

The 21st Century World Order: Rise of China and Challenges to American Global Hegemony

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Abstract

The dynamics of global power politics have been consistently changing from multipolar to bipolar and lastly the unipolar structure in the past century. Washington proclaimed an overriding leadership role for itself and started enjoying its unique status of uncontested hegemony in the global politics. The rest of the nations; neither alone nor collectively could challenge the American worldwide supremacy. However, the American unilateralist approach in various international political issues ensued insecurity and even annoyance in some of the regional powers like; China and Russia. Therefore, in the past couple of decades the emergence of new power centers, particularly the rising China and the resurging of Russia and their strategic alignment; and the relative decline of the US; clearly indicate that the American hegemony shall no more exist. The dynamics of international politics are undoubtedly heading towards the transition of the world system to a multipolar world order; where besides the US, China and Russia will play a significant role.

Key Words: Unilateralist, multipolar, declinism, triumphalism, hegemony

INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the 21st century, United States was lavishly enjoying the arrogance of a sole, unmatched and uncontested superpower of the unipolar world system. However, the worldwide self-imposed and overstretched commitment made the US; first to act like a hyper-power and then face the declinism from hegemonic triumphalism. The US-EU transatlantic axis, essentially the driving force of this unusual arrangement, started to lose its overall capacity of governing the entire structure of the American hegemonic world order. In the contemporary world system, the likelihood of a sole overriding epicenter of international politics is getting beyond imagination. The emerging powers like; China and Russia are undeniably striving for a new multipolar world order. Even EU, a very close partner of the US in the past several decades, is distancing away from the American sway, to register itself as a new power center of the international politics.

Every passing day, the voices proclaiming that the unipolar world order is over or it is taking last breaths; are growing. The international political theater undoubtedly heralds the end of US hegemony or Pax-Americana; which give rise to the question that what are the major fault lines of this transition. Certain, the key elements of this shift are; the American challenges in maintaining its hegemony; the rise of China at the global stage; and the nature engagement between these great powers.

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There could be at least three scenarios of a hegemonic declinism and the new structure of international system in the 21st century. First, the coalition of emerging players having tenacity of constituting a counterhegemonic power; second, imperial overstretch designs of the existing hegemon; and lastly, the rise of a new powers that ultimately defy the status-quo in the existing world order. Upon the unveiling of unipolar world system, a highly renowned scholar of international politics, Francis Fukuyama (1989) was fascinated with the hegemonic triumphalism of the US and called it the end of history. However, the only constant in politics is change. Rise and fall of the great powers is an essential phenomenon of world politics and it is widely agreed that the American decline may be a traditional course of history.

The most crucial aspect of 21st century world order could be characterized by the simultaneous existence of conflict and cooperation among the great powers especially the US and China. The two economic superpowers have already launched a trade war; but they are also the largest trading partners of each other. Hence, conflict and cooperation may run side by side in the coming decades and the great powers like; the US, China, EU and Russia need to be exceedingly watchful to any intensification of rifts that may horribly destabilize the entire global system.

IS PAX-AMERICANA ON THE GO?

At end of World War II, the US emerged as the most dominant player of the global system. By virtue of its economic and military superiority, the US launched its first unipolar moment and aimed to establish the new international order or the Pax-Americana. However, in the Cold War, outside the Russian domain, the United States successfully established its worldwide supremacy predominantly in the regions of Transatlantic, Far East and the Middle East. The main pillars of this world system were; the American ideological appeal, its soft power and a wide-ranging structure of US-led international organizations, founded in the post WW-II era (Layne, 2012).

It is generally agreed that the US may remain a dominant military power of the world for decades. However, the rise of China as a few significant world player, coupled with the American fiscal and economic limitations, indicate that the US, as a military hegemon, will be challenged over the coming decades. The US decline certainly leads to a significant transition in world politics that will obviously introduce new kind of arrangements among the world powers. The waning worth of hard power against the soft power undertakes that the American unipolar moment is ordained to decline in the 21st century. However, the Pax-Americana, based on the Economic supremacy, worldwide military dominance, the US dominated global institutions and the soft power has already started to wither.

The climax of economic supremacy is reached when the hegemonic power is capable of deciding the rules of the game for the entire world; by providing the worlds reserve currency and retaining the ability to solve the critical economic crises. Such factors related to the US are under severe stress and it can be categorically stated that China has either equated or even surpassed the United States in numerous areas like; global exports, foreign direct investment and socio-economic assistance.

However, in military dominance undoubtedly the United States is still the most commanding player of the world system. China and Russia are aggressively stretching their muscles to mark their peripheral influences; therefore, the US can face numerous challenges in various regions of the world. Moreover, the growing concerns from Americans on its overstretched worldwide

engagements and huge defense budget may also act as if fuel on the fire. Ultimately, the US defense spending may face substantial cuts in future (Altman & Haass, 2010).

One of the key elements of the American led liberal hegemonic order is the comprehensive system of international political, security and economic institutions; including the United Nations, the UN Security Council, NATO, the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, and others. A number of analysts categorically assert that the US has established its supremacy by utilizing these multinational organizations as instruments of global dominance (Foot, MacFarlane & Mastanduno, 2003). These transnational organizations are being challenged by their Chinese counterparts, like; the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The Drivers of American Hegemonic Declinism

On the internal front; doubts, debt, deficits, and depreciation of dollar are the drivers of the American decline. Mounting doubts among the masses and investors regarding the US economy; the ever soaring debts, uncontrolled budgetary deficits and deepening fears regarding the future role of dollar as the single largest currency of international economy; are the critical issues indicating the decline of American hegemony. These challenges will certainly coerce the US authorities to reduce their strategic role in its overseas commitments. Such domestic obligations shall ultimately be the drivers of decline and the transnational military commitments are a kind of guns-butter tradeoff (Dombrowski, 2005).

In post WW-II era, the US continued to exercise the role of hegemon in the world; for the dollar was the most valued currency in the international system that allowed Washington to live beyond its means. As long as the dollar maintains its position and other economic actors believe that the US will payback its debts, Washington would bear the financing of offshore ambitions of “guns” and internal socioeconomic programs of “butter” with foreign borrowing (Sharma, 2010).

The mounting American debts are linked with billions of dollars of bail-out packages by various regimes and the very costly battles in Afghanistan and Iraq, the latter’s cost up to US\$ 3 trillion (Stiglitz & Bilmiss, 2008). The US has spent up to US\$ 120 billion, a year to fight the Afghan war; therefore President Obama had to announce drawdown of the American forces. These two wars pushed US to annual budget shortfalls of US\$ 1 trillion (Woodward, 2010).

The US can only get away with such lucrative means and preserve its military dominance, till the time the dollar’s status of reserve currency or “credit card” position is maintained. Washington has to either raise taxes and interest rates for the extravagant domestic desires or learn to live within its means by adopting strategies of lesser spending and greater saving. In other words the US must tighten its belt by profoundly dipping its offshore military and internal lavish expenses.

Since the recession of 2008; dollar as a credit card of the international currency reserve has been facing critical challenges; for the competing currencies of other big economic players are either geopolitical rivals like China or the ambiguous allies like Europe. The two have their own ambitions; the first aims to overturn the Wall Street; while the second no longer requires the US protection from the Soviet threat like it did in the past. The dollar also faces an uncertain future doubt prevails over its worldwide value in future.

China, having the largest reserves of more than US\$ 3 trillion, is also worried that America's fiscal slump will leave Beijing holding the bag with huge amounts of depreciated dollars (Babones, 2018). The Chinese vote of no confidence in the future of dollar would be reflected in its calls to create a new reserve currency to replace the dollar with Renminbi, the China's currency. Beijing is also trying to gradually internationalize Renminbi by encouraging its closer partners like; Pakistan to switch over the bilateral trade to the RMB. Once this tendency has taken off, the RMB would certainly establish a separate economic block; that will lead to economic multipolarity of the world (Campanella, 2014).

International monetary institutions have expressed their concerns about the American debts and deficits and warned the US to get its fiscal house in order. Alarm bells at the dollar's uncertain future status have been ringing since last decade; the World Bank in 2011 identified that the dollar would lose its status of the primary reserve currency by 2025; after the Euro and RMB are launch as alternates in the new "multi-currency" monetary system (Politi, 2011). The US will have to opt for certain combination of budgetary cuts, tax rise, interest-rate hikes and significant austerity measures in federal expenses and defense expenditures (Layne, 2012).

Currently the US defense spending is too high and it faces domestic political pressures for steep cuts in it. Such steps indicate that in future the US would be compelled to reassess and redraw its overseas military commitments that will eventually have at least two serious consequences. First, the gap between the American and its strongest competitor China's defense spending will shrink and ultimately the US preeminence will compromise. Second, the American role of worldwide stabilizer and the guardian of the global commons will significantly decline. Thus, the US fiscal challenges and their interrelated uncertain future of dollar; are essentially the drivers of American decline in the 21st world system.

External Challenges to the American Global Hegemony

The external drivers of the American decline are associated with the rise of new great powers, especially China and Russia. In some respects the emergence of these new great powers is less about their rise than their restoration; for the two Eurasian giants had held the position of super powers in the past; China till the mid-Seventeenth and Russia till the late 20th century (Jacques, 2012). From their perspective, or some other actors, Beijing and Moscow may be merely asserting to regain what they view as their natural, or rightful, place in the hierarchy of great powers.

On the international political stage the ascension of new great powers is the sturdiest proof of the end of US-led unipolar moment. The most significant indication of the rising great powers; particularly China is its relative growth rate and her share of world GDP. The notion that the US-led global system is on the go and its relative power is declining has certainly become an undeniable fact; as China is ambitious to get at the center of the world's economic and geopolitical gravity. Beijing is expressing unique illustrations of how an aspiring great power positions itself to challenge the US hegemony, a sole superpower in the unipolar world system.

Since the era of Deng Xiaoping, China has been striving to spur its economic growth, by demonstrating its low profile in international politics and avoiding direct confrontation with the US and other regional powers. In order to ensure its modernization, Beijing first integrated itself in the US-led liberal world order; and now it aims to set the rules of the game at the global level. The

Chinese agenda of the liberal international economic order was not only to earn money; but to become too prosperous to acquire the military competence vital for challenging the US, at least as a regional hegemony in East Asia.

The United States' overstretched military commitments have enabled China to understand that the hegemon is facing the decline; while Beijing beholds itself as having risen to the position of a great-power. This new status and its corresponding self-confidence are reflected in China's recent foreign policy moves in the South and Southeast Asia. It is expected that China has positioned itself to displace the US from the status of the world's largest economy that certainly has more than just economic significance; rather it is also geopolitically vital. Christopher Layne (2012) maintains that traditionally the rising pattern of the great powers is well established in the archives of international political history.

The Likely Structure of the Future World System

Rising China obviously has severe repercussions for the US; despite the Chinese leadership repeatedly ascertains its peaceful rise. However, rising powers follow certain traditional patterns of adopting the strategy to go hand in hand with the expansion to protect distant regions, and then at war. A number of analysts ascertain that there is certain process of power transition going on in the world, with the US in decline phase and China on the rise. When the two giants reach approximately to the same level, there might be trouble (Freud, 2015). It is also maintained that China is aiming for its own hegemony in the East-Asian region; and two hegemonies in the same constituency is certainly impossible (Layne, 2012). One of the two has to depart from the theatre, more probably the US. Otherwise, there will be a confrontation; and the American economy may not sustain a conflict with the world's economic super power for too long.

There is general perception about the US defense spending, which is taken to be unsustainable and even self-defeating. Such an enormous military budget, more than three times that of China and larger than the ten succeeding countries, can certainly undermine the overall American economy (Freud, 2015). The general impression among the Americans that unlike Europeans, the US hardly minds going to war may be a fatal experience for the entire world order. The American wish to hold on to hegemony in East-Asia may also make the war a probable outcome in the region. The US will have to make harder choices; the stiffest could be accommodating the rising China; but the likelihood of this scenario is too skimpy (Freud, 2015).

The US decline will certainly have profound effects on the future of transnational politics. The proponents of HST maintain that an open intercontinental economic arrangement necessitates the presence of a single hegemonic power in the world to handle serious military, political and monetary challenges. The military power of hegemon enables it to take the responsibility of ensuring stability in strategic regions and defending the international commons (Posen, 2003). Economically, the hegemon offers public goods to the international community by opening its internal market to other nations. It also tries to make sure the supply of liquidity to the worldwide economies without any hindrance; in addition to provide a reserve currency to the global economy (Kindleberger, 1986). Though, the US still exercises to be the strongest military power; but the economic burdens can constrain it to shrink strategically (Layne, 2012).

The Recession of 2008 has obviously made it clear that the US has virtually lost the position of an economic hegemon of the liberal world order. Since, the economic hegemon, instead of triggering, must play a savior role in resolving the global economic crises. The hegemon ought to be the lender of last resort; instead of the borrower of first resort in the universal economy. It is too much obvious that the US has become more a part of the problem than being a part of the solution by holding the title of the biggest debtor of the world (Layne, 2012). Currently, the overall economy of the world dwindles; particularly in post COVID-19 era, the economic superpower has to take the responsibility of initiating the kick-start measures. Hence, the hegemon can instigate the recovery process by purchasing the products of other nations; as the United States did in the post-World Wars periods by helping the European economies in their resurrection. However, China has taken the leadership role in such a critical economic situation.

In the economic crises of 2008, the US economy proved to be too sickening to lead the world economy in recovery to its health; instead the rising China had to step up to perform this huge task. The American inability to galvanize the global economic recovery revealed that the US was no longer proficient to continue its role of being the economic superpower. The same reality was also conceded by the US President Barak Obama at the London's G-20 Summit in 2009; while admitting that the US is no longer capable to withstand its role of being the world's consumer of last resort; rather the international community must look towards the growing economies, especially China to become the engines of global economic recovery (Layne, 2012).

The Traditional Pattern of the Great Powers' Rise

The archives of international politics ascertain that almost all the rising great powers follow the pattern of making money, growing ambitions of interests and status, maximizing military power and finally striving for their hegemony. China, just like the other ascending great powers following the same track; however it claims of a "peaceful rise." It is a well-known fact that the emergence of almost all the great powers has unswervingly been an element of geopolitical destabilization in the global system.

In the later 19th and early 20th centuries, the same kind of ascendancies to the status of great powers by Germany, United States and Japan triggered the WW-I and WW-II (Layne, 1993). As soon as these rising big players get wealthier enough; then undoubtedly their transnational political ambitions upturn and ultimately they impatiently transform their economic potential into the military strength (Zakaria, 1999).

The second stride of rising great powers usually is to fortify their military muscles. In the case of China, it is a distinguished fact that its leadership has already launched an extraordinary military modernization process that aims to expand the multidimensional capabilities of the People's Liberation Army. Though China could not yet equate itself to the highly sophisticated military technology of the United States; however, Beijing is undoubtedly narrowing down the existing advantage of its competitor, Washington (Cordesman, Hess & Yarosh, 2013). The next ultimate objective of the rising great powers invariably is to strive for dominance in their respective regions (Mearsheimer, 2001).

This hypothesis certainly leads to a belligerent situation in which China and the US are heading towards a collision particularly in East Asia, the region where Washington has had the status of an

incumbent hegemon since the end of WW-II. On the contrary, an ever increasingly powerful and assertive China is progressively expanding its encroachments, in order to mark that the region is Beijing's strategic backyard. In order to avoid any confrontation between the two powers, the US has to address the Chinese concerns in the region; otherwise any miscalculation may substantiate catastrophic results.

Figure 1: A Traditional Pattern of the Great Powers' Rise



Finally, the newly emerging great powers certainly aim at acquiring and capitalizing economic and political interests beyond their borders. Eventually the rising players pursue their agenda to procure the power projection capabilities which are ultimately indispensable for defending those offshore interests (Zakaria, 1999).

China's Peaceful Rise?

China has been consistently reiterating that its "rise" will be peaceful, with no hegemonic designs and global dominance agenda. However, with the growing tensions amid China and its smaller neighboring states in the Far-East that are looking for their security towards the US, a key player in the region; the Chinese claims may not be as simple as being portrayed. In the presence of such complex situation, between the pro-US states and China, the likelihood of violent conflict on the China borders cannot be completely ruled out in future.

Keeping in view the conflicting environment between the emerging great power China and the retiring hegemon, the United States; it can be reiterated that there is always a regular pattern in the politics to get to the status of great powers. Predominantly great powers enter into a race of hard competition for power, fortifying security, elevating status, enhancing prestige, and multiplying their influence. Undoubtedly, the newly emerging great powers endeavor to move up to the top of the elite club of the great powers. After being successful in their efforts, the great powers certainly want to materialize their influence of wealth and power to reshape the existing international order. Obviously in this newly constructed arrangement; the new great powers seek privileges for their national interests. Eventually their aim is to become leading hegemonic power, initially in their own regions and then worldwide (Layne, 2012).

This well-crafted course of rise would help the scholars of international politics in their analysis of China's rise, as it proclaims to be assuredly peaceful. Historical enquiry ascertains that this rise would be anything, but peaceful; because when the rising great powers enter the global political system, the result would be no other than the geopolitical turbulence and ultimately the war (Layne, 2015).

The Sino-US Engagements in the Future World System

There could be some specific scenarios that may help to visualize why the Sino-US relationships may face geopolitical explosion in the region. One could be the "Dodge City Syndrome," that can be referred to an American film scene where two gunmen encounter each other in the town saloon. Once they estimated the capacity of the other and look into one another's eyes; one of them said that the town was not big enough for both of them to fight. After knowing the real strength of the opponent; one of them would definitely say that they must not go at against each other. There could be another way to think of the evolving relationships between China and the US; as Layne (2015) calls it the Newtonian Theory of Geopolitics; which identifies that certain region cannot be dominated by two superpowers at the same time.

The second scenario that may initiate Sino-US conflict is related to the dynamics of power transition mechanism, which certainly kick starts when a declining hegemon is face up to a fast-rising new great power. The dynamics of power transition forces the great powers to look for changing the global balance of power construction in their own favor; ultimately aim to be on the driving seat of the existing world order.

According to the structural realists the structure of global system is so complex that it necessitates all the bigger or smaller states to maximize their national power. Since, none of the rest of entities other than their national power can best serve these states; first in their survival and then in establishing their hegemony. However, it is worth mention that this school of thought believes that for changing the dynamics of world order from one type of polarization to the other – unipolar to bipolar or multipolar – the superpowers usually go at war (Mearsheimer, 2007).

Apparently it may look too easy to academically dismiss the idea that China and the US are heading towards a conflict in the coming decades of the 21st century. The same notion is also upheld by some of the American international relations theorists who try to give assurances that the likelihood of the Sino-American war is by far out of question. There could be three possible reasons behind this obstinate philosophy.

The first one is the deterrence effect of nuclear weapons; both of them are capable of destroying the whole world with their most lethal fossils. The second could be the pacifying effects of an economic interdependence, particularly among the two economic superpowers and the largest trade partners in the world, the US and China. In other words, the blessings of globalization would check the two competing great powers from direct clash against each other. The third and perhaps the more certain reason could be due to the fact that China will place itself in the international institutions and the global political structures of the contemporary world order. Beijing will ultimately consent to the laws, rules and norms of contemporary system as well as the US dominated transnational institutions (Ikenberry, 2011).

However, none of these arguments seems to be highly persuasive for the following reasons. The first argument relating to the denial of Sino-US conflict, for both the great powers are nuclear armed states; certainly lead the scholars to analyse the fact that indeed nuclear armed countries are deterred from using nuclear weapons against each other, but they may not be clogged from fighting a conventional war. Such as India and Pakistan are the nuclear armed states; yet they engaged each other in conventional conflicts; like in the 1999 Kargil encounter. In early 2019, the two neighbors were at the verge of a full-fledged war when Pakistan shoot down the Indian fighter jet inside its own territory and also captured the enemy pilot (Abi-Habib, 2019). Thus, Sino-US clash cannot be completely ruled out, for there are numerous conflicting issues, particularly in the East Asian region.

The second hypothesis that economic interdependence can prevent conflict among the rival great powers can also be repudiated; for prior to the outbreak of WW-I, the same kind of economic interdependence also existed among the conflicting European powers. The third notion that the powerful China shall willingly subordinate itself to the standards of the Pax-Americana and the US-led worldwide institutions, predominantly established in post WW-II era; can also be refuted for if Beijing was to accept subordination then there was no need of striving for placing the pillars of a new multipolar world order.

The transnational initiatives like; AIIB, SCO, BRICS and the BRI are believed to the foundations of China sponsored 21st century world order (Layne, 2015). As soon as China attains the status of an equivalent great power as against the United States; it will unsurprisingly demand for reshaping of the existing international order. Eventually the American sway of an uncontested hegemon shall diminish; for it is a well-established fact that great powers, once get on the top, do change the dynamics of international politics in accordance with their own national interests.

The China's Rise and the American Frustration

Christopher Layne (2015) argues that the United States may not be capable of maintaining its status-quo in East-Asia. In order to avoid any redundant and violent conflict in the region, the SU ought to accommodate China as the dominant player in East-Asia. Accommodating China as a rising great power, at least in the region; though against the will of the US foreign policy hawks, would be a prudent and exceedingly realistic policy option (Layne, 2015).

On the contrary, the idea of American declinism is very much indigestible for those political analysts and policymakers that still seem to be overwhelmed by the unipolar fantasy. As the former US ambassador to China, John Huntsman proclaims that the decline is un-American (Porter, 2015). This is one of the reasons that despite believing in the continuity of American global supremacy, its foreign policy establishment seems to be worried about the rise of China. President Obama's strategic derive, "pivot to Asia," was designed to contain an increasingly assertive China (De Castro, 2013). American fear of China's rise can be traced in majority of Washington's decision. As the civil nuclear deal between India and the US had numerous strategic goals but one of the major factors was to contain rising China (Hussain, 2017).

Despite deeper concerns from different players over this nuclear deal, Washington bothered neither the nuclear nonproliferation norms nor the concerns of China and Pakistan, the two strategic rivals of India in the region. The American apprehension of regional supremacy from

China was also evident in its fervent reaction over joining the Beijing sponsored AIIB, by the closer US allies like; the UK, France, Germany, Australia and South Korea (Sobolewski & Lange, 2015). The American discomfort about rising China could be an unstated admission from the US that its “unipolar moment” is over (Layne, 2015).

On the other hand the decline certainly may be un-American, as expressed by a large number of the US officials, but it would be extremely difficult to stop it from happening, sooner or later. Since, the decline of the United States is said to be the product of the greater and impersonal forces of history. While China can be stated as if the poster child for the continuing course of shifting the world’s geopolitical and economic center of gravity to Asian or the Eastern hemisphere from the trans-Atlantic or Western hemisphere (Layne, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The era of 1990s was the climax of the US-led hegemonic world order; but since the dawn of the Twenty-first century, the age of its anticlimax has started. In the war on terror in Afghanistan, almost the entire world backed the US; but only two years later, France and Germany, the key NATO allies, withdrew their support in the war on Iraq. This critical occurrence marked the beginning of the American declinism from hegemonic triumphalism. However, the decline of the US and that of its hegemony are two conspicuously different phenomena. Certainly the Pax-Americna is at odds; the unipolar system is giving way to the multipolar, multilateral or multicentric world order; but it does not necessarily infer to the idea that the US is losing its status of being the world power. Since, it is the strongest military power of the world and its economic, political and cultural eminence would not easily degenerate. Hence, the declinism of the American led or the Western dominated world order does not categorically ascertain the decline of the US itself.

However, ratifying the lasting global supremacy of the US, its foreign policy instruments express their unrest about the rapid rise of China; and statistics also indicate that the situation may favor Beijing. Thus, it can be established that in near future the US would ultimately lose its capability of retaining the position of global hegemon or at least its status-quo in East Asia; therefore to avoid any violent conflict, Washington will have to accommodate China as a dominant player in the region.

The American fear about the rise of China is also ascertained by the regular pattern ever exercised in the international power politics. Predominantly, the great powers enter into struggle for power, followed by fortifying their security, elevating status, enhancing prestige, and multiplying their influence. The emerging powers first target to get on the top and join the elite club of the great powers then they certainly materialize their influence of wealth and power to reshape the international order, where they demand privileges in accordance to their national interests. The history of international politics certainly reveals that the fundamental aim of all the emerging great powers is to acquire the status of hegemons in their regions. Following these footprints, it could be established that the rise of China could be anything but peaceful.

The Sino-US conflict also lies in the dynamics of power transition mechanism, which undoubtedly kick start when a declining hegemon confronts a fast-rising new great power that aims to turn over the global balance of power or the existing world order in its own favor. When the new great powers enter the global system, the result would be no other than the geopolitical turbulence and

eventually the outbreak of war. Hence great powers and their sponsored states usually go at war; and apparently it would be difficult to dismiss the possibility of Sino-US conflict in the coming decades.

In the past few decades, China has launched vital economic, political and security initiatives at home and worldwide that could ultimately aim to implement the Beijing's Twenty-first century regional or global agenda. Since, the contemporary era in international politics can be marked as a transition phase from the US-lead hegemonic world order to China-centric world system. It may also be an un-elucidated future world order with various inquisitive descriptions like; a multipolar, a polycentric, a multilateral, a non-polar, a neo-polar, a-polar or a no one's world.

The dynamics of the Twenty-first century world order herald the US decline and the China's rise. The economic and military race between the existing and the emerging hegemons, along with a series of developments, will eventually introduce the transition in the world order. Since, it is a natural phenomenon that a declining hegemon is either replaced or joined by one or more ambitiously rising great powers. Historically, any change in international order proved catastrophic, but the Twenty-first century world order could be distinctively different; since China as the most influential emerging great power has repeatedly explained that the future global system will be peaceful. However, the rise of great powers has hardly ever been peaceful.

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