



THE IMPACT OF THE MILITARY POWER FACTOR IN CHANGES ON POLITICAL AND TERRITORIAL SPACE IN THE PROCESS OF THE POST-GLOBAL TRANSIT

UDC 327

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Abstract. *The phase of civilization evolution known as the era of globalization, as well as its precursor, the period of the bipolar world order, are now becoming part of history. The current system is being replaced by a world order whose contours have not yet been finally realized and are still vague. Nonetheless, the fundamental components of the post-global composition of the world are beginning to take shape. At the level of national and international relations, some of the most prominent trends include: economic egotism, a tendency toward autarkic practices, the revival of the “closed society” paradigm, the dramatic increase of religious nationalism, the reincarnation of alliance politics in the vein of the “warring kingdoms” period. The role of military power remains a crucial element in the transition from the global to the post-global system, both in terms of ideological perspectives and in the realm of real politics. The events of recent years underscore the growing significance of power elements in the instruments of politics and statesmen. Countries and their leaders are increasingly resorting to the use of military industrial capabilities to bolster their status in world politics or address political and territorial issues. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that following the period of relative stability after the collapse of the USSR, the world is now entering a phase of upsurge in warfare and military clashes. In the current publication, the authors will endeavor to trace the trajectory of escalating armed violence, examining a series of military conflicts and their impact on the political and territorial configurations of the Eurasian geopolitical landscape. The*

Received July 29, 2024 / Accepted November 8, 2024

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authors are inclined to consider this problem within the framework of the evolving transition of the global community towards a novel paradigm of interrelations.

Key words: *world order, post-global world, military power, war, military conflict.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The humanitarian crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus was marked not only by impressive human losses, but also by the fact that it set in motion the process of reformatting the entire planetary social space. Now, we are witnessing a shift in socio-historical epochs, as globalization, a dominant feature of our contemporary era, gives way to a novel post-global phase in its evolution. The main parameters of the forthcoming cycle of sociogenesis, in fact, are the antithesis of the systemic characteristics of the previous one. If globalization as a whole can be viewed as a process of global integration accompanied by the extension of social connections across the globe (James 2005, 197), post-globalist practices lead to the fragmentation of this space and the reduction of transcontinental forms of social structure and communication (Peters and Askin 2020, 5). The seemingly temporary limitations imposed on world trade during the course of combating the pandemic have indeed evolved into sustainable strategies of economic nationalism or economic self-interest, signaling the demise of an era of the global market and the advent to the reality of the “age after free trade” (Lighthizer and Hanson 2024). The post-pandemic reality has provided a foundation for prominent international institutions to issue warnings regarding the potential collapse of the global market into two distinct and unrelated blocks (Okonjo-Iweala 2023). The reorientation of national economies towards governmental planning and the “closure” of their markets, coupled with the prevalence of autarkist sentiments and ideas over the concept of open global economic and commercial networks have solidified the ascendancy of globalism as an ideological movement. Reality has effectively eliminated the claim of the liberal doctrine to universal applicability, rendering global universalism obsolete (Дугин 2020). The post-global world, or rather a significant part of it, has rejected the vision of globalists who sought to impose a single historical project upon all, exploring the options to homogenize life within the framework of a single matrix. China, India, Russia, and the states of the Global South have championed their own systems of values and models of the world order, liberated from the influence of the West. Z. Brzezinski has previously foreseen the inevitability of such a prospect (Brzezinski 2012, 139). The ideological erosion of globalism has upended the political architecture of the world, based on the recognition of the unquestioned leadership of Western elites. Failing to demonstrate their flagship qualities in the face of the coronavirus pandemic (Lobanov and Selin 202, 148), the Western ruling class and the institutions they lead have continued to lose ground in the global political and public spheres, making way for non-Western unions and their leaders.¹

The transition of the global community and various forms of its organization such as economics, ideology, and politics from globalism to a post-global state is a nonlinear process with a certain degree of unpredictability. Referring to the axiomatic principles of

¹ In 2022, BRICS countries surpassed G7 in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), with 31.5% compared to 30.3%. By 2028, BRICS is projected to account for 37% of the world's GDP, while G7's segment in the global economy is expected to be below 27%. See in: Vladimir Putin's Address to the Federal Assembly on 21st February 2023, available on the official website of the President of Russia. Accessed on July 11, 2024. <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70565>.

political analysis, we can state that the very fact of this transition is almost an axiom. However, the specifics of this process, including its course, duration, and intensity, are always contextualized. In this publication, the authors aim to delve into a comprehensive exploration of the factors that accompany the establishment of a post-global order in contemporary political reality.

2. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The study is intended to analyze the intricacies of the expression of the military power factor during the restructuring and subsequent transition of the globalized framework of international relations towards a unipolar configuration of the world order, and to substantiate the hypothesis that the recent political and territorial changes are inextricably linked with the upward dynamics of this factor evolution.

3. THE OBJECT AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

The current study is dedicated to the examination of military power as a crucial component in the process of establishing a new framework for interstate relations in the context of global transition towards a post-global era. The subject of this study lies in exploring the political and territorial transformations that arise as a consequence of strategic deployment of military force by both state and non-state actors. Throughout the course of this work, the authors have applied a range of methodologies including the axiomatic approach, the extrapolation technique, and the predicting modeling the system dynamics.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the period of intense globalization, which spanned approximately the year 2000 to the year 2015, the factor of military power did not emerge much against the background of prevailing trends in global development. This included trans-nationalization, regionalization in economic and trade spheres, as well as the formation of a unipolarity in international relations.

The statistics reveal a significant decline in armed conflicts after the peak of the early 1990s, when there were 58 high-intensity conflicts involving states. By the year 2003, this number had decreased to 32, representing a reduction of over 40%. From 2003 until 2015, there was little change in this trend (Davis, Peterson, and Öberg 2023, 695). However, in the period between 2015 and 2018, there was a resurgence in conflict activity, with an average of 50-52 incidents occurring annually (Davis, Peterson, and Öberg 2023, 695). In 2022, researchers from Uppsala University in Sweden documented a record-breaking 55 cases of interstate conflicts over the previous 30 years (Davis, Peterson, and Öberg 2023, 693). Conversely, experts from the International Institute for Strategic Studies in the United Kingdom increased this figure by more than three times, to 183, when compared to regional conflicts and those involving non-state actors in 2023 (IISS 2023).

Synchronization of events allows us to correlate the escalation of international conflict with structural transformations in the global economic landscape, including commodity and financial markets occurred during this timeframe under the influence of a series of crises

such as the Great Recession of 2009-2013 and its aftermath in 2015-2018, as well as the European debt crisis of 2009-2019. In response to these shocks, national states sought to protect their economies and financial systems, rather than coordinate anti-crisis measures on a global scale. This trend toward “fencing off” was evident in efforts to shield themselves from both real and potential centers of instability (Gardó, and Martin 2010, 38). During the anti-pandemic campaign, this fragmentation of the global economy and markets into separate segments has only intensified. This period from 2020 to 2022 witnessed a dramatic collapse of the fundamental principles and core practices of globalization, including the perception of transparent borders, social solidarity, the efficacy of supranational institutions, and faith in the infallibility of global elites. Consequently, the world has become even more self-centered, “closed” and preoccupied with addressing local problems (Georgieva 2023). Thus, society has now entered a stage of post-global transformation, rendering the return to the pre-pandemic order impossible (Kissinger 2020). The geopolitical rivalry, strengthened in this new context, has undermined the unipolar model of world order, which previously served as a political projection of a globalizing economy and markets. The global landscape has been undergoing a dynamic transformation on a scale that defies the historical precedent with the formation of novel alliances emerging as a counterpoint to the dominant position and advantages enjoyed by the United States as the primary protector and benefactor of unipolarity. A triumvirate consisting of China, Russia and Iran is becoming increasingly pronounced, their convergence driven by a shared rejection of the *Pax Americana* and the desire to establish their own trans-regional polarity. This development has prompted critics to label this alliance as the “anti-Western axis”, with China being described as the “new hegemon of the non-democratic part of the world” (Urhova 2024). Some *think tanks* continue to explore and elaborate on this discourse, highlighting the impending division of the world amidst heightened geopolitical competition (CSIS 2024).

The current state of affairs is challenging for the prediction of the trajectory of future events. It remains uncertain whether the post-global transition will culminate in the establishment of a fully-fledged multi-polar model of the world order, superseding the prevailing unipolar structure, or whether there will be a shift towards unstable alliances based on situational dynamics. Two scenarios seem plausible in the foreseeable future, the global landscape will no longer be characterized by a unipolar system, and the replacement of international relations in the *Zukunft Zwei* format will not necessarily be peaceful (Jahn 2018, 52). First, if the world divides into blocs or groupings of states, conflict will inevitably permeate the system of their interactions, particularly in the context of growing geopolitical rivalry and the intensifying competition for diminishing resources (Layne 1993, 47). The axiomatic nature of this statement has been consistently validated throughout history, commencing in the period of *Zhanguo Shidai* in ancient China. Furthermore, socio-historical evidence also indicates that during the transition to a new stage of international relations, amid the shift towards a new model of the world order, accompanied by alterations of socio-economic structures, etc., the conflicts among actors participating in world politics tend to escalate both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, if we have previously identified the numerical values and the causal mechanisms underlying the escalation, the evolutionary transformations occurring in the context and the content of international conflicts necessitate further analysis. In our view, at least four essential aspects should be considered.

The first is that the nature of a conflict or the conflict environment, in which conflicts arise, as a set of conflict-causing factors that generate clashes between the interacting subjects,

has undergone a transformation compared to what it was 10-15 years ago. During the flourishing of neoliberal globalization, the unipolar model of the world order, known in Western terminology as the “Rules-Based Order”, dominated the system of international relations. Accordingly, most conflicts on the world stage were either driven by the desire of the dominant USA to impose its rules of conduct on others or to punish those who violated these norms (Лавров 2021). With no restraining force against the hegemonic aspirations of the United States, it became the sole superpower that orchestrated conflicts on a global scale, keeping them within acceptable thresholds for its own interests. This situation even gave rise to discussions about a period of relative stability following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Fard 2021, 33). In the aftermath of globalization, the world is turning the page, entering a new era marked by conflict and warfare situations (Blinken 2023). Unlike a unipolar system, conflict emerges not due to the attempts of a hegemon to impose its preferred model, but rather from the inability to maintain control over the situation and the very destruction of the model. The dismantling of unipolarity, like any other system of the global order, is accompanied by a degree of stochasticity and chaos in international relations, which were previously structured in some form of hierarchy by the dominant power. The weakening of vertical ties within the system was perceived by many players as a signal to act, a sort of “window of opportunity” for addressing urgent challenges in national development, particularly since some of them already had gained experience of breaking free from the control of a “big brother” in times of the “coronavirus crisis”. Among those who violated the “rules-based international order”, China stands out, having embarked on the creation of artificial islands in waters surrounding the contested Spratly Archipelago, thereby reigniting the Taiwan problem. Azerbaijan, having abolished the *status quo ante* in the South Caucasus region, and Russia, having annexed Crimea have challenged the post-Cold War status quo. From the perspective of the United States, these actions have disrupted the established global order and brought the world to a kind of Brownian motion (Biden 2023). While it is possible to partially agree with this statement of the American side, it is important to recognize that the crisis and decline of the unipolar world order are not solely attributable to any one country’s misjudged policies. Rather, they are rooted in far more profound and objective factors. At the same time, we must acknowledge the validity of the argument that the disintegration of the unipolar world-system has created a breeding ground for conflict in the context of post-globalism.

Another important aspect of this problem is the heightened focus of the conflicting parties on the pursuit of their political and territorial goals. The post-bipolar and bipolar world orders have cultivated numerous local disputes across the planet, stemming from territorial claims over specific areas with their associated resources. These disagreements have often resulted in clashes of varying intensity. However, due to the stalemate in the situation, these conflicts have either been brought to a state of smoldering or frozen nature². The parties have chosen to postpone their efforts to resolve the underlying issues until more favorable geopolitical circumstances arise, primarily associated with the onset of tectonic shifts on a global level (Peet 2008). Following the upheaval caused by the pandemic, during which many countries considered themselves liberated from previous legal obligations to maintain public order, several of them reached the realization that the moment had arrived and it was high time to complete the process of territorial gestalt. Azerbaijan, guided by the

² The vivid examples of them include Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, the enclaves of Fergana Valley, Kosovo, Palestinian territories in the Middle East, Taiwan, and Cyprus, as well as other regions.

principle of crisis management, that “a swift resolution is often the most appropriate”, eliminated the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) in 2023. This action violated the country’s own commitment as a member of the United Nations not to use violence in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Landgraf, and Seferian 2024). Turkey has also followed this path, implementing similar actions in Syria and Northern Iraq. Under the pretext of combating separatist groups and in pursuit of security objectives, Turkish authorities between 2020 and 2022 effectively integrated significant portions of two neighboring countries inhabited by ethnic Turks into their national structures (in Iraqi Kurdistan, a zone measuring 375 kilometers in length and of 40-50 kilometers in depth was annexed, while Syria saw the occupation of an area covering 8,835 sq km, encompassing over 1,000 settlements) (Çevik 2022, 2). During the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, substantial territorial alterations also took place. In 2022, certain regions of Ukraine, namely the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics, parts of the Zaporizhia and Kherson areas were integrated into the Russian Federation. This development may serve as a close parallel to the actions taken by other global actors in various parts of the world. Such an assumption can be made with a reasonable degree of confidence, as all these events – with the exception of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine – remained largely unnoticed by the international community, particularly by the United States, which is the key player in global affairs. If this trend continues, it will serve as evidence for many political regimes that territorial claims can achieve positive outcomes (Landgraf, and Seferian 2024).

The third and perhaps the most significant peculiarity of the post-global reality is the re-emergence of military force as a tool of political strategy. In the context of chaotic international relations, characterized by the collapse of the old world and the emergence of a new one, force and warfare become instruments to consolidate positions during this transitional period (Kashin, and Sushentsov 2024, 33). It is no coincidence that countries have resorted to the path of renewed armed conflicts to resolve long-standing territorial disputes. For example, the resolution of the Artsakh problem required several decades of preparation by the alliance of Azerbaijan and Turkey, followed by 44 days of active hostilities, three years of ceasefire, and finally, the elimination of the remnants of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) just in 3 days. Turkey, in turn, has conducted three major military operations on the territories of neighboring Syria and Iraq, employing heavy equipment and air forces. The Russian-Ukrainian confrontation is marked by an unprecedented level of fighting in Europe since the end of the Second World War (Kissinger 2022, 34). It is highly probable that the dynamics of force interaction in the global arena will increase, as the temptation of using military capabilities to swiftly and decisively address the accumulated challenges of nations will be immense. For instance, it is uncertain whether Azerbaijan will stop at Artsakh and refrain from attempting to establish a corridor to its Nakhichevan exclave (de Waal, 2023). Similarly, it appears unlikely that Turkey will merely defend its economic interests in the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea shelf in its dispute with Greece with the olive branch of peace in its hands. The situation regarding Northern Cyprus also presents a similar scenario. The so-called “factor of 2027” is well known, when, according to the analysis of the American intelligence community, the China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA), equipped by the military-industrial complex, will match the primary indicators of military, technical and technological power with those of the United States by 2027 (Rudd 2023). After that, it is not inconceivable that a scenario may unfold in which the early and forced reintegration of Taiwan follows. The Balkan region also runs the risk of becoming a new theater of military operations. Attempts by intermediaries to resolve

peacefully the dispute between Serbia and the semi-recognized “Republic of Kosovo” regarding the status of the region with the same name have not been successful. There is no guarantee that both parties will not take up arms once again, especially when Europe is busy with Ukraine and the United States is engaged in containing China (Maliqi 2023, 43). The “grapes of wrath” are ripening in the Western Hemisphere. In 2023, Venezuela and Guyana came close to a military confrontation over the disputed territory of Essequibo. Non-state actors began to actively join the interstate armed confrontation. In the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, Israel is primarily targeted by pro-Iranian proxies, such as the radical movements of Hamas and Hezbollah, which conduct military operations against the Jewish state. The immunity of such entities to the norms of international law and the laws of war underpins their propensity towards unconventional forms of aggression in conflicts they are involved in (Byman 2024). Consequently, even a superficial analysis of this multi-faceted issue reveals not only a heightened reliance on military force as a means for achieving the goals of global actors, but also indicates the active manifestation of its inherent transversal attributes, namely, the capability to dynamically overcome spatial, ethnical and psychological constraints.

The post-global era has brought about another novelty in the way conflict actors approach the use of force. The key changes lie in the transformation of the employment of military power and technical capabilities into a non-essential tool for coercion, unlike in the past (Иванов, 2003: 590). In modern hybrid conflicts, armed violence is no longer an automatic response, but rather an optional component of broader non-traditional military operations. These operations aim not to decisively defeat the adversary on the battlefield but rather to achieve victory through the disruption of their vital support systems and undermining their will to resist (McCuen 2008, 110). This is accomplished by causing irreversible damage using the combination of forces, resources and conditions of an economic, financial, social, political, psychological and informational impact. Simultaneously, hybrid strategies may be rather time-consuming in nature, as they are designed to exhaust the enemy, which, in turn, affects the duration of the confrontation (Коньшев, Парфенов 2019, 59). The Russian-Ukrainian standoff has been going on for more than two years with no clear prospect of an end to the conflict. During this clash, the Euro-Atlantic bloc, which supports Ukraine, uses an extensive array of hybrid warfare tactics against Russia. These actions encompass: sanctions and trade restrictions in the economic sphere; blocking Russian financial transactions abroad; terrorist attacks on energy communications in the field of logistics; artificial crises and mass protests targeted to destabilize governance; content manipulation campaigns in the information space aimed to psychologically and morally exhaust the opposing party. As evidenced by recent events in Ukraine, the means of armed struggle are not completely rejected. Instead, they appear to be integrated into the general strategy of hybrid warfare, serving as an element of this approach (Сивков, Соколов 2023, 137). In the meantime, the instigator of hybrid attacks endeavors to avoid direct confrontation with its opponent, opting instead to engage in combat “under false pretenses” with the hands of its proxies, such as those allied to the United States and NATO in Ukraine or as Iran does in the fight against Israel. In the process, they furnish their proxies with military resources, financial support, and encouragement for insurgency and terrorist activities (McCuen 2008, 111).

These, in our view, are the fundamental conceptual aspects pertaining to the manifestation of the military force factor in the transition to the post-global world order. Naturally, this list is far from exhaustive and is subject to expansion in response to evolving realities, as the extent of political and territorial changes resulting from the

employment of military power remains uncertain. A critical interim finding is that, under the current circumstances, the significance of military force as a tool of foreign policy and the safeguarding of a nation's interests is not only undiminished, but will increase, undergoing statistical updates and acquiring novel qualitative attributes.

5. CONCLUSION

In the light of the increasing dynamics of armed conflicts against the background of the spreading chaotic global political landscape, it is impossible not to wonder about the fatality of plunging a significant portion of the global community into a state of brutal *fighting without rules*. The authors of this article believe that, under the formation of ad hoc alliances within the non-Western sector of the world, their confrontation with the Euro-Atlantic coalition can potentially take on acute forms. However, the only restraint on the escalation of such conflicts would be the possession and the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction by either party. Nevertheless, the authors maintain a position rooted in the recognition of the potential for an alternative course of events in the case of a change in the vector of world development towards the gradual establishment of a multipolar model of international relations. In line with the sentiments of the President of the Russian Federation, who posited that a multi-polar world represents a realm of equal actors, devoid of any form of dictatorship, characterized by a more equitable distribution of resources and knowledge, fostering mutually beneficial cooperation and shared development, and ensuring common security for everyone, it is important not to ignore the advantages inherent in world order (Путин 2024). On the contrary, it is crucial to acknowledge that this model has many contradictions and imperfections, as it remains incapable of completely eliminating armed antagonism and territorial disputes among nations primarily due to the ongoing process of emerging new centers of power seeking their role in the evolving world landscape. Concurrently, in a future with a relatively balanced geographical distribution of power in the space of global politics, the military principle of human existence is likely to be more firmly embraced by all the actors within the framework of coordinated disciplinary approaches.

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UTICAJ FAKTORA VOJNE SILE NA PROMENE POLITIČKO-TERITORIJALNIH STRUKTURA U PROCESU POSTGLOBALNE TRANZICIJE

Period razvoja civilizacije poznat kao globalizacija, kao i era bipolarnog svetskog poretka koja mu je prethodila, postaje istorija. Umesto njih, na scenu stupa svetski poredak čije konture još nisu jasne. Ipak, osnovni elementi njegove kompozicije se naziru. Na planu državne politike i međudržavnih odnosa do izražaja dolaze ekonomski egoizam, sklonost autarhiji, renesansa paradigme „zatvorenog društva“, nagli porast verskog nacionalizma i reinkarnacija politike formiranja saveza u duhu vremena „zaraćenih carstava“. Faktor vojne sile nastavlja da igra značajnu ulogu u procesu tranzicije iz globalnog u postglobalni poredak, kako u ideološkom smislu tako i na planu realne politike. Događaji poslednjih godina ukazuju na sve značajniju ulogu moći kao instrumenta politike i političara. Države i njihovi lideri sve češće pribegavaju korišćenju vojno-industrijskog potencijala radi poboljšanja svog statusa u svetskoj politici ili rešavanja političkih i teritorijalnih problema. Ne bi bilo preterano reći da posle ere relativne stabilnosti koja je usledila nakon raspada SSSR-a, svet ulazi u period ratova i vojnih sukoba. U ovoj publikaciji, autori će pokušati da prikažu dinamiku oružanog nasilja na primeru niza vojnih sukoba i nastalih političkih i teritorijalnih promena na evroazijskom geopolitičkom prostoru. Ovaj problem razmatraće u kontekstu tranzicije svetske zajednice ka novom sistemu odnosa.

Кljučне речи: *svetski poredak, postglobalni svet, vojna sila, rat, vojni sukob*