



CHAPTER 8

**THREE TYPES OF WORLD POLITICS:
COMPARING RUSSIAN DETERRENCE,
CHINESE INTERCONNECTIVITY AND
TURKISH DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES**

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Abstract

The great transformation in world politics during the 21st century is considered with a particular focus on the Western dominance vis-à-vis challenges and strategies adopted by emerging powers. This study aims to unravel the historical underpinnings of Western expansionism, explore the dynamics between the status quo and revisionism, and trace the evolution of the modern global order. Special emphasis is placed on analyzing case studies of Russia, China, and Türkiye to understand their respective approaches to world politics and shape it. Russia pursues a multi-polar world and employs revisionist policies inspired by its Soviet and Tsarist-era dominance, particularly through deterrence strategies in security, energy, nuclear plants. China proposes interconnectivity in world governance through dependency and network policies, most significantly exemplified by the economic policies through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and multi-billion projects as an economic power all over the world. Lastly, Türkiye, despite lacking economic and security power compared to China and Russia, leverages its historical influence from the Ottoman Empire, religious discourse in the Islamic world, Turkic identity in Central Asia and strong modernization process through the part of Western institutions such as NATO and EU accession process, employing diplomatic power as a key tool. Analyzing these cases separately and collectively is benefited from the grand strategy concept and comparative politics method. In summary, this research seeks to contribute to our understanding of the evolving dynamics of world politics in the 21st century. By conceptualization through the historical events, contemporary trends, and case studies of major powers, the study aims to shed light on the complex interplay between Western hegemony and emerging powers for world order.

Keywords

Status-Quo, Revisionism, Western Hegemony, China, Russia, Türkiye

Introduction: History as a Two Tales of Grand Strategies

The interplay of power among civilizations and regions has remained in constant flux, showcasing a dynamic and ever-changing process throughout history (McNeill, 1995). Hegemon powers have asserted their influence; while opposing revisionist forces have aimed to reshape established order but transformation necessitates a paradigm shift and the presence of capable actors to drive this process. Therefore, world history unfolds not solely as a narrative of established powers' dominance, but also as a tale of revisionism driven by opposing forces. Amid the global transformations shaped by hegemonic powers and revisionists, new paradigms emerge in each period, shaping the historical evolution from the era of Alexander the Great through the Roman Empire, Islamic Civilization, Mongol and Chinese Empires and lastly Western powers and challenges of discontents.

Conceptualization to grand strategies of world powers during the protection of status-quo or proposing revisionism, the study will conceptualize the notion of grand strategy, drawing from the perspectives of Williamson Murray and Charles Hill. Instead of determining certain strategies for states based on their capacity and clear targets, Murray (2011, p. 39) explores grand strategy through the analogy of a French peasant soup, a mixture of items thrown into the pot over the course of a week and then eaten, for which no recipe can possibly exist. Additionally, the study utilizes Hill's (2010) perspective, employing case studies ranging from ancient Greece to modern China to illustrate the evolution of grand strategy and world order through literature, statecraft and history. These studies shed light on our research and will enable us to conduct in-depth analyses of each country.

To understand today's world order, we must look to historical developments as Gaddis highlights that "we know the future only by the past we project into it" (Gaddis, 2002). The establishment of the modern world order began with Western expansion, starting with geographical explorations and continuing through colonialism, followed by industrial and political revolutions within a Western-centered world. J. C. Sharman emphasizes that from the 16th to 18th century, "Europeans did not enjoy any significant military superiority vis-à-vis non-Western opponents in the early modern era, even in Europe". He follows "The greatest conquerors and empire-builders of the early modern era were in fact Asian empires, from the Ottomans in the Near East to the Mughals in South Asia, and the Ming and Manchu Qing in China" (Sharman, 2019). The triumphs of Western conquistadors and expansionist policies can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the leverage of diseases, alliances with local communities, the deployment of advanced weaponry, and the capitalization on power vacuums in regions like Africa, America, and India. The foundations of Western expansionism are rooted in the pursuit of Eastern wealth, aiming to conquer, exert control, and establish dominance to safeguard economic interests and achieve global supremacy.

Along with the Western expansionism and colonial history, the political history of modern world system traces back to Great French Revolution which has subsequently been shaped between revisionist Napoleon Wars and Peace of Westphalia system. Westphalian system established an "international order based on mutual independence, political tolerance, and the balance of power" stood in stark "contrast to the menacing Napoleonic imperial vision" (Kayaoglu, 2010). As a nature of revisionism "war" is inevitably intertwined with "peace" which can be seen in the novel of Tolstoy who depicted the 19th century of Russia through the story of two families (Russian -and French) and an outrider during the Napoleon War whose effect to culture (Gallie, 1978; Wood, 2007). Instead of Hegelian approach to Napoleon categorized as a world spirit and hero on horseback (Broussard, 1995), Tolstoy identifies him as a "slave of history" (Thrift, 2019) whose historical perspective is like more Annales school (Burke, 2013) to focus on long durée and life of ordinary people for analyzing the change and transformation in history (Welch, 2017). Whether focusing on the world leaders as a slave or driving force of history, world politics has been revisited and revised irrevocably which shaped ordinary life during the 19th century after the Napoleon Campaign which represents as a paradigm shift in world history (Zaretsky, 2022).

The revisionism of the Napoleon Campaign has ended with the Congress of Vienna which reorganized Europe under the leadership of Austria, Chancellor Klemens von Metternich, along with Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain. Preserving status-quo, establishing European balance of power and territorial settlement was ensured by the parties of Congress as the most-comprehensive treaty that

Europe had ever seen. In spite of the Congress of Vienna, the idea behind the French Revolution, specifically nationalism and civil liberties, has spread across Europe and the world including the Ottoman Empire (Hobsbawm, 2010). Unfortunately, congress was only “keep the peace” among the populations in a short term without enduring the peace in Europe through interventionism which resulted with endless succession of insurrections during the 1820s, down to the revolutions of 1848 (Ghervas, 2014). Therefore, none of the great powers and consensus on status-quo is able to stop the course of history as we are facing today.

From the 19th century onwards, the intensity of great power competition within Europe escalated dramatically, notably during WWI and the subsequent WWII, which expanded globally due to colonialism. Germany’s belated engagement in colonial endeavors and its assertive demands precipitated a global conflict, while the post-WWI order’s foundational requisites remained unfulfilled, a circumstance coined “a peace to end all peace” by David Fromkin (Karpas, 1991). The prelude to WWII was characterized by efforts to sustain tranquility, succeeded by an enduring panorama of great power rivalry in an increasingly interconnected world, ultimately culminating in the Cold War. As multilateral institutions surged, the antagonism between the USA and the USSR during the Cold War culminated in a bifurcation of international establishments, particularly manifested by NATO and the Warsaw Pact in security doctrines. The cessation of the Cold War epoch and the establishment of a unipolar world under American hegemony and Western ideals now stand in question amidst a contemporary global predicament. While this scenario has been depicted as a portrayal of the “end of history,” a narrative aiming to propagate Western ideals and supremacy worldwide as conceptualized by Fukuyama (2006), a current vantage point reveals that it portends heightened conflicts and more substantial revisions on the horizon.

The demand of revisionism has been amplified by emerging powers, most notably China, alongside Russia and Türkiye, warranting particular attention. As Paul Kennedy points out, a country’s production capability has ultimately determined its ability to wield and maintain its power in international politics (Kennedy, 1987). Since 1945, the US has wielded remarkable political, cultural, and military supremacy, underpinned and facilitated by its robust economy. The US, however, seems to have passed its prime, Martin Jacques asserts that the US is already starting to experience the typical issues associated with imperial overreach. Prior to delving into China’s role, it is imperative to consider the revisionist aspirations of Russia and Türkiye in shaping the world system’s conceptual and contextual framework. Russia stands as a pivotal actor in both contemporary and past eras, a stature primarily rooted in its geographical, ideological, and civilizational narrative that historically positioned itself as an alternative to the West. The dissolution of the USSR led to a decline in Russia’s global superpower status, resulting in limited influence even within regional politics. In response, Vladimir Putin emerged as a prominent figure, adopting a “historical revisionist” approach to contemporary developments (Chotiner, 2022). Türkiye aims to strengthen the multilateral system against superpowers while advocating for reforms to make it more just, particularly in relation to the UN Security Council. Türkiye is well-positioned to play this limited revisionist role, as it envisions a system that represents not only Islamic, Turkic, and non-Western nations but also the West, given its role in Western multilateral institutions, especially NATO.

Russian Grand Strategy: Deterrence for Multipolar World

A rules-based international order is one where the rules govern to restrict the use-of-force to provide justice for the weak. However, the Russian grand strategy revolves around stability, where order is prized over justice (Allison, 2017). Hence, the Russian foreign policy is predominantly concerned on two fundamental points: the preservation of the international system of power balances and Russia’s “rightful” place within these balances. Today, within the context of American hegemony, it operates under a significant security paranoia, constructing all revisionism through the prism of security perception (Purushothamam, 2022) fueled by the relative decline in power and rupture of unity within the western world that create opportunities for Russian military aggression.

Russia does not attempt to uproot the international settlement and make it anew according to its own design but simply acts to preserve its own position as a dominant, independent and sovereign player within the system (Kofman, 2020). As a consequence, sovereignty is one of the most important tenets

of Russian discourse in foreign policy. In Russia and abroad, Russian state upholds regime security over human security to preserve the stability of the system and adamantly criticizes US policies in pursuit of regime change throughout Eurasia, which is one of the main drivers of Russian foreign policy. This is also why while Russia defends a rules-based order in the international arena, it refuses the emergence of a new form of international law where the practices of states are “expected to conform to emergent global norms of conduct” which would override the principle of sovereignty (Allison, 2017).

History of Russian Revisionism

Russia’s current grand strategy of maintaining stability in power relations is deeply rooted in its historical habits and practices (Kofman, 2020). Since the Napoleonic Wars, Russia has consistently aimed to secure its position within the global order. In the early nineteenth century, Russia pursued revisionist policies, seeking access to warm water ports. During the Greek revolts, the Tsar’s government considered intervening in the Ottoman Empire to gain control of its Balkan territories. However, Russia ultimately opted for negotiation and limited military intervention. This decision was influenced by Russia’s role as one of the founders of the Concert of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars, which gave it a central position in the international order—a position it sought to preserve by balancing the Greek nationalist revolt against imperial rule (Goddard, 2018). In the following years, Russia supported Greek independence alongside other European powers, illustrating that Russia’s relationship with the international order also involved a dimension of coercive policies.

Following World War I, the newly established Soviet Union refused to join the League of Nations or to pay foreign debts of the Tzar, and in turn, the Western powers did not recognize the Soviet Union. The diplomatic isolation pushed Soviets to pursue ties outside the status-quo. This led to the establishment of the Communist International, also known as Comintern, which brought together a global network of Communist emissaries (Goddard, 2018). These events brought a new dimension to the Russian grand strategy where henceforth Russia not only vied to preserve its dominant status in the global order, it also wove new networks to make available alternative settlements. This new dimension is reflected in the writings of a Soviet diplomat Maxim Litvinov where he endorsed the “[division of] the world into separate zones of security within the framework of an overarching international organization” (Goddard, 2018).

The World War II has seen the devastation of the balance of power and the global order. The postwar order was to be made by the victorious Allied powers, one of which was the Soviet Union. The ties created between the Soviets and the Western powers due to wartime cooperation and agreements provided a suitable environment for the engagement of the two during the reconstruction of the postwar order. Accordingly, Soviet diplomats played a key and active role during the establishment of the Bretton Woods system and the United Nations. During that time, the Soviets gave primacy to diplomatic channels to safeguard their global status because they believed that communist electoral victories were very likely in the war-torn Europe. Thus, this brief era saw cooperation to a large extent and very little confrontation (Goddard, 2018).

This rhetoric was disrupted when USSR’s expectations did not materialize. The Western powers turned out to be more politically maneuverable than the communists and swayed the elections in France and Italy. As communists were expelled from Western governments, Soviets were isolated by the Western powers. This isolation led USSR to adopt an “exit strategy” (Goddard, 2018). Despite taking part in the drafting of the Bretton Woods agreement, USSR did not sign it because it “would result in its subordination to the United States.” (Molodyko, 2020). Starting with this, USSR returned to its prewar policy of pursuing exclusive spheres of influence, establishing a network of international economic and security frameworks (Goddard, 2018).

Following the dissolution of the USSR, Russia became a closed and isolated country, largely losing its international influence. The presidency of Vladimir Putin saw Russia regain a considerable amount of its former strength and return to its previous policies of revisionism. Most notably, the breach of the most fundamental rule of the modern international system, the restriction of the use of force, with the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US prompted Russia to return to its interventionist policies,

apparent from the speech given by President Putin in 2007 at the Munich Security Conference which heavily criticized the unipolar world, followed by the invasion of Georgia in 2008 (Rzeszutko, 2022). This revival of the Russian grand strategy was further emphasized by the words of the President Putin in the Contemporary Russian History documentary aired in 2021: “Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama” (Aydın, 2022). However, the contemporary revival of Russian revisionism had a particular character, being outflanked in Europe by NATO and EU and competing with China in Asia, “Russia has increasingly turned to violent action in its near abroad and become more vocal in its overt challenge to the international order” (Goddard, 2018).

Contemporary Russian Grand Strategy

The contemporary Russian grand strategy resembles an extension of the previous eras. The goal remains the same, preserving the global order in which Russia is a key player, sustaining Russia’s position within this order and creating alternative international systems.

In the international arena, Russia vies to preserve the order established after the World War II. It considers the UN Charter, and the Security Council’s position within it, as the cornerstone and constitution of any possible modern international system. In a UN General Assembly speech given in 2015, Putin remarked that undermining the legitimacy of the UN could “lead to a collapse of the entire architecture of international organizations, and then indeed there would be no other rules left but the rule of force” (Putin, 2015). In line with that directive, Russia resists any secondary way of interpreting or applying international law. Most notably, Russia opposes the use of customary international law, unwritten rules of international law formed by state practice and general opinion, for international adjudication because they are “shaped primarily by the dominant states in the international system—which for the post-Cold War era means the United States and its allies” and justifications made over them can bypass Russia’s position in the UNSC. Because of that, for example, Russia claims that the responsibility to protect (R2P) norm, which is used to justify military intervention, can only be invoked following an authorization of the UNSC despite using it itself to justify its war with Georgia (Allison, 2017).

Russia retains this attitude in its bilateral relations as well. It broke away from the revolutionary vein of the USSR and returned to the stance of Tzarist Russia on the matter of regime change to preserve the stability of the international system. Russia has denounced all developments for regime change, such as the Arab Spring and the Maidan revolution in Ukraine, as “externally inspired efforts” strategically induced by the US. Russia also reverted its stance on the argument of “legitimacy”. Legitimacy was invoked to pass the resolution that enabled intervention in Libya, which led to the overthrow Gaddafi. When the same argument was used for Syria, Putin noted “We do not want the Libyan or Iraqi scenario to be repeated in Syria” and militarily intervened to prevent the collapse of the Assad Regime (Allison, 2017).

As seen here, contemporary Russian revisionism derives not from a desire to reform the global order but from the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself in a European security architecture built around and without it. When Russia began its recovery under President Putin, it desired to have a say in the security arrangements of Europe (Kofman, 2020). To press its claims, in other words, to give Russia its “rightful” place in the European security arrangements, Russia leveraged two capabilities: military might and weaponization of energy.

While not an expansionist power per se, Russia’s conception of security inevitably led it to military confrontations with and within other states. Since the Cold War, Russian military began to utilize what is called “active defense”. While nuclear capabilities made direct military confrontation unfeasible between the Soviet Union and the United States, Soviet high command realized that 1950s onward, there were not much to be gained from direct offensive approaches. This led to a reevaluation of the Soviet concept of warfare. Unlike passive defense, which revolves around defensive infrastructure to defend a certain frontier, active defense works by shifting forces and leveraging maneuverability. In that form of warfighting, the aim is not to attain a decisive result within a territory but is to conduct strategic operations, maneuvers, noncontact warfare and exploiting possibilities of counterattack at the expense of territory only to refuse victory to the other side, US and its allies, and draw the conflict into a war of

attrition so that wars can be ended with favorable or at least acceptable terms. However, because direct confrontation is ruled out, expanding the conflict to other theaters, in other words, fighting in other countries in the forms of proxy wars is a fundamental necessity for active defense (Kofman et al., 2021).

Current Russian military strategy is an extension of active defense, supported by intimidation and threat. Russia leverages its increasing military capability to induce restraint in its opponents and calculates its moves according to a “structured escalation management strategy”, using enough force to intimidate its adversaries into restraint but limited enough to prolong the war of attrition, using nuclear threat as a mean of de-escalation (Kofman, 2020). This is the attitude Russia adopted in its intervention in Syria and the way it conducts the war in Ukraine bears significant similarities.

To align Russian General Valery Gerasimov’s doctrine with the grand strategy concept of this study, it articulates the integration of military and non-military forces during the power competition. Along with this perspective, Russia has weaponized energy to strengthen its position in the global order. Russia has extensive energy resources: it is first in natural gas, second in coal, fifth in petroleum worldwide and has vast water, wind and solar energy potential. With the 1973 Oil Crisis, the political potential of energy was made apparent, and Russia exploits this potential and the lack of a unified political stance among EU countries to expand its influence over Europe through energy dependency and bilateral agreements. To safeguard its dominance in the energy market, Russia is involved heavily with the Caspian Sea region which is strategically important because of its considerable hydrocarbon reserves. Through bilateral agreements with Caspian Sea countries, Russia has countered US attempts to penetrate the region, blocked European searches for alternatives and ensured energy demand and markets alternative to Europe, alleviating its own dependency (Aydın, 2023).

Apart from monopolizing it, Russia leverages energy to build partnerships and expand its sphere of influence. Through cooperation with China and projects on energy extraction and transportation, Russia has penetrated the Asia-Pacific region which helped it overcome the sanctions imposed since 2014. Apart from gas and oil, Russia also utilizes nuclear energy for this purpose. Rosatom, a Russian state nuclear energy institution, participates in diplomatic initiatives by building nuclear reactors in foreign countries which, as of today, has built such reactors in 12 countries. Because of the nature of these projects, the building, upkeep, operation and decommissioning of the reactors prolong the partnership between the client states and Russia over 100-year periods (Aydın, 2023).

In addition to the bilateral partnerships, Russia seeks alternative international systems to help its struggle with the West. One of the main focuses of Russian efforts in that regard has been to decrease its vulnerability to Western sanctions for which it seeks to diversify available payment instruments. In 1952, an international economic conference convened in Moscow with the initiative of the USSR that aimed to formulate a financial system among the socialist countries not tied to the dollar which resulted in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance and the use of transferable Ruble as the first international currency that is used exclusively for international trade and investment (Molodyko, 2020). In 2023, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov remarked “Serious, self-respecting countries are well aware of what is at stake, see the incompetence of the ‘masters’ of the current international monetary and financial system, and want to create their own mechanisms to ensure sustainable development, which will be protected from outside dictates” declaring that BRICS is considering a common currency not tied to the dollar (Teslova, 2023). Although a common currency looks far-fetched for now, BRICS have already initiated infrastructural work on BRICS Pay, a common platform which will enable the switch to national currencies in inter-BRICS trade, marking a significant step of de-dollarization. Russia has also taken bilateral steps in that regard with China, Türkiye and India (Molodyko, 2020).

Chinese Grand Strategy: Interconnected World

China is a rising power and an increasingly dominant player in global politics. It has unsettled Asia-Pacific security arrangements with its rising military and economic might and by laying territorial claims, established new regional ties through institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and engaged in unprecedented international economic activity (Goddard, 2018). Also,

rapid Chinese development have caught the interest of the developing countries which began to induce a paradigmatic shift conceptualized as a “need to build state governance capacities and reinforce the centrality of the state within the economy and polity” (Springborg, 2009), reinforced by the extent of Chinese global engagement. This placed China as a contender for revising the global liberal order, systematized by the formulation of “Chinese School” of international relations.

Historically, Chinese civilizational discourse has been geared towards hegemony, both locally and globally. Contemporary China projects its power internationally over the economy which has become a revisionist policy tool, reshaping the parameters of international relations, rewriting existing norms, and challenging prevailing systems (Gilpin, 1981). China’s economic prowess led the states in its interlocutor to perceive it as a stabilizing force both regionally and internationally, exemplified by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a venture aimed at nurturing economic growth and security in non-Western realms. This shift in perception also gave rise to calls for redefining the Western-centered system, advocating for a recalibration of global security and economic progress across all regions according to current power balances.

Following these calls, the “Chinese School” of international relations was formulated. Efforts for establishing the Chinese School began in 2000s as an intellectual movement. The School developed in conjunction with yet independent from the state tutorship and reflects not the official Chinese communist doctrine, but is conceived as an extension of thousands-of-years old Chinese intellectual contributions, bearing fragments from Taoism, Confucianism and Marxism. The Chinese culture views individuals as “parts of a social web” and hence the Chinese School of IR focuses mainly on co-existing and cooperating in an interactive web of relationships, giving rise to the foreign policy approach, symbiosis (Xiao, 2024).

Concordantly, China refrains from using its economic or military power to intervene in foreign countries or compel other states into its will. Instead, its grand strategy provides an alternative approach to global politics by promoting economic development and political stability throughout the non-Western world over its initiatives like BRI. This has two main causes. First, China’s journey to superpower status was propelled exclusively by its economic development, triggering a spillover effect across various domains. This unique trajectory of China’s rise as a superpower through mutual benefit, which is a paradigm shift from Eurocentric view of the world, introduces a novel world concept within the realm of revisionism. Second, China has integrated to the international institutional framework over the past two decades and has benefited immensely from it, especially economically. This makes overturning the international institutional framework not only costly for China but it also strikes to the very source of its power. Hence, China is a “bridging revisionist”, bending the international system by forging new economic and political networks through institutions like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRI, and the AIIB (Goddard, 2018).

Thus, achieving China’s aims necessitate effective strategies for multilateralism, political dialogue, security cooperation, and conflict resolution, ensuring a peaceful and productive international process. By doing so, China can establish a mechanism to provide regional stability particularly in the non-Western geographies, economic progress, and collaboration.

The conceptual foundation of the Chinese grand strategy is rooted in the concept of inclusivity, premised on the recognition of the world’s inherent interconnectedness. Instead of challenging the American hegemony, “connectivity” in this context signifies a collective destiny wherein nations forge a shared future for humanity, fostering a sense of global community (Wang, 2017). The emphasis on these principles is particularly evident in economic growth, prioritizing mutual benefits through international trade partnerships to enhance bilateral relations. On that note, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi emphasize in a speech given on 23 September 2023 that cooperation cannot be built upon a model of one side winning at the expense of the other, stressing the importance of collaborative efforts that result in mutual benefits, describing such cooperation as not just feasible but imperative (Yi, 2022). The pursuit of win-win outcomes emerges as the operational mode through which nations collectively safeguard their respective national interests and interdependency, thereby underpinning global peace and developmental trajectories (Yi, 2015). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that not all individual nations will experience uniform “wins,” contrary to Beijing’s claims (Kynge, 2023;

Tiezzi, 2023) and that this approach does not guarantee positive outcomes for all parties universally, best exemplified by the complex China-U.S. relationship where economic solid ties do not guarantee enduring amicability due to evolving geopolitics (Yu, 2020; Liang & Ding, 2020).

At the same time, while China's peaceful development strategy has been in place since Deng Xiaoping's era, there are criticisms regarding its unbalanced export-import relationship with the rest of the world. Additionally, China's relations with third-world countries have been characterized as debt-trap diplomacy. Consequently, there are questions about whether these unbalanced economic relations and debt traps will lead to clear Chinese hegemony instead of the intended peaceful development, coexistence, and equal relations conceptualization of China's global perception.

In essence, through partnerships and multilateralism, China aims to weave an international network of cooperation and interdependence. Hence, China's grand strategy is not based on Chinese world domination, but it conceives an interconnected system of partnering states where China is at the center of the web. It attempts to leverage its central position within these networks to wield global influence. To ensure the continuity of this system, China defends international political stability and tension reduction and attempts to utilize its derivative political power to position itself as an international mediator (FMPRC, 2023a). A notable example of this diplomatic involvement occurred in February 2023, when Beijing sponsored a dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia that resulted in a settlement of their strained ties (FMPRC, 2023b). This illustrates that China's economic interests lead to its role as a mediator among the relevant stakeholders. Through such intermediation, it could potentially contribute to resolving regional conflicts and addressing hotspot issues, which could contribute to China's revisionist policies and help it reshape the world order to its vision (Jin, 2020).

Türkiye's Grand Strategy: Diplomacy for Multilateralism

Türkiye occupies a highly significant position in world politics, influenced by its geography, identity, and history. However, Türkiye is different from Russia and China because it is not a superpower. Its revisionism and grand strategy do not arise from its military or economic capabilities but from its historical, cultural and diplomatic position; from the fact that it lies at the crossroads of civilizations and cultures. It is a Turkic country with deep connections within the Turkic world and Central Asia, the successor of the Ottoman Empire and hence the seat of the last caliphate, thus is deeply rooted in the Islamic world, and following the War of Independence, it has been an integrated part of the Western order. Its multidimensional geopolitical and cultural identities shape its foreign and economic policies and its recently emerging grand strategy to world politics.

Türkiye's founding story provides important clues to understanding its contemporary context of revisionism. The Ottoman Empire, which entered World War I, sought revisionism in world politics alongside Germany, but this effort failed. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın wrote about "the expected day" (Üngör, 2008, p. 101) reflecting the hope that the Ottoman Empire would regain what it had lost through irredentist politics, but these hopes were reversed. Despite the war being lost and the Treaty of Sèvres imposed on the Ottoman Empire after World War I, Türkiye did not accept these terms and declared the Misak-ı Milli (National Pact), marking the first successful, albeit limited, revisionist stance against the West. The establishment of Türkiye and the leadership of Mustafa Kemal inspired the non-Western and colonized world for freedom.

After the war, Türkiye integrated into the Western order and initiated a modern social transformation. This approach, characterized as "Westernism against the West" (Oran, 2010) suggested that Türkiye should follow the Western system to become stronger. Consequently, Türkiye has become one of the most integrated non-Western countries with the West, being a member of NATO, engaging in the EU accession process, and taking a part in almost all Western institutions. During the Cold War, Türkiye's integration with the West deepened due to the threat from the USSR. However, with the collapse of the USSR, a major transformation in global and regional politics also affected Türkiye. NATO's relevance has evolved, and the dynamics of Türkiye's relationship with the West and other global powers have shifted. Today, Türkiye remains an important medium-sized power that maintains institutional relations with the West while also expressing its criticisms when the threat of Russia has tremendously decreased.

These historical developments have placed Türkiye in a unique position. Inheriting a legacy from the Ottoman Empire, Türkiye has historically positioned itself as a counterbalance to the threats posed by Western dominance and has consistently needed to remain vigilant against Western imperialism which ruined the Ottoman Empire, seeking to assume positions that maintain historical legacy and enhance current power and influence in the Islamic world. This legacy has also enabled Türkiye to pursue a multifaceted diplomatic strategy. Similar to Russia, Türkiye possesses a historical legacy as the successor to an empire—in this case, the Ottoman Empire. Currently, Türkiye seeks to represent Islamic and Turkic nations on the global stage and plays an inspiring role for much of the developing world, particularly in Africa, where it is actively establishing commercial ties. Türkiye holds considerable influence due to its cultural and historical ties with Turkic nations, facilitated by its empowerment of the Organization of Turkic States (Kocak, 2023). In the Middle East, Türkiye's significance primarily stems from its status as the last seat of the caliphate and its historical legacy through the Ottoman Empire, as well as its growing economic, energy, and logistical connectivity with regional countries.

The power vacuum in these Islamic and Turkic worlds also provide a conducive environment for Türkiye's diplomacy as a regional powerhouse. Despite challenging the Western powers at its founding, Türkiye has undergone extensive modernization and Westernization since the 19th century and holds a close geographical connection to Europe to this day (Berkes, 2013). Thus, Türkiye's diplomatic endeavors span both east and west. Türkiye is presently pursuing a proactive foreign policy that spans various regional domains. This includes engagement in the Syrian conflict, a mediation role in the Russia-Ukraine war, involvement in Eastern Mediterranean politics, presence in the Iraq war and new trade route within Iraq, a crucial role in Libyan affairs, and support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Türkiye is also actively involved in from Asian to Afghan to African politics, particularly in Sudan and Somalia. Additionally, Türkiye is addressing challenges related to Islamophobia in Europe and India, engaging in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, as evidenced by its response to the Gaza massacre in International Court of Justice, and playing a significant role in advocating for the revision of the United Nations system.

The question arises whether Türkiye, with its historical and foundational references, can develop a grand strategy within the concept of limited revisionism without possessing the necessary economic, military, or political power as identified as one of the superpowers in world politics. While Türkiye does not have as much military power as Russia or economic strength as China, it has several pillars upon which to build a grand strategy. These include the Organization of Turkic States, with its millions of people and numerous countries; the Muslim identity and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; and the post-Ottoman legacy, which together contribute to Türkiye's diplomatic and cultural power. Additionally, Türkiye's relations with the West, including its NATO membership and EU process, provide an institutional foundation. This way, Türkiye pursues its aims on revising the global order by leveraging its regional ties and its global position to act as a broker for voicing demands for policy change; claiming that a new international system is emerging out of the failures of current world order to respond the global issues (Erdoğan, 2021). Instead, solutions to global problems require a truly global engagement in the decision-making processes because of which Türkiye calls for the abolishment of the veto (Altun, 2021).

Türkiye's proactive policy, without centering its position solely on the West, should be examined within the framework of this grand strategy. Organization of Turkic States has become more active, and Türkiye has played an instrumental role in its establishment and recent meetings. Türkiye's support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been a source of hope for Organization of Turkic States countries. Furthermore, Türkiye contributes to the strength of Muslim people through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, evidenced by figures like supporting Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu for the head of organization, which shows an institutional reconciliation of the secular country with Islam. Türkiye's positive relations with Islamic movements during the Arab Spring and its stance on the Israel-Palestine issue also demonstrate its leadership in this area.

Türkiye's role as a regional power with strong ties to the world system, supported by its imperial past and lack of colonial exploitation, positions it as a legitimate actor demanding transformation in world politics. President Erdoğan, who has ruled the country for over 20 years, brings this agenda forward with mottos like "the world is bigger than five" and "a just world is possible." (TCCB, 2018; Erdoğan,

2021). Türkiye's stance on various issues, such as opposing Russia on Ukraine while developing economic relations with it, showcases its complex position. This diplomacy highlights the need for middle powers to have a voice beyond the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

In conclusion, Türkiye is a country with a legitimate basis for strong revisionism in a changing world. It is taking steps through its institutions, history, and societal ethos to achieve this. Türkiye's recent steps towards joining BRICS indicate its desire for autonomy and a special role in global peace and balance. However, pursuing these policies requires a robust diplomatic structure to avoid pitfalls similar to those faced by Egypt under Nasser. Without a strong diplomatic framework, Türkiye risks instability and prolonged crises in its pursuit of revisionism. That is why developing an international coalition for reform within the UN will be a critical step to further its constructive agenda for a peaceful and just global governance system.

Conclusion

The Western-oriented system of international power relations no longer reflects current and future power balances, prompting calls for a revision of the global order from all corners of the world. Amidst this weakening international order, the concept of grand strategy offers useful insights into the behavior of prominent revisionist states. Three emerging revisionist powers—Russia, China, and Türkiye—endeavor to reshape the global order according to their own designs, employing distinct grand strategies that leverage their unique positions in the international system and draw from their historiographical and cultural heritages.

Russia pursues a security-oriented foreign policy, embodying a grand strategy of deterrence. Drawing on its historical role in maintaining power balances, Russia aims to secure its position within the international system, as it did during the Tsarist and Soviet periods that it helped shape. To revise global power balances, it adopts an aggressive stance, employing strategic military interventions to draw opponents into attrition. Additionally, it weaponizes energy, fostering a relationship of dependence with European states, and seeks to establish alternative international systems within its orbit to ensure independence from competitors.

China, as the second-largest economy, stands out for its robust high-tech industry, significant military capabilities, execution of worldwide projects, and a global perspective rooted in mutual interests. China's rise to superpower status was propelled by economic development, triggering a spillover effect across various domains. This unique trajectory, which represents a paradigm shift from a Euro-centric view of global affairs, introduced a novel world concept within the realm of revisionism. This transformation culminated in China's grand strategy through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aimed at disseminating a similar narrative worldwide via multilateral initiatives and existing institutions. Within this grand strategy, the economy has become a revisionist policy tool, reshaping international relations, rewriting norms, and challenging prevailing systems. China's goal is to create an international network of multilateral cooperation and interdependence, positioning itself as an arbiter and mediator in international conflicts. Hence, China's grand strategy is not about world domination but rather an interconnected system of partnering states with China at the center, as a Zhōngguó (中国; 中國), which in Chinese means 'Central state'.

Türkiye holds a significant position in global politics due to its multilateral agreements, geography, identity, and historical legacy, despite not being a superpower like Russia or China. Situated at the crossroads of civilizations, Türkiye maintains deep connections between the West and East, particularly within the Turkic and Islamic worlds, rooted in the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Following post-World War I developments, Türkiye defiantly opposed the Treaty of Sèvres to pursue revisionist policies. After achieving independence, Türkiye integrated into the Western order while concurrently initiating a modern social transformation, famously characterized as "Westernism against the West," inspiring non-Western nations to adopt both anti-colonial sentiments and development models. As a revisionist nation opposing Western hegemony, Türkiye strategically utilizes its historical legacy, the Turkic Council, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and its post-Ottoman influence. Its nuanced position, navigating relations with the West through NATO and the EU, and its principled stance on

global issues, underscore the necessity for middle powers to assert their influence in international politics. President Erdogan underscores the potential for a fairer world by advocating for reforms to the UN Security Council, asserting that “the world is bigger than five.”

Overall, the concept of the Western liberal order as the “end of history” appears increasingly untenable, even from a Western perspective. This is evident in the West’s responses to political developments such as the attacks in Palestine and the actions of countries that position themselves as protectors of human rights, such as the USA. Concurrently, emerging revisionist powers like Russia, China, and Türkiye are advancing their own distinct grand strategies, influenced by their specific geopolitical and diplomatic contexts.

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