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## **WORLD TRENDS FROM 2022**

### **Resume**

This paper, divided in three chapters of uneven length, analyses the world trends in near future. Forecasting major processes at the global scale is a key task of the IR discipline. Author asks the question whether current world order restructuring is causing the outbreak of the new World War. In order to answer the question, he first underlines importance of forecasting, and explains what the world war is. Author claims that approach according to which it is required to have theoretical background in order to make scientific prediction is erroneous. The closest there is to objective framework is according to the author, to employ Italian neoclassical geopolitical school. In the article, author questions international and national, societal, political and only briefly economic trends in the collective West and in the Middle East. He presents the reasons why BRICS, or the East and South are growing and leading the change in major power redistribution in the framework of the new multipolar world order.

**Keywords:** forecasting, prediction, World War, World Order, Cancel Culture, Collective West, Middle East, BRICS

### **INTRODUCTION IN THE ART OR SCIENCE OF PREDICTION**

On a hot late spring day, while starting to write on the issue concerning forecasting world trends, I heard part of the dialogue at the next table. Two men were talking. One said “Are we to expect the

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new wave of corona measures in autumn?.” But more importantly, I am waiting for the Chinese to kick that island (Taiwan) off. “They were trying to foresee some important international events. Forecasting or prediction is a common subject in everyday life and is common among sports commentators, for example. Prediction should be the confirmation of the scientific basis of the model that author(s) are using in analyzing some process in the field of International Relations (IR). According to Morgentau, the ultimate goal in the field was and should be scientific prediction (Morgentau 1970, 242). Cautious authors who still try to achieve this objective claim that what they deem as “(t)he growing attention to forecasting within academic research” is “only possible in fields where the forecasters can rely on prior knowledge and accumulated evidence in the form of systematically collected data or the insights of experts who possess privileged knowledge about an otherwise impenetrable decision-making process” (Schneider et al 2010, 5–6).

From the time being up until today, governments want to prepare for the future. Preparation is based on expectations or on experience of what might be expected if one does this or that. Preparation or planning is reasonable action in everyday life, in business, and in politics. Prediction goes beyond. It is the operation of envisaging future results of current processes and a step more to even predict a new process, or some new development, or how some trend will evolve.

Just as some people are ready to give their palms to a fortune teller, those who yield power would often like to know what will happen in the future. In European antiquity, oracles were famous for this. Not only oracles, but various dubious charlatans, magicians, or astrologers, were sometimes engaged by the ruler who was not a deeply devoted believer, comforted in the teachings of the Church and the understanding that the future is in the afterlife. What can be subsumed as preparing for defense, food storage, and other necessary reserves is rational and experience-based planning, present in all of the recorded history. IR prediction should have a somewhat deeper look. Today, a glimpse into the future is the task of political advisors and counsellors, of researchers in institutes, in intelligence agencies or in think tanks. Sometimes, even of the ‘scientists.’

The desire to govern the future through science arose in parallel to the rise of the modern nation state and a more technocratic and scientific approach to public administration in the nineteenth century. With the dawn of modernity, foreseeing and preparing for possible future developments became a key task for policy-makers, bureaucrats and scholars alike (Wenger et al 2020, 4).

How interesting is this insight, that is, the desire to govern the future? Indeed, such careful planning could be understood as a hubris of trying to not just look into the future but to organize it, to conquer it in some sense. In 2020, the monograph, *The Politics and Science of Prediction*, was published as one of the latest attempts to scientifically ground the art of looking in the crystal ball and provide governments, armies, or informal power centres with the most accurate prevision, now with a large amount of data and even helped with artificial intelligence (AI) (Wenger et al., 16). Prediction is essential in decades of economic hocus-pocus with stock exchanges and calculating the growing number of risks in credit elaboration and business investment analysis. All this is a result of the wish to secure profit and power. In the case of power, the holder or holders wish to predict any possible threat to its maintenance and to foresee the trends according to which it is possible to plan for the status quo or to expand the power. Hence, strategies for the future and contingency plans.

This kind of behaviour, related to power, is usually described by academicians in the realist worldview (balance of power in Waltz, or balance of threats and rise and fall of powers, Walt, or growth of power, Schweller).<sup>1</sup> Former Associate Adjunct Professor in the Department of Political Science and Executive Director of the Berkeley Program in Eurasian and East European Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, Edward W. Walker claims that any forecast has to be grounded in some theory. Ergo, if we look into the future of world trends, we are doing it through the spectacles of some worldview and we are able to understand the world only through those glasses. One could reflect on this from the constructivist point of view and claim that this inevitably leads us to start with perceptions of reality and not with objective reality, and thus we could never understand the trends, but we could be able only to see what the worldview we have adopted allows us to see. If the spectacles, which are here used to signify the worldview in International Relations (IR), are coloured in red, we will see the world in red nuances. If they are blue, we would look at a blue planet. But if we do not use coloured spectacles, we can see the world as it is (of course, if we do not suffer from some problem with our eyes).

However, if one is to state some established framework for the analysis, then the Italian neoclassical geopolitical school, which combines *volontà* (will) of the decision makers to implement certain policies or achieve some goals, with history and geography as frameworks that influence the decision-making process, and with metaphysical judgement

1 See: Schweller 1999; chapter six in: Waltz 1979; Walt 1985, 3–43.

and ethical background (Marconi), in its foreign policy approach to the world, is the most suitable if one wishes to look at the world trends without spectacles.<sup>2</sup> The influence of history on relations between countries and geographical characteristics are evident as variables influencing those who make decisions.<sup>3</sup>

When it comes to implementing policies based on tactics and strategies to achieve certain objectives, then plans and provisions are made by a mix of area specialists, experts that might have graduated from the IR but have experience in field work or have been employed in research institutions. Scholars - realists, liberals, constructivists, or neo-Marxists - are rarely the ones who prepare scenarios and projections for those who make decisions in the West. In this “scientific” ivory tower, they mostly construct theoretical constructs and comment or criticize each other. Nevertheless, sometimes even they have a chance of ‘talking to power’ and advising it, like Samuel Huntington did. Different is the case in Russia, for example, where Sergej Glazev or Nataliya Narochmitskaya and Sergei Karaganov do talk and counsel decision makers. But in the Russian case, these academicians do not adhere to any of the western-defined schools of thought in IR.

Specialised consultant firms and think tanks are the ones engaged by governments and corporations for forecasting of international political, economic, and security trends. Oxford Analytica is one of them with analysis team led by practitioners and eventually former researchers at policy institutes (think tanks). Intelligence agencies are making estimates for the future (National Intelligence Council 2021), while academics eventually collect the data on those actually engaging in forecasting.

The fact that ivory tower academics do not collaborate with those who implement the policies they fantasize about does not mean that it

2 For the Italian classical geopolitical thought see: Marconi 2012, 47–64; Lizza 2001; Massi 1986, 3–45; Famous Oxford Analytica is not the same as Cambridge Analytica engaged in scandal of collecting data of Facebook users. See the analyst team: “Oxford Analytica, Analysts”.

3 Good example is Syrian-Turkish relations. Historically Turks were occupiers of Syria and Republican Turkey used opportunity in 1939 to get province of Hatay - former Sanjak Alexandretta that after the WWI went to French mandate territory of Syria - to join it, using international context of approaching world war and positioning of Turkey in it. Even today this issue occasionally represents a stumbling stone in relations among two countries, for years now involved also in the war. It is the above mentioned that contribute to the prolonged historical enmity between two countries. Geopolitical position of the province, just like the usage of waters has influence on the relations of Damascus and Ankara. For historical enmity see: Phillips, 2011, 35; For old and new disputes over the province see: Sancak 2019.

should be a rule, or that prediction should not be studied. It might be that abstract theorising is, as Morgenthau wrote decades before, the escape from reality in a safe space without the responsibility to test the framework through which one understands the world of international relations (Morgenthau 1970, 243–261).

What is the essence of the discipline if not to understand the patterns of behaviour of international actors and predict their behaviour? The trouble is that those actors are not some abstract mechanic units of the international system but human governed entities, which is the reason why Hedley Bull criticised ‘scientific theorists’.<sup>4</sup> Some international actors act as a result of human reasoning and decision-making. Therefore, scholarly understanding of the way units of the system behave is often deeply wrong and ahistorical because of the generalization that does not take into account motivation and the will (mentioned *volontà*), formal and informal agreements influencing the decision-making process on foreign policy and the internal processes that shape how some actors behave. Therefore, there is no mathematical formula to predict how a state, political or religious movement or organization, or an association of people wielding significant influence on politics and the economy, will act. Otherwise, there would be some formula, and everything would be predictable. The future would be certain. What to do then?

“quantification, except for the hideous pile of arid terms and the so-called theories without practical application, did not produce anything useful.” However, it does not mean that one should renounce the predictions, as they are useful and necessary for well-planned policies of any sort. It is necessary to combine common sense, prudence (*phronesis*), and historical, political, and economic processes knowledge” (Janković 2016, 127).

Yes, it means that prediction in IR is a process that is not definable as in natural sciences. It relies on a classical political approach. It also involves intuition, which, like power, defies strict definition, as observed by Joseph Nye (Nye 1990, 177). It also requires some inside information,

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4 Bull from the position of classical approach claims that questions about concrete behavior of countries, about role of war and other essential issues in the field of international relations should be answered also by IR scientific theorists. But “(W)hen confronted with them they do one of things. Either they shy away and devote themselves to peripheral subjects—methodologies for dealing with the subject, logical extrapolations of conceptual frameworks for thinking about it, marginalia of the subject that are susceptible of measurement or direct observation—or they break free of their own code...” and resort to classical approach. See: Bull 1966, 367.

as above-mentioned, and accumulated data that needs to be elaborated. Classical prediction, which is mostly used in the final chapter of a scientific monograph or part of an article, is a weighing of the chances that some process will proceed in some direction. For example, Vuković contends that if the gap between Beijing and New Delhi in technological, economic, and overall security continues to widen, India may form a strategic military alliance with the United States. If armed border clashes between Asian giants persist, the likelihood of an Indo-American alliance is increased (Vuković 2020, 261). Still, detecting global trends requires much more data and intuition, as the task is not only larger in extension but more demanding as it pretends to address trends spanning politics, economics, security, and culture.

*Quid sequitur?* Hence, what lies in the future? Prediction in this text deals with global trends and with what will be the repercussions of the current world reordering. In 2017, I have published two articles with predictions on global trends, envisaging World War Three as different from the two conducted in the 20th century. If previously, Ukraine, the South and East China Seas, and the Middle East were predicted as three major loci for the escalation of what might be termed as World War Three, is it still the same, or are we already in it? To answer this question, we will present a brief overview of major international social and political trends.

## MAJOR TRENDS

A World War as a major power redistribution event is always a major trend, a global crisis. The apex of the Ukrainian crisis raised the perspective of a conventional world war. Tensions between China, the USA, and Taiwan seem to further this trend. Conflict potential and the economic crisis in some Middle Eastern, Western and other countries may create an explosive mix. There are “small world wars”, that is to say, wars with the participation of countries from different continents. International wars in the Middle Eastern theatres may be classified as “small world wars.” Thus, two multinational wars, the Syrian and Libyan, involve countries from more than three continents. For a long time, the Middle East and the Balkans have been critical arenas for power calculations. Before the Crimean War, Russia, Great Britain, and France were competing for the influence and rule of the Ottoman territories and subsidiaries. Before WWI, Italy took over Libya, and France and Germany were on the brink of war over Morocco. Germany became a partner of the Ottoman Turks, and the Balkan wars were a prelude to

the major European war (WWI). Similarly, German and Italian threats to British colonial rule in the Mediterranean were one of the triggers for the major war conflagration.

But let us stop for the moment. What is a world war? This is an international armed conflict waged in theatres on more than one continent, in which all or most of the great powers are participating, with political, economic, and social consequences felt on various continents. These consequences regard the redistribution of power at the international level and thus changes in the world order (Jankovic 2017, 45). Besides the definition, it is important to underline the nature or causes of the world war, including the trends signaling the advent of such an historical event.

## **New West**

The Cold War victory of the West was followed by a series of wars and changes in social and cultural practices in Western countries. Transformation occurred in societies with previous Christian traditions and mostly with strong social policies (Europe and Canada) or at least with wide individual and collective rights that permitted the flourishing of various communities, but with a Christian-based moral fabric of general society. Even the United States and Australia were like this.

Ever since the victory at the end of the 1980s, with the exceptions of Hungary and Poland, the West has become increasingly religiously neutral with the abandoning of Christian values and traditions.<sup>5</sup> Flags with colors representing LGBT+ and related manifestations; consumer festivals instead of religious ones (night of museum, shopping night...); violent demonstrations of political extremists; and estrangement of migrant communities from the changing domicile population are new symbols. Tensions in agencies, (understood as part of the structure of international relations) reflect or cause changes in the structured Western-led order. Whatever the segment one decides to take into consideration, the fact remains that online and increasingly heterogeneous societies are producing internal conflicts, hardly manageable as the number of confronted groups is growing. As Randall Collins understood in 1993, “The overarching pattern for the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first is that resources for mobilizing conflicts have become more widespread” but pullulation of interest groups has rendered the conflicts more fragmented and less shared by general society (Collins 1993, 300). Interest groups representing a wide range

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5 Think of Christmas wars phenomenon in USA and later in Great Britain.

of collectives, from LGBT promoters to feminists, migrant communities and their supporters, old trade unions, pro-abortionists, antiabortionists, and similar, are easing social tensions by diminishing wider conflict in society and encouraging fragmentation of the fight.

The creation of new conflicted groups went in parallel with transformation and with so-called liberalization in economies. In effect, corporations are becoming financially big with no precedent in recorded history. Waning protection of workers, coupled with a decline in social policies and declining rights of the workforce, hurt employment security. Lower wages and spreading job insecurity, in turn, “have a negative impact on macroeconomic development and growth” (Quak and van de Vijzel, 2014). Different analyses sponsored by the World Bank, IMF, and corporations will offer different perspectives on how “flexibility” and “adaptation”—nice words to hide lower real wages and less security for employees—are actually good. For those purposes, it is useful to read a brilliant monography with an indicative title *Toxic Sludge is Good for You: Lies, Damn Lies, and the Public Relations Industry* (Stauber and Rampton 1995). And good it is, but for the 1 percent, while the rest are mostly ‘losers’ of globalization, or how Clinton called them ‘deplorables’<sup>6</sup> (World Bank 2018). In fact, so-called flexibility, which accounts mostly for externalization of labour and dislocation of the post of production, is diminishing constantly number of employees, not only among blue but increasingly also among white collars in countries where business was initially developed. Further transfer of work out of offices and factories to the internet diminishes costs for the company and lowers the level of employment (McKinsey Global Institute 2021). It also augments the costs for the employed, who now need to use more electricity, heating and other costs reserved for the company when an employee works at its premises. If rising fuel costs continue the trend seen with COVID-19 measures, resulting in a 20% reduction in business travel, this will not jeopardize the superrich lifestyle (McKinsey Global Institute 2021). Potentially explosive subjugation of public and private life to more controls may instigate group protests. In order to prevent, sedate or placate them, surveillance is necessary. If previously, surveillance over the population was characteristic of totalitarian communist regimes, formally liberal democracies are increasingly turning themselves into nanny states. Growing monitoring of the population on the one hand and a lessening of the social policies aimed at helping the population,

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6 See how different organizations and corporation permeated with liberal capitalist culture of deregulation cheer in essence the growing disparity between the 1% and the rest: World Bank 2018.



coupled with economic difficulties, is a recipe for a society somewhere between the Brave New World and the Orwellian 1984. For the first time in history, the coronavirus SARS-2 CoV-19 related measures have transformed the world, as Kljakić notes, into:

“A world-wide regime of curfew and closure of people, of the economy, and of communications.” (The world was transformed) into a global quarantine, a universal hospital, a planetary concentration camp, and a death waiting room, in a totalitarian controlled and manipulated space filled with panic and widespread fear” (Kljakić 2022, 13).

This regime that affected the world, and in particular parts north of the Equator, was an excuse for the expansion of monitoring, controlling, and generally spying on the population, creating new polarization between those accepting government and World Health Organization (WHO) promoted therapies and other measures and those opposing or merely not accepting them.

Some three decades after the Randal Collins observation of controlled fragmented social conflicts, the polarization due to the transformation of previously liberal democracies, highlighted by Sars 2 Cov 2019 package control and looming global confrontation among enemies and supporters of Russia, is augmenting the chances of internal conflicts among those who make decisions and those who suffer their consequences. This has an effect on trends, as shapers of foreign policy actions of the state and its actions in international order are challenged to do this or that, or they could be changed. A good example is the French leadership, which needs to achieve some results in foreign policy in order to placate the internal grievances. Trump’s presidency and the evolution of the Democratic party in the USA are results of evolving internal conflicts.

Today, instead of the once economically growing European Economic Community, there is a bureaucratic superstructure fencing initiatives of political and economic freedom with thousands of rulings, edicts, and other norms. At the same time, debt expansion with digital and physical money printing is fueling the bubble of western finances. Prince Michael of Lichtenstain highlighted these phenomena.

“Central banks’ irresponsible money printing to cover government overspending and waste has created a situation in which the amount of money circulating throughout the economy disproportionately exceeds the goods and services on offer.

This phenomenon is exacerbated by the growing number of people in nearly all economies engaged in supervisory and administrative

jobs – mainly in public services – instead of productive private sector positions. The flood of laws, rules, and regulations issued at national and supranational levels has become a self-feeding engine, sucking up more and more resources.

Driven by irresponsible deficit policies, the public and administrative sectors are growing” (Prince Michael of Liechtenstein 2022).

The West is promoting trans-green communism. The spread of gender ideology, sex change, which requires lifelong therapies, the fight against cash and the so-called green economy are growing in parallel with the rise of assisted suicide and the digitalization of the economy and individual life. The fact that, contrary to what the government in Washington claims, “increasing minors’ access to cross-sex interventions is associated with a significant increase in the adolescent suicide rate” is in line with the basically misanthropic policies of the global suprasociety (Greene 2022, 3; Zinoviev, 2000). This revolutionary anti-Christian trend is deeply nihilistic. In order to create something new (if new it is), it is necessary to liquidate precedent social order and cancel culture’s modality of doing it, following the alchemic formula *Ordo ab Chao*.

Cancel culture born in the USA is being transplanted onto European soil in order to liquidate everything understood as offensive today and in the past: the arts, opera, writings, monuments, and opinions expressed in public. In turn, this process, with some analogies historically presented in different authoritarian systems, is killing social plurality and even comedy. The EU is effectively becoming the opposite of political freedom, economic growth, and evolution toward European defense. Government debt has risen far above the Maastricht criteria of 60% debt and a 3% deficit for the Eurozone. The Euro area has governmental debt of over 90 percent, and the deficit is also much higher than projected. France, for example, had a 6.5% deficit and debt of 112,9% of GDP in 2021 (Eurostat 2022; Insee 2022). Politics is restrained to only pro-EU, highly normative political spaces. Globally, in demographic, political, security and increasingly in economic parameters, the EU is less and less significant. Its share of the world’s merchandise trade is slowly but constantly diminishing<sup>7</sup> (Koopman and Wilhelm 2010, 306). EU participation in the world population is strongly in decline. After campaigning in Libya, Russian mercenaries are replacing French soldiers in Central Africa and in Mali. With the explosion of East-West conflict evident with the Ukrainian crisis, the EU is ever more evidently

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7 Look at the figure 1 that shows how since 1999 EU participation in world trade is gradually receding, in: Koopman and Wilhelm 2010, 305–312.

a civic arm of the transatlantic alliance. When it was written that the EU was entering its 1943, intended as the Wehrmacht's declining year, it referred to the EU's internal divisions, Brexit, and the bureaucracy in Brussels and Berlin's inability to develop a genuine and independent from Washington foreign affairs and security identity (Janković 2016, 138). The course of time and the latest stage of the Ukrainian crisis have accentuated the EU's dependency on the USA and its political and economic weaknesses. If there was anything more serious than a public political speech and declaration, it would be the establishment of EU common defense. The Ukrainian crisis offered the possibility for the Atlantic security establishment to consolidate the alliance grip over the military structures of the old continent with the intention of sucking in previously neutral or de facto military neutral countries like Finland and Sweden.

This attempt at closing the gaps and breaches in the front against not only Russia, but against China and the political East in general, is a result of the power growth of the Bear and Dragon in the first place, but with them also of the global East and of the South. More generally, it is an attempt to dominate global trends, to reassess the world and to monopolize the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of the few. This is the essence of the World Economic Forum proposals. That is what Ljubomir Kljakić understands as the attempt to stop the global demise of capitalist society (Kljakić 2010). Proroković (2018) observed in 2018 that the United States cannot be classified as a superpower - if such a classification was ever valid - as long as it cannot influence Central Asian regional politics (Proroković 2018, 90). By 2022, it became evident that the U.S. was not able to dominate Middle East politics anymore. Saudi Arabia, a traditional western ally (first of Britain, then of the Americans), is building a facility for extracting uranium with the help of China (Middle East Monitor, August 2022), which has become its major trade partner.<sup>8</sup> This is one of the bells ringing that the change has come.

### **Sun rises in the East**

The restructuring of the world order, evident with the apex of the Ukrainian crisis, started on February 24, 2022. Previously, Russia has secured an alliance with Azerbaijan (22 February 2022), resolved a failed coup d'état in Kazakhstan, and assured good relations with Turkey.<sup>9</sup> In

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8 See for the trade statistics: OEC 2022.

9 Two days before the military intervention Russian and Azeri presidents signed alliance Declaration in Kremlin. This document raised the cooperation level of

the midst of the crisis, the president of San Salvador is publicly criticizing the USA, and the first leftist won the presidential race in Colombia.<sup>10</sup>

The political east is becoming more homogenous or is staying as such in internal political life with the support of a myriad of realities in the political south, from theocratic government in Iran, to the autocratic regime of Kim in North Korea, to democratic Brazil and different democratic and non-democratic African and Latin American countries. The BRICS+ summit in Beijing (June 2022) announces expansion and represents an alternative to the G7, which is based on artificial economy, digital money, and financial economy. The old idea of Russian intellectual, diplomat, and politician Jevgeniy Primakov of establishing a cooperative framework of RIC (Russia, India, and China) became BRIC, then BRICS, and will eventually become BRICS+. Argentina and Iran would like to join the club, while Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Thailand, and Bangladesh are also interested in economic partnership in the framework of what is being called BRICS plus (Hafezi Faulconbridge 2022). If the “share of BRICS countries in total world commodity trade has persistently increased from 7.33% in 2001 to 17.25% in 2015”, today BRICS accounts for more than 16 percent of all trade (including in services) (Kalpana 2016, 103). Iran and Russia are determined to finally ditch the US dollar from bilateral trade payments in order to bypass the sanctions on bank transactions through the SWIFT system. (Middle East Monitor, July 2022). The advancement of Russian private military companies and their relative positive image in former French colonies has been condemned in Paris. On the pretext of the Russian war in Ukraine, French president Emmanuel Macron in Africa has criticized Moscow as “l’une des dernières puissances impériales coloniales” (one of the last imperial colonial powers). Essentially, this is a diplomatic way of protesting the loss of footholds in some countries (Le Parisienne 2022). Cooperation between Moscow and Ankara is similar to that of the Saudis, but more extensive. The most significant investment is Rosatom’s (Russian state nuclear company) work on the construction of the first nuclear power plant (NPP) in Turkey. It is the first to be built using the BOO (Build-Own-Operate) model. The Russian stake in the 20 billion US dollar project is 99.2 percent (Akkuyu 2022). The announced deal with Ankara came after Russia announced a bigger investment in Iran’s oil sector worth some 40 billion US dollars (Bayramli 2022).

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cooperation by essentially establishing bilateral defense alliance. See for the English version: President.az 2022; Президент России 2022.

10 President of Salvador Nayib Bukele is constantly criticed by the White House as he has managed to calm the country and significantly reduce organized and violent crime in the country. See his twitter account. Example is: Bukele 2022. In Colombia Christian socialist former guerilla fighter Gustavo Pedro is first leftist president.

## Region in perennial turmoil: MENA

A somewhat chaotic trend in the macro region is certainly not a novelty, in particular since the Arab Spring. Fertility decline is also present here. Turkey (just like India in the Indian subcontinent) is experiencing fertility around or just below the level of replacement (2,1 children per mother). Democratic hopes were dashed in vain in Tunisia and Egypt. Internal political turmoil in Iraq and Lebanon has implications for the larger regional alliance system, just as Syria and, to a lesser extent, Libya involved foreign powers in the local quagmire. Lebanon is shaken by numerous refugees from Syria (around 1,5 million) added to 192,000 Palestinian refugees (174,422 prior to the Syrian war resided in Lebanon and 17,706 flew from Syria). (Unicef) The August 2020 Beirut bombing also dealt a devastating blow to the local economy, which had been in default since March of that year. Besides the economy, the political crisis that was initiated with the assassination of the Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005 and the Israeli war with Hezbollah in 2006, governments were caretaking, unstable, and even parliamentary elections were not held for a while (from 2013 to 2018). Lack of potable water, of cash and of grains is exacerbating rural living conditions. After many protests, the only visible perspective for common people is to be prey to local corrupt elites or, worse, of international bankers. This precarious situation leaves the government unable to defend its interests in a row with Israel, with Hezbollah as the only credible deterrent force.<sup>11</sup>

Lebanon has a significant Shia population, politically represented by two movements, Amal and Hezbollah, both having ties to Tehran and being enemies of the Jewish state. Iraq has a Shia majority, but internal divisions are exasperated after the removal of the Saddam regime, the US-led occupation in 2003, and subsequent domestic terrorism, ethnic and religious clashes, and the ISIS episode. These numerous factors perpetuated divisions in a country with a significant population of Suni Arabs and Kurds. Internal political life is complicated also by inner Shia struggles for power and personal animosities between the leader of the Sadr movement and one of the leading Shia politicians, Nouri al-Maliki (Baram, GIS 2022).

Recently

“parts of the Middle East and North Africa have been important playground for weighing strength of influence among several big and mid-range powers. In particular Syria, Libya, Iraq and with

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<sup>11</sup> See detailed situation in Lebanon in analysis for Italian Senate and Parliament: Pedde and Mezran 2022, 40.

minor importance (although with immense human tragedy) Yemen, proved to be theatres for assertive and status quo powers. While Iraq is embedded in the Middle East, Libya and Syria have shares of Mediterranean coast. Sea shore of Libya and Syria facilitated intervening countries to act, and to assert their influence in this area... Syria on the other hand is medium sized country with regional importance. It is clear that this part of the world continues to be significant for power politics” (Janković 2020, 80).

But Syria (Sham for the Arabs) vests sacral geographic importance as the place of the great battle, after which an Islamic state will be established, or in Shiite tradition, Mahdi will show up and lead the (Shia) Islamic Army (Karouny 2014). In Christian and Judaic tradition, Syria and Mesopotamia in general, are places of events preceding the final battle of Christ and Antichrist at the head of armies, or of Gog’s led army that will for that event, or before flood in the Holy Land (Ezekiel 38, 8–12; 39,2).<sup>12</sup>

Today, Iraq is torn apart between Iranian, American, Israeli, and Turkish interests (Baram 2022). Internal clashes are evident among the Shia. The Talabani and Barzani clans in northern Iraq’s Kurdistan Autonomous Region have historically clashed with Israeli, Iranian, and Turkish interests. Their concern is primarily independence. That is why representatives of both clans, on the occasion of the announced US withdrawal from Iraq (the withdrawal of 2011), asked if Americans would continue to support Kurdistan (Romano 2010, 1345). Lebanon’s food and water crisis is certainly not an isolated situation in the region. Egypt is suffering from food shortages, and the continuous Gaza siege leaves little time for the local Palestinian Arabs to survive prior to total despair. The worldwide “food crisis” is well underway and, according to World Food Program chief David Beasley, it will be “beyond anything we’ve seen in our lifetime” (Metwally 2022).

## CONCLUSIONS FOR TOMORROW

The increasing separation of the G7 countries, and the West in general, from a rising number of countries is intensifying economic, cultural, political, and media conflicts. This shift in the world order is historically followed by major conflicts. The old “masters of the universe” are generally not willing to cede control without a fight. Today, it is

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12 For the detailed interpretation of the Ezekiel and other excerpts from the Holly Bible in Serbian, see: Kostić Palanski 2022.

precisely the Western world that is unwilling to relinquish the reins it seized in the 18th century. Major structural changes announced with cultural and after economic and political changes originated in the Western world are being emphasised with the unresolved economic crisis since 2008/9, the demographic collapse of European domicile populations and the spread of bureaucratic overregulation. First coronavirus measures, societal and economic changes, and NATO imposition on EU defense policies, combined with a new world conflict, cost Europe dearly, as they had in the previous two world wars. However, it has collapsing fertility rates of domiciled European peoples with increasingly canceled histories and arts this time around. Economic transition is paired with demographic and political change.

By canceling non-coherent views, arts, monuments, and authors, i.e., by canceling culture, European history, culture, and remnants of its once Christian values are barred. However, the fate of the global suprasociety is not entirely dependent on the EU or the collective West. It has permeated elites in the Arab world and also in Asia. That is why the multidimensional nascent World War transcends national borders. Thus, the war between Russia and the West is fought not only in Russia itself.

The will of the western globalised elites to transform their and other societies is followed by decisions: laws, edicts, regulations, and treaties that are being abandoned as the world order shakes and crumbles. But in the European Union and in the collective West, it is proceeding. The outcome of those decisions, deeply rooted in the misanthropic nature of ruling elites, is not only the killing of cows but the general euthanasia of European values.

The world order crisis exacerbated by the war in Ukraine has different repercussions in different regions. In the Middle East, water stress has the dangerous addition of famine. Some countries in this part of the world are heavily reliant on imports of food, in particular of grains. Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen are the most obvious examples. Africa is also experiencing shortages of food. Still, political divisions in Iraq and Lebanon, as well as unresolved but relatively calm wars in Libya and Yemen, as well as an ongoing war in Syria, as well as a continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Turkish incursions in Iraqi Kurdistan, signal a return to instability in the MENA region. This means that the crisis might just explode. Expected political change in Turkey may broaden the scope of military operations south of the Black Sea. This would mean that in the near future, the World War that was announced in Syria might return to the home region in the near future.

Still, the war theater has its new scene with Taiwan and the coasts of the South and East China Sea in the period ahead. The AUKUS coalition was created mostly in order to prepare Anglo-American forces for that scenario. According to this viewpoint, the current global conflict bears some resemblance to WWII.

Saudi Arabia's unprecedented behaviour in the Ukrainian crisis and its refusal to align with Washington against Moscow is a symptom of a broader revolution in international relations. Nations with restored or preserved traditions, sharing historical memories of western dominance over longer or shorter time spans, are re-emerging as major players in their respective regions or on a global scale.

Elites in Russia, China and in some other countries, like in Brazil, India and Iran, are not canceling their cultures, but building upon them. They are establishing a multipolar world order, and that shift in power distribution in different continents is sort of the new world war.

Historical subjugation of the global East and the South is reaching its end. These increasingly multipolar, conflicted, and divisive trends, which are detrimental to the European Union and the West, will increase the potential for internal conflict in European societies.

The fact that China, India, Turkey, the Arab world, most African countries, and a growing number of Latin American countries did not sanction Russia and instead cooperate with Moscow represents a significant global trend toward the transformation of global world order and power transfer. The growing importance of BRICS and the nascent BRICS+ format indicates that the future is deeply conflicting. The outcome of the war will mark a break in nihilistic trends. Expectation that it will bring humanity closer to the dystopian green transcommunist global community is lessening as the economic, political, and military crisis on the European continent is protracting.



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## **СВЕТСКИ ТРЕНДОВИ ОД 2022.**

### **Сажетак**

Рад подељен у три целине неједнаке дужине се бави анализом светских трендова у скоријој будућности. Прогноза кључних процес на глобалном нивоу је главни задатак дисциплине међународних односа. Аутор поставља питање да ли текуће реструктурирање светског поретка може узрокује избијање новог Светског рата. Како би одговорио на ово питање, он прво наглашава важност прогнозе и објашњава значење светског рата. Аутор тврди да је погрешно захтевати коришћење теоретског оквира зарад научне прогнозе. По њему, најближе објективности је коришћење италијанске неокласичне геополитичке школе. У чланку, се испитују међународни, национални, друштвени, политички и укратко економски трендови на колективном Западу и на Блиском истоку. Аутор објашњава зашто БРИКС, те Југ и Исток остварују раст и предводе промене у великој редистрибуцији моћи у оквиру новог мултиполарног светског поретка.

**Кључне речи:** предвиђање, прогноза, Светски рат, светски поредак, кансл култура, Колективни Запад, Блиски исток, БРИКС

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