

Thinking about Global Futures – and America's

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November 30, 2017

GLOBAL TRENDS

TRENDS



CHOICES & UNCERTAINTIES

5 years

20 years

Limits of Plausibility

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SCENARIOS



Emerging and recent trends will make governing and international cooperation harder, revealing the limits of power.

Near-future:

Heightened tensions within, between, and across countries.

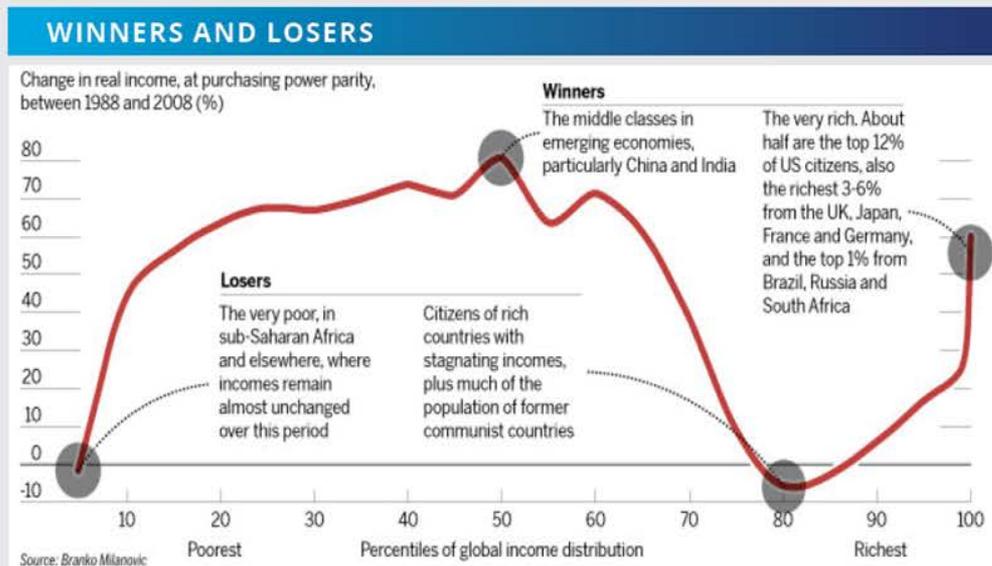
More distant futures depend on:

- How governments-citizens, elites-masses renegotiate the basic bargain between them.
- How majors powers and others work out new patterns of international cooperation.

The paradox of progress

Two decades of IT and globalization, plus beneficial demography, drove high economic growth, reduced consumer prices, and raised public expectations of well-being.

BUT:



From Branko Milanovic

- Asia's rise, economic convergence between countries **increased geopolitical competition**
- A billion less poor people in the world but increased inequality in the West, which is **challenging governments**
- Deeper integration, interdependence, resulting in more **disruptive swings** in financial markets and energy prices
- Future rates of **economic growth are uncertain but likely to remain slow** in the near-future
- Digital, bio, material and other technologies **increased access to information, reduced barriers to entry**

Empowered individuals will make coalition-building harder

Economic and technological trends are:

Empowering small groups and individuals as once only states could

Proliferating veto-players and problem-solvers

Increasing the complexity and number of new issues

Heightening expectations of government performance

- Narrowing the window for forging new patterns of cooperation narrows as actors proliferate and global challenges grow.
- In such a world, power is not what it used to be:
 - Military and economic *power in being* less able to secure and sustain outcomes as veto-players block action.
 - A la carte internationalism results. . . slippery slope to spheres of influence.

Near-term: next five years



Big Uncertainties

- China
- The United States

Certainties

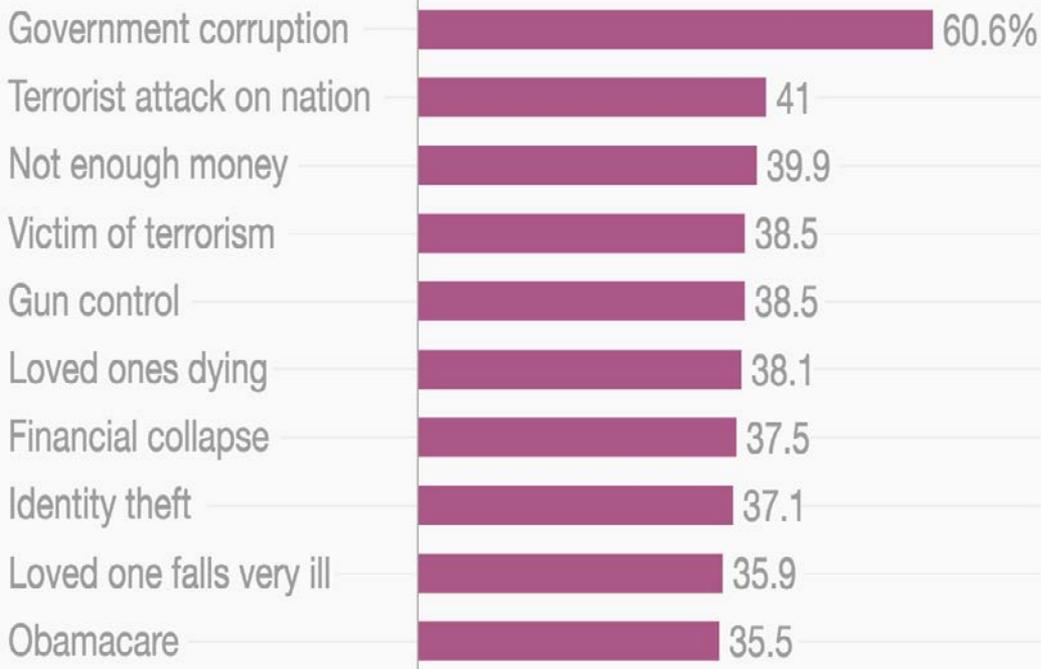
- Russia/Europe
- Slower Economic Growth,
- Middle East/Terrorism

Putting terrorism in perspective

94 deaths from jihadists between 2005 and 2015

Americans who in 2016 were "afraid" or "very afraid" of...

(out of 1,500 people surveyed)



- **Compare: more than 300,000 shot dead**
- **Seems random, even at lunch in San Bernardino**
- **“But lightning doesn’t mean us any harm”**
- **Everyone had a low probability/high consequence – nuclear power, e.g.**
- **Mass shooters and “terrorists” merge – Orlando, Las Vegas**

Looking further out

Technology

Disconnect between citizens and their governments

Values conflicts

Climate change



Within Countries

- Identity Politics, disconnect between citizens and government

Between Countries

- Failure at home drives opportunism

Across Countries

- Empowered individuals hamper collective action
- Technology, especially AI and gene editing
- Cyber
- Divergent interests and values
- Climate change – perhaps sooner than expected

Longer-term scenarios

Orbits

World splits into competing spheres of influence, with tensions between China, Russia, and the United States forcing countries to choose sides. Diverging values, military build-ups, rising nationalism, and domestic insecurity all increase geopolitical competition, with nervous governments seeking to maintain legitimacy at home while asserting their interests within their own orbits.

Islands

Countries turn inward to take care of their own as governments struggle to manage rising public and business demands for protection from economic volatility, disruptive technologies, disease outbreaks, and terrorism—creating a more defensive and segmented world.

Tribes

Power increasingly devolves from states to subnational groups as governments prove less adept than increasingly powerful societal groups and commercial entities at managing sharp divisions over values, culture, religion, and ethnicity.

Opportunities

Near-term volatility could lead to reducing tensions, creating better long-term outcomes:



People and leadership matter—the future is ours to shape.



Overwhelming crises and near misses—whether climate change, lone wolves, or North Korea—represent opportunities for building resilience, new forms of “public” and “private” in governing.



Technology and jobs: Short-term displacement, long-term transformation and employment.



Cold War redux: Confidence-building measures.



Weariness with war and extremism.

The challenge for America



- Disconnect between people and government
 - Economic roots – before and after 1970
 - But not just economic
- Trends, like AI, will worsen economic drivers
 - U.S. a small government outlier
- What might change:
 - Demographics
 - Dramatic changes in governance
- Will it take a real crisis?