

The Thucydides Trap: Grand Strategy in Sino-American Relations

Professor Athanasios Platias

Department of International and European Studies
School of Economics, Business and International Studies
University of Piraeus



October 29, 2024

FINANCE · JAMIE DIMON

Jamie Dimon says World War III may have already begun

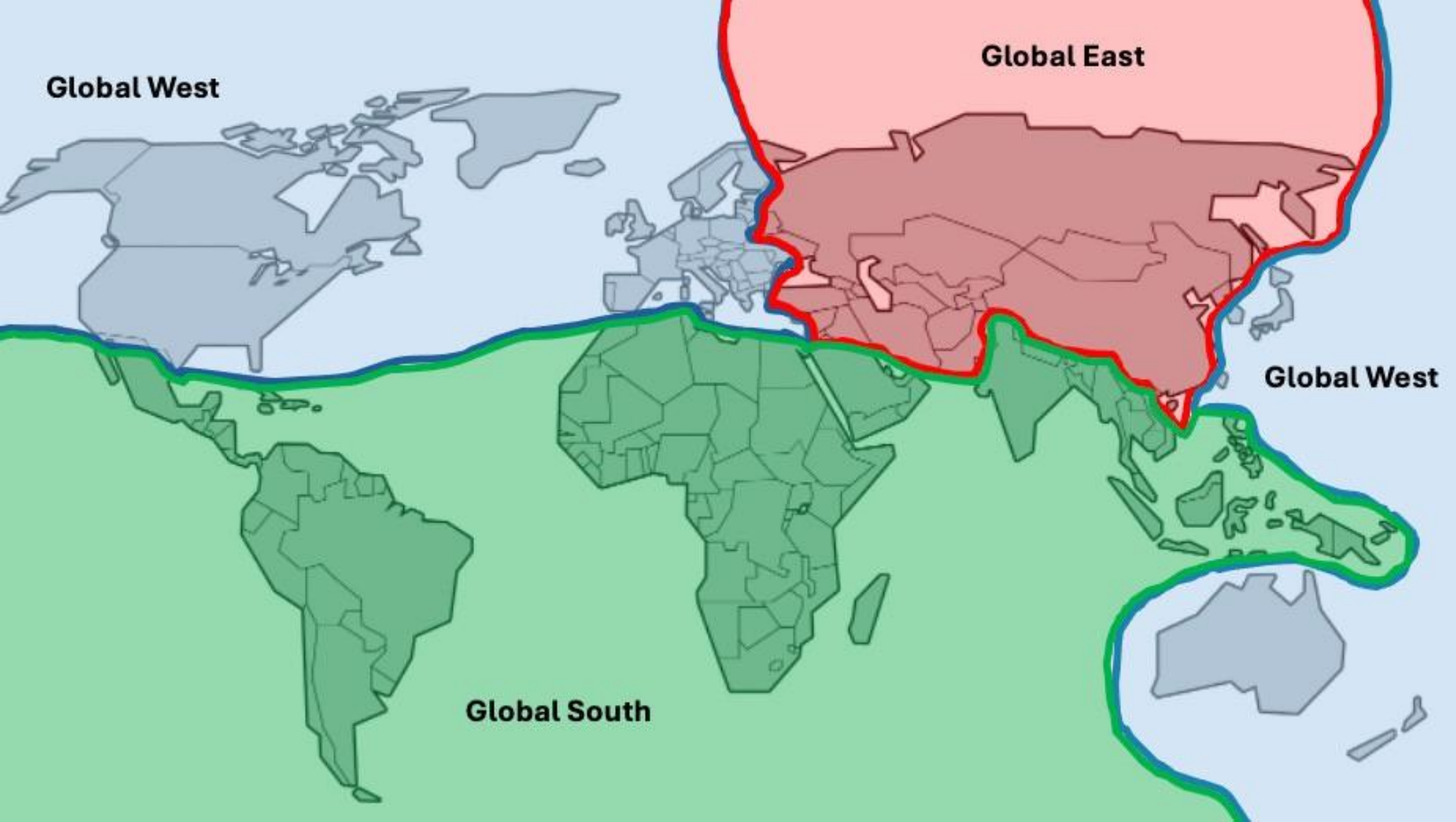
BY ELEANOR PRINGLE

October 29, 2024 at 5:52 PM GMT+2



Evolving Global Framework

Bipolar Cold War	Unipolar Moment	Fragmented Globalization
U.S. and allies Soviet Union and allies	U.S. Globalization	2+2+ (two major powers: China and the U.S.) two secondary powers: Russia and Europe) New Cold War



New Cold War vs Old Cold War

Similarities:

Geopolitical Competition for Supremacy

Arms Race (nuclear, space, cyber, AI)

Economic war

Intelligence war

Political warfare

Ideological struggle

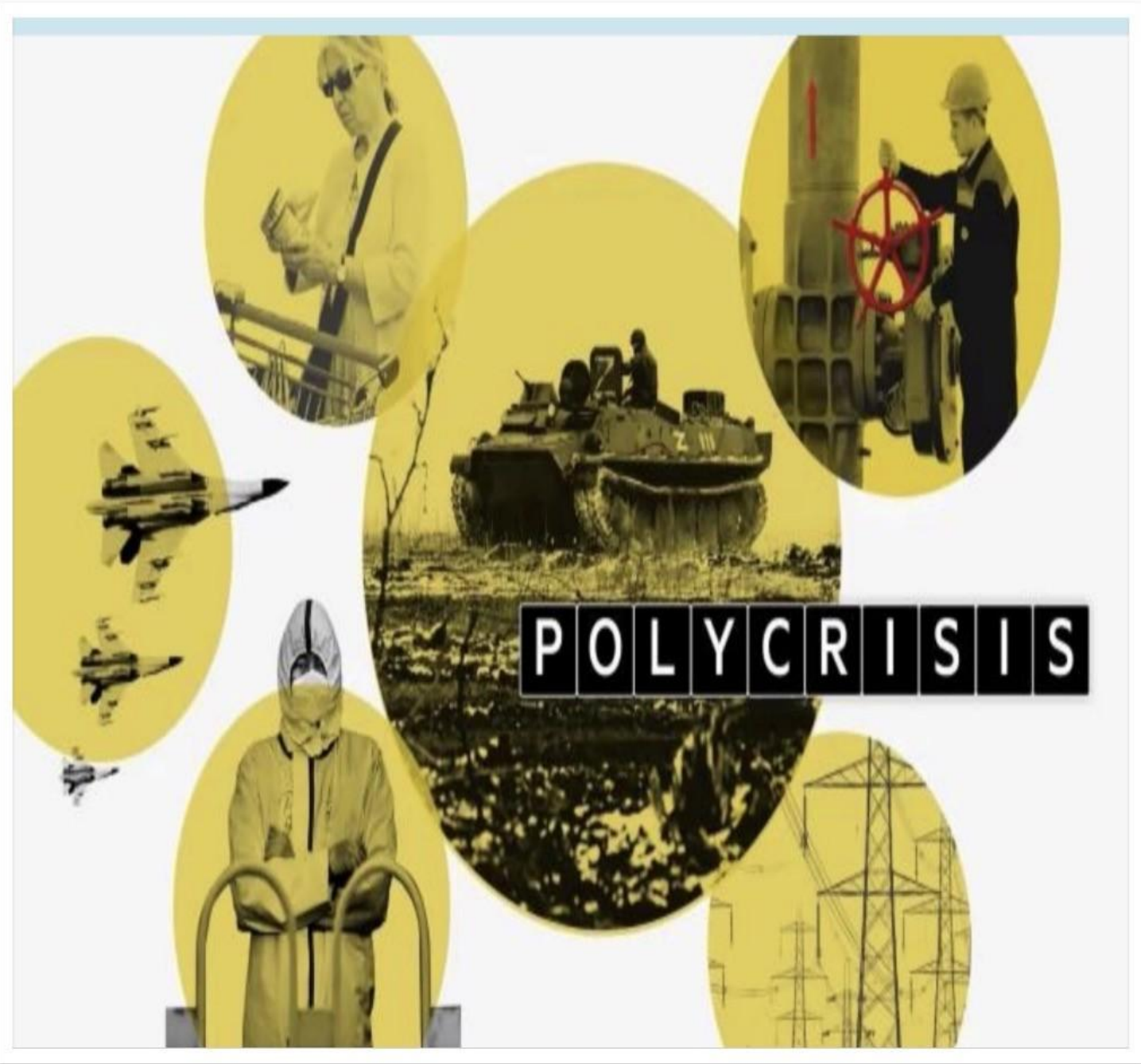
Tech competition

Regional flashpoints

Divergences:

Much greater economic interdependence

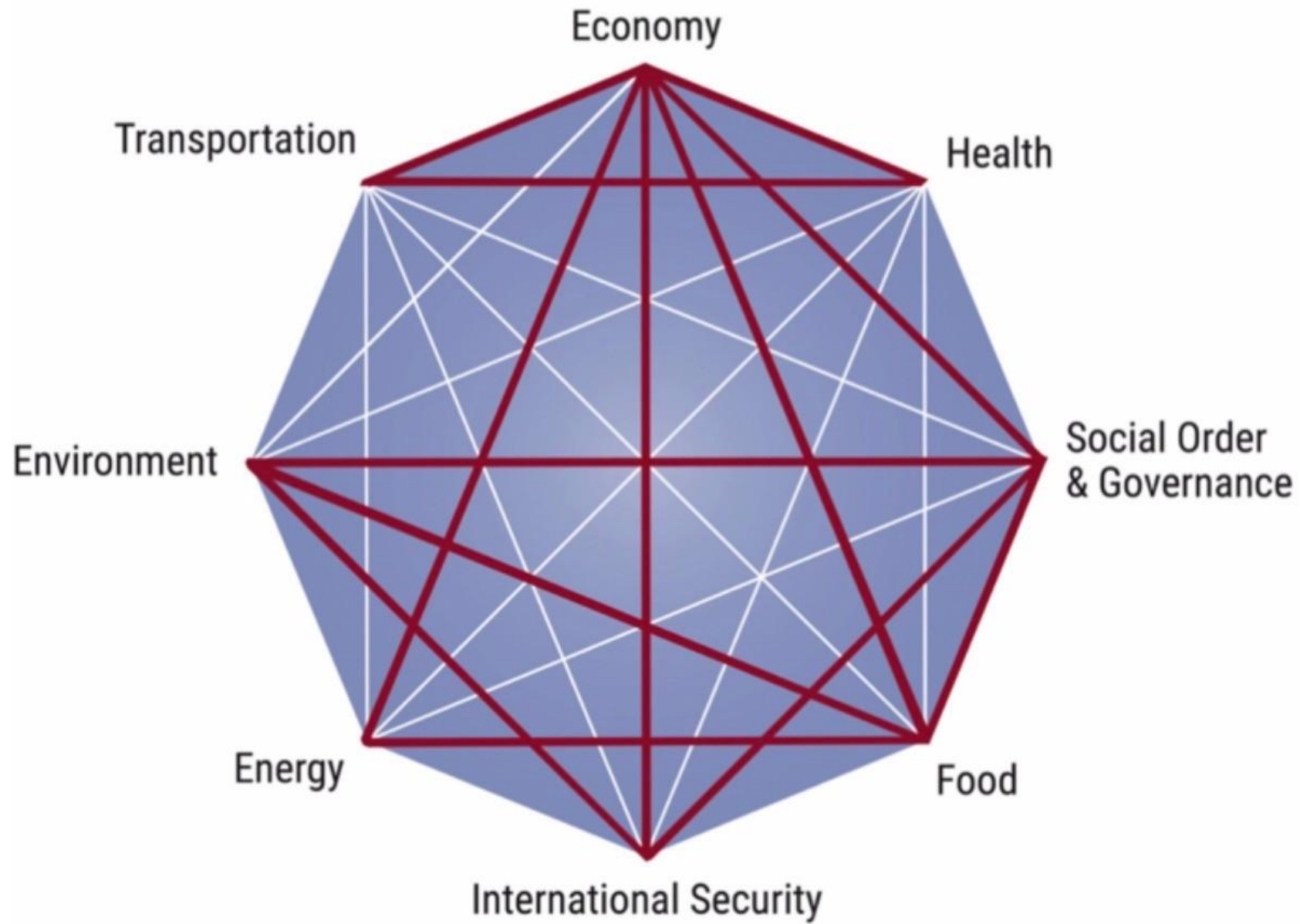
No rigid alliance blocks



polycrisis

[poli-krai-sis] *noun*

the simultaneous occurrence of
several catastrophic events



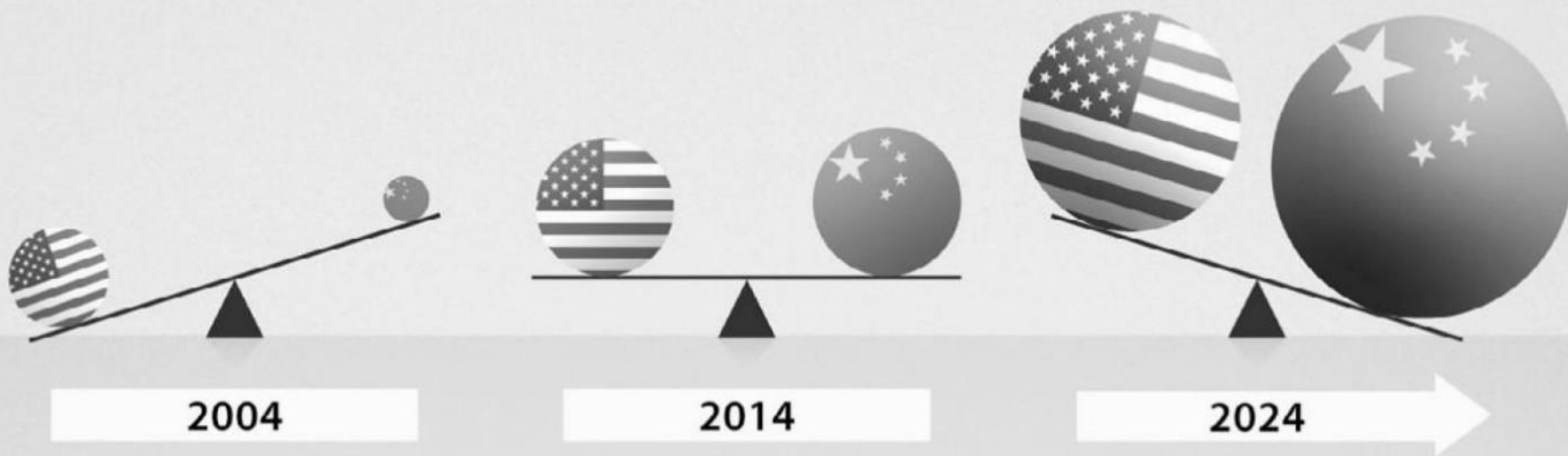
Thucydides Trap

A term coined to describe the instability resulting from systemic power transition, a tendency towards war when a rising power threatens to displace an existing dominant power.



№	Period	Ruling Power	Rising Power	Domain	Result
1	Late 15 th century	 Portugal	 Spain	Global empire and trade	No war
2	First half of 16 th century	 France	 Habsburgs	Land power in western Europe	War
3	16 th and 17 th centuries	 Habsburgs	 Ottoman Empire	Land power in central and eastern Europe, sea power in the Mediterranean	War
4	First half of 17 th century	 Habsburgs	 Sweden	Land and sea power in northern Europe	War
5	Mid-to-late 17 th century	 Dutch Republic	 England	Global empire, sea power, and trade	War
6	Late 17 th to mid-18 th centuries	 France	 Great Britain	Global empire and European land power	War
7	Late 18 th and early 19 th centuries	 United Kingdom	 France	Land and sea power in Europe	War
8	Mid-19 th century	 France and  United Kingdom	 Russia	Global empire, influence in Central Asia and eastern Mediterranean	War
9	Mid-19 th century	 France	 Germany	Land power in Europe	War
10	Late 19 th and early 20 th centuries	 China and  Russia	 Japan	Land and sea power in East Asia	War
11	Early-20 th century	 United Kingdom	 United States	Global economic dominance and naval supremacy in the Western Hemisphere	No war
12	Early-20 th century	 United Kingdom supported by France, Russia	 Germany	Land power in Europe and global sea power	War
13	Mid-20 th century	 Soviet Union ,  France ,  UK	 Germany	Land and sea power in Europe	War
14	Mid-20 th century	 United States	 Japan	Sea power and influence in the Asia-Pacific region	War

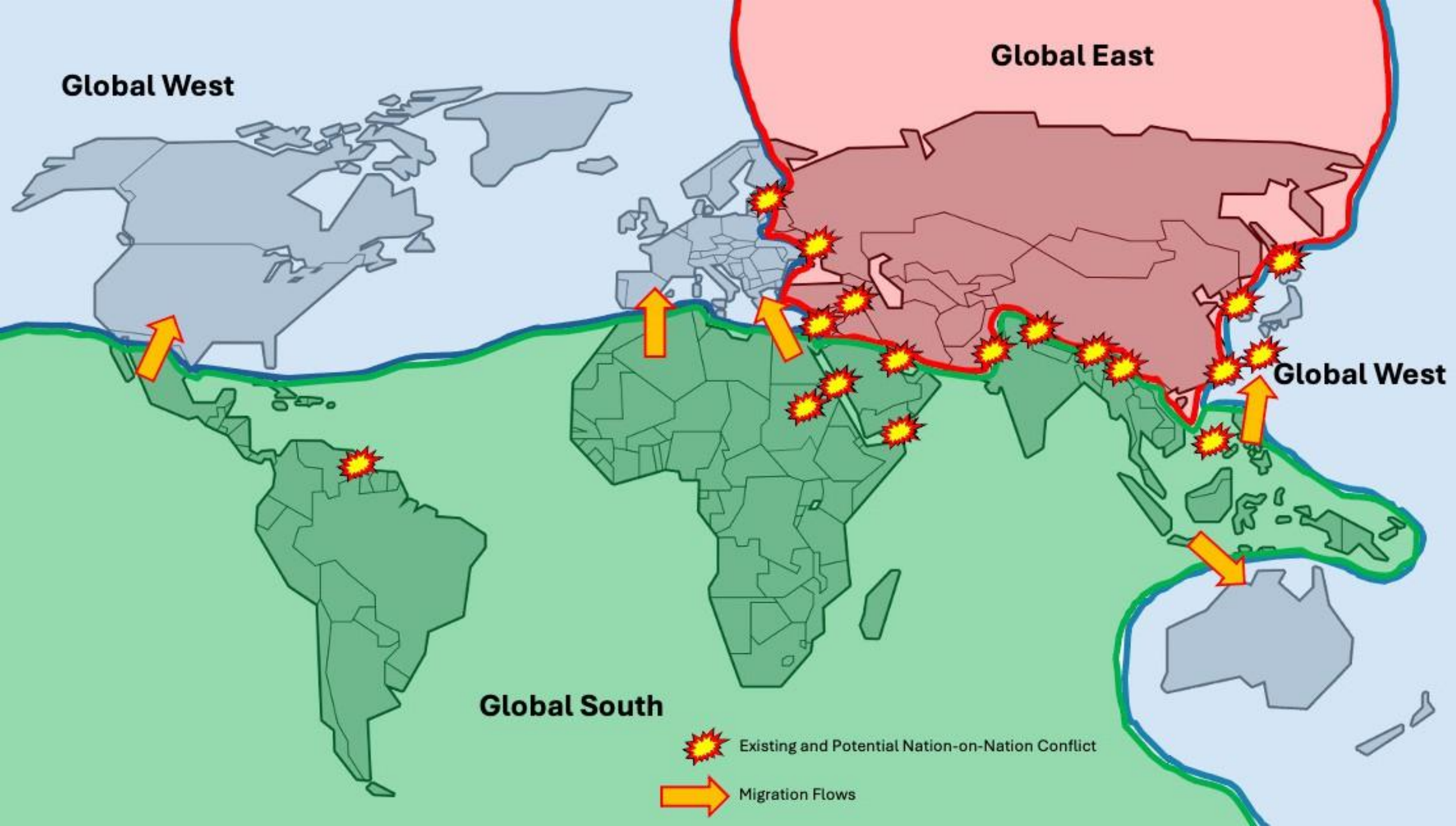
Who's rebalancing whom?



GDP (PPP), in billions of dollars

	2004	2014	2024 est.
China	5,760	18,228	35,596
US	12,275	17,393	25,093

Source: IMF, Economist Intelligence Unit



Flashpoints around Eurasia

Black Sea
Aegean Sea
Eastern Mediterranean
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Indian Ocean
South China Sea
East China Sea
Arctic Ocean

USA vs CHINA 2024

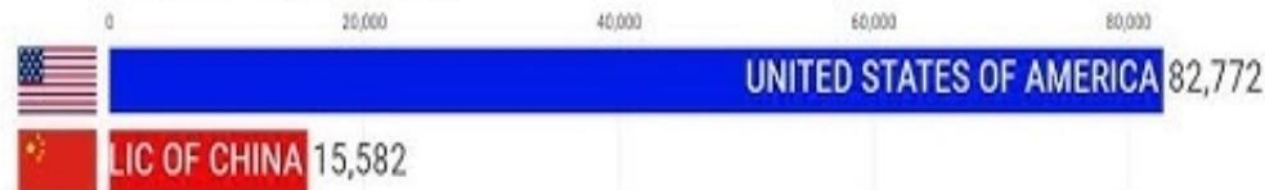
Nominal GDP (in billion \$)



GDP PPP (in billion \$)



GDP Percapita (in \$)



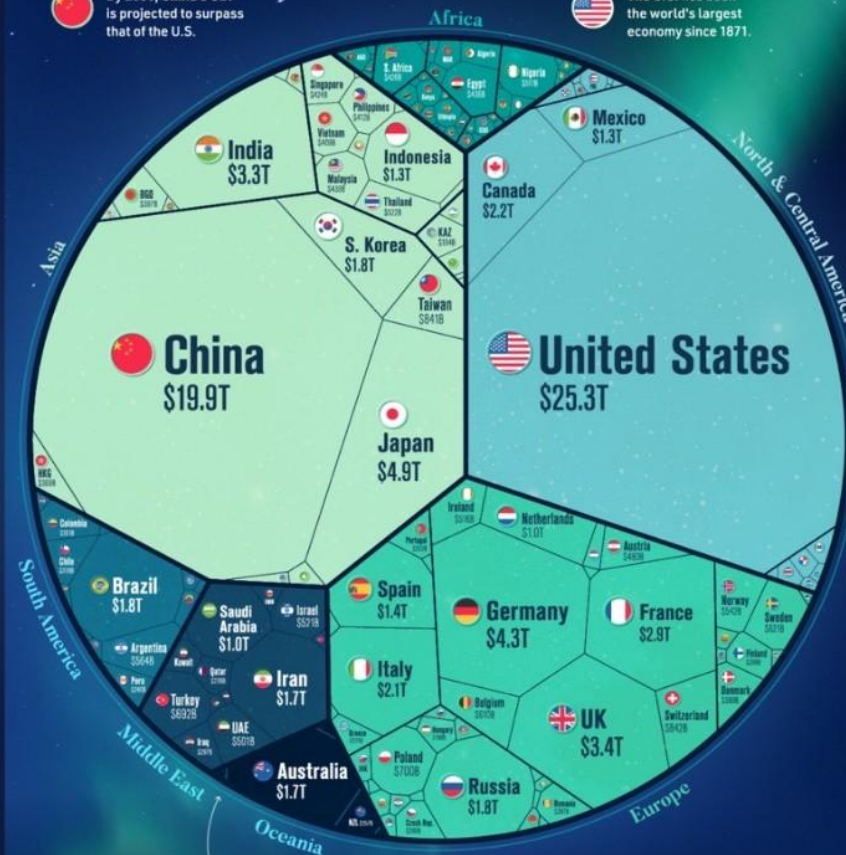
Population (in million)



Despite conflict and looming stagflation, the global economy will hit an impressive new milestone, reaching **\$104 trillion**, according to the latest IMF projections for end of year.



The U.S. has been the world's largest economy since 1871.



 Many of the world's smallest economies are located in the Oceania region, such as **Tuvalu** with a GDP of \$66 million.



Ireland is expected to be the fastest growing economy in the Eurozone, with a 5.2% increase this year.

*2022 data was not available for a handful of countries, including Ukraine and Pakistan.
For full data notes and detailed version of this visualization, visit visualcapitalist.com/100-trillion-global-economy/

Source: IMF (April 2022)





[/visualcapitalist](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzF0oBpYq161BkD6oZi2GgQ)


[@visualcap](https://www.instagram.com/visualcapitalist)

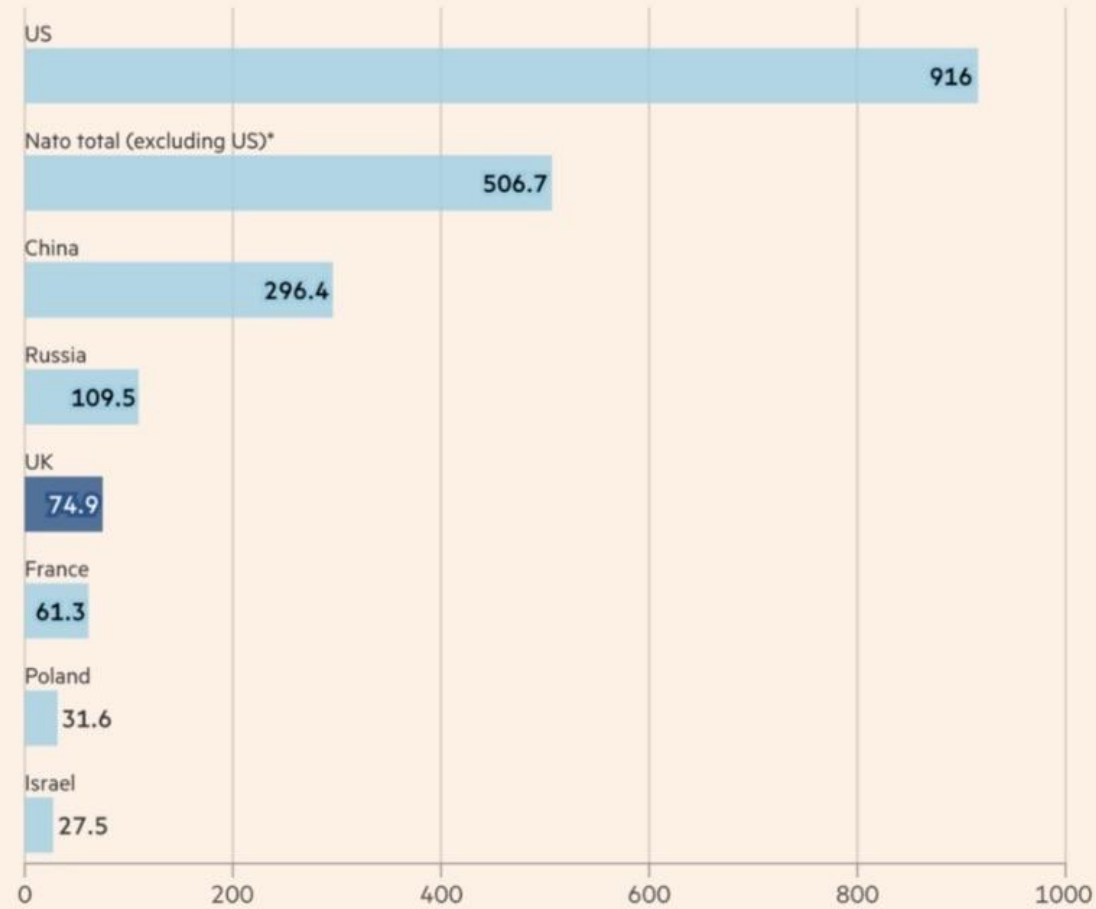
visualcapitalist.com

COLLABORATORS RESEARCH + WRITING Raul Amorós | ART DIRECTION + DESIGN Joyce Ma

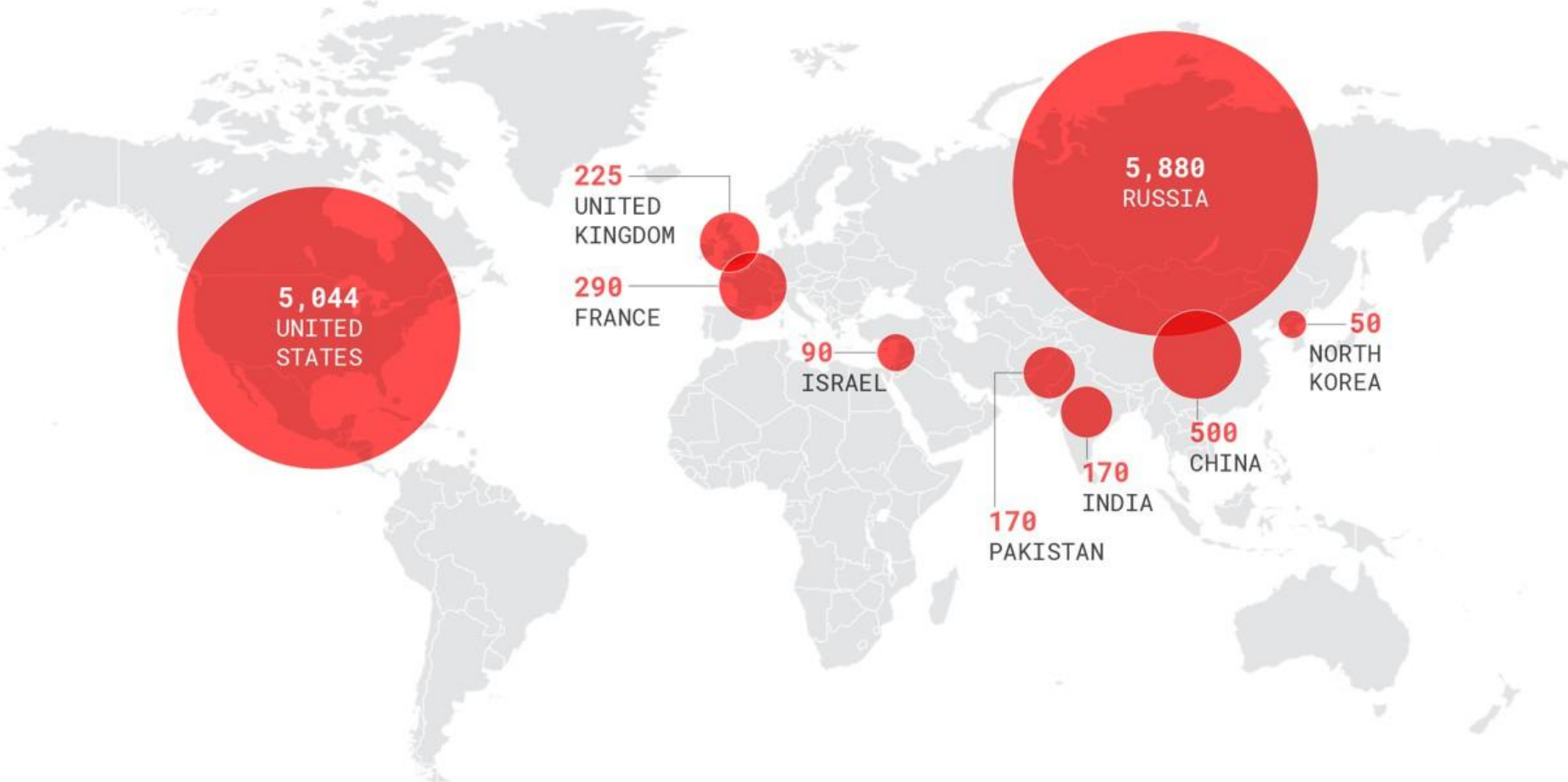
Global military expenditure in 2023

Selected countries

% of GDP Current \$bn



NUCLEAR WARHEADS BY COUNTRY

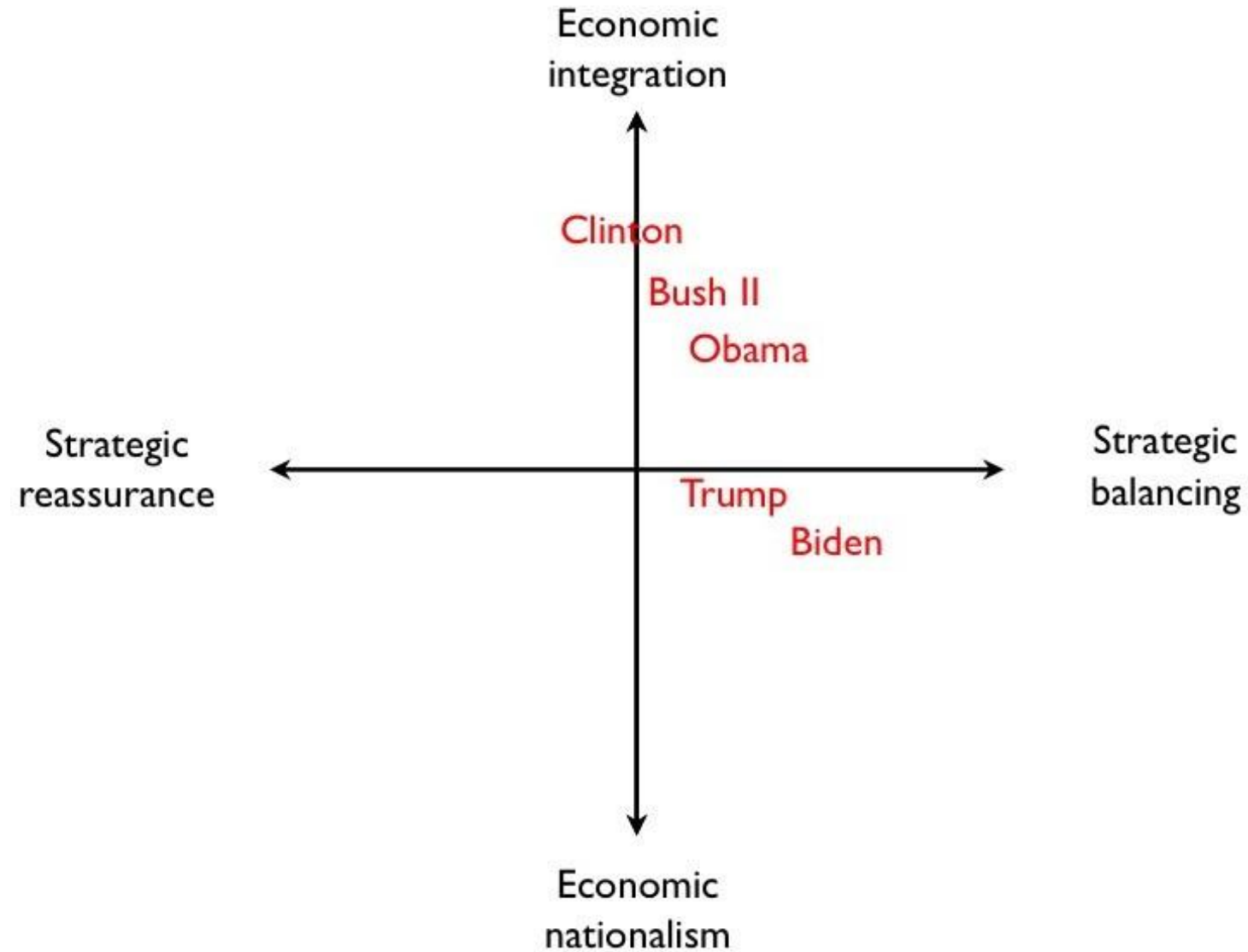


Source: Hans Kristensen, Matt Korda, et al., "Status of World Nuclear Forces," Federation of American Scientists, March 25, 2024.

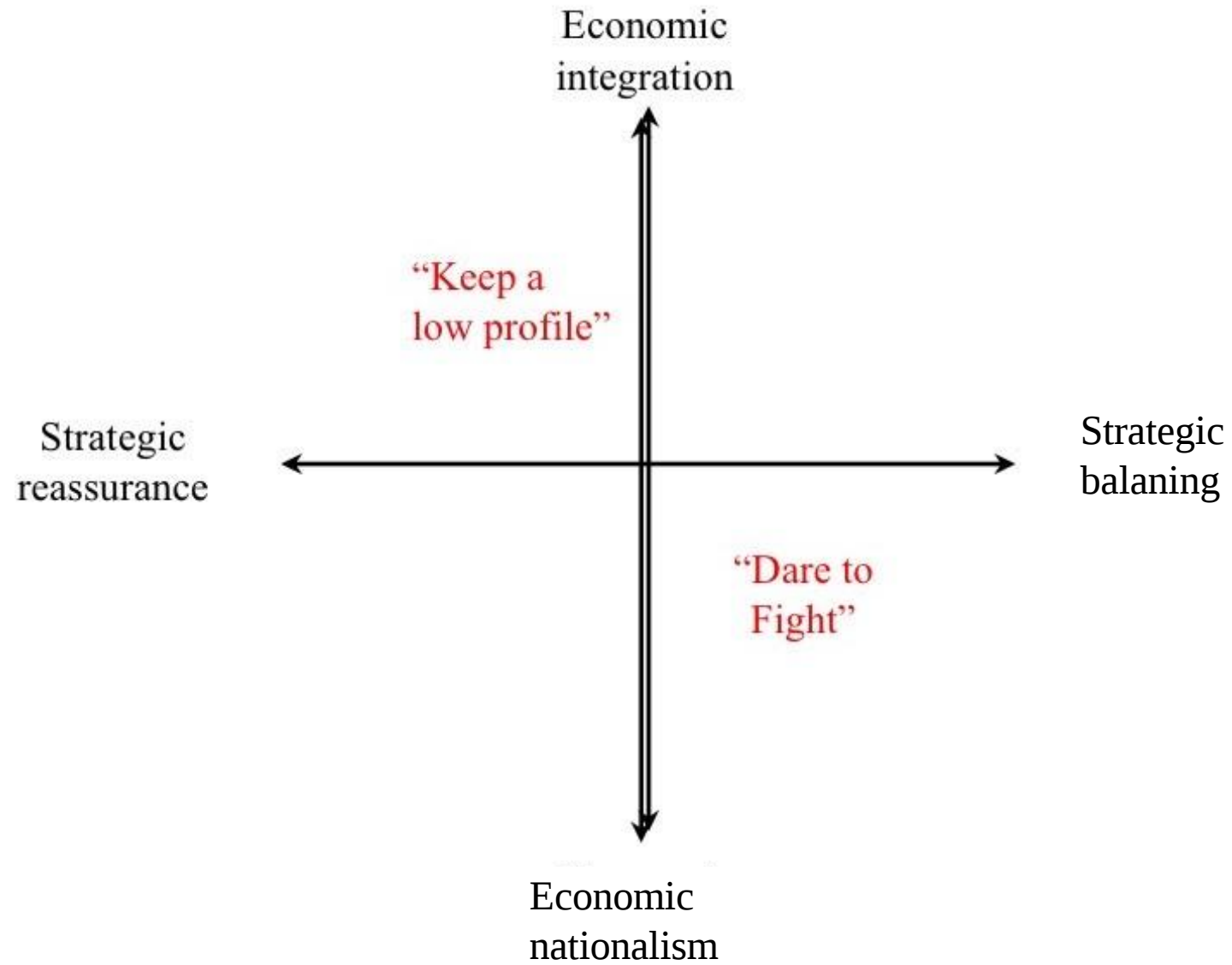
US grand strategy matrix

	<i>Deep</i>	<i>Soft</i>
<i>Engangement</i>	Liberal hegemony	Selective engagement
<i>Disengagement</i>	Isolation	Restraint/Offshore balancing

US responses to China's rise by president



China's responses to American hegemony



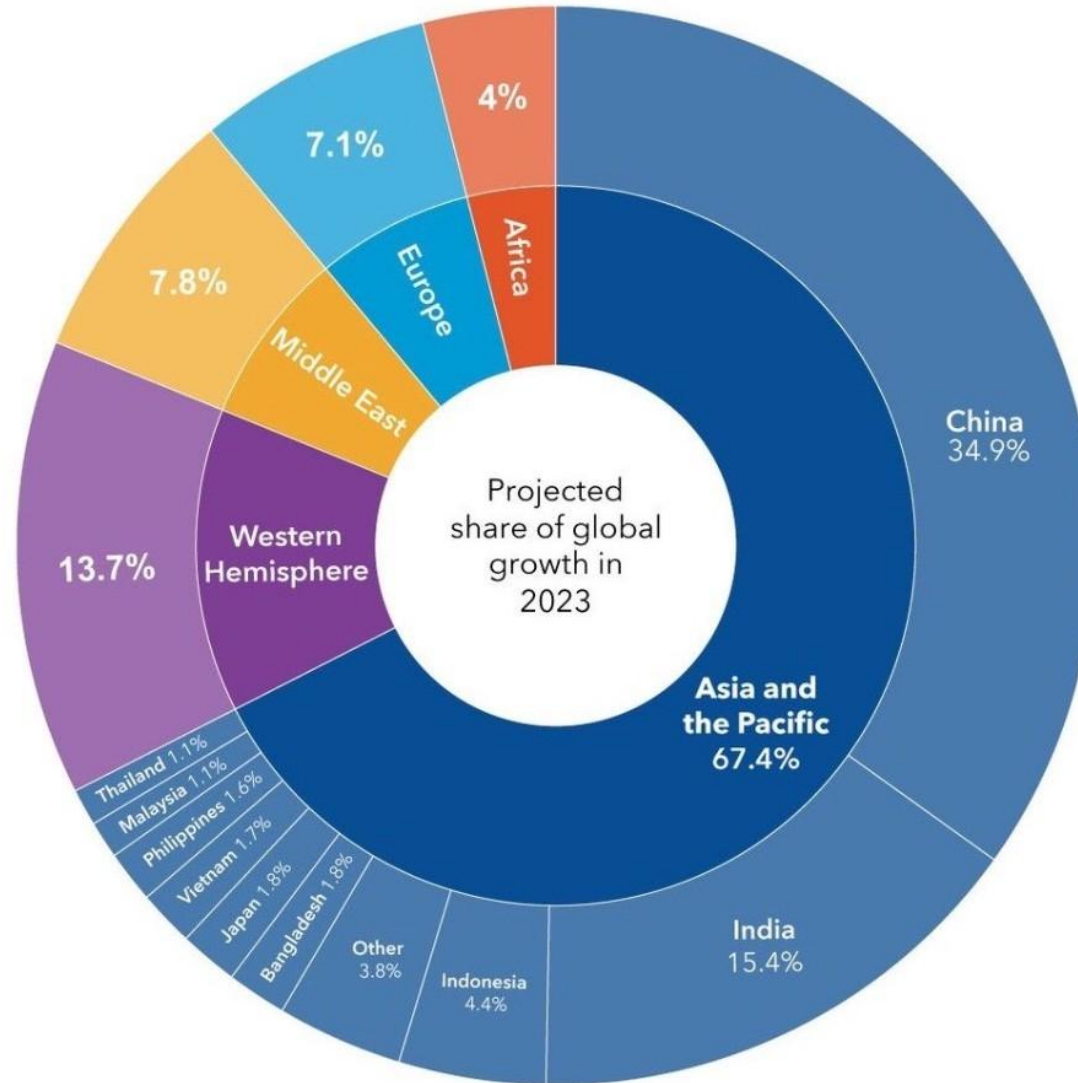
Meet My Five Billion Neighbors



POPULATION: Asia = 5 Billion > Americas (1 Billion) + Europe/Middle East/Africa (2 Billion)

Bigger driver

Asia will contribute about 70% of global growth this year.

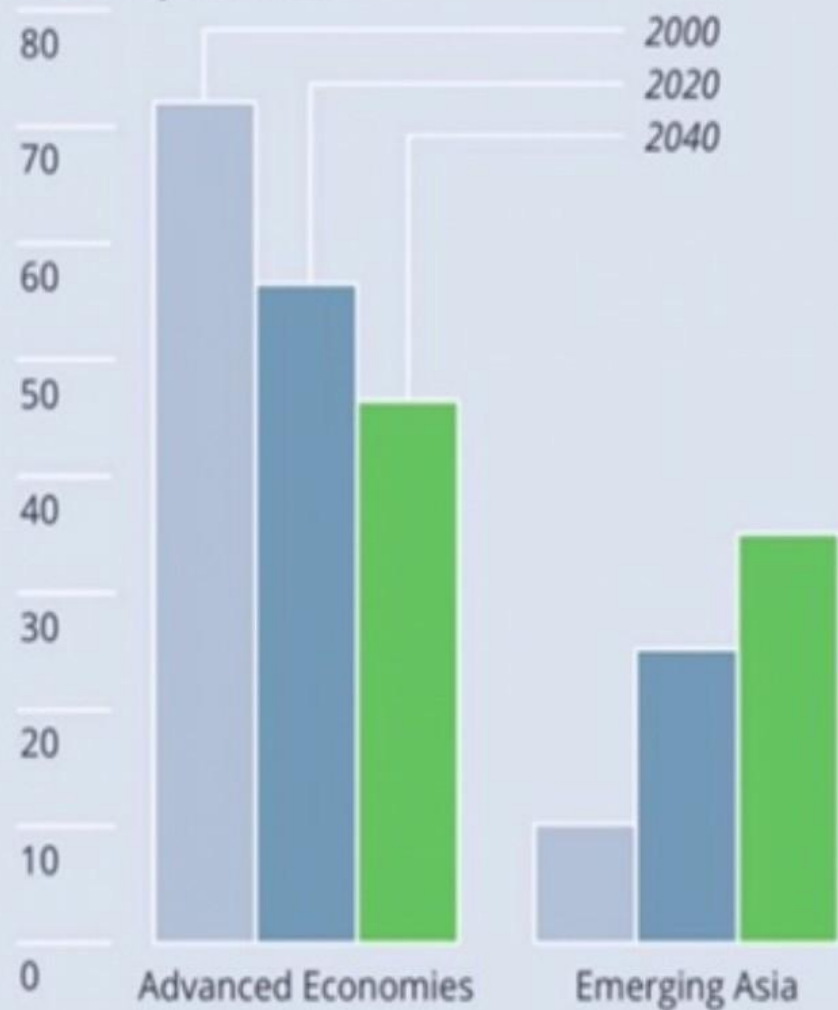


Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook, April 2023.

Note: Groupings based on IMF Regional Economic Outlook classifications.

ECONOMIC WEIGHT SHIFTING TO ASIA

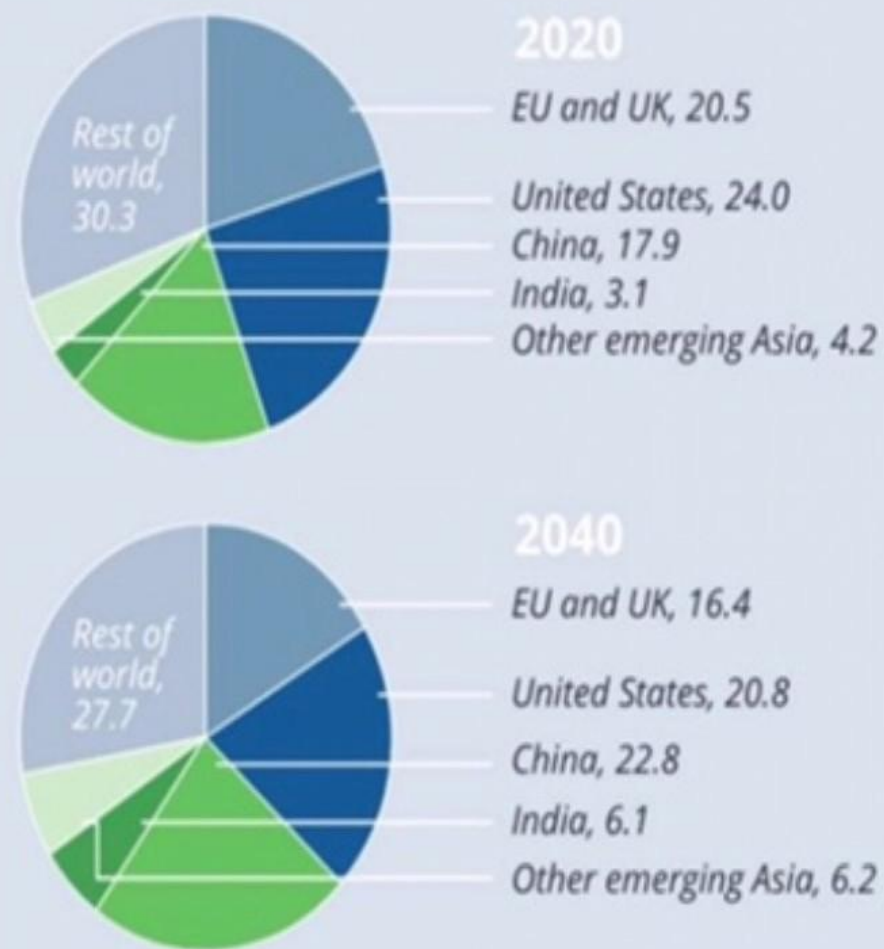
Percent of world GDP



Source: Oxford Economics.

FORECAST SHARE OF WORLD GDP

Percent



Source: Oxford Economics.

No limits Friendship

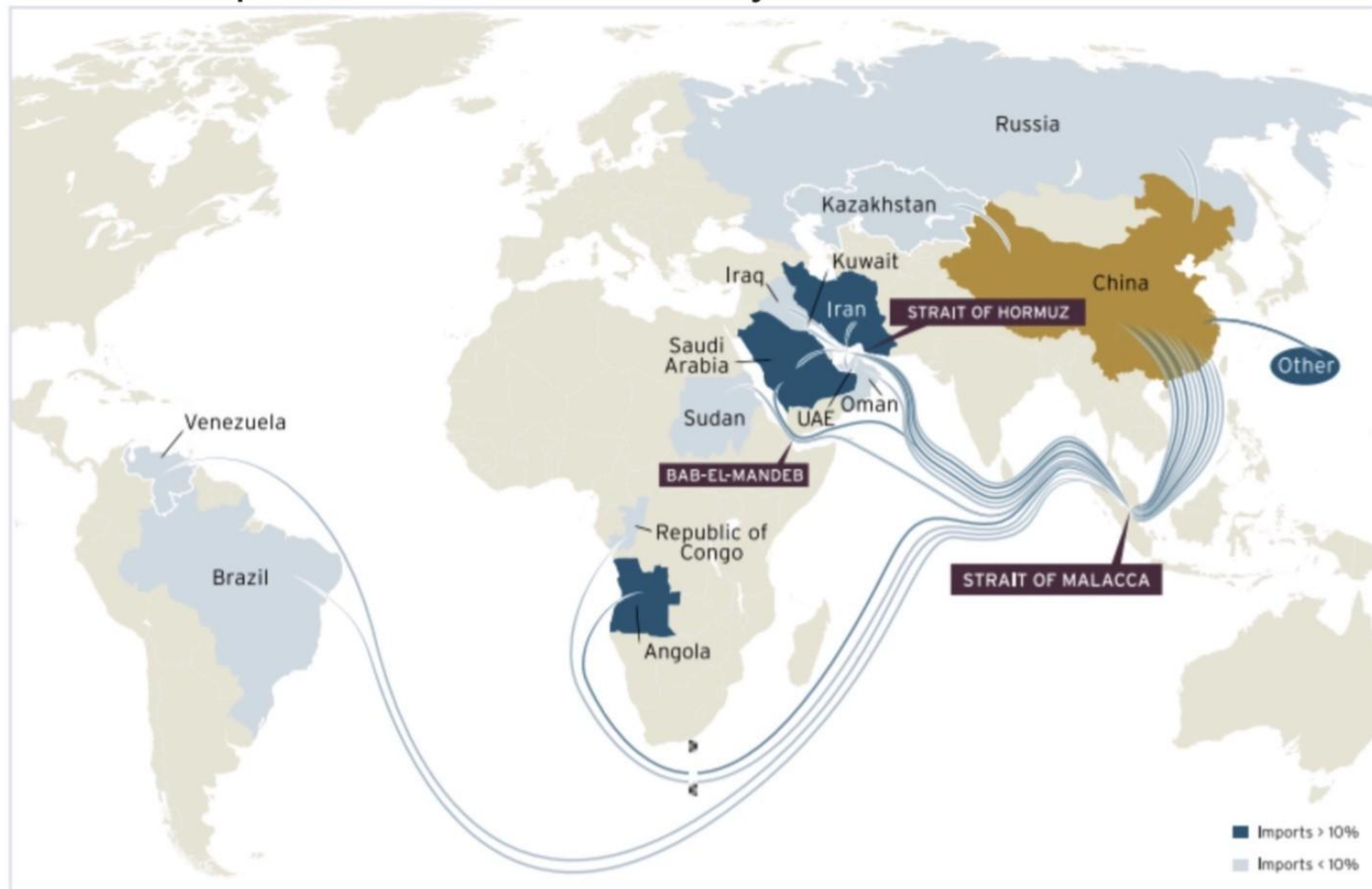


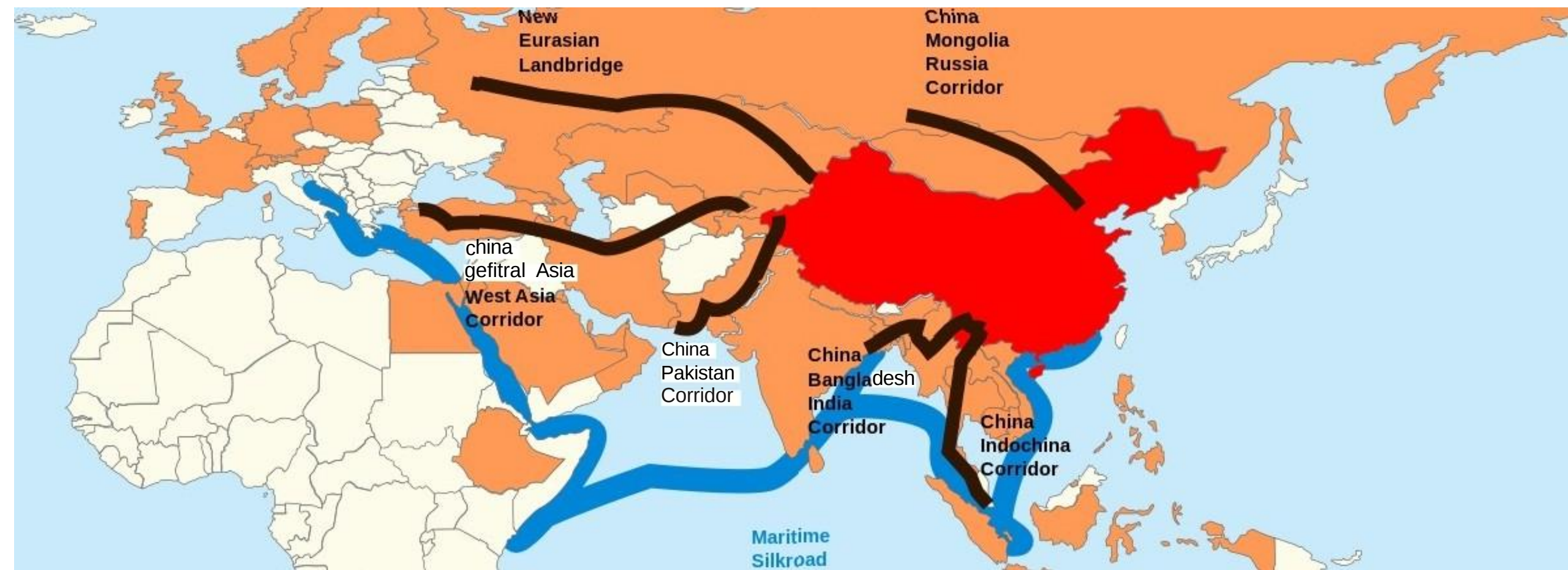
Global maritime chokepoints



Sources: Wendell Minnick, "Experts: Chinese '4th Fleet Appears Unlikely,'" *Defense News*, February 6, 2015; Darshana M. Baruah, Nitya Labh, and Jessica Greely, "Mapping the Indian Ocean Region," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 15, 2023; "Main Maritime Shipping Routes and Chokepoints," Port Economic, Management, and Policy.

China imports: Trade vulnerability and the Malacca dilemma



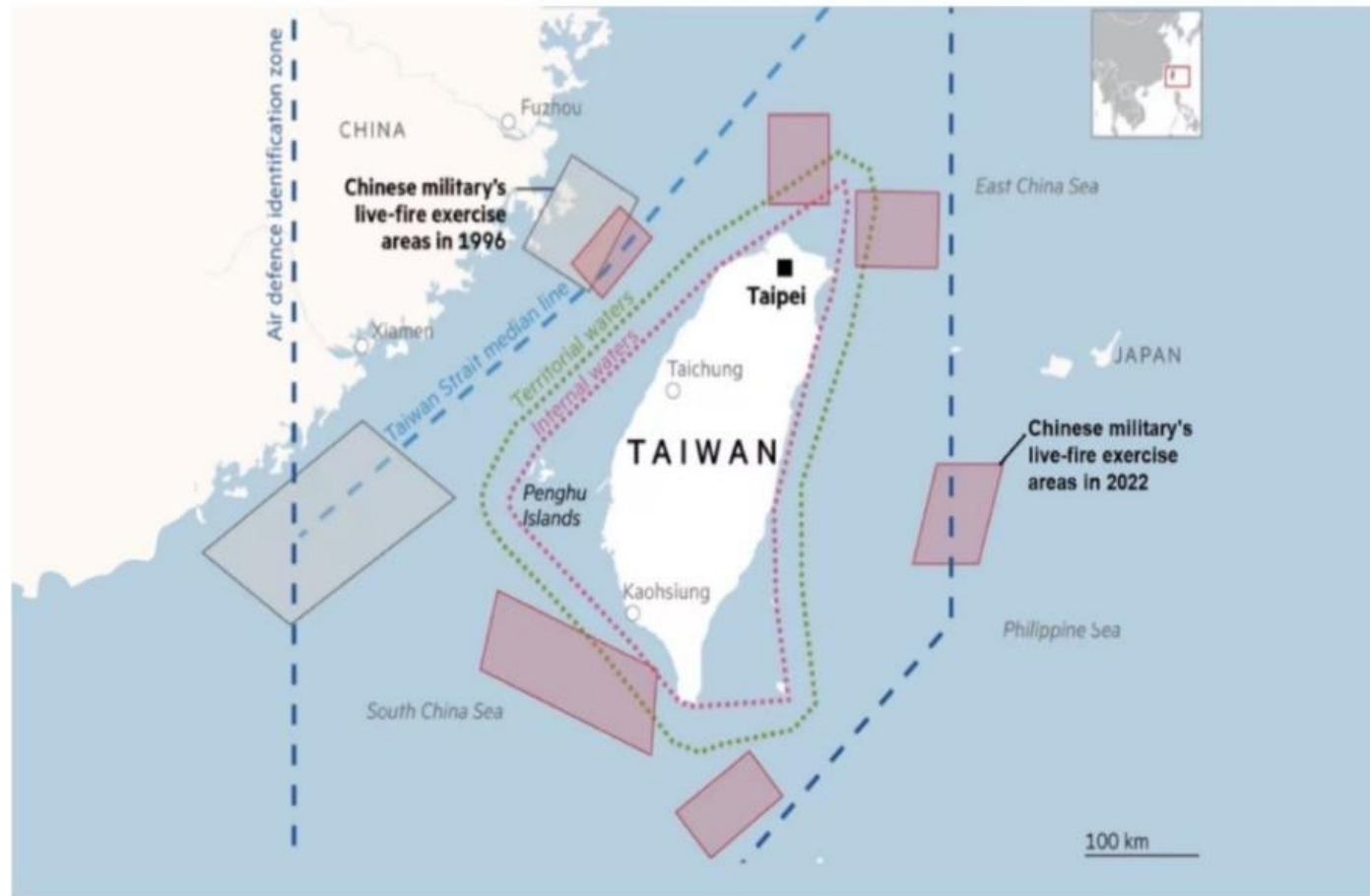




Chokepoints and U.S. Encroachment



East Asia: Impact of China and Taiwan conflict on shipping



Sino-American Antagonism: Concluding Remarks

- Ideological : Democracies vs Autocracies
- Geopolitical: Oceanic vs Eurasian coalitions
- Economic: resilience, decoupling
- Military: Nuclear and Conventional Arms Race
- Technological: primacy in AI, technological denial





Red Lines in Sino-American Relations

- Abstain from cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure
- Abstain from targeting space assets
- Avoid provocative military exercises, deployments, and maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait.
- Avoid changing the status quo in Taiwan

Strategic cooperation in the New Cold War

- Nuclear Arms Control in order to improve strategic stability
- Mitigation of the strategic impact of AI: always a human on the loop
- Upheld the nuclear non-proliferation regime
- Environmental sustainability
- Management of pandemics: build a better system for distributing future vaccines to the developing world.
- Improve global financial stability, especially by agreeing to reschedule the debts of developing countries hit hard by natural or medical disasters.

ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ ΠΛΑΤΙΑΣ
ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΣ ΤΡΙΓΚΑΣ

Αποδομώντας την Παγίδα του Θουκυδίδη

Υψηλή Στρατηγική και
Γεωπολιτικός Ανταγωνισμός
ΗΠΑ - Κίνας


ΔΙΑΥΛΟΣ



ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ ΠΛΑΤΙΑΣ
ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ ΚΟΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ

Η ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΙΚΗΣ

50 ΚΑΝΟΝΕΣ

για τον πόλεμο, την πολιτική,
τις επιχειρήσεις και την καθημερινή ζωή




ΔΙΑΥΛΟΣ