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THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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SPACESHIP EARTH

In 1969, 30 years ago, a large portion of the earth's population had to revise their conception of the world. Pictures of Earth as seen from the moon taken by American astronauts made a considerable impression. The pictures portrayed a very beautiful planet - shining, inviting, sunny, fertile, full of life and beauty. This was Spaceship Earth, a spaceship apparently characterised more by nature than by culture. The spaceship Earth appears hospitable and yet vulnerable. It faces space, communicating. It is a spaceship the population of which lives on the outside in stead of within.

However, behind its external beauty and openness lurks self-destruction. A few years following the moon voyage, new pictures appear. Images of holes in the ozone layer. A closer look beneath the sky reveals polluted oceans, lakes, and rivers. Images of natural disasters caused by environmental destruction. Pictures of a planet in consumption of itself. Other images make an impression: overpopulated cities, gigantic electronic billboards announcing the Earth's population reaching the 6 billion mark, the latest billion having appeared within the last 10 years. Images of unfathomable poverty, slave labour, street children amidst huge piles of garbage. And not least the flow of refugees, victims of wars, ethnic cleansings, human beings subject to unbelievable degrees of suffering.

The images may be replaced by statistical facts: 35 000 human beings dye daily of hunger or due to malnutrition. The average of war related deaths per day is approximately 1000 human beings, 1000 die in traffic and about the same number commit suicide.

The world - now as before - is in trouble.

The picture of Spaceship Earth 1969 was also a reminder for mankind, that there is merely this one planet available for habitation. Earth had a survival problem. It was a symbol implying that the world must not explode into millions of pieces as a result of the predominant east-west strife. At that time, the atomic threat was immense. 60 000 nuclear weapons were ready for use. The explosive force was equivalent to 3 tons power of destruction or 25 000 hand grenades for every human being on Earth.

The events of 1989-91 changes the world completely. Along with the voluntary capitulation of the Soviet Union and its subsequent dissolution as an empire and as a state, the East-West conflict disappeared into thin air. A new world order had arisen. The threat of nuclear self-destruction was gone. However, the environmental bomb remained. It became the new warning that doomsday was nigh, aided by the overpopulation bomb and the poverty bomb. Are these the new terms for the international system of the 21st century?

What is the war situation like? Generally, the war expenditures are being reduced. In reality, the Cold War was an actual war lacking, however, in bloodshed among the implicated parties. The Cold War was predominantly fought out by military means. The arms race itself, the ever improved weaponry conceived, produced, and deployed was a considerable part of the East-West conflict. This gone, an actual demobilisation took place. It was no longer necessary to prepare for world war. Other kinds of war were of the essence: smaller scale, geographically limited wars, most commonly civil wars. Wars have become 'asymmetrical' and 'politically correct' wars. We will return to this.

A NEW INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

With the events of 1989-91, terms were created for an entirely new international system. This is the system which will determine large parts of the 21st century. Several conditions have added to the foundation of this novel international system. As mentioned, one is the perception that the world is an entity and that the survival of the planet is threatened by developments humanly created. Post-modern society, under elaboration for a number of years is a second. Post-modern society is marked by individualisation, globalisation, technological developments enabling communication and dissemination of knowledge. We are dealing with a global information based society characterised by increasing elimination of time and space dimensions in human relations.

What happens this second economically, politically, and militarily may be registered contemporaneously all over the world.

The concept of the international system can be perceived in numerous ways. Here, it will be interpreted as the manner in which the world is constructed politically: which are the core actors, which important political processes take place, and not least what is the nature of the structure, that is to say how are the most determinant actors organised in relation to one another?

In principle, there is a decisive difference structurally between a state's internal structure and the organisation of the inter-state relations of states. Internally, the structure is marked by hierarchy, and specialisation within units. Internationally, the structure is marked by anarchy and uniformity in units (all states are sovereign). The individual state is based internally on authority, administration, and law. The international system is based upon strength, power play, and adaptation. These are the principal differences between the two types of political systems. In fact, there are many states that are not hierarchical, in stead they are fragmented and subject to civil war like circumstances. Equally, close collaboration among states occurs in the direction of integration and specialisation. But this does not refute the overall formalities: once acknowledged as a state, one becomes a state and one is subject to the, in principle, anarchical relations in existence among states.

If it is true that strength, power play, and adaptation are determinant characteristics of the international system, the great powers will dominate. They, and not least how many there are of them, determine the nature of the system. Which are the dominant states, which are the poles in international politics? Here, we differentiate between great powers / superpowers on the one hand and all remaining states on the other. According to this perception, by and large there are only three different kinds on 'polarity': multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity. In addition, a non-polar situation may be conceivable, that is a situation with no great or superpowers what so ever.

The figure illustrates the historical developments. The 20th century has witnessed all three types: multipolarity until 1945, hereafter bipolarity until 1989-91, and henceforth unipolarity. The topical question is: what will the world look like in the next century? How stable is the present unipolarity with the United States as the sole superpower? Will the next polarity be one of multipolarity or of bipolarity? Or even something entirely different?

Multipolarity is a situation concerning several great / superpowers. They enter continuously changing alliances. The aim is to balance an overly strong state or coalition of states. Bipolarity is two superpowers in constant contest for hegemony. Unipolarity is the situation where a single power dominates. No other state is able to match or balance this 'pole'. Nor is it possible to establish any kind of coalition of states in opposition to the unipole as regards decisive areas of security policy.

Beginning around 1990, the unipole has been the United States. This implies that

- The balance of power in the international system is clearly asymmetrical, no state seriously balances the United States
- The United States is able to safeguard its own interests. However, this safeguarding will also encompass the international system generally, since the USA with its sum of capabilities 'takes up' a large part of the system. Figuratively speaking, the more flats one owns in a block of flats, the greater ones interest in maintaining the building and roof of the construction as such
- Veritably all states will flock around the USA, primarily in matters of security; it is impossible to alter the 'asymmetrical balance'
- This is equivalent to a form of 'uni-polarisation' implying the wise political stance of seeking to align one self with the USA as the opposite will mean the threat of isolation
- As opposed to the situation during the Cold War, it is no longer possible to free ride. Hard work is required in order to make one self heard within the international system
- Basically, the USA sets the international agenda
- In principle, the overall responsibility for international peace and stability is conferred upon the USA
- This, however, means greater regionalisation in which the individual regions to a larger extent take charge of their own security - with varying support from the USA.

THE USA AS THE SOLE SUPERPOWER

Can this interpretation based on neorealist theory be said to be in concord with reality? It is certainly true that the USA became the sole superpower as a result of the USSR's voluntary renunciation of its superpower status. This in itself was a significant relative gain on the part of the USA. And no one forced the USSR into this. As a matter of fact Russia ultimately disengaged itself from the USSR and thus brought on the disintegration.

It is also true that the USA has the world's strongest economy. The USA has not, as it has been claimed, experienced any significant relative economic recession considering long-term developments.

Politically, the USA is stronger than ever before: the political norms advocated by the USA have been declared global. These are primarily democracy, market economy, human rights, and personal freedom. Once again, the individual countries have not been forced into

celebrating these norms. It is possible simply to advertise them. There is, however, a clear incentive to conform: not in order to please the USA, but because it is apparent that states conforming to these principles fare well. The states are so to speak socialised in this direction, not least because it pays.

Militarily, the USA stands tremendously strong. In terms of military expenditure, the USA along with its military allies in NATO and elsewhere is responsible for 85% of the world's joint military expenditures. This may not be particularly meaningful. For example, China's military expenditure is merely five times that of Denmark and China is after all a nuclear power with 3 million armed personnel. Military expenditure, however, implies something about development and technology. The USA is said to be 5-10 years ahead of Europe in respect to military technology. As the only country, the USA has global reach, strategically and militarily. The USA is preparing to wage two regional wars simultaneously. The US refers to this political fact as its win-win strategy. It must, for example, be possible to fight both Iraq and North Korea at the same time, and win. Or, as the case was in the summer of 1999, fight Serbia and Iraq simultaneously. The USA is able to choose freely between three options: firstly, an international mission USA being the entrepreneur for the UN supported by the UN member states, secondly, a mission in co-operation with USA's military allies (as in Kosovo) or thirdly, a unilateral military mission, the USA operating single handedly.

Geo-strategically, the USA plays an overwhelming part. Not only does the USA perceive itself to be 'A European Power', the USA is also 'An Asian Power'. The USA has stationed 100 000 men on each continent. It has placed nuclear weapons both places. The fact that the USA is also a Latin American power is self evident, as it could equally become an African power should this become desirable.

As regards other capabilities, the USA ranks high although not at the top. It is the third largest country in respect to population, third only to China and India. In terms of area, Russia is the largest followed by Canada, China, and the USA which are approximately of equal size.

THE THREE WORLDS

But perhaps the situation is such, that size plays a minor part in a number of areas. Territories and mass populations are not vital to post-industrial or post-modern societies.

How is this to be understood? Analysing the planet from a development perspective, it may be broadly divided into three realms:

A third world, which includes countries and territories based on traditional agriculture. This is a static, and nature dependent society. The second world is the dynamic, industrialised world based on mass production. The first world is post-industrial or post-modern society. Here, key words are such as knowledge, globalisation, and individualisation. The break down of time and space, flexibility, globalisation, and orientation towards the individual on all fronts are characteristic of the first world. The country most prone to the first world is the USA. This means that the USA as the leading IT nation is in possession of the best possibilities for retaining its uni-polar position.

Individualisation and globalisation are key words for post-modern society. This implies that the individual has become an international actor to a much larger extent than previously. Politically, this is apparent in the increase of democracy. The individual is able to make a difference. Democracy implies openness and insecurity. It is impossible to foresee the constellation of future governments. Economically, the individual faces many new possibilities in a world governed by market economy. The political consumer and the political investor are gaining influence. French atomic policy and the sale of French wines and cars may all of a sudden become connected. Likewise in the military area, individualisation and globalisation are on the increase. An image appears of a 'universal soldier', trained for individual action, working for international peace and security on behalf of the international community.

Unipolarity and post-modernity do not at first glance fit together. However, two points may be stated: firstly, an important reason for the collapse of the Soviet Union was that it excluded itself from the general global developments, not least due to a security trauma implying fear of alien penetration. This meant societal, economic-technological, and political stagnation and under-development. Secondly, from 1990 unipolarity resulted in an opening up to new possibilities for post-modern society, nationally as well as internationally. Unipolarity introduced a new world order, in principle with a single joint global ethic as opposed to two previously, and a world built on common global norms and values. It followed that the world could now more easily move in a direction of global, individualised, post-modern society.

THE FOUR BOMBS

However, other circumstances not directly related to polarity have aided and strengthened USA's uni-polar situation, at least for a while. These are a number of traditional 'threats', previously coined the population bomb, the pollution bomb, the poverty bomb, and the atomic bomb in its extended sense including the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction generally. These four threats have persisted. In a longer perspective, a degree of optimism may be detected. It has now become apparent that the population curve has been broken. Equally, the 21st century will probably witness continuing growth among the developing countries while the industrialised countries will experience reduced growth. It may also be claimed that a certified attempt can resolve vital pollution and environmental issues. In other words, the three bombs; poverty, population, and pollution are not inevitable features of development, they are political problems with political solutions. This also goes for the concrete bomb: nuclear weapons, and weapons of mass destruction. In this, there is also no inevitability. Although new atomic powers have evolved, despite a number of states' attempts at developing weapons of mass destruction, the extent expected has not been reached. Also, the initial bi-polar and later on uni-polar political pressure has been as strong as to maintain and in certain cases entrench the general norm of non-proliferation. Countries excluding themselves risk stigmatisation, and the appellation 'rogue states' within the international system. This term is currently used for Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea. Finally, countries such as France and Great Britain will in all probability become increasingly dependent on the USA nuclearly, and their status as independent nuclear powers may thus be questioned. India and Pakistan will have increasing difficulties internationally, in exploiting their recent demonstration of promoting themselves to a nuclear status.

There are as such no mean possibilities for a gradual dismounting of the weapons of mass destruction. The regime of non-proliferation may come to succeed in the long run. Not that atomic technology remains the monopoly of a few states, rather the technology is generally known. In stead, a political situation may be created making it inexpedient to be an atomic power.

TWO TENDENCIES

Beyond a doubt there is a reverse side of this: internationalisation, globalisation, individualisation all allow for technical and political space for movement, freedom and the realisation for basic and differentiated human needs. With freedom comes taking advantage of the vulnerable society and the individual's vulnerability and weakness through relentless

market mechanisms, through crime, human exploitation, terrorism, and crimes against humanity. Globalisation also implies the necessity of a strong international set of rules and institutions implementing, surveilling, monitoring, and judging. Among these are WTO, The International Court of Justice, and trade and security regimes of any kind. The question is, what does unipolarity mean in this context and is the international system actually en route to an international community proper.

Looking at the world today there are two immediate, contrasting tendencies: in short between integration and disintegration, and between cohesion and dissolution. The first tendency aims at mutual dependence, interdependence among states, nations, organisations, corporations, individuals - an interdependence growing and becoming institutionalised through integration processes of varying intensity and in a number of fields. EU, NAFTA, NATO, ASEAN spring to mind. The world is marked by global networks and internationalisation. This tendency allows for the permeability of borders expressed through transnational processes. This does not imply that the state as such is withering away or will lapse. States continue to play a very central part. But it means that a growing number of decisions are taken jointly, sub-regionally, regionally, internationally or transversely on these levels.

The second tendency aims at independence, nationalism, ethnicism, isolationism, and fragmentation. The reasons for this tendency are manifold: a natural reaction considering the growing internationalism or global hegemony forcing through decisions based upon what is perceived as imputed, foreign, negative values and norms. An attempt at regaining a lost identity by excavating history. During the bi-polar period, the national identity was subordinated the East-West identity. The decisive battle was waged between two widely different modes of organising the world. Nationalism could return in consequence of unipolarity, not least in respect to the 'losing' parties of the Cold War, those having based themselves upon communist principles. Hyper-nationalism, and racism became a means to an identity among peoples feeling their physical and economical survival threatened by comparable groups. Soon the question: Serb or Croat, became a question of life and death. In this way, biological warfare was reintroduced. Not by biological means but in terms of biological, or racial affinity: 'Blut-und-Boden' revisited.

Which of these will be the winner in this contest of tendencies? Unipolarity will clearly aid the first tendency. But the other will to a certain extent remain prevalent. As recent events in the Balkans have proved, there is a clear understanding within the international community,

to a large degree meaning the dominant states, that the future necessarily belongs to co-existence, not between East and West, this dividing line has long been obsolete, but between peoples of different cultures, descents, languages, and races. This is the principle which is attempted enforced and realised in the Balkans by the international community, i.e. UN aided by NATO. The great democracies: USA, India, and the huge European reconciliatory project could constitute models for this. The USA and India are both states incorporating multiple nationalities, languages, cultures, and races. Most states are like that. The USA and India consciously promote policies pertaining to full equality and integration. Especially the USA can be said to bear all nationalities within itself. Nevertheless, the USA comes across as a cohesive state. In Europe, a grandiose project, EU, is establishing close collaboration, called integration among the nations of Europe, however in principle maintaining national sovereignty.

Much indicates that the vision for the international system of the 21st century is close international collaboration on as many practical, functional areas as possible based upon an extensive set of rules. The partners in collaboration will to a growing extent be multi-ethnic and multi-national.

These are the visions. But how will these visions become realised within the contemporary uni-polar system? How to ensure that hyper-nationalism, racism, the 'biologically motivated' warfare be kept down? How to prevent isolationism, fragmentation, and dissolution from gaining ground to the detriment of regional and international co-operation? To ensure the triumph of human rights over ethnic cleansing and genocide?

First the overall security. No matter the violent, vehement events and wars in Africa, Asia, and even in the heart of Europe, the period of time subsequent to the Cold War with its degree of overall security lacks precedent. The threat of World War is history. The probability of wars among super-powers is close to none. European security is divisible. 'Strategic Ghettos' or limited conflict areas with war-like situations are now possible without contesting Europe's overall security. None of the larger European countries have strategic interests in the Balkans, for example.

But as suggested a number of small-scale civil war like wars will exist, i.e. between ethnic, religious, political, or economic groups. In addition to this, the wars fought by the so-called international community: the asymmetrical wars, the 'politically correct' wars. These are wars like the Gulf War where the USA on behalf of the UN and in coalition with others

fought out a war against Iraq. Or the war against Serbia, where NATO on behalf of the international community - but lacking explicit mandate from the UN Security Council - undertook a humanitarian intervention. The war which was no war but rather with German Chancellor Schröder's words 'A political act by military means to achieve peace' was however partially legitimised by subsequent UN action, accepting Kosovo as a NATO protectorate.

These wars are asymmetrical because one side representing the international community is completely superior politically, technologically, economically, and not least militarily. The most recent military hardware is at its disposal. The war-faring power-coalition chooses superciliously time, means, and extent of the military action. As no strategic interests are involved, what is the topic here is international action and intervention due to the defence of human rights. What is under attack is the breach of international law, inhuman acts, justifying intervention in a nation's internal affairs.

The asymmetrical wars are also 'politically correct' because they attempt at all costs to avoid targeting civilians and causing civilian damage. At the same time it is topical to avoid own losses. Thus, the most advanced military weaponry systems are used to secure the attacker and ensure that no unintended damage is done to the attacked. A mantra for the politically correct war is to ensure weaponry systems that actually reach the desired targets. Previously, one could observe weapons that only reached their target and created intentional damage 1% of the time. Presently, in theory 99% of the total number of launches must reach their targets.

This kind of military development is part of what is called 'RMA', that is Revolution in Military Affairs. Hierarchical organisations are replaced by flat structures of command. Hardware is replaced by software. Mass in the form of personnel and material is replaced by knowledge and the adaptation hereof. Objectively evaluated, this revolution is yet in its beginning. This has for example been evident from the two great wars of intervention - the Gulf War and the war in Kosovo. Given that the number of deaths on the side of the intervening force during the Gulf War - 153 as opposed to the expected number, 10 000, was remarkably low. This was all the more pronounced in the Kosovo War where none of NATO's forces were killed. But evidently this is a long cry for the correct execution of the correct war. During the war in Kosovo, the practical utilisation of technological superiority - and its actual presence - left much to be wanted.

THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND EUROPE

How has unipolarity influenced Europe? Decisively. Without the change from bipolarity to unipolarity, we would not have witnessed the 'healing' of Europe, that the divided Europe became one. We would not have seen the dissolution of the Soviet empire and later the Soviet Union resulting in an immediate addition to the number of sovereign states - that incidentally also became democratic. We would not have witnessed the new institutional development in Europe resulting in the 'EU-sation' of Europe, that is to say that Europe has become the single most important political-economic organisation in Europe with agreements on co-operation and a gigantic enlargement programme. In addition, Europe has become 'NATO-ised' in areas of politics, security policy, and military, partially in the form of an already transpired enlargement, partially in the form of new organisational institutions such as EACP, enhanced PfP, NATO-Russia Council, and the NATO-Ukraine commission.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

A revealing illustration of the pronounced European alterations implied by the new international system is seen in the following:

2> 1(+4)

1>21

25>50

2>1

15>1 or 15+1

The first line is decisive: it illustrates that the number of superpowers has gone from two to one. This has changed the world completely. Actually, what has transpired is the evolution of an entirely new international system. 1(+4) indicates that the USA surely is the most superior power. When the USA looks out for the international system, it is also looking out for itself as it covers and occupies so much of the actual system and fills out so much space in the system. The USA has global reach and power projection politically, economically, and militarily. This is not available to others. However, there are aspiring superpowers. +4 in parenthesis alludes to them. These are Russia, China, Japan and the EU (or Germany). But none of these have superior combined capabilities, none have global reach or presence.

Russia is, in principle, a nuclear power able to threaten the USA. But this does not translate into praxis. Russia has been reduced to a regional power the clear interests of which lie in close collaboration with the rest of Europe and the USA. Japan is the world's second greatest economy but it remains severely dependent on the USA in respect to security policy. The size of the country and its resources are limited. China is the 'wild card'. But disregarding economic growth and outward stability, the problems lurk under the surface politically, economically, and not least environmentally. China may still be perceived as an under-developed country. The EU is attempting to secure its position as a political unit in the international system. This has only been successful to a limited extent. It remains such, that practically only in the economic field is the EU capable of making itself felt. Germany has no possibilities on its own.

Summa Summarum: We are left with a single superpower and in the longer term aspiring superpowers which will in actual fact, however, flock around the USA for the coming many years. None of the four will, for obvious reasons, openly address unipolarity just as none of them is prepared to admit to any 'flocking-policy'. But observing the developments analytically, unipolarity and flocking will nevertheless take place within vital policy areas.

A prerequisite for and at the same time a consequence of unipolarity is visible in the 1 > 21 development. What is in question here is the dissolution of the Soviet empire and hence that of the USSR. Initially, the Eastern European countries, now coined the Central and-Eastern European countries formerly totally under the thumb of the USSR, became liberated domestically and since then in respect to foreign policy. Subsequently, the USSR collapsed completely. This in interaction with a number of other lines of development resulted in the number of states not including the mini -states doubled from 25 to approx. 50. Germany became re-united - 2 has become 1. Europe has gone from a single continent divided in two by a rim of alliance free countries to a continent characterised by many small states and a few larger powers, adhering to one another in security policy with an American overlay.

The topical question is whether we will experience a development from 15 > 1, that is whether a cohesive Europe will actually be established leading to a single, joint foreign, security, and defence policy, as envisioned in the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties. In trade a joint policy is already visible. As part of the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy), declarations are virtually put forth daily (evaluations in the form of recognition or disapprobation). Common views, actions, and strategies are set down. But everything

points in the direction of the EU continuing with two kinds of policy: a joint policy for all 15 member states, approved by consensus and covering definite, clear cut areas. And individual policies touching upon vital interests. The formula will thus be 15+1.

Not least regarding the vital security areas both outside of Europe in relation to Iraq and within Europe in relation to former Yugoslavia, the Europeans powers have not been able to agree on the topical political approaches. During the Gulf war 1990 - 91 the periodical, *The Economist*, characterised Europe as a hen run, all the hens being preoccupied with pecking up crumbs without looking up. All leadership was relinquished to the USA. In a caricature from 1999, the *International Herald Tribune* compared the European countries to kindergarten pupils, eagerly occupied with their EURO-bricks, calling out, frightened, to their teacher - the American Statue of Liberty - when Kosovo exploded near by.

At present, all points to the assumption that the EU will strengthen its military dimension. Larger military actions will, however, still take place using NATO assets. The concept of an actual European army is not in the cards. Defence proper of Europe will remain in the hands of NATO.

And this is the core effect of the international system upon Europe. While the USA was the guarantor for Western European security during the Cold War, the situation after the Cold War is such that the USA now bears partial responsibility for all of Europe's security. From this perspective, both NATO and EU enlargement makes sense. NATO is expanding in two manners: a growing number of members to include Poland, Hungary, and The Czech Republic, as well as an organisational enlargement in the form of Partnership for Peace, EAPC, The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Committee. Similarly, the EU is enlarging in two ways: by accomplishing concrete accession negotiations with the countries in question, and by implementing association agreements, and partnership agreements with the remaining European countries.

There is no doubt that the USA, due to its position initially as one of two superpowers and hence as the single superpower plays a highly important part in Europe. This is the claim, that without its conduct of originally Western European and later on European security there would be no viable European integration. The USA has been an eager supporter of as close collaboration as possible between the European countries. The model for this has been something comparable to the USA. What has been decisive is that with USA's strong involvement in European defence and security, national security implementation among the

European countries themselves has been suspended. Western European and later on all European countries had no need of mutual fear. This has been the best incentive to integration. Notably, American civil servants were the first to use the term 'economic integration' of Europe, not least in connection with the American demand for regional collaboration on the distribution of Marshall Aid funds.

The USA does not help and support Europe for the sake of their bright eyes. The USA has not stationed close to 100.000 men in Europe for idealistic reasons. Any American president and not least Clinton, who more than any other president has supported the European process of integration will claim that the USA in Europe is implementing security in Europe for the sake of the USA itself. It is in the interest of America to maintain a stabile, integrated, highly developed, peaceful - and undivided - Europe. Europe also acts as a kind of forward American defence.

As long as the USA remains the only superpower, European integration will be able to persist and continue. But what will occur should the USA be overtaken by the aspiring superpowers, if unipolarity becomes multipolarity?

THE FUTURE

As mentioned, many states are already stating openly that the world is multi-polar at the present time. This goes not only for China, Russia, and India, but also for a number of other countries as for example France. And not a single country officially uses the term, unipolarity, to describe the present situation. Some allude to divided polarity - bipolarity in the nuclear field (USA-Russia) and unipolarity in the general field of security policy, and multipolarity in the field of economics. It is, of course, fully legitimate to argue in this manner. However, if one chooses to maintain a neorealist interpretation of the international system, polarity cannot be divided. In order to be a super or great power, only one thing counts: combined capabilities. The score must be high on all accounts: resources, population, territory, economic and military capabilities, political stability, and competence.

By this standard, the USA takes the lead beyond comparison. Thus, unipolarity remains the decisive trait of the international system. But will it remain so? As long as USA is in this unique situation, unipolarity will remain entrenched. It will be able to last for quite a long time. When the forces of power balance set in, it depends on the ability of the USA to maintain its position of combined superiority of capabilities, and in this connection to retain its global political, economic, cultural, and military presence. But the manner in which the

USA handles its role as the only superpower also plays a part. If the USA continues to execute an USA controlled regionalisation effort leading to the easing and dividing of its global responsibility, implementing and continuing generally accepted political, economic, and military global control, unipolarity may persist. Fixing a timespan is difficult. However, 10-20 years must be viewed as the shortest timespan feasible.

But the international system will change. Nothing remains forever. The most probable outcome is multipolarity. In this case, Europe will be challenged decisively. If a basic precondition for the continuation and maintenance of the European process of integration - economically and politically through EU and securitywise and militarily through NATO - is American implementation of European security, this development does not look promising for Europe.