

Alliances in the Third Millennium System and their Impact on Multipolarity

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Abstract

Using the hypothesis that there is an associative relationship between the alliances formed by rising powers in the third millennium system and the transformation of that system from unipolarity to multipolarity as a baseline, this paper aims to investigate and explore the key alliances among rising powers in the third millennium system, as well as the impact of these alliances on the shift from unipolarity to multipolarity. Both a descriptive analytical method and a systems analysis approach were employed. This study concludes that these rising powers, while notably rejecting American hegemony, tend to establish political and economic alliances amongst themselves, significantly impacting the gradual transformation of the third millennium system towards multipolarity as opposed to unipolarity. However, it is important to note that this shift towards multipolarity may have varied consequences on international peace and security, depending on the nature of actions and reactions between international powers—whether competitive or cooperative. The study therefore recommends that, to maintain international peace and security, international powers should align their interests and prioritize dialogue and negotiation to resolve disagreements and differences. Furthermore, it advocates for the establishment of an international system characterized by cooperative and competitive multipolarity supported by the principles of democracy, freedom, and human rights, rather than being defined by any single economic model.

Keywords: American Hegemony, Rising Powers, Multipolarity, BRICS, Alliances of the Third Millennium System.

1. Introduction

The rising presence of rising national powers in the third millennium system that reject the continued hegemony of the United States over the international community stands as the driving force behind the start of a shift towards a system of multipolarity with shifting alliances and balances of power instead of unipolarity. Despite the fact that no singular modern power has been able to match the power of the United States so far, the continuous rise of these powers and the new alliances being formed between them allows them to influence international political and economic policy, which may lead to a post -American World.

Shifts in the balance of power internationally may lead to changes in the look and shape of the current international order, as well as the third millennium order. Though this change can be relatively slow and difficult, it is a clear indicator that we are facing a new “map of alliances” in the third millennium order, which will lead to a period of chaos, instability, and an imbalance of power that presents a rising threat to international peace and security.

1.1 Previous Studies

There are several papers that have researched this topic prior from a variety of different angles, published in a variety of mediums (books, scientific journals). This study will examine the following:

- ❖ The impact of BRICS on the reformation of the international order (Al-Tai', 2020).
 - This paper sought to define BRICS and its role as a key influencer on the region, as well its use of its economic influence to achieve the member nations' long term, strategic goals. The author uses both the descriptive analytical research method as well as the systems analysis method. The study reached a number of conclusions, most critical of which were: While BRICS nations wield a significant amount of influence over regional and international affairs, which could allow them to significantly alter the international order and lessen US hegemony, the presence of internal disagreement, as well as the significant differences in the members' desired outcomes from the alliance presents a significant challenge to their future cooperation.
- ❖ Global changes and their impact on the emergence of regional powers in the Greater Middle East (Al-Tamimi, 2018).
 - This study sought to identify the role the United States played in the distribution of power in the international world order, with the United States maintaining its role as the dominant power in the world. The study also sought to identify the reasons behind the emergence of regional powers in the Greater Middle East and to what extent this rise was tied to shifts occurring in international policy of international superpowers, as well as the role these emerging powers are required to play in order to maintain global peace and security. The study reached a number of conclusions, of which the following was key: The global world order will face a state of instability due to the emergence of new regional powers in the Middle East, and thus the author stresses the importance of enabling and allowing international organizations to play a larger role between these emerging powers.
- ❖ The Rise of BRICS- A multipolar World? (Naik, 2016)
 - The author sees that despite the many challenges facing them on both a national and international scale, the BRICS nations have been able to establish an alternate voice in international forums, proving they seek to establish an alternative, cooperative platform aimed at tackling joint challenges as well proving that a world the isn't under the hegemony of single player is possible. The author concludes that BRICS will garner the support and acceptance of other, smaller nations if they are able to provide more projects and aid to the nations more in need of aid, and thus he urges the member states to foster a greater level of trust amongst themselves and that the national development bank should be more active in providing aid to the nations that need it most.
- ❖ Neoliberalists and the future of American Power: A literary review (Abu Zeid, 2014)

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- The study examined the Neoliberal take on the future of American power and the global balance of power in the new century, as well as the possibility of new World Wars between the major superpowers. The study concluded that (and consistent with an approach based in realism) despite the fact that the current pattern in international relations is generally one of peace, conflict will continue to be the dominant force in international relations, with international stability being nothing more than a prolonged ceasefire. The future of international relations in the 21st century will also be dominated by conflict (as in centuries past, albeit with different tools) over resources, hegemony, influence, and dominance.

This study is unique of its kind since it aims to discuss a related angle as it tracks the alliances between the rising powers in the third millennium system and the role, they will play on the road to ending US hegemony over the international scene, as well as the consequence of that being the beginning of a gradual transformation toward multipolarity. The study will also discuss the overall affect that transformation could have on the balance of power in the third millennium system as well as international peace and security.

2. The Study Problem and Questions

The third millennium system has seen significant changes in the concepts and theories of conflict, as well as in strategic thinking and military doctrines, which has led to the beginning of an emergence of a new world order that leans toward multipolarity, as well as changes in the balance of power and alliances.

This study seeks to explore the consequences the change from unipolarity to multipolarity in the third millennium system will have on the map of alliances in the current international world order, as well as the evolution of multiple avenues for conflict and competition among the rising powers in the system, which may lead to a state of chaos, instability, and an imbalance of power that presents a rising threat to world peace and security.

2.1 Questions posed by the Study

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the changes occurring to the international order with regards to US hegemony and the increased emergence of new, rising international powers?
2. What is the impact of these changes on the early stages of transformation from unipolarity to multipolarity?

3. Significance of the Study and Objectives

3.1 Significance of the Study

This study gains its importance through tracking the changes to the modern world order: between US hegemony and rising international powers seeking to change the balance of power and the nature of international relations in the 21st century.

Its importance also lies as it is based on studying the repercussions of the emergence of new, emerging powers in the third millennium, seeking to consolidate multipolarity in the third millennium system, on the map of alliances and the balance of power in the international system.

3.2 Objectives

This study seeks to accomplish two key objectives:

1. Examine the changes to the current international order by examining US hegemony on one side and rising national powers (in the third millennium system) on the other.
2. Identify the most crucial alliances in the third millennium system and their impact on the gradual transformation to a system of multipolarity.

4. Methodology of the Study

The following research methods were used:

1. Descriptive Analytical Method: a research method where data on a particular problem is gathered with the aim to develop a solution to the problem through analyzing the data from every angle / dimension. This method will be used in this study through the tracking of the start of a gradual transformation from unipolarity to multipolarity in the third millennium system due to the rise of a number of key powers and the affect the emerging alliances between them will have on the balance of power in the third millennium system and by extension, international peace and security.
2. Systems Analysis Method: one of the most important recent approaches in political studies (introduced in the 50s) which theorizes a feedback loop that begins with inputs and results in outputs. This approach was used when studying the effect, the emerging alliances between rising powers in the third millennium system has its gradual transformation toward multipolarity, and the affect this transformation will have on global peace and security, given the intense competition between said powers.

3.1 Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the problem statements posed by this study, as well as the aforementioned objectives of the study, this study seeks to show that:

- There is a direct, causal relationship between the rising powers in the third millennium system and the alliances they are forming and the beginning of a gradual transformation toward a system of multipolarity instead of unipolarity.

3.2 Study Structure

In order to answer the questions posed by this study, the study was divided into the following research subheadings:

- **The first topic:** The global third millennium system: between US hegemony and the emergence of rising international players.
- **The second topic:** The impact of alliances in the third millennium system on the transformation toward multipolarity
- **The first topic:** The Global Third Millennium System: Between US Hegemony and the Emergence of Rising International Players.

The third millennium system currently contains several concentrations of developing and rising international powers that are capable of laying a foundation for new “superpowers” in the region that work in harmony with one another i.e., a dominating force that is composed of several key alliances. In light of weakening-albeit still dominating the international scene- American hegemony in the region, these new players have been able to acquire new seats at the table among elite international circles, and will bring with them new threats- and new rules to the game. Indeed,

the third millennium system is getting increasingly complicated and trending towards more imbalance in the balance of power as time goes on, from the resurgence of the Russian Federation and emergence of China, India, and the EU as key superpowers that reshaped the international scene (and especially following the 2008 financial crisis) (Her, 2013), to the emergence of new international players that refuse to wholly submit to US power and influence, without necessarily directly clashing with it.

❖ US Hegemony and the Rise of New Players

Madeleine Albright was quoted at the start of the third millennium to have said that “America has become an indispensable ally and nation” and in 2001 said that “The United States should be more than just an international player; it must own this moment in modern history”. While the US remains the dominant power in modern times, the failures it experienced managing key regional conflicts during the 90’s in regions such as the Balkans, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, it’s seeming inability to counter Chinese and Asian development, increased international criticism for its international presence, and its involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have shaken up US hegemony across the world. In its effort to justify its hegemony over the world and interference in the internal affairs of others, the US adopted two key policies that have reflected poorly on the US and it’s international status: first, to create a new enemy with whom to compete and fight with in order to maintain its presence and legitimacy and second, in seeking to superimpose western values on the rest of the world without taking into consideration the differences in culture, society, and political landscapes (especially in the third world). These policies, largely adopted after the events of 9/11, and its adoption of new strategies, such as coercive diplomacy and preventative wars have resulted in a less peaceful and secure world, and have led to a reduction in overall positive sentiment around the world for US policy on one side and the rise in popularity and influence for other international players, such as China and the EU, on the other. International sentiment towards the US can be described as “hesitant” if not outright hostile, and the slow but steady rise of other players to join the ranks of international superpowers presents the largest challenge to the US yet (Abu Zaid, 2014).

In his book “Re-examining the International World Order”, Sorensen stresses that the factors for competition between international superpowers are present and capable of increasing. China today, for example, is keen on increasing its influence and control at a scale that could lead to conflict with other players, including the US, and whose relationship with the US has elements of both friendship and animosity. Putin’s Russia (following its failure to befriend the West) has taken a more hostile approach to its relationship with the West, and describes itself as a competitor of the US and the West, and could become an enemy. And while Russia and China do not seek to restructure the international world order that the US developed, they do seek to amend it to be more in line with their interests. Certain political commentators in China hold the view that the US has declined from a leader to an equalizer (Sorensen, 2020).

Additionally, in his book “The world after the US”, Fareed Zakaria points to the fact that the world is witnessing it’s third major transformation in modern times in areas of politics, economics, and culture, and is seeing the rise of others, as several nations the world over have seen economic growth deemed impossible in the past, seen most clearly in Asia. Between 2006 and 2007, 124 nations had a growth in their GDP of 4% or more, with over (40) of those nations being in Africa.

The modern world order has also seen a transfer of power from nations to non-governmental players and individuals whose influence has risen at the expense of undermining centralized control over the world, which gives the modern, multipolar world order a completely different image than the one seen prior to WWI (Zakaria, 2009).

One of the most important factors that have led to the beginning of the end of US hegemony over international policies that rising powers has been their desire to challenge US hegemony over the design and creation of international political and economic policies. This desire is supported by economic and human growth, as seen in China, India, and Brazil, economic influence on the regional and international level, the ability to adapt to global changes, and strong technological and military advances (Al-Tamimi, 2018).

❖ **Rising Powers in the International Third Millennium System**

The most prominent rising powers in the international third millennium system are as follows:

1. Federal Russia

It has strongly regained its position in the international interaction, is trying to influence global issues, and attract a number of allies through regional strategic coalitions, enabling it to determine its zones of influence, benefiting from the vast energy revenues in the time from 2006-2013 to support its weak economy. In 2013, the size of the national product reached (2.30) trillion dollars, which is ten times the size of the production in 2000, as it did not exceed (200) billion dollars. It has also modernized its huge and strategic military power to become the second military power in the world after the United States, and before the third Chinese army, according to the classification of the Global Firepower website specialized in military affairs for the year 2017 (and it is still in the same rank in the classification of the year 2021). Moreover, it is the second exporter of arms in the world according to the statistics of the Stockholm International Peace Institute for the years from 2013-2017, and Moscow acquired (25%) of the arms trade After the United States with 34% and China in the third place with (6%) (Abdul-Sadiq, 2018).

2. China

Zhang Weiwei says in his book "The Chinese Earthquake - the Rise of a Civilized Country", that China has established an unprecedented modern state system, which includes one government, market, economy, education, law, defense, finance and tax system. It is also considered one of the most influential countries in the world, since it became clear from organizing the Olympic Games in 2008, and its orientation of economic growth in the country, while retaining many of its traditions as a civilized country with a huge population density in the world. China today combines between being a national and a civilized state, combining their strengths and advantages. Being a modern state, it supports equality between states in terms of sovereignty, protection of human rights, rejecting racial discrimination, and preserving many of the traditions and characteristics resulting of their ancient civilization. It is characterized as an old country and an emerging "developing" country, traditional and modern, Chinese and international (Wei, 2016).

China has initiated its pace towards the world's economic dominance, since its economy reached the second rank in the world. It was also to achieve technical and economic progress in parallel with the spread of its cultural model - in defiance of the Western cultural model - as it established the "Confucius Institute", in 2018. (548) institutes bearing this name have spread in (154) countries and regions in the world, and China was also distinguished by its substantial

interest in the Chinese army and strengthening China's military capabilities. The American writers Daniel Burstein and Arne de Keema - two of America's top economic advisors – declared in their book titled "The Great Dragon - China in the Twenty-First Century", that 2022 will be the Year of the Dragon in China's annual calendar, as President Ping said in a speech in 2014: that self-reliance is the basis for the establishment of the Chinese nation in the jungle of nations, and that self-innovation is an inevitable way become at the top of science and technology. He also confirmed that we would not be separated from those around us.... and announced the revival of the Silk Road; to realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Al-Nashar, 2019).

3. Japan

After the Second World War, Japan was distinguished with the fast economic and commercial growth to be a new model for the developing countries. Trying to redefine the new Japanese foreign policy, Japanese politicians took a long time to take part in the international affairs till the mid-80s of the twentieth century, or as some say after the second Gulf war. The Japanese foreign policy simply followed the demands of the United States and did not show any willingness to take the initiative or play a leading role. It remained disarmed and peaceful according to its American-made constitution. But, with the vast economic development, Japan could not any more remain passive concerning the international affairs. Japan had overcome its military defeat and economic devastation to become effective in the field of production, export and finance at the international level. It was expected that it would turn into a great military power in a short time when it decided to be so, as Japan could easily build-up modern army and navy through utilizing its financial resources, technological potentials and industrial productivity (Akgun& Çalış, Reluctant Giant: The Rise of Japan and its Role in The Post-Cold War <http://sam.gov.tr>).

The ranking of the Japanese army has risen globally among the armies of countries that have great powers on the international scene. At a constant rate annually, Japan spends no more than 1% of the gross domestic product on military power, as Tokyo has managed to strengthen its presence on the list of the first ten military forces according to the classification of Global website- Firepower. Between 2013 and 2014, Japan made a rapid rise from the seventeenth to the tenth rank, and from there to the eighth in 2018, and that was in line of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's announcement in 2017 of his intention to amend Article Nine of the Constitution that restricts arming the country and possessing offensive capabilities, intent on “rebuilding the nation,” describing some clauses of the constitution as humiliating. This does not indicate that this is the end of the strategic alliance with the United States, as in his suggestion was justifying Japan's attempt to restore its global role fearing that Washington's withdrawal from East Asia - which former US President Trump had proposed - or that the American power will decline against China and Russia, especially in light of the growing strength of its traditional opponents in the region (Abed, 2019, Japan. Quiet and Steady Steps Towards Restoring the “Imperialist Army,” <https://www.aa.com.tr/>), according to the National Interest magazine, the Japanese army for the year 2021 CE is considered one of the strongest five armies in the world (Episkopos, 2021, Top 5 Militaries on Planet Earth: 2021 Edition <https://nationalinterest.org>).

4. India

India is witnessing a stage of being a great power that possesses the potentials of the rising powers since it is far more being an economic power in South Asia which is considered a vital

regional area in the world order, adjacent to East and South-East Asia where the area is described as the most worldwide economically dynamic region. It is open to the strategic Middle East region, and open to the Indian Ocean, which is the pivot (central point) of the strategies of the world's maritime powers. Therefore, India is looking to enforce its presence in the world order, after becoming one of the major regional powers, which made it think that this qualifies it to enjoy a permanent membership in the Security Council. India has also followed, since the era of the Post-Cold War, during 1991-2016, a policy that depends on dealing carefully while not being engaged within the American strategy framework in the world. That is, it maintained an approach which supports the independence trend, while working to expand its global relations, and adopting policies that support easing regional conflicts with China and Pakistan (Al-Haddad, 2017, p 208-209).

India today looks like a global giant that is slowly rising. Its ambassador to the United States, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, stressed in a speech to students and staff at Harvard University in 2019 that: India's economic power is progressing and the circumstances are suitable for becoming a global great power in the twenty-first century. He stressed that India took nearly (60) years after independence to reach an economy of one trillion dollars, but it took only 12 years to reach an economy of 2.0 trillion dollars, and only five years from 2014-2019 to rise to 3.0 trillion dollars. In addition, the ambassador assured that the Prime Minister of India has set a goal to achieve \$5.0 trillion by 2025, (Shringla, 2019, Indian Economic Juggernaut on A roll, Country Will be A superpower: Envoy, <https://www.business-standard.com/>). Regarding its military force, the statistics indicate that India comes at the fourth rank internationally among the three most powerful armies according to international classification. The defense budget of the Indian army reaches (\$73.6) billion for 2021 (Episkopos, 2021, Top 5 Militaries on Planet Earth: 2021 Edition <https://nationalinterest.org/>).

5. European Union (EU)

The world order today tends to focus on the rank of regional systems, since the newest prominent regional polar fractures had been reshaped since the formation of the EU. Although the EU is considered one of the present international powers in the world order, the exit of Britain definitely affects the EU. Britain is considered the greatest military force in Europe, as it represents (25%) of expenditure on defense in the EU and (40%) of the EU expenditure on defensive researches and development. Furthermore, it has the soft power which includes: culture, political and diplomatic values, it possesses the hard power that comprises: military, financial and foreign policy as well, which is an additional resource for the EU influence (Hashem, 2017).

The exit of Britain from the EU is seen by some as a clear invitation to the rising nationalist thoughts in Europe, reduces the Union's political weight and turns it into a "small power".

On the contrary, others believe that its exit will pave the way towards establishing a federal European Union that Britain was used to oppose, and supports a more united "European opinion/say" in many multi-lateral institutions, including the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Besides, they also argue that Britain's exit will facilitate the rearrangement of the balance of security in Europe, unify the Common Trade Policy, and strengthen the European Common Security and Defense Policy. However, David Volkerts Landau (chief economist at Deutsche Bank) asserts that Britain's exit from the EU will actually turn the EU into a "small power". argues that it will be devastating for Europe, which will become much

less important, and its influence will be weakened on the level of foreign policy of the United Nations and the global decision-making process, not only geographically, but also economically, politically and militarily (Ham, 2016).

6. Brazil

Although the military rule in Brazil remained for more than half a century, it was able to get out of the bottleneck and build a successful democratic system economically, thankful to the constitutional amendments that were culminated by electing the President of the Republic directly from the nation of Brazil. Brazil has emerged as a rising regional and international power, supported by its strong position due to its huge demographic weight (a quarter of a billion people), its large geographical area, and precious natural resources, as all of these potentials were exploited by political decision-makers who were determined to reinforce its role as a regional and global power. Despite some major social problems, Brazil succeeded to record remarkable economic achievements, as it is was in the eighth rank in the world's economic classification, and is an active member of the Group of Twenty (Askaran, 2011). Brazil is also a rising military power, as according to the Global Firepower website, which studied the military power, financial, logistical and geography capabilities of countries for the year 2021 AD (in a study of 140 countries), Brazil ranked ninth in the world. (Global firepower website, 2021, 2021 Military Strength Ranking, <https://www.globalfirepower.com>)

7. Rising Powers in the Middle East

In the absence of any Arab power on the regional scene, Turkey and Iran - being original countries in the region - are the two most prominent regional powers in the region. Although they are ranked second among other emerging powers at the international level, they are classified as effective regional powers that seek to develop their moral, economic, military and structural forces and potentials. This qualifies them to occupy a strong position on the international level, allowing them to influence the behavior of others, and support their policy to achieve their strategic goals, which represent their national will, besides their political, diplomatic, economic and military abilities (Al-Adam, 2019, which is stronger: Facts and Figures about Military and Economic Abilities of Turkey and Iran <https://www.aljazeera.net>).

A study made by Global Fire Power magazine of the military power of (140) countries showed the "fierce competition" among the Middle East countries to possess military power. Turkey ranked 11th in the world, and Egypt ranked 13th as the largest Arab military power, followed by Iran in the 14th place, Saudi Arabia ranked 17th, and Israel came in the twentieth place. (Globalfirepower website, 2021, 2021 Military Strength Ranking, <https://www.globalfirepower.com/>)

❖ The second topic: The Impact of Alliances in the Third Millennium System on the Transformation Toward Multipolarity

In their effort to get rid of US hegemony of international decision-making and to re-examine many of the standards and concepts related to international relations, and to establish a multipolar reality, the following key alliances and conglomerates were formed:

1. SCO- Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The SCO was one of the first results to a series of attempts at dealing with what was known as "New Security" Problems that China and Russia had conducted. SCO was a Chinese initiative

presented in 1996 in a meeting between leaders from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan in Shanghai. This meeting resulted in the signing the Shanghai Pact to establish the SCO between the five aforementioned nations, which was established in 2001. In 2007, the SCO was amended to further increase cooperation between the nations in areas of security and organized crime in what was known as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which was seen by analysts as further attempts to increase influence over Central Asia and to reduce US hegemony over it (Klaa, 2021).

The stages of evolution for the role of security in the agreement can be organized as follows:

- Regional Convergence, 1991-1996: through searching for common denominators for regional stability, which began with a joint agreement between Beijing and Moscow to redraw and reduce military presence shared borders. They also signed a similar security agreement in 1992 that included Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.
- Confidence building between member nations, 1996-2001
- Institutionalizing regional security through the SCO and the addition of Uzbekistan as a member state.
- Global Security Strategy Adoption, 2004-2013, where the SCO began presenting itself not only as a regional player, but an international one capable of playing an important role in international security.

Since its founding, the SCO was able to deal with many challenges to foster increased trust between its members, as well as increase its membership while also refusing a US request in 2005 to join the SCO as an observer state by China. This refusal has cast a shadow of suspicion over the organization by the US and its allies, despite its founding charter mentioning that the SCO was not founded to oppose specific nations or regions. Some analysts view the foundation of the SCO as a result of the refusal of these nations of the US being the sole leader of the world, where the period between 2005-2014 saw the organization evolving from a regional player with a limited scope to an effective, multipolar, international player capable of reducing US hegemony (Dahman, 2015).

The SCO was also able to add strong international players to its membership. According to Russian Special Presidential Envoy to SCO Affairs Bakhtiyer Khakimov (2020), the organization, with Pakistan and India joining in 2017, now spans 60% of Eurasia and 45% of the world's population, and is imminently adding more members with 16 nations applying for membership.

while the organization (as of 2020) contains 8 members: (Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), 4 observer states: (Belarus, Afghanistan, Iran, Mongolia), 6 dialogue partners: (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkey) (Arabic.rt.com). Through this geopolitical composition, the SCO has slowly transformed to a key international player. This sentiment was echoed by the BBC's reported in the 2019 SCO summit in Bishek "there are several indicators emerging from this year's summit that the SCO has begun to take its role very seriously, and that the world is larger than the West.

Despite all of these factors, some do not see the SCO as equal to NATO, the US, and the West in general due to a number of reasons, including: the competition between Moscow and Beijing for influence on one side and their individual sequence of priorities on the other, the vast

relationships the member states currently have with the US (relationships they don't intend on severing), as well as the various stances of the member states toward the differences between Pakistan and India leads them to conclude that it is too early to consider the SCO a significant new player, nevertheless, its continued existence along with BRICS could act as building for a more multipolar world (Dahman, 2015).

2. CSTO: Collective Security Treaty Organization

CSTO is a military alliance founded in 2002 based on the Collective Security Treaty of 1992 and includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia as member states. Headquartered in Moscow, members rotate presiding over the organization annually and aim to accomplish a number of objectives, including: maintaining joint security and protecting the sovereignty of member states, military cooperation and maintaining regional peace and security, combatting terrorism and organized crime and preventing the spread of WMDs. The CSTO charter also prevents members from using force or threats between one another, joining other military alliances, and considers attacks on any member an attack on all members (which the organization failed to enforce during the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020) (Al Jazeera Net (2012), Collective Security Treaty Organization, <https://www.aljazeera.net>).

The formation of the CSTO can be attributed to the increase in regionality in international relations, as these regional alliances help small developing countries face global competition and provides them with international access while protecting their national interests. While the CSTO provides equal membership on paper, Russia remains the dominating force in the CSTO, and has provided Russia the ability to prevent NATO operations in the area. This, coupled with a lack of total alignment between Russia's interests and the remaining members and the organization's inability to repel military aggression on its member states has weakened its credibility on an international scale (Avedissian, 2019), Fact Sheet: What is The Collective Security Treaty Organization, <https://www.evnreport.com>).

3. BRICS:

An acronym to associate five of the world's major emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), BRICS members seek to be global leaders and influencers, particularly Russia and China. In 2006, at the margins of the General Debate in the UN Assembly, the first signs of BRICS began to take shape, with Brazil, Russia, India, and China forming the initiative and South Africa joining later in 2011. The first formal summit for BRICS was hosted after the financial crisis of 2008, with the leaders of the four nations meeting in Russia in 2009, where they stressed the importance of a stable world order and agreed to cooperate and coordinate in all areas, including economics (Abdul Samie, 2021, the map of the "BRICS" group, the rising power in relations, <https://www.politics-dz.com/>).

❖ How does BRICS challenge Western Institutions?

BRICS is seen as an organization aimed at unifying resources, complete and compatible in some areas and perhaps not as compatible in others and as such, BRICS has tried to develop institutions and organizations that can serve its member's long-term strategies. In considering the economy to be the main basis for international cooperation, BRICS formed a number of economic institutions, including: (Al-Tai, 2020):

- 2014: New Development Bank (NDB): Announced during the summit in Fortaleza and headquartered in Shanghai, the NDB is an attempt by BRICS members to break away from

the IMF and World Bank through funding the bank equally among the member states (\$10 Billion per member)

- 2015: Contingent Reserve Arrangement: Founded in 2015, the CRA aims at providing additional cash flow during times of crisis for BRICS member states. The reserve has a capital of (\$100) Billion, distributed as follows: China (\$41) Billion, India (\$18) billion, Brazil (\$18) billion, Russia (\$18) billion, and South Africa (\$5) billion. While BRICS members have an equal voting share for strategic decisions, the CRA has a voting rights structure similar to that of the IMF, albeit with a fairer voting system that does not include the right to veto by any member. The CRA is one of the tools available to BRICS members when facing unexpected emergencies without the need to seek help from Western institutions.
- BRICS Pay: BRICS is working to set up a unified payment and monetary system for its members as a way to reduce dependence on the US dollar through using national currencies in trade. This was seen as another attempt by BRICS to develop economic transactions independent from Western and US hegemony. BRICS was also able to leverage its political influence (especially given the competition between China and the US) to add an African member state, something China deemed vital for BRICS. With China being South Africa's largest trade partner, and given its influence in Africa and strategic geographic location, South Africa became the fifth member of BRICS. BRICS has also been keen on establishing a role in key international issues, especially in the Arab World, and has called for the reformation of the United Nations and Security Council to be more effective and representative. Despite all this, BRICS remains an organization that is imbalanced economically, and is unlike other alliances, as there are no clear political or cultural ties between the member states, with their desire to create a new world order that ends Western and US hegemony and has BRICS members as key influencers being the only thing that unites them (Abd Al-Monim, 2020).

Turkic Council (The Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States): For a long time, Turkey has recognized the importance of transforming into a key player in a strategic region where its young population exceeds (200) million with a GDP approaching (\$2) trillion and led by people with a desire to establish a distinct national identity, far from Russian hegemony and policy. Turkey has been successful recently in establishing a foothold in Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan) where there are strong cultural and ethnic ties.

This culminated in the formation of the organization in 2009, through the signing of the Nakhchivan Agreement between Turkey and the Central Asian nations in Azerbaijan, and is considered the first voluntary alliance between Turkic nations in history. The role Turkey plays in Central Asia was further expanded through a Turkish initiative dubbed "a New Asia" in 2019 in addition to numerous Turkish economic investments in the region as well as expanded trade, establishing a university association for Central Asian Universities. Turkey has also taken a keen interest in the political and security aspects of the members (this was made clear through Turkish support provided to Azerbaijan in its 2020 war with Armenia), which has shifted the balance of power in the Caucasus region (Auf, 2021, Soft Turkish Domination. How Ankara Challenges the Kremlin's Strong Grip in Central Asia, <https://www.aljazeera.net/>).

In the council's virtual summit held in Kazakhstan in March 2021, attended by Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan (non-member), and Hungary

(observer), the council agreed on furthering cooperation among its members, rebuilding Nagorno-Karabakh, and maintaining peace in the region. The Kazakh president also put forth an initiative to establish a “special economic region” for the Turkic states as well as establishing an “investment fund” for the council members and to change the name of the council to “The Organization for Turkic States” (Zorlu, 2021, The Turkish Council, “A New Leap for Strengthening Cooperation and Expanding Capabilities, <https://www.aa.com.tr>).

The Turkic Council is considered to be one of the fastest growing organizations of its type. In 2019, Uzbekistan formally applied to be a member, in 2020, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Emine Dzhepp said in an interview that Ukraine seeks to obtain observer status in the council, and in 2021, Afghanistan formally applied for observer status. While there are differences between the member states, Central Asian nations see membership in the council as a crucial alternative to depending on Russia and China (Hungary is looking for alternatives to the EU), and the council presenting itself as a council of ‘family’ and ‘brotherhood’ represents another key difference from the Western world, as there are both familial and religious ties that the Turkic countries share among one another. Despite the Council’s ambitions however, it remains a complementary alliance that cannot replace security organizations (such as NATO and CSTO) or a strong economic dependence on Beijing. (Lambert, 2021, The Turkish Konrul: How Ankara Uses the Turki Council to Re- Engage in Central Asia, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu>).

It's important to note the rise of a wave of regional alliances, with many being formed in the first two decades of the third millennium, with nations being a member in several alliances at once, which presents several questions around their importance, effectiveness, stability, and long-term survivability.

Professor Ali Jalal Muawad if Cairo University notes that “the alliances of the current stage are increasingly complex in nature when taking into account several factors, including: nations seeking to increase their networks of alliances as part of their strategy to diversify, the increasingly important role security plays in regional alliances, the rise of non-international players, the rise of alliances that surpass borders, the emergence of several different organizations and agreements regarding international security, soft alliances going hand in and with military alliances.

He also sees that the transformations in international and regional alliances is owing to a number of factors such as ideology and principle, the level of impact internal factors and systems have, and the organizational and operational aspects of alliances. This trend of alliances has evolved to be a key factor in international interactions, but with it also evolving to be more flexible to include partial alliances, security alliances, soft alliances, hybrid alliances, and temporary coalitions (Muawad, 2017).

❖ **Alliances in the Third Millennium System and the Transformation Toward Multipolarity:**

The third millennium system continues to be in a state of flux, between unipolarity on one side and multipolarity on the other. The direction taken by many rising powers to form regional economic alliances with political dimensions in light of a chaotic third millennium system is a reaction to the Western strategy of refusing multipolarity and may be what leads to a gradual move toward a system of multipolarity, especially since no international players, including China and Russia, have been able to alone amass the capabilities and resources required to face US strategy.

Shivshankar Menon, an Indian diplomat, sees that the ministries of BRICS member states stress the role of BRICS in creating a multipolar world, and that the main objective of BRICS is

to create a decentralized, multipolar world instead of a unipolar, centralized one: “Developing nations in the East have the resources and opportunities in creating non-Western power capable of creating an alternative to managing international relations, in light of their ability to benefit from the economic crisis and other crises around the world”. The gradual rise of non-Western powers is on pace with American and European economic slowdown, and the reduction of America’s imperial role around the world creates chances for developing economies to leave their fingerprints on the international order. The change to multipolarity becomes clear when looking at new members joining BRICS, who are more varied in their cultural, ideological, and even economic differences (Naik, 2016).

In his book “The Theory of a Multipolar World”, Aleksandr Dugin states that “Civilization in the 21st century is much wider and deeper than a single international, regional, cultural, religious, or economic component of its makeup, and there must be full recognition of all of it’s cultural, historical, and religious, pre-existing components without exception.” Dugin does not focus in his book on the presence of democracy (or lack thereof) as a requirement for cooperation and multipolarity, as not all civilizations across history were democratic. What is important for a rising or developing power is to be ready to cooperate and contribute toward multipolarity, without having to sacrifice what differentiates them from other powers around them. Additionally, the gradual building of a multipolar civilization does not necessitate a specific economic or financial system, as different societies are capable of developing different economic systems, and only time can tell which systems are more successful than others, not conditional aid or forced takeover” (Dugin, 2017).

❖ **The question remains: Will multipolarity in the third millennium system be cooperative or competitive? What impact will that have on international peace and security?**

Conditions in the modern international order point to the fact that the transformation toward multipolarity is the more likely scenario; this multipolarity could be cooperative or competitive, each with a different set of consequences on international peace and security.

Cooperative multipolarity could transform the current world order to a more controlled form of capitalism that will necessitate nations establish a baseline for economic relations within a political system, which necessitates an alignment of interest between the worlds superpowers and the adoption of dialogue as the key method of maintaining relationships. There will also be a need to continue to uphold the values of democracy, freedom, and human rights, and a strong attempt to tackle areas with a strong concentration of regional problems, which will help to maintain world peace and security will be required. Competitive multipolarity was the dominant pattern in international relations in the 19th century which led to increased conflicts of interest between regional and international powers culminating in two destructive world wars. And while there is doubt this scenario will happen again, competitive multipolarity can lead to a greater increase in the strength and influence of international alliances and coalitions, increased competition between alliances and organizations, the creation of new regional conflicts, increased differences on economic and financial policy, and an increased strain on the relations between nations as each nation seeks to establish its influence over the region, which threatens international peace and security.

5. Conclusions

According to what was studied in the previous axes, in an attempt to trace its hypotheses and answer the questions that were raised, the study concluded that: There is an associative

relationship between the alliances being formed between the rising powers in the third millennium system and that system's transformation from unipolarity to multipolarity as a baseline.

Accordingly, the study concluded the following:

This paper concludes that in their desire to reject US hegemony, rising powers have increasingly leaned on forming economic alliances with political dimensions. This rise in alliances has an effect on the gradual transformation of the third millennium system toward multipolarity instead of unipolarity. However, a multipolar system could have differing consequences on world peace and security, depending on the nature of the relationships between international powers (cooperative or competitive).

6. Recommendations

In order to solidify and maintain world peace and security, this study recommends that international powers seek to align on interests and to seek out dialogue where there is disagreement or a difference of opinion, supporting the formation of a cooperative multipolar world that protects human gains, democratic values, freedom, and human rights, and one that is not intrinsically tied to a specific economic system.

Conflicts of interest statements

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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