



# New Trends in Emerging Power-Great Power Conflicts

---

HAANS J. FREDDY  
V. BIJUKUMAR

palgrave  
macmillan

# New Trends in Emerging Power-Great Power Conflicts

Haans J. Freddy · V. Bijukumar

New Trends  
in Emerging  
Power-Great Power  
Conflicts

palgrave  
macmillan

Haans J. Freddy  
Madras Christian College  
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

V. Bijukumar  
School of Social Sciences  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi, India

ISBN 978-3-031-58166-3      ISBN 978-3-031-58167-0 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58167-0>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer  
Nature Switzerland AG 2024

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

If disposing of this product, please recycle the paper.

## FOREWORD

In the third decade of the twenty-first century, the forces of disorder are challenging the world order in multiple domains. World politics in the present era is marked by shifting global dynamics and the rise of new power centres. As the world witnesses the emergence of new powers seeking to assert their influence on the global stage, the stage is set for a paradigm shift in terms of conflict in world politics. The spectre of conflict looms large over different parts of the international landscape. The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza serve as stark reminders of the potential for conflict escalation and the complex interplay of interests among nations. The threat of a regional conflict expanding to become a great power conflict is very real.

The presumptive ‘rules-based liberal world order’ that emerged after the Second World War has changed irrevocably in the twenty-first century. The number of major powers, including nuclear armed powers, has increased in different regions of the world. The global architecture constructed on the basis of a world controlled by a small number of major powers in the Western hemisphere has become redundant in a new world with many emerging powers that seek their rightful place in the global discourse. The emerging powers seek their share of power in the global system and their place on the high table. The existing system of global governance faces a serious legitimacy crisis and there is an urgent need to redesign the governance architecture to manage the complex global power structure that exists today.

As rising powers seek to challenge the hegemony of established regional powers, the stage is set for conflict as each side perceives the other's actions as threatening. This dynamic is exacerbated by the quest for regional hegemony, as rising powers seek to expand their influence and alter the existing regional order to their advantage. The rapid growth of emerging powers has the potential to disrupt the delicate balance of power in the regional and international system, leading to increased tensions and the possibility of conflict.

A key contribution of this book is its analysis of regional dynamics, particularly the interactions between regional hegemons and rising powers that mirror great power conflicts. This book delves into the growing tensions between emerging powers and established regional powers, shedding light on the underlying dynamics that drive these conflicts. Drawing on a rich tapestry of theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, the authors present a compelling argument for a new trend in world politics—the potential for great power wars sparked by the rise of emerging powers. This book offers a timely and insightful analysis of great power-emerging power conflicts that are reshaping the world order. By shedding light on the underlying dynamics of these conflicts, the authors provide a valuable resource for scholars and policymakers seeking to navigate the complex maze of contemporary international politics.

R. Sridhar  
Vice Principal  
Madras Christian College  
Chennai, India

## PREFACE

This book is about war. The world today is passing through a difficult phase in its history where inter-state conflicts or war is gradually increasing across regions in the world. The loss of lives and the human suffering that is emerging through these conflicts is indeed perturbing. Should it spread across all regions of the world, the devastation of life and property will be unimaginable.

We think it necessary to make known to the reader the motivations for taking a rather different view of inter-state conflicts that have been hitherto discussed in numerous books that are available. When COVID-19 was announced as a global pandemic, India and China for the first time since 1962 witnessed blood being spilt in the Himalayan region. The Galwan impasse that led to both countries' soldiers engaging in a street fight like brawl that saw twenty soldiers from the Indian side and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers who were thrown off the cliff, beaten to death with nail studded clubs and other unconventional weapons is one of the reasons for this book to have been conceived. Different perspectives emerged and theoretical analysis of the conflict were presented to the world as to why this impasse is important to world politics. Importantly, this fighting in the borders between Indian and Chinese soldiers saw realism as the prominent theory that was being used to interpret it. To be more precise the theory of offensive realism became prominent in the discussion of the border dispute between India and China. For us too offensive realism seemed to offer a more convincing

analysis of the disputes that are present between India and China. This book is therefore an extension of such conflicts between states which can be seen and interpreted from a rather new perspective. We suggest that these conflicts between states present a new trend of asymmetrical conflicts that could possibly bring great powers into these conflicts and thereby increase the possibility of great power confrontation in the future.

In the post-Second World War period asymmetrical conflicts, that is, conflict between states with unequal power resources engage in war became a trend. A few examples such as the Prussia-Austria, Hungary and Turkey, Pakistan's war with India, Sino-Indian war are indicative of asymmetrical conflicts around the world. One of the important observations and interpretations that can be brought out of these conflicts is that it suggests the fulfilment of the realist assumption that states seek survival and in order to ensure survival states must acquire more power. Thus, the quest for power also seems to be a cause for conflicts between states. When a dominant power is challenged by a rising power, there is the possibility that the dominant power would seek to preserve its status or position by which it can reap the benefits that it would through the preservation of its status. The rationale thus for this study comes with the realization that although there are numerous studies that examine great power conflicts and asymmetric conflicts in the world, conflicts between emerging powers and great powers are a new trend seems to be eluding the discourse on international conflicts in the world. We therefore engage with specific cases of conflicts in the world that includes the US-China, US-Russia and the Sino-Indian rivalries to explain that these asymmetrical rivalries could trigger a great power confrontation. The past offers numerous examples of emerging powers and great powers or dominant power engaging in war that has resulted in international political change. Great power war brings change in the international system. Two important consequences emerge through great power war: (i) the state which has been hitherto the dominant power may be replaced or (ii) the challenging state may be defeated and the status quo is sustained until there arises another challenge to the dominant power. The above-mentioned conflicts thus show that there is an emerging trend that great power-emerging power conflicts are indeed a problem which needs to be examined with greater emphasis. This study is therefore an attempt to examine such conflicts in which emerging powers are becoming more and more entangled in conflicts with great powers.



We have greatly enjoyed writing this book which tries to explain and define great powers and emerging powers and we hope that the reader benefits from the assumptions that it makes to comprehend that this trend of emerging power-great power conflicts is indeed an interesting field of enquiry that needs more attention. Although in certain ways the study is limited and may not be all encompassing, we hope that the book enables the reader to acknowledge the emerging trend of international conflicts and how it could transform itself into great power conflicts once again in the world.

Chennai, India  
New Delhi, India

Haans J. Freddy  
V. Bijukumar

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume would not have been possible without the support of many friends and colleagues. To that end, I wish to thank Dr. S. D. Christopher Chandran, Head Department of Political Science, Madras Christian College, Chennai. My friend Dr. Thongkholal Haokip, Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, who was a source of inspiration in many of my academic endeavours. I extend my sincere thanks to Prof. K. Debbarma who was my Ph.D. mentor at the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. I thank Dr. Rajiv Ranjan, Associate Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, Delhi University. I gratefully acknowledge the many discussions with Dr. Lawrence Prabhakar Williams who willingly spent his time to discuss and comment on the initial drafts of the chapters in this volume. My thanks to Prof. Uma Maheshwari, Head Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Madras, for her encouragement when writing this book. I wish to thank my students, Mr. Shekin Sancho and Mr. Sujin, in the Department of Political Science, Madras Christian College, for their editorial assistance. I am grateful to Dr. C. Joshua Thomas Deputy Director (Retd) for his encouragement when I was writing this book. My thanks to J. Andrew Grant, Queens University, Kingston, Canada, who has been a constant support, encouragement and great inspiration for me. Our sincere thanks to Prof. Swaran Singh for his kind endorsement of this book. We finally would like to thank immensely Ms. Anca Pusca who showed interest in this work and took it to publication with Palgrave Macmillan.

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction: Emerging Powers and Great Powers</b>	<b>1</b>
	<i>Power in International Relations</i>	5
	<i>Great Powers in the World</i>	10
	<i>Emerging Powers in the International System</i>	14
	<i>References</i>	19
<b>2</b>	<b>Power Transitions in World Politics: A Theoretical Analysis</b>	<b>25</b>
	<i>References</i>	34
<b>3</b>	<b>Case Study I: US-China Rivalries</b>	<b>37</b>
	<i>US-China Great Power Competition</i>	41
	<i>US-China Competition in Africa</i>	48
	<i>US-China Trade War</i>	53
	<i>COVID-19 and US-China Great Power Relations</i>	56
	<i>References</i>	59
<b>4</b>	<b>Case Study II: US-Russia Rivalries</b>	<b>63</b>
	<i>References</i>	86
<b>5</b>	<b>Case Study III: China-India Rivalry</b>	<b>91</b>
	<i>Territorial Disputes with India</i>	93
	<i>The Doklam Impasse</i>	96
	<i>The Galwan Standoff</i>	101
	<i>The Pakistan Factor in India-China Rivalry</i>	103

<i>References</i>	106
<b>6 Conclusion</b>	111
<i>References</i>	117
<b>Bibliography</b>	119
<b>Index</b>	135

## ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	Anti-Access/Area Denial
AFRICOM	The African Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
B3W	Build Back Better World
BIC	Brazil India China
BPTA	Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China South Africa
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COMECON	The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DBO	Daulat Beg Oldie
DSDBO	Darbuk-Shyloh and Daulat Beg Oldie
DTTI	Defense Trade and Technology
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICBMs	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IRBMs	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles
JWG	Joint Working Group

LAC	Line of Actual Control
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MIC	Made in China
MRBMs	Medium Range Ballistic Missiles
MSR	Maritime Silk Road
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEFA	North East Frontier Agency
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
POK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
PRC	People's Republic of China
RAF	Royal Air Force
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SA-IOR	South Asian Indian Ocean Region
SALT I	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I
SALT II	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
START I	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I
START II	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USINDOPACOM	US Indo-Pacific Command
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization
YALI	Young African Leaders Initiative



# Introduction: Emerging Powers and Great Powers

In today's world, the possibility of war between states has increased at an alarming rate. The war between Russia and Ukraine, Israel-Palestine war and the rise in tensions between Pakistan and Iran, North Korea and South Korea are examples that draw our attention to these dangerous problems that will have enduring consequences for the future of the world. In general, international politics has been dominated by great powers and smaller powers; emerging powers and middle powers have had little say in it. Great powers have determined the rules of the game and have in general decided who gets what since they have both constitutive and distributive powers. Treaties such as Westphalia (1648), Utrecht (1713), Vienna (1814), Berlin (1878), Versailles (1919) and Yalta and Potsdam (1945) illustrate that great powers were in control of the rules for the new state system that would be established in the post-war period (Sweijts, 2010: 2). However, changes in the distribution of power among states brought significant transformations in the political, economic and military realms which had tremendous implications in the context of distribution of power in the world (Gilpin, 1981: 1). Countries' obsession for power and with the rise of nations from the Global South, the rise of China and other emerging powers have brought with it complexities and challenges to the existing world order. International relations as a discipline has had to adapt itself to analyse these changes wherein, in the context of power, new categorizations such as rising powers, emerging