

Part 1: Navigating the New Multipolar World Order:

Exclusive Interview with Maj. Gen. B.K. Sharma, AVSM, SM **

By Neeraj Mahajan (Taazakhabarnews.com)



In the increasingly complex and interconnected world, [multipolar global order](#) is reshaping the dynamics of international relations. As a distinguished military leader and strategic thinker, Maj. Gen. B.K. Sharma, AVSM, SM and Bar (Retd.), Director General, United Service Institution of India (USI), offers valuable insights into the implications of this shift for global security and stability.

Neeraj Mahajan is a hard-core, creative and dynamic media professional with over 35 years of proven competence and 360-degree experience in print, electronic, web and mobile journalism. He is an eminent investigative journalist, out of the box thinker, and a hard-core reporter who is always hungry for facts. Neeraj has worked in all kinds of daily/weekly/broadsheet/tabloid newspapers, magazines and television channels like Star TV, BBC, Patriot, Sunday Observer, Sunday Mail, Network Magazine, Verdict, and Gfiles Magazine.

*As Director General of the United Service Institution of India (USI), India's 156-year think tank Maj. Gen. B.K. Sharma, AVSM, SM and Bar (Retd.) is the Editor in Chief of the USI Strategic Yearbook and has profusely contributed several books and research papers at international and national conferences. He speaks at policy think tanks and academic institutions in India and abroad. He is one of India's most reputed experts on strategic net assessment, scenario building, and strategic gaming. From the implications of great power rivalries to the role of technology in modern warfare, Maj Gen Sharma's thoughts provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex security environment we face today. Commissioned in the Sikh Light Infantry Regiment, Gen Sharma Commanded a Mountain Division on the China border and served as a Senior Faculty Member at the National Defence College served at the UN Peacekeeping in Central America and was Defence Attaché in Central Asia. He received three military awards from the President of India for distinguished national service and courage. He received a nation-building award from the Confederation of Educational Excellence. Excerpts from an exclusive no-hold-barred, freewheeling interview with editor, Taazakhabar News **NEERAJ MAHAJAN**.*

Trump 2.0 has adopted radical policies that are disrupting the established geopolitical paradigms. How will this, in your view, impact the world order?



In the current global scenario, realpolitik and power-centric dynamics dominate international relations. State behavior continues to be shaped by the logic of 'Social Darwinism', where national interest reigns supreme and significant powers vie for influence, often at the expense of global stability. The spectre of the Thucydides Trap'—where the rise of a new power instigates conflict with an established hegemon—looms large. A succession of global shocks—the COVID-19 pandemic, the Taliban's return to Afghanistan, and ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza—have deepened international fault lines and thrust the world into a state of perpetual crisis and strategic disarray. We

are witnessing a new era of Cold War-like rivalry, or as some analysts frame it, the “New Great Game” of the 21st century.



The global order is increasingly defined by an ideological divide, manifesting as a civilizational confrontation between the so-called liberal democracies led by the West and authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia on the one hand. Competing governance models are being promoted globally, deepening geopolitical schisms. Strategic competition intensifies across the Indo-Pacific, Eurasia, Arctic, outer space, cyberspace, and cognitive domains. Control over critical resources—energy, water, rare-earth elements, semiconductors, food, and digital infrastructure—has become a tool of geopolitical coercion. The push to decouple and de-risk global supply chains, particularly from China, is a significant force reshaping alliances and regional strategies. Using the U.S. dollar as a tool of economic statecraft has destabilized the global financial order, spurring inflation and food insecurity and encouraging the rise of alternative trading blocs, currency swap mechanisms, and parallel financial architectures such as BRICS+.

Donald Trump’s second term has disrupted global trade norms and weakened traditional alliances, accelerating the shift toward a fragmented, multipolar world. His sweeping tariffs—25% on Canada and Mexico, up to 125% on China, and levies on the EU, Japan, and South Korea—have upended supply chains, raised consumer costs, and slowed global growth. In response, allies and rivals have imposed retaliatory measures, heightening economic friction. Trump’s “America First” doctrine and transactional diplomacy have eroded trust among long-standing allies, who now hedge against U.S. unpredictability. The EU is advancing its security framework and promoting the euro to challenge dollar dominance.

Trilateral cooperation between Japan, South Korea, and China in Asia signals a recalibration of power independent of Washington. The liberal international order—built on multilateralism, open trade, and alliance-based deterrence—is fraying. Trump’s unilateralism and preference for bilateral deals weaken collective responses to transnational threats like climate change and nuclear proliferation. Strategic analysts warn that MAGA may ironically translate into *MCGA*—Making China Great Again—as Beijing fills the void left by American disengagement. The US-led liberal world order is transforming—ironically, also being reshaped by the very nation that created it. However, the emergence of a new, stable world order will take considerable time. Individual countries will hedge, balance, and realign in the interim to protect and advance their national interests.

With global power becoming more distributed, how are traditional alliances like NATO or strategic partnerships like QUAD evolving to remain relevant?

Though internal contradictions may constrain their full potential, regional groupings such as QUAD, AUKUS, SCO, and BRICS will grow relevant for addressing regional and bilateral issues. The Trans-Atlantic alliance, NATO, and US-led alliances in East Asia may face strains due to American unilateralism. Meanwhile, although Russia and China are strategically aligned, they are unlikely to forge a formal alliance.



NATO is adapting by targeting hybrid threats—cyber warfare and disinformation—while eyeing China alongside Russia. NATO has moved from static territorial defence to addressing hybrid warfare and Indo-Pacific stability. QUAD (U.S., Japan, Australia, and India) is formalising to counter China’s Indo-Pacific dominance, focusing on non-traditional threats and technological, maritime, and supply chain coordination. These alliances are less about ideology and more about capability pooling and resilience building. Both are shifting to flexible, issue-based “multilateralism” over rigid blocs. NATO struggles with unity, QUAD with India’s autonomy, but their evolution mirrors a broader trend: alliances must align with diffused power and non-traditional threats to stay relevant.

Is “no permanent friends or enemies” now a strategic necessity? Can you identify recent examples where former adversaries have found common ground in strategic or defence cooperation? What does this signal about future patterns?

Strategic fluidity is the new norm, and flexibility is key—pragmatism overrides ideology. The Abraham Accords saw historic normalisation between Israel and Arab states. India and the U.S.—once estranged during the Cold War—are now deepening defence cooperation. Even Turkey and Egypt are mending ties. Saudi Arabia and Russia, once Cold War foes, now coordinate oil cuts. Turkey, a NATO ally, buys Russia’s S-400 systems despite tensions.

India and China sustain trade amid border disputes. This signals a future of fluid, interest-driven alignments where today’s rival could be tomorrow’s partner. It complicates trust but fosters pragmatic diplomacy. States are recalibrating faster than ever to hedge risks and maximise strategic dividends.

How do you define a “multipolar world”? It is said that the world has plunged into an era of contested multi-polarity. Please elucidate your views on this. How do you see the role of the Global South in the evolving geopolitical milieu?

A multipolar world features multiple power centres—economic, military, and ideological—none dominant. “Contested multipolarity” reflects this diffusion amid clashing norms and rivalries. The global order is shifting from a U.S.-led unipolarity to a fragmented, asymmetric multipolarity. The relative decline of U.S. influence and China’s assertive rise are at the heart of this transition. The Biden administration’s Indo-Pacific strategy—anchored in QUAD, AUKUS, NATO expansion, and B3W—does face disruption under Trump 2.0. China, in contrast, is crafting a Sino-centric Asia through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and a suite of global narratives: *Global Development*, *Global Security*, *Global Civilisation*, *Global Mediation*, and *Global Digital*. These efforts aim to realign the Global South under Beijing’s influence. Russia and China actively promote multipolarity by expanding alternative platforms like BRICS and the SCO.

Simultaneously, ASEAN’s strategic neutrality and India’s leadership in initiatives like the Global G21 reflect the rise of new, non-Western cooperative frameworks. Russia’s post-2014 Pivot to Asia—via energy corridors, Arctic routes, and strategic ties with China—is complemented by connectivity projects with India, including the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Vladivostok–Chennai link. This evolving architecture presents both risks and opportunities for India. Navigating it will require agile diplomacy, strategic hedging, and calibrated leadership in emerging coalitions.



The Global South will continue to pursue strategic autonomy and advocate for collective approaches to shared global challenges. Rather than a return to rigid politico-military blocs reminiscent of the Cold War or the World Wars, we are likely to witness the consolidation of multiple power centres and a more fluid, diffused multipolarity still struggling to coalesce into a coherent new order. The Global South will continue to pursue strategic autonomy and advocate for collective approaches to shared global challenges.

*This is a reproduction of an interview of DG USI by the Editor of the Taazakhabar News.*¹

¹ Neeraj Mahajan, Navigating the New Multipolar World Order: Exclusive Interview with Maj. Gen. B.K. Sharma, AVSM, SM and Bar, Taazakhabar News
<https://taazakhabarnews.com/navigating-the-new-multipolar-world-order-exclusive-interview-with-maj-gen-b-k-sharma-avsm-sm-and-bar/>

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