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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF INDUSTRIAL AND DEFENSE TECHNOLOGIES

Abstract: *Geopolitical competition in the fields of industry and defense technology is gradually influencing the modern international security order. Technological capabilities are becoming a major source of economic growth, national power and strategic influence, particularly in areas such as digital infrastructure, autonomous systems, semiconductors and artificial intelligence. The paper analyzes how the growing dependence of security on technological superiority affects the change in global power relations, with a special focus on the rivalry of great powers, primarily the United States of America and China. Special attention is paid to the concepts of technological sovereignty, security of supply chains and the role of civil-military convergence in modern national security strategies. The impact of digitalisation, cyber threats and the use of artificial intelligence on global stability, as well as the challenges faced by international and regional institutions in regulating new technologies, are all addressed in this study through a review of the relevant literature. It is concluded that industrial and defense technologies represent one of the central fields of contemporary geopolitical conflicts, the understanding of which is of crucial importance for shaping long-term security strategies and preserving international stability in conditions of accelerated technological changes.*

Keywords: *international security; geopolitics; defense technologies; industrial policy; artificial intelligence; technological sovereignty*

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic conflicts over industrial and defense technology, now central to determining national power and international influence, are becoming increasingly common in today's global security environment. As technological capabilities have become closely linked to economic and military power, mastering advanced technologies such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and autonomous systems has become a key element of national security strategy.[1] Leadership in these areas strengthens a nation's strategic influence in the international arena and also brings economic benefits. This intensifies competition between great powers and threatens established security mechanisms.

Geopolitical conflicts currently focus on industrial and defense technologies, particularly between superpowers such as China and the United States. As U.S. investment efforts in China's technology industries demonstrate, this competition extends beyond innovation and production capacity to include supply chain management, investment screening, and export restrictions aimed at limiting competitors' access to sensitive technologies.[2] Essentially, states seek to protect their defense sectors from external threats, and this competition reflects broader concerns about technological dependence and strategic autonomy.[3] The increasing adoption of advanced technologies such as drones, autonomous systems, and artificial intelligence in the military shows how developments in civilian technologies are impacting tactical concepts and global defense strategies.

The geopolitics of industrial and defense technologies also influences alliance structures and multilateral cooperation. Regional and transatlantic partners are increasingly turning to joint research and development initiatives to improve competitiveness and sustainability. Europe's efforts to foster innovation through joint defense technology programs reflect an attempt to narrow the technological gap with global competitors while strengthening collective security mechanisms.[4]

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1 Farrand, B., Carrapico, H. & Turobov, A. (2024): "The new geopolitics of EU cybersecurity: Security, economy and sovereignty", *International Affairs*, *100*(6), 2379–2397. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iiae231

2 Bhutani, A. (2025): "U.S. Clamps Down on Investment in Chinese Tech Companies", *The Wall Street Journal*, https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/ndaa-us-investment-chinese-tech-firms-c0866b0b.

3 Farrand, B., Carrapico, H. & Turobov, A. (2024): "The new geopolitics of EU cybersecurity: Security, economy and sovereignty", *International Affairs*, *100*(6), 2379–2397. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iiae231

4 Chan, K. (2025): "Hackathon teams race to solve defense tech challenges as Europe boosts military capabilities", *AP News*, https://apnews.com/article/europe-defense-drone-military-technology-hackathon-02768cd972c967cb08879b9041c8e4cb.

Conflicts over intellectual property, market access and technological standards provide the backdrop for this cooperation, highlighting the growing convergence of security and economic interests in modern geopolitics.[5]

Under these circumstances, national security strategies focus as much on protecting technological leadership as traditional military capabilities. Competition in industrial and defense technology is therefore shaping broader international security dynamics, including not only military power but also deterrence, economic governance, and strategic autonomy, making these trends important to both policymakers and scholars seeking to understand the future international order.

OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Different security challenges are brought to the forefront by today's interconnected global dynamics. These issues cover a wide range of current issues, including nuclear proliferation, disruptive technology, environmental issues, and many more. Innovative approaches to complex environmental and geopolitical concerns enhance the role of diplomacy and defence as vital channels for negotiation and conflict resolution. International security professionals strive to prevent crises and promote both national and international interests by using a sophisticated combination of alliance-building and strong military capabilities.[6]

The study of how geography affects international relations and politics is called geopolitics. It looks at how geographical elements like locations, resources, and borders interact with states' and other actors' political actions on the international scene.[7] Geopolitics examines how these elements influence a country's international relations, foreign policy, and overall place in the world order. The interplay of geographical variables with political, economic, and social elements that shape the connections and power balances between various nations and groups on a global scale is referred to as geopolitical dynamics (or geopolitics dynamics). These dynamics include competition for resources, power, and territory control, as well as its effects on trade, security, and international relations.[8]

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5 Zúñiga, N., Burton, S. D., Blancato, F. & Carr, M. (2024): "The geopolitics of technology standards: Historical context for US, EU and Chinese approaches", *International Affairs*, *100*(4), 1635–1652. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iiae124

6 GTPE Communications (2024): "Diplomacy, Defense, and the Nuances of Modern International Security", https://pe.gatech.edu/blog/industry-trends/Diplomacy-Defense-Nuances-of-Modern-International-Security.

7 Granieri, R. (2015): "What is geopolitics and why does it matter?", *Orbis*, *59*(4), 491–504. DOI: 10.1016/j.orbis.2015.08.003

8 Flint, C. (2021): *Introduction to geopolitics* (3rd ed.), Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781003138549

The last ten years have seen significant changes in international politics, which have continued to influence the world. These shifts in geopolitics are dynamic and constantly evolving. As a result, the global governance structure has progressively changed from a unipolar order to a more intricate and dispersed multipolar arrangement.[9] The current geopolitical scene is largely defined by issues related to trade liberalisation, climate change, technology breakthroughs, and the role of non-state actors (NSAs). The world's geopolitics have been shaped by the world's growing interconnection and interdependence, as well as by problems and challenges like trade, conflict, politics, diplomacy, and national leadership. In fact, the main causes of conflicts and wars around the world are increasingly rivalry for natural resources, access to international markets, and technological superiority.[10] Furthermore, the future balance of power would unavoidably be impacted by shifts in economic and military power from Western to Eastern nations, particularly as China grows into a major global force.[11] Over the course of the next 20 years, a complex system of cutting-edge technologies will merge and transform society and the economy.[12] According to this viewpoint, the capacity to produce, obtain, and apply these "frontier" technologies will play a crucial part in determining the geostrategic role those different economies can play in the global setting.[13]

The concepts of collective security are synonymous with global security, which encompasses actions and programs intended to resolve interrelated and conflicting problems in order to promote a more secure and stable global community. The United Nations was founded with the goal of promoting world peace and security via humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution.[14] International tensions are fuelled by intense competition for economic and technological supremacy and go beyond trade, especially between the US and China. Global value chain configuration and geostrategic issues, such as the security and resilience of digital networks, energy, space, marine domains,

9 Abdulle, M. A. (2024): "The rise of the multipolar world order: Opportunities and challenges for Africa", *Journal of International Relations and Policy*, *5*(1), 1–10. DOI: 10.47941/jirp.1720

10 Ramesh, S. (2025): "War and Conflict: The Last 5000 Years of Human History", in: *The Political Economy of Contemporary Human Civilisation, Volume II*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-84185-9_7

11 Weng, Z. (2023): "Competition and Cooperation: A Study of the Motivation of China-U.S. Cooperation and Conflict Management in the New Era", *Academic Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, *5*(2), 99-102. DOI: 10.54097/ajmss.v5i2.23

12 Baltezarević, B., Baltezarević, R., & Baltezarević, V. (2018). Aktivnosti starijih osoba na onlajn društvenim mrežama. Megatrend Review/Megatrend Revija, 15(3), 157-172, 160.

13 Archibugi, D., Mariella, V. & Vezzani, A. (2025): "What next? Nations in the technological race through the 2030", *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 212, 123987.

14 Sabit, M. M. (2023): "UN collective security system's responsibility to protect & preparedness in preventing wars", *The Indian Journal for Research in Law and Management*, *1*(2).

and international financial infrastructure, are involved in this competition. In this regard, the concept of technological sovereignty has been more significant in recent years, emphasising how independent technology capabilities influence international strategic exchanges.[15]

The current state of global security is characterised by increased dangers of nuclear proliferation, which are compounded by growing geopolitical tensions and trends in arsenal upgrade and growth. From 9,585 at the start of 2024 to 9,604 at the start of 2025, there was an alarming increase in the quantity of nuclear weapons that could be used.[16] As nuclear-armed nations upgrade and, in certain situations, deliberately grow their arsenals, the majority of which are deployed and ready for immediate deployment on submarines, land-based missiles, and bomber bases, this increasing trajectory is anticipated to continue.[17]

The defence industry can be examined as an economic phenomenon by using ideas from the field of economics. Accordingly, countries should raise the level of product knowledge in order to raise living standards.[18] Big Tech is essential to the military and intelligence services. In order to monitor adversaries and, if necessary, predict their actions on the battlefield, the latter control tools, such as cloud systems or AI algorithms focused on picture and sound identification, behaviour prediction, and military targeting are crucial. These companies are essential to military-related innovation ecosystems because they support start-ups' R&D activities and make it easier for technology created for the civilian sector to be transferred to the military.[19] Big Tech's direct engagement in ongoing conflicts is a manifestation of the digital-military-industrial complex. AWS and Microsoft have been in charge of the IT infrastructure of the Ukrainian public administration and banking system since the very beginning of the conflict, in addition to Space-X,

15 Caravella, S., Crespi, F., Cucignatto, G. & Guarascio, D. (2024): "Technological sovereignty and strategic dependencies: The case of the photovoltaic supply chain", *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 434, 140222.

16 Sinha, S. (2025): "9,605 nuclear weapons deployable globally, China leader in growing arsenal", *Interesting Engineering*, https://interestingengineering.com/culture/global-nuclear-weapon-stockpiles-rise.

17 Newsweek (2025): "Global Arms Race Warning Issued As Nuclear Warheads Increase", https://www.newsweek.com/japan-news-researchers-warning-nuclear-arms-race-warhead-buildup-2081186.

18 Reinert, E. (2007): *How Rich Countries Got Rich … and Why Poor Countries Stay Poor*, Constable, London.

19 Guarascio, D. & Pianta, M. (2025): "Digital technologies: Civilian vs. military trajectories" (LEM Working Paper Series No. 2025/08), Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Laboratory of Economics and Management (LEM). DOI: 10.57838/sssa/dkb0-wb35

Elon Musk's company that provides Internet connectivity to the Ukrainian army through its low-orbit satellite system.[20]

Despite having a number of nations at the forefront of science and technology, the EU has lagged behind the US and, in certain areas, China. Five EU27 nations, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark, are among the top ten global leaders in the 2024 innovation index, according to data on innovation in 133 countries from the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Switzerland and the United Kingdom, two non-EU nations, are ranked first and fifth, respectively, in the top 10. Investment in science and innovation, technological advancement, technological adoption, and the socioeconomic effect of innovation are the four main phases of the innovation cycle that are measured by the Global Innovation Index (GII).[21]

The spread of digital technologies opens up new forms of cyber threats,[22] that increasingly affect the security of states and the international security order. Nevertheless, increasing digital literacy is an effective preventive measure against cybercrime,[23] and thus contributes to strengthening national cyber security in a digitally connected world. Furthermore, it is important to carefully consider the geopolitical environment of artificial intelligence (AI) advancement and acceptance. Technology asymmetries could result from the distribution of AI-related research, resources, and skills among countries, thereby widening global imbalances.[24] Comprehending these discrepancies is essential to understanding how AI affects cyber power dynamics, international politics, and the distribution of power in the digital sphere. Another important aspect of using AI in cybersecurity discussions is ethical and legal considerations.[25]

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20 Coveri, A., Cozza, C. & Guarascio, D. (2025): "Blurring boundaries: An analysis of the digital platforms–military nexus", *Review of Political Economy*, *37*(4), 1632–1663. DOI: 10.1080/09538259.2024.2395832

21 WIPO (2024): *Global Innovation Index 2024* (15th ed.), https://www.wipo.int/web-publications/global-innovation-index-2024/en/.

22 Baltezarević, R. & Baltezarević, I. (2021): "The dangers and threats that digital users face in cyberspace", *IPSI Transactions on Internet Research*, *17*(1), 47–53.

23 Baltezarević, R. (2022): "Digitalna pismenost kao sredstvo prevencije protiv sajber kriminala", *Baština*, *32*(57), 131–139. DOI: 10.5937/bastina32-38103

24 Chaudhary, H., Detroja, A., Prajapati, P. & Shah, P. (2020): "A review of various challenges in cybersecurity using artificial intelligence", in: *Proceedings of the 2020 3rd International Conference on Intelligent Sustainable Systems (ICISS)*, IEEE, 829–836. DOI: 10.1109/ICISS49785.2020.9316003

25 Roberts, A. & Venables, A. (2021): "The role of artificial intelligence in kinetic targeting from the perspective of international humanitarian law", in: *Proceedings of the 2021 13th International Conference on Cyber Conflict (CyCon)*, IEEE, 43–57. DOI: 10.23919/CyCon51939.2021.9468301

Artificial intelligence is increasingly integrated into modern economic flows, enabling companies to make more accurate decisions, optimize operations and increase productivity,[26] which affects not only the global economy but also the geopolitical dynamics of technological and security competition between major powers. Concerns about data privacy, individual rights, and data sovereignty become critical as AI is used more and more for cyber operations and decision-making. It is essential to promote international cooperation and collaboration in order to tackle complex issues such as the necessity of responsible AI governance and the creation of globally recognised guidelines for cybersecurity measures driven by AI. The importance of a unified policy framework that promotes inclusivity, openness, and responsible AI technology development in cybersecurity is emphasised. Such a framework is essential to ensuring that AI's transformational potential is used for the greater good, promoting cyber resilience globally.[27]

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a key factor influencing international security and defence in recent years, changing the character of conflict, the balance of power, and strategic priorities. Policymakers are focussing more on attaining technological superiority and autonomy as AI technologies advance quickly. The growing intensity of the AI arms race has been highlighted by the recent launch of the Chinese AI model, DeepSeek. Several geopolitical presumptions about the current state of competition between the two main stakeholders (China and the United States) are called into question by this development. But using such a weapon in combat also creates new risks and moral dilemmas. Leading global powers are redefining international rivalry and affecting both economic and security agendas as they compete for dominance in AI. A crucial but frequently disregarded factor in creating international norms and regulations is AI standardisation. Digital sovereignty is becoming a key concern as nations compete for control over the development and governance of AI, especially with regard to cybersecurity threats, data control, and defence uses.[28]

The development of emerging defence technology has revolutionary possibilities for both operational efficacy and military superiority. From sophisticated manufacturing to artificial intelligence, the innovation pipeline is accelerating, and that is cause for excitement. Adoption of technology is still a major obstacle, nevertheless,

[26] Baltezarević, R. (2023): "Uticaj veštačke inteligencije na globalnu ekonomiju", *Megatrend revija*, *20*(3), 13–24. DOI: 10.5937/MegRev2303013B

[27] Jin, A. S., Hogewood, L., Fries, S., Lambert, J. H., Fiondella, L., Strelzoff, A., Boone, J., Fleckner, K. & Linkov, I. (2022): "Resilience of cyber-physical systems: Role of AI, digital twins, and edge computing", *IEEE Engineering Management Review*, *50*(2), 195–203. DOI: 10.1109/EMR.2022.3172649

[28] Martino, L. & Favorotto, L. (2025): "Redefining Security: How AI is Changing the Future of Defense", https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/redefining-security-how-ai-is-changing-the-future-of-defense-198182.

with major obstacles posing a threat to advancement. The current defence innovation ecosystem is dispersed, with different roles played by government labs carrying out basic research, public institutions supplying funding and demand signals, start-ups developing ground-breaking technologies, big, established commercial players scaling solutions, and the DIB organising, deploying, and maintaining military operations. Inefficiencies brought on by this fragmentation considerably impede the transfer of technology from the laboratory to the front lines of combat.[29]

CONCLUSION

Competition in industrial and defense technologies is becoming an important source of political power and geopolitical influence in today's international security. Technological superiority is now not only an economic resource, but also a strategic element that influences alliances, containment, and stability of the world order.

The growing rivalry between superpowers in digital infrastructure, semiconductors and artificial intelligence amply demonstrates the close relationship between military prowess and civilian innovation. This convergence further blurs the lines between economy and security, making technological sovereignty one of the central goals of national strategies.

At the same time, accelerated digitization and the expansion of cyberspace create new security vulnerabilities that go beyond traditional forms of threats. Cyber threats, AI-supported operations and dependence on global supply chains necessitate a comprehensive approach to security that includes technological resilience, regulation and international cooperation.

The increasingly pronounced dependence of international security on technological capacities increases the importance of global institutions, rules and standards, although their actual effectiveness remains limited due to technological inequalities and competing geopolitical ambitions of states. The global system still faces the risk of increased volatility and perhaps escalation of conflict in the absence of a clear strategy for managing emerging technologies.

Overall, industrial and defense technologies represent one of the main foci of geopolitical conflict in the modern international system today. Understanding these dynamics is of crucial importance for the creation of long-term security strategies that can follow rapid technological transformations, preserve international stability and mitigate security risks in an increasingly complex global environment.

[29] Swartz, D. & Brukardt, R. (2025): "Creating a modernized defense technology frontier", https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/aerospace-and-defense/our-insights/creating-a-modernized-defense-technology-frontier.

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MEĐUNARODNA BEZBEDNOST I GEOPOLITIKA INDUSTRIJSKIH I ODBRAMBENIH TEHNOLOGIJA

Sažetak: *Geopolitička konkurencija u oblastima industrije i odbrambene tehnologije postepeno utiče na savremeni međunarodni bezbednosni poredak. Tehnološke mogućnosti postaju glavni izvor ekonomskog rasta, nacionalne moći i strateškog uticaja, posebno u oblastima kao što su digitalna infrastruktura, autonomni sistemi, poluprovodnici i veštačka inteligencija. Rad analizira kako rastuća zavisnost bezbednosti od tehnološke superiornosti utiče na promenu globalnih odnosa moći, sa posebnim fokusom na rivalstvo velikih sila, pre svega Sjedinjenih Američkih Država i Kine. Posebna pažnja posvećena je konceptima tehnološkog suvereniteta, bezbednosti lanaca snabdevanja i ulozi civilno-vojne konvergencije u savremenim strategijama nacionalne bezbednosti. Uticaj digitalizacije, sajber pretnji i upotrebe veštačke inteligencije na globalnu stabilnost, kao i izazovi sa kojima se suočavaju međunarodne i regionalne institucije u regulisanju novih tehnologija, obrađeni su u ovoj studiji kroz pregled relevantne literature. Zaključeno je da industrijske i odbrambene tehnologije predstavljaju jedno od centralnih polja savremenih geopolitičkih sukoba, čije je razumevanje od ključnog značaja za oblikovanje dugoročnih bezbednosnih strategija i očuvanje međunarodne stabilnosti u uslovima ubrzanih tehnoloških promena.*

Ključne reči: *međunarodna bezbednost; geopolitika; odbrambene tehnologije; industrijska politika; veštačka inteligencija; tehnološki suverenitet*