24 June 2009*.

Europe.<sup>64</sup>

In other words, the Russian growing influence on the region completely altered U.S. and NATO calculations and capabilities in the area.

### 2.3.4 India

The case of India is particular. The country has no direct contrasting interest with the West, rather its economic relations with Europe and the United States would suggest that it is aligned with them.<sup>65</sup> Yet, when one looks closer, it is possible to see that the situation is much more complicated. India and the U.S., and the West more in general will certainly share some common interests in the future. However, New Delhi is already showing no willingness to give up her interests to suit Western requests.

*Military power.* A few years ago, India developed a new military doctrine according to which the country not only contemplates but also would act much faster and more determined against Pakistan in case of threat. This is relevant for a simple reason: this shows that formidable military developments are going more and more out of Western control.<sup>66</sup> So far, any military clash between Pakistan and India was halted by U.S. presence and pressure. What will happen when U.S. influence in Asia will wane? The answer is simple: the West will have lesser influence on world politics. The very development of this doctrine is a proof. The western interest is for peace between Karachi and New Delhi. India is of the same opinion, so far at least as her population or territory are not threatened. Finally, New Delhi is developing naval capabilities to control the Ocean Sea.<sup>67</sup> Also in this case, the implication is that Western influence in the area is going to

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<sup>64</sup> Luke Harding and Ian Traynor, "Obama abandons missile defence shield in Europe," *The Guardian*, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/17/missile-defence-shield-barack-obama>>.

<sup>65</sup> Henry D. Sokolski, *Gauging U.S.-Indian Strategic Cooperation* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007) <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?PubID=755>>; Stephen J. Blank, *Natural Allies? Regional Security in Asia and Prospects for Indo-American Strategic Cooperation* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005) <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?PubID=626>>.

<sup>66</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III. "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine." *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 158-190.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas P. Barnett, "India's 12 Steps to a World-Class Navy," <<http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/12steps.htm>>; Devindra Sethi, "Maritime India Cruises to Power," *UPI ASIA*, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009, <[http://upiasia.com/Security/2009/09/24/maritime\\_india\\_cruises\\_to\\_power/9640/](http://upiasia.com/Security/2009/09/24/maritime_india_cruises_to_power/9640/)>; Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean," *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 2009 <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64832/robert-d-kaplan/center-stage-for-the-21st-century>>;

shrink: interestingly, after 400 years, the West is losing its grip on the Indian Ocean.

*Energy politics.* The second issue of interest is India's *libertine* energy politics.<sup>68</sup> Similarly to China, the country desperately needs energy resources. This is not surprising, given that the country needs to feed and employ 1 billion people. What concerns the West is from *whom* India is buying oil and gas. And this is anyone able to sell. Iran is the first one, both for geographical, economic and political reasons. In the past years, India has demonstrated no interest in breaking her ties with Teheran just because of Western interests or pressure. The question, and its answer, is quite simple: how likely is it that India will accommodate these requests when Western power will further wane?

### **2.3.5 Brazil**

Out of the BRIC, Brazil is clearly the country that currently has the minor aspirations. The country has not experienced yet an industrialization similar to the one India or China have seen, and neither can it count on its human capital. Poverty, illiteracy, corruption are still wide and deep-rooted. Yet, the country is slowly beginning to rise in the world scene.<sup>69</sup> Of particular interest is the fact that a big part of its recent growth is due exactly to the rise of multipolarism. Brazil invested massively in the past in bio-fuels. Furthermore, recently oil has been discovered off its coasts. The result is that the spike in the demand in raw materials have directly advantaged its economy. Interestingly, this spike was exactly due to the rise of new powers I have documented in the first section. In a way, the more precarious situation of the country has led to more moderate changes in its foreign policy. However, two clear trends can be identified.

*Defense restructuring.* Brazil is buying new weapon-systems, new platforms, new defence

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<sup>68</sup> Ariel Cohen, Lisa Curtis, and Owen Graham, "The Proposed Iran–Pakistan–India Gas Pipeline: An Unacceptable Risk to Regional Security," Executive Summary Backgrounder, No. 2139 (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009) <[www.heritage.org/Research/asiaandthepacific/upload/bg\\_2139.pdf](http://www.heritage.org/Research/asiaandthepacific/upload/bg_2139.pdf)>

<sup>69</sup> Peter Kingstone, "Brazil: The Sleeping Giant Awakes," World Politics Review, <<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=3145>>; Monica Hirst, "Strategic Posture Review: Brazil," World Politics Review Reports, <<http://reports.worldpoliticsreview.com/brazil>>; Tullo Vigevani and Gabriel Cepaluni, "Lula's Foreign Policy and the Quest for Autonomy through Diversification," Third World Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 7 (2007): 1309-1326.

capabilities.<sup>70</sup> Self-evidently, it wants to reach a higher international status. And it can afford all this thanks to its excellent economic performance. However, since defence budgets are being slashed by the financial crisis all around the world, Brazil is exploiting its favourable market condition to gain the most from these acquisitions. The off-set it is getting, in terms of production-share and industrial capabilities, are indeed enormous.

*South American diplomacy.* Brazil has attempted to play the king-maker of South America. Although both Washington and the turmoil of South American politics won't permit it, Brazil has tried to achieve a greater role. And in part, it succeeded. Its growing economic role, coupled with its increasing political and diplomatic resources are indeed helping the country to achieve a greater status both in the region and vis-à-vis Washington. South America will unlikely display the strict regionalization patterns we can see in other regions. Brazil has too many internal problems, and the U.S. is still both too close and too strong to permit such an epilogue. However, the way ahead seems given: Brazil is becoming the necessary interlocutor for South America. In a way, or another, this means, again, reducing influence of the West.

### **3. What policy implications for NATO**

In this work, I have attempted to do two things. First, to show that the material balance of power is shifting in favour of the non-Western world. Second, that this shift has an enormous political meaning. Not only NATO countries are becoming weaker – in relative terms – but the other countries are also profiting from this situation: they are becoming stronger, and are making everything to improve their relative position.

In respect with NATO policy, and in particular with the organization's New Strategic Concept, the question is then what should change, and what has to be taken into consideration?<sup>71</sup> In this final section, I will consider the most important NATO issues and policies, and evaluate whether, what,

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<sup>70</sup> Pedro Paulo Rezende, "Brazil Concludes Major Procurement Deal with France," *Janes Defense Weekly*, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009, <[http://www.janes.com/news/defence/jdw/jdw090911\\_4\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/news/defence/jdw/jdw090911_4_n.shtml)>.

<sup>71</sup> Karl-Heinz Kamp, "Toward a New Strategy for NATO," *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (August-September 2009): 21-27; Klaus Wittman, "Towards a New Strategic Concept for NATO," *Forum Paper 10* (Rome: NATO Defence College, September 2009) <<http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/downloads.php?icode=123>>; Jens Ringmose and Sten Rynning, "Come Home, NATO? The Atlantic Alliance's New Strategic Concept," *DIIS Report 4* (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2009) <[http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS\\_report\\_200904\\_RingmoseRynning\\_NATO\\_web.pdf](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS_report_200904_RingmoseRynning_NATO_web.pdf)>.

how and to what extent has to change, in light of the previous considerations.

### **3.1 Enlargement**

During the Cold War, NATO never enlarged. Its founding members did not accept new partners, nor any external country showed a strong willingness to join. The only significant exception regards Spain and Portugal: the two countries had been two inward-looking autocracies till the mid-'70s. When their military regimes fell apart, the countries moved towards democracy and later decided to join NATO. However, since they were geographically looking at West, the geopolitical meaning of their entry was quite limited – also because they were the less developed countries of Western Europe.

NATO expansion began clearly and massively only after the end of the Cold War.<sup>72</sup> It is not a case, that this happened in the period of maximum U.S. power.

This process, however, was halted at the 2008 Bucharest summit, when Georgia's and Ukraine's entry, despite strongly supported by the then Bush administration, was rejected by the European side of NATO. Since Western Europe and the U.S. were split on this issue, the final decision was basically delayed. Interestingly, Italy and Germany strongly opposed this solution: their energy links with Russia seem to have played a major role. For the first time in its history, NATO did not follow suit a direct request from NATO.

The question begging for an answer is then, what should future NATO policy be about enlargement. As the previous discussion about Russia has already made self-evident, NATO enlargement is becoming less and less feasible, and more and more costly. NATO countries can legitimately opt to continue this policy. Its costs will however mount, especially in terms of Russian opposition. Thus, this policy should be suspended, when not totally abandoned. New members will be unable to bring significant political, military or economic capabilities.<sup>73</sup> They will only render more complicated the internal structures and working of the Alliance. And in particular, the prospects of entry of new countries will only bring resentment and opposition by third-parties:

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<sup>72</sup> Thomas S. Szayna, *NATO Enlargement, 2000-2015, Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping* (Santa Barbara: Rand Corporation, 2001)

<sup>73</sup> Ted Galen Carpenter, "The Babysitter's Club," *The National Interest* (Online), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008, <[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=9318](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=9318)>.

Russia, China, Iran. Or in the countries whose entry will be rejected.

### **3.2 Out of Area operations**

During the Cold War, NATO was strictly bound to the policy of nuclear deterrence and territorial defence.<sup>74</sup> With some minor exceptions concerning cooperative actions in the Middle East,<sup>75</sup> the Alliance never evaded her sphere of influence. Yet, with the end of the Soviet Union, this policy substantially changes. NATO was first involved in the Balkans. Initially as a peace-broker, then as an actor during the 1999 Kosovo war, and then with peace-keeping and peace-enforcing operations that basically set the stage for the incoming entrance of the Balkans in its own structure. Simultaneously, NATO entered Afghanistan after the defeat of the Taliban in 2002. Currently, this is the most difficult mission the Alliance is undertaking. Finally, in response to the growing piracy threat off the Somali coast, NATO undertook a naval mission at the end of 2008.

Also in this case, out-of-area operations have to be seriously rethought. In the post-Cold War era, they were rendered possible by two intertwined factors: NATO's relative supremacy in both political and military terms. And the lack of serious opposition to them. When NATO bombed Serbia, her military capabilities could not be matched, and Russia or China were not able to levy any serious obstacle to its operations. Nowadays, the picture is completely different. NATO military supremacy is questionable: firstly because the globalization of the arms industry has strongly favoured the defense.<sup>76</sup> Simply put, insurgents and guerrillas are in a position of advantage against NATO conventional troops. Secondly, wars have always depended enormously on logistics.<sup>77</sup> Current operations are no exception. NATO declining political supremacy directly affects its logistics capabilities. As the Afghan conflict shows, this results in undermining tactical and operational effectiveness.<sup>78</sup> In a world of growing threats and instability, NATO must be prepared to enter with ease, and deploy rapidly its military force also in distant theatres: the only

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<sup>74</sup> Gustav Schmidt (ed.), *A History of NATO* (London: Palgrave, 2001)

<sup>75</sup> Sten Rynning, "NATO and the broader Middle East, 1949-2007: The history and lessons of controversial encounters," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (December 2007): 905-27.

<sup>76</sup> Bitzinger, *op.cit.*

<sup>77</sup> Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

<sup>78</sup> Malou Innocent and Ted Galen Carpenter, "America's Imperiled Military Lifeline through Pakistan," *Dallas Morning News*, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2008, <[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=9866](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=9866)>.

way to ensure military effectiveness. However, logistical capabilities are a *sine qua non* condition for success. Ensuring logistical capabilities in areas not under one's own control is basically impossible. Thus, NATO should avoid any engagement where logistics is in doubt. This means, NATO should remain focused only on the areas that surround Western Europe (Middle East, Northern Africa, Balkans) – where logistics is affordable and feasible. Otherwise, prolonged operations in other areas can be conceived only when approved and concerted *ex-ante* with other Great Powers and as a more effective alternative to U.N. forces. The problem is that while in the former case, EDSP missions are more appropriate, and indeed growing in importance, in the latter the U.N. is, in any case, the more suitable level of discussion. In other words, NATO is going to compete with other structures, and not necessarily will come out successful.

### **3.3 Energy Security**

Another theme that has brought about tension and asperity concerning NATO policy is energy security. The rationale of this dossier is that in the post-Cold War era, threats are multidimensional. Hence, security cannot be understood from a simple military perspective, but also in social, political and economic terms.<sup>79</sup> NATO energy security is still a slippery and vague concept. However, in operative terms, it reflects a simple aim: guaranteeing and preserving energy supplies to Western Europe.<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, since security of supplies also means independence from potential political threats or disruption, the policy employment of this concept has resulted in the attempt to outline Russia, and build direct energy links with Central Asia.<sup>81</sup> Unsurprisingly, Russia has not appreciated this line of thought. As my treatment of her energy and Central Asian policies shows, Moscow has thus attempted to sabot NATO aspirations. In this, it has been willingly helped by China.

Also in this case, this policy has to be seriously and deeply rethought. Firstly, because it is short-sighted: most of NATO efforts and hopes focused on Turkmenistan. Yet, the country will never have the resources to satisfy our needs. Secondly, these stances only exacerbates relations with Moscow and potentially New Delhi and Beijing, without improving significantly NATO members'

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<sup>79</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 1998).

<sup>80</sup> Andrew Monaghan, "Energy Security: NATO's Limited, Complementary Role," NATO Defense College Research Paper, NO. 36, May 2008, <[www.ndc.nato.int/download/publications/rp\\_36en.pdf](http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/publications/rp_36en.pdf)>.

<sup>81</sup> Nicolò Sartori, "Can NATO Enhance Energy Cooperation in the Caspian Region?," NATO Defense College Forum Paper 5 (Rome: NDC, 2008), <[http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/publications/fp\\_05.pdf](http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/publications/fp_05.pdf)>.

security.

Beside diversification of supply, Western Europe should probably focus on nuclear energy, alternative energies, and new energies in order to strengthen her energy security. But clearly, NATO is not the appropriate *forum* for these decisions: it is the European Union.

### **3.4 Missile defense**

While this work went to press, the President of the United States of America decided in a bold and surprising move to abandon the Ballistic Missile Shield that the former administration intended to deploy in Poland and Czech Republic. This is what I thought was necessary concerning this issue. So far, the project has proved unsatisfactory from a technical point of view. Politically, it was deeply contested both in Europe and in Poland and in the Czech Republic. While strategically, it offered very few guarantees and ended up only antagonizing Russia further. Investing further in missile defence may prove rewarding. However, this cannot occur at the cost of alienating Moscow. This is why rethinking the whole project and downgrading it at the lower levels (tactical and operational) it is probably the correct decision.

### **3.6 NATO Transformation**

The Alliance's alleged transformation is intended to provide it with the capabilities necessary to face the challenges of the future. This implies two different focuses. On the one hand, the organization has to transform itself. On the other, it has to transform its capabilities. Since NATO relies on its members' forces, this means transforming them. Concerning the first issue, there is not very much to say. The organization's internal reform is probably needed but it is difficult, from the outside, to say whether is going in the right direction or not. We know that NATO will play a smaller role in the future, this should suggest that efficiencies and cost-reductions should be pursued. Unfortunately, the organization is directly taking the other way: most of its internal transformation means expansion, enlargement, and even the construction of a new Headquarter.

A few more words can be said on NATO forces transformation. So far, it has been driven by a simple idea: Net-centric warfare.<sup>82</sup> The doctrine, developed in the U.S. during the 1990s, suggests

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<sup>82</sup> Carl Ek, "NATO's Prague Capabilities Commitment," CRS Report for Congress, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007 <[www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21659.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21659.pdf)>; "Improving NATO's operational Capabilities," <<http://www.nato.int/issues/capabilities/>>; David R. Scruggs et. al., European Defense Integration: Bridging the Gap Between Strategy and Capabilities (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2005), <[http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/051001\\_edi\\_report\\_.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/051001_edi_report_.pdf)> .

that states develop rapid, flexible, dispersed and light military forces able to exploit the benefits of Information Warfare, so to ensure their full-spectrum battle dominance, and hence deliver concentrated kinetic power, in order to bring about their intended effects.<sup>83</sup>

The problems of this view, beside being strictly U.S.-centric, are several. Firstly, European countries cannot afford a transformation similar to the American one. Secondly, most of these countries do not even want (or can) to enter direct conflicts (Germany and Italy). Hence, these capabilities would prove partially useless for their peace-enforcing missions. Thirdly, European countries are already transforming, and under two different logics. One is the national one. The other is the European one. So far as European efforts were lagging behind, NATO could take the initiative and drive, or at least shape, the process. However, the European Union has undertaken several initiatives in the last years. Its countries' military transformation is one of them. And it seems, that it is overwhelming NATO policies in this area.

In sum, NATO internal transformation risks to result in just enormous costs. It will suit the Alliance's internal bureaucracies and its contractors, but hardly its members. NATO military transformation, on the other hand, is too biased towards the American way of battle. This will inevitably lead, and is already contributing to disappointment in Europe. NATO should probably think about a more modest and effective transformation.

## **Conclusions**

This work has attempted to achieve three goals. First, to show that a shift in material capabilities is occurring in world politics. Second, that this shift is pushing emerging Powers to behave more aggressively and more self-confidently. Although the West remains, and will, way far richer and more effective in military terms than the others, the simultaneous rise of several Powers is especially challenging, since it will require to focus on several different fronts and theatres.

Consequently, world politics will become *de facto* multipolar. In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, NATO made a choice: to expand, both in its members and in its operations. This

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<sup>83</sup> Paul T. Mitchell, "Network Centric Warfare: Coalition Operations in the Age of US Military Primacy," Adelphi Paper, No. 385 (London: IISS, 2006); David S. Alberts et. al., *Network Centric War: Developing and Leveraging Information Superiority* (Washington, DC: CCRP, 1999), <[www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/Alberts\\_NCW.pdf](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/Alberts_NCW.pdf)>;

choice was reaffirmed in the post-9/11 era. In my account, this policy needs to be rethought. The world is changing, and so must policies. NATO was intended as a means to deliver regional stability. In the 1990s, it enlarged to Eastern Europe and the Balkans: but in a way, this was a logical prosecution of its mission. However, with the War on Terror, NATO expanded enormously: both in its willingness to acquire new members and in its operations (Iraq, Afghanistan, Somali coast, energy security). As I have shown in the last section, this implies several problems.

First, in a world in which the role of the West is going to shrink, expanding NATO tasks can only lead to failures. Either because its members are not committed enough, or because of the constraints posed by other actors. Secondly, as the treatment of the main NATO policies shows, NATO is often unsuited to address certain issues. On energy policy, what is required is industrial coordination. This issue is of competence of the EU, not of NATO. Similarly, NATO can be an effective means to execute peace-keeping operations in the areas surrounding Europe – at least till the EU will lack proper military means and capabilities. However, NATO is not the right institution to deal with crises in outer zones, especially when subjected to other Great Powers' influence or of their interest. In these cases, NATO may act, but only after an *ex-ante* agreement inside the UN with the other Great Powers. NATO can certainly be more effective than UN peace-keeping forces. However, this is exactly the reason why other Powers may not like NATO involvement. This is another reason why concert and agreement are so necessary.

The Atlantic alliance can also opt for another route: most of its officials would probably prefer this way: enlarge its missions, its duties, its tasks. I don't think this is the right solution. Firstly, bureaucrats always want more things to do. In this way, they ensure their own work. However, this does mean that they are able to deliver what has been promised. Secondly, in a world where the West is going to matter relatively less, the solution is to try to do well, less things. The attempt to do more and more things can only lead to perform worse and worse and at the end to be unable to deliver also the most basic goals the Alliance was intended for.

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