

Global Agenda Council on Geopolitical Risk 2012-2014



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Understanding/Context

The world is increasingly interconnected, yet borders still matter in a globalized world. Geopolitics have become increasingly important, not just because of shifting power dynamics, but also because issues of security have become intertwined with those of trade, migration, employment and other forms of international relations. Traditional superpowers can no longer be confident of their positions and strength on the international stage, and this dispersion of power has changed the dynamics of geopolitics: countries like China and Brazil command more negotiating power than before; some like Tunisia and Egypt have gained democracy, albeit violently; and others like Syria and North Korea have rigidly stayed the same and even receded in terms of the freedoms they provide to their citizens.

Another trend observed by the Global Agenda Council on Geopolitical Risk has been that of de-globalization and a weakening of multilateralism for a number of years. Initially, it was thought that regional institutions and groupings would take over in providing a rules-based framework for trade, investment and security. However, it has become clear in 2013 that global trends of fragmentation are stronger than international and regional efforts to build new regimes.

Shaping the Agenda

The Global Agenda Council on Geopolitical Risk aims to establish geopolitical risk as a primary category in the discourse on economic and political global governance, at a time when increasing uncertainty along geo-economic and geopolitical lines makes it imperative to study the issues in a multidimensional and multistakeholder manner.

The Council produced and published an e-book in 2013 entitled *What's Next? Essays on Geopolitics that Matter, Volume 2* – the second in the Council's two-year term. Each chapter of

the e-book is an insight into a different region of the world and the changes it is going through. As a collection rather than a comprehensive portrait of the geopolitical risks facing various regions, it provides an illustration of where the world might be headed. The topics covered include the vulnerability of elites globally, US-China relations, the rise of vox populi, issues in the Middle East, among others. The chapter on the vulnerability of elites follows a white paper by the same title released at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2013, which highlighted the adverse impact of the lack of leadership in times of geopolitical uncertainty. The Council will continue monitoring some of the events and release a geopolitical update paper in time for the Annual Meeting 2014 to advise participants on the risks and challenges in the geopolitical space.

“Traditional superpowers can no longer be confident of their positions and strength on the international stage”

The Council aims to produce the *What's Next?* book as a series every year, providing analysis on risks and geopolitical hotspots to look out for. It aims to launch this book at the Summit on the Global Agenda 2013 in Abu Dhabi in November, and hopes to include in its discussions the relevant Global Agenda Councils. The Council is also holding a roundtable discussion with the Global Agenda Council on the United States regarding the role of the US in geopolitics and the best way to use its influence in the global arena.

Contact Information

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