



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY
CRIS

Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies



Future Trends Series - GR:REEN Project

Title of the report

Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds

Area

General

Reporter

US National Intelligence Council

Type of the Reporter

Government

Periodically updated?

Yes

First issued year

1996

Latest update

2012

Official website

www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends

Language available

English

Short summary

The world of 2030 will be radically transformed from our world today. By 2030, no country - whether the US, China, or any other large country - will be a hegemonic power. The empowerment of individuals and diffusion of power among states and from states to informal networks will have a dramatic impact, largely reversing the historic rise of the West since 1750, restoring Asia's weight in the global economy, and ushering in a new era of "democratization" at the international and domestic level. In addition to individual empowerment and the diffusion of state power, we believe that two other megatrends will shape our world out to 2030: demographic patterns, especially rapid aging; and growing resource demands which, in the cases of food and water, might lead to scarcities. These trends, which are virtually certain, exist today, but during the next 15-20 years they will gain much greater momentum.

First, individual empowerment will accelerate owing to poverty reduction, growth of the global middle class, greater educational attainment, widespread use of new communications and manufacturing technologies, and health-care advances. Second, there will not be any hegemonic power. Power will shift to networks and coalitions in a multi-polar world. Third, the demographic arc of instability will narrow. Economic growth might decline in "aging" countries. Sixty percent of the world's population will live in urbanized areas; migration will increase. Fourth, demand for these resources will grow substantially owing to an increase in the global population. Tackling problems pertaining to one commodity will be linked to supply and demand for the others.

1. Growth of the Global Middle Class

Middle classes almost everywhere in the developing world are poised to expand substantially in terms of both absolute numbers and the percentage of the population that can claim middle class status during the next 15-20 years.

2. Wider Access to Lethal and Disruptive Technologies

A wider spectrum of instruments of war - especially precision-strike capabilities, cyber instruments, and bioterror weaponry - will become accessible. Individuals and small groups will have the capability to perpetrate large-scale violence and disruption - a capability formerly the monopoly of states.

3. Definitive Shift of Economic Power to the East and South

The US, European, and Japanese share of global income is projected to fall from 56 percent today to well under half by 2030. In 2008, China overtook the US as the world's largest saver; by 2020, emerging markets' share of financial assets is projected to almost double.

4. Unprecedented and Widespread Aging

Whereas in 2012 only Japan and Germany have matured beyond a median age of 45 years, most European countries, South Korea, and Taiwan will have entered the post-mature age category by 2030. Migration will become more globalized as both rich and developing countries suffer from workforce shortages.

5. Urbanization

Today's roughly 50 percent urban population will climb to nearly 60 percent, or 4.9 billion people, in 2030. Africa will gradually replace Asia as the region with the highest urbanization growth rate. Urban centres are estimated to generate 80 percent of economic growth; the potential exists to apply modern technologies and infrastructure, promoting better use of scarce resources.

6. Food and Water Pressures

Demand for food is expected to rise at least 35 percent by 2030 while demand for water is expected to rise by 40 percent. Nearly half of the world's population will live in areas experiencing severe water stress. Fragile states in Africa and the Middle East are most at risk of experiencing food and water shortages, but China and India are also vulnerable.

7. US Energy Independence

With shale gas, the US will have sufficient natural gas to meet domestic needs and generate potential global exports for decades to come. Increased oil production from difficult-to-access oil deposits would result in a substantial reduction in the US net trade balance and foster economic expansion. Global spare capacity may exceed over 8 million barrels, at which point OPEC would lose price control and crude oil prices would collapse, causing a major negative impact on oil-export economies.

Suggestions

/

Methodology

Survey, research from secondary sources and modelling

Reference to other trends reports? If yes, which reports?

/