

The Democratic Empire

Vinay Gupta, London, June 9 2010

In the event of a severe global financial crash, which I will term *global bankruptcy*, there are likely to be four general geopolitical effects.

The US withdraws to manage domestic affairs. China struggles for internal unity. The core Europe huddles tighter together for security. The developing world descends into violent anarchy in many places, particularly the cities. These are near-certainties.

One map of the effects is to examine the political umbrella generated by the likely future disposition of nuclear arsenals.

*US	globally scope, but no will to send troops.
*France	narrow core-EU focus. (probable)
*Britain	small global deployment?
Russia	withdrawn to narrow national/European focus.
Pakistan	India, unless the nukes stray. Then Israel?
India	Pakistan, China, possible additional missions.
China	global soft power, defensive use only. Taiwan?
Israel	narrow defensive focus, no big economic agenda.
North Korea	narrow defensive focus, possible blackmail.

The shift in nuclear stances can be summarized as:

1. The US rolls up its base network and global ambitions
2. The French nuclear capacity underwrites an EU force
3. The British nuclear capacity supports the Commonwealth

A *nuclear Commonwealth* emerges when Britain extends the political umbrella generated by Trident to nations with which it has long historic ties. For example, if in some future Australia faced overwhelming military pressure, it is hard to imagine that the UK public would allow them to be over-run. The simple truth is that as long as the UK has Trident, Australia is likely safe. The limits and boundaries of that political reality do not lie exactly along the borders of the current Commonwealth, but along older lines, likely closely corresponding to WW2 military cooperation.

India and other large, populous Commonwealth nations may provide a reciprocal service: *ground troops*. At 1.2 billion people, with 2.5 million members of the armed forces, were forces necessary to provide functions like border security where manpower is indispensable and risks are relatively low, it is possible to imagine acceptable terms for use of Indian troops being reached by all parties. The likely currencies would be alliance, technology, bloc integration and money.

Such a nuclear Commonwealth with developing world ground troops has a comparable extent to the US base network, and has a potential footprint of over a quarter of the world's population in the abstract. The likely participant nations are anglophile democracies with shared ideals of good governance and centuries of shared history. A common language is another substantial asset. Under the pressure of a collapse in the current international order this structure could quickly emerge. The US would have little to fear, and much to gain, from sharing the burden of protecting democracy globally with this convergence.