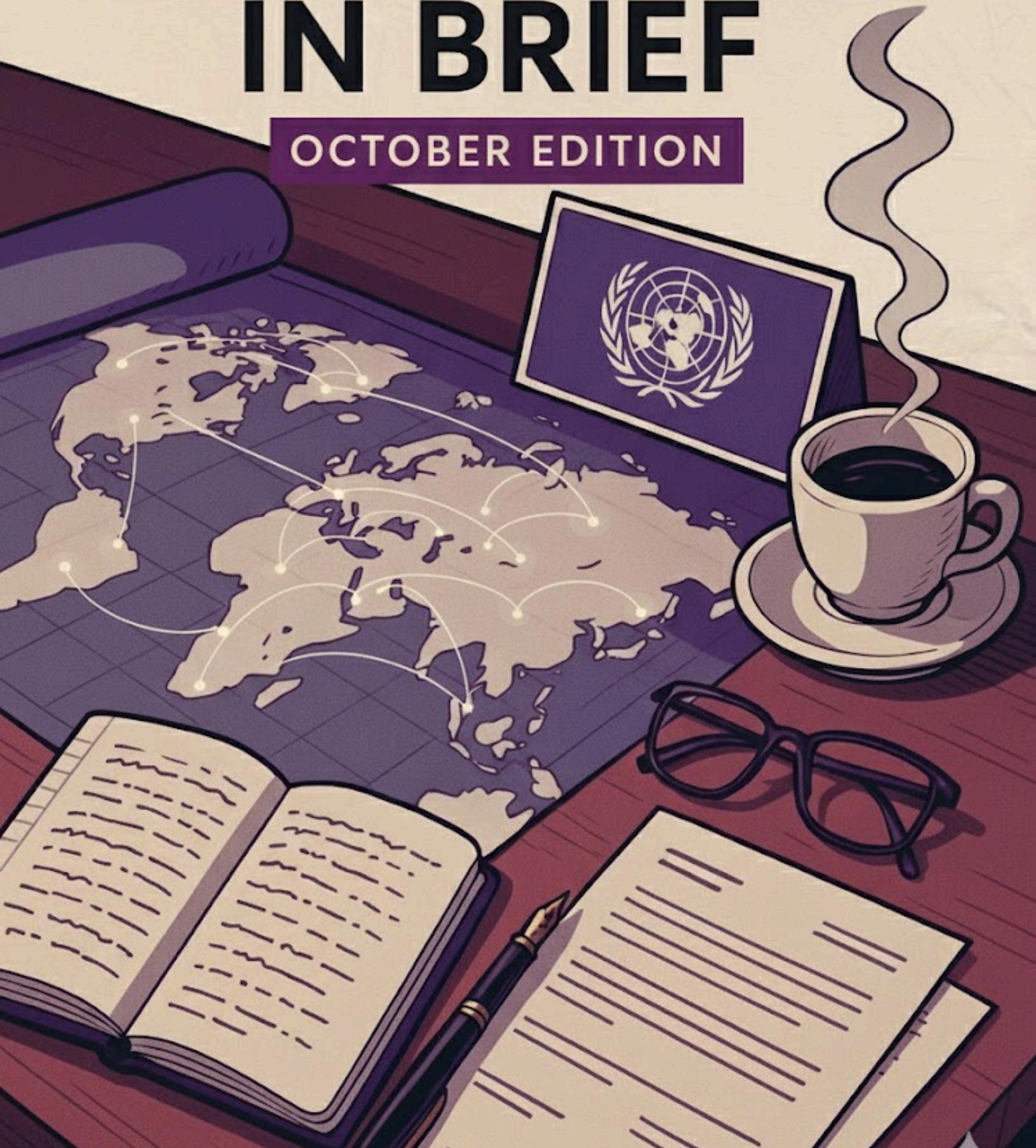


THE WORLD IN BRIEF

OCTOBER EDITION





NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to bring you the October edition of The World in Brief. As the world grows more complex, this issue explores how power is being redefined in the twenty-first century.

From the weaponisation of international trade to the killing of Iryna Zarutska and its impact on America's political divide, we look at how conflict and competition now unfold across borders and institutions. This edition also examines tensions between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, as well as the Kenya youth protests that reflect growing discontent among a new generation.

Turning to global affairs, we analyse the race for technological dominance in AI is the New Nuclear, China's evolving global governance order, and the continuing shadow of Russian election interference. Together, these stories offer a sharp look at the forces shaping today's geopolitics.

Until November,
Aaditya Agarwal and Ansh Bhansali,
Editors-in-Chief,
The World in Brief.





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INTERNATIONAL TRADE WEAPONIZATION

Sanaa Seksaria



Trade was not always the system of tangled foreign relations, political moves, and financial strategies it is now. It began with the barter system in the early stages of the Mesopotamian civilization. What was a way to survive has hence evolved into an intricate agreement for the betterment of the world.

Countries were allowed to trade freely, without restrictions on imports and exports. However, countries began exploiting this system for their own benefit. In a time when colonisation existed vividly, the United Kingdom forced its colonies to work twice as hard to create export goods, while taxing imported goods extremely high.



This disrupted the economies of scale, affecting the colonies (now free countries) even today. Seemingly a recurring pattern, more and more leaders are weaponising this system for political leverage today. Tariffs, sanctions, export controls, or denial of access to major ports have been employed in order to attain not just economic but strategic goals.



This transition highlights the growing economic interdependence in our world. Cases involving such have existed for centuries. For instance, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The USA and the European Union chose to attack with economic warfare instead of traditional violence or verbal aggression.



They froze over \$300 billion of Russia's foreign reserves and assets, and even disconnected them from the SWIFT global payment system (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication). These actions aimed to sabotage Moscow's economy, restricting its capacity for making foreign transactions and funding the war.

Although the sanctions did become devastating to Russia, they also unsettled world energy markets since Europe was so dependent on Russia for oil and gas. Energy prices shot through the roof worldwide. This sequence of events readily demonstrated the interdependence of economies

Another political case has just taken place. The USA has used tariffs and restrictions on technology to restrain China's growing technological advancements. While seen by some as an economic action to preserve their economy, others view this as a rash action taken as a fuel in the sparking battles of the world

Indeed, a battle was sparked. China placed tariffs on minerals, deeming them 'rare earth minerals, abundant in China. These minerals support millions of gadgets and nearly 75% of all technology around the world. The United States, in retaliation, imposed 100% tariffs on China and Chinese goods. This ongoing economic battle continues to surge and spread to countries globally.



THE KILLING OF IRYNA ZARUTSKA

Rhea Agarwal

East/West Boulevard station on the Lynx Blue Line, Charlotte, North Carolina, United States. A place which sounds as simple as a mere train station- but the starting point of a massive breaking point in the political crisis in the United States. On August 22nd, 2025, 23 year old Iryna Zarutska was killed on a public train. She was an immigrant seeking peace after fleeing war torn Ukraine and looking for a shelter. In addition to being a monstrous hate crime, her murder marked a crucial change in the escalating ideological conflict between the United States's two major political parties; the Democrats and the Republicans.

Within hours of her passing, Iryna became a political analysed, and weaponized to be a political

Brown Jr. was a man with a history of psychiatric profile. Decarlos Brown was outstanding psychological issues. Republicans immediately, framing the murder as the in criminal justice policies,' turning the

use in court. President Donald direct blame on Democratic culture of 'casualness and brutality.

figure. She was exploited, statement. Iryna's killer, Decarlos violent offenses and an extensive on the streets despite numerous took advantage of this detail -evitable result of 'progressive killing of a refugee into a point to Trump, not being one to soften his leaders, accused them of fostering a informality' that gave way such



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Democrats, in turn, criticized the politicization of her murder. Former Governor Roy Cooper office pushed back, a democrat. He emphasized that no reform or policy had played a role in Brown's release and as retaliation, Democrats highlighted the systemic neglect of mental health infrastructure. The feeling that tragedy in America no longer escapes a political spin to benefit each side deepened. Instead of mourning Zarutska as a person, someone with their own hopes, dreams, and future ambitions, she was immediately turned into a symbol, as a point to make, used in yet another round of blame and further division. The North Carolina legislature quickly passed "Iryna's Law," instituting stricter bail conditions and risk assessments.

What makes Zarutska's killing so haunting is not only its brutality but how it was immediately used to prove a statement, a political point. It revealed how in the American cut-throat political arena, no wound is too fresh and no body is too sacred to be claimed immediately as evidence.



The real tragedy is not only that Iryna Zarutska died too young and too soon, but that her death became yet another weapon in a war where the truth is always secondary to the story being spoken out of authority's mouth.

As the power struggle keeps increasing between the Democrats and the Republicans, Iryna Zarutska becomes a permanent symbol in the ideological battlefield, not a person gone from our world—but an assassination committed by the opposing party, claimed by neither side, yet spoken for by both.



THE DRC VS RWANDA

Sanjay Dadlani

A war had started between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda in 2022 when Rwandan troops invaded to extend military aid to March 23 Movement (M23) rebel forces, including fighting with them against the Congolese army (FARDC) and militias loyal to the government. On 27 June 2025, a peace deal was signed between the DRC and Rwanda, but as of September 2025, implementation has ground to a halt. Since the Second Congo War, the eastern provinces of the DRC have been the location of a persistent insurgency by several rebel movements, most prominently the March 23 Movement (M23) in North Kivu and its Twirwaneho branch in South Kivu, and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Ituri and North Kivu.

The current phase of the war is connected to an existing campaign that was initiated in March 2022 by the M23 Movement, which the DRC, United Nations, United States, and other Western nations accuse Rwanda of not just aiding but actively combatting the insurgents. After the Rwandan Civil War had ended in 1994 as a defeat of the Rwandan government for the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a Tutsi-dominated army established by Rwandan exiles in Uganda with the patronage of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the Hutu extremists responsible for the genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda crossed the border into neighboring Zaire.





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These forces, which included the ex-Rwandan armed forces and the Interahamwe paramilitary wing, migrated into the Kivu province of east Zaire with 1.5 million Hutu civilian refugees from Rwanda.

There the Hutu insurgents formed militia units to fight an insurgency against the new RPF government. Zaire, under the government of Mobutu Sese Seko, was experiencing economic and political instability, and its fragile state institutions could not enforce security within the large country

The capture of Goma after a few days of battles in late January was the most extensive buildup of the Kivu war since M23 initially captured the city in 2012. M23 pushed ahead into the remainder of North Kivu and into South Kivu in February, seizing the latter's capital Bukavu.

The African Union has requested that M23 withdraw to avoid the "balkanization" of the DR Congo and the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2773 also requesting Rwanda to stop providing support for M23. After talks in June 2025 facilitated by the United States, Rwanda and the DRC signed an initial peace agreement. The final deal includes Rwanda pulling out its forces within 90 days and the DRC cutting all assistance to the FDLR. Through September 2025, Rwandan forces have yet to pull out.





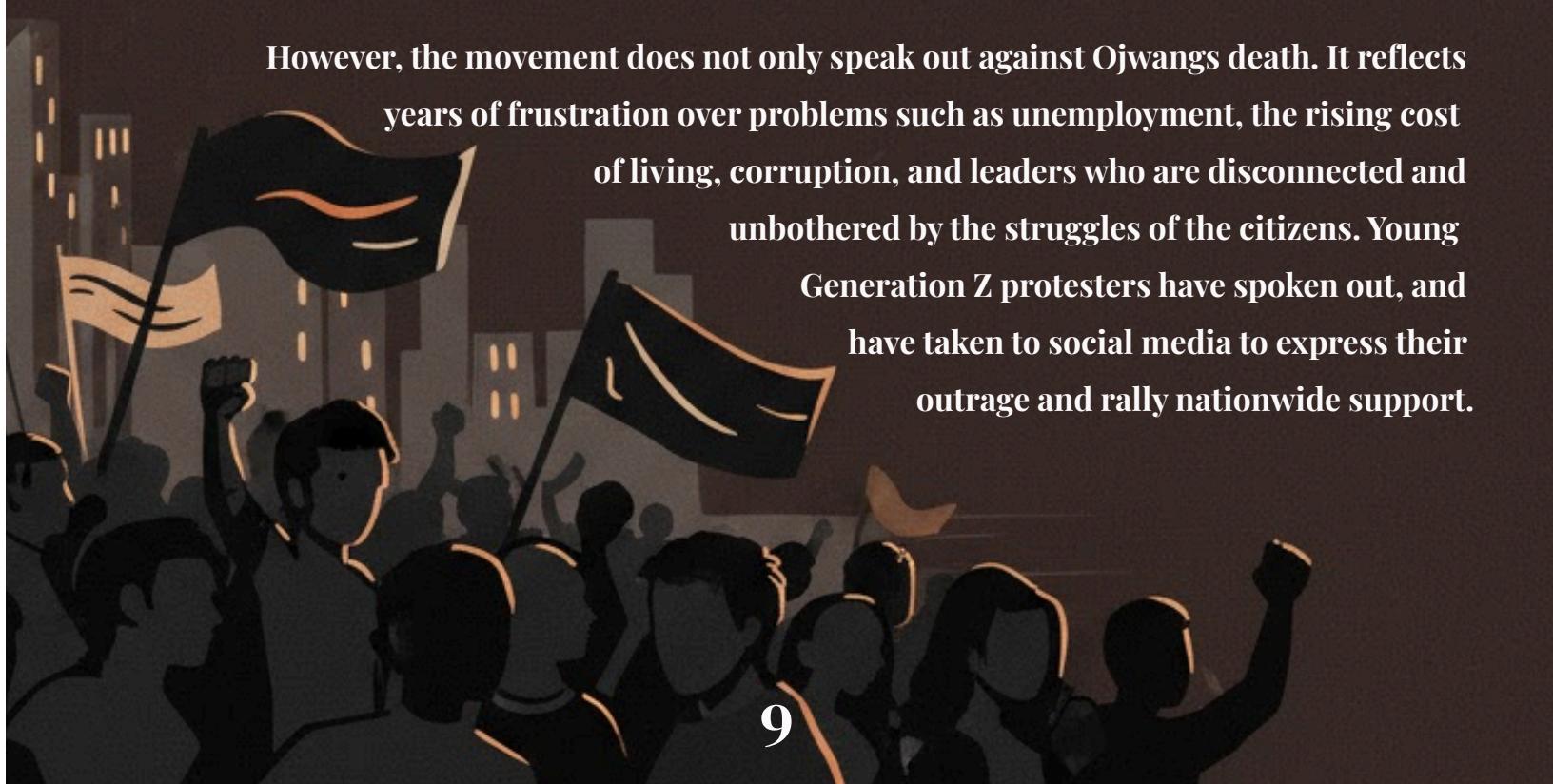
THE KENYA YOUTH PROTESTS

Sarah Shahpurwalla

Kenya has recently witnessed a wave of youth led protests that have shaken the nation's political and social landscape. It began as single protests but soon evolved into a nationwide movement which was led mostly by young people demanding accountability and a voice in shaping Kenya's future.

The protests were sparked by the tragic death of Albert Omondi Ojwang. He was a teacher and blogger who died in police custody after being accused of insulting a senior officer. Though the police claimed his death was a suicide, an autopsy revealed that there were signs of assault. His death became a symbol of a growing frustration of the people with police violence and the lack of transparency that many young Kenyans say defines their government.

However, the movement does not only speak out against Ojwangs death. It reflects years of frustration over problems such as unemployment, the rising cost of living, corruption, and leaders who are disconnected and unbothered by the struggles of the citizens. Young Generation Z protesters have spoken out, and have taken to social media to express their outrage and rally nationwide support.

A stylized illustration of a protest crowd at night. Silhouettes of many people are shown from behind, holding up their right fists in a gesture of protest. Some are also holding flags, one of which is orange and black. The background shows dark buildings with some windows lit up, suggesting an urban setting at night.



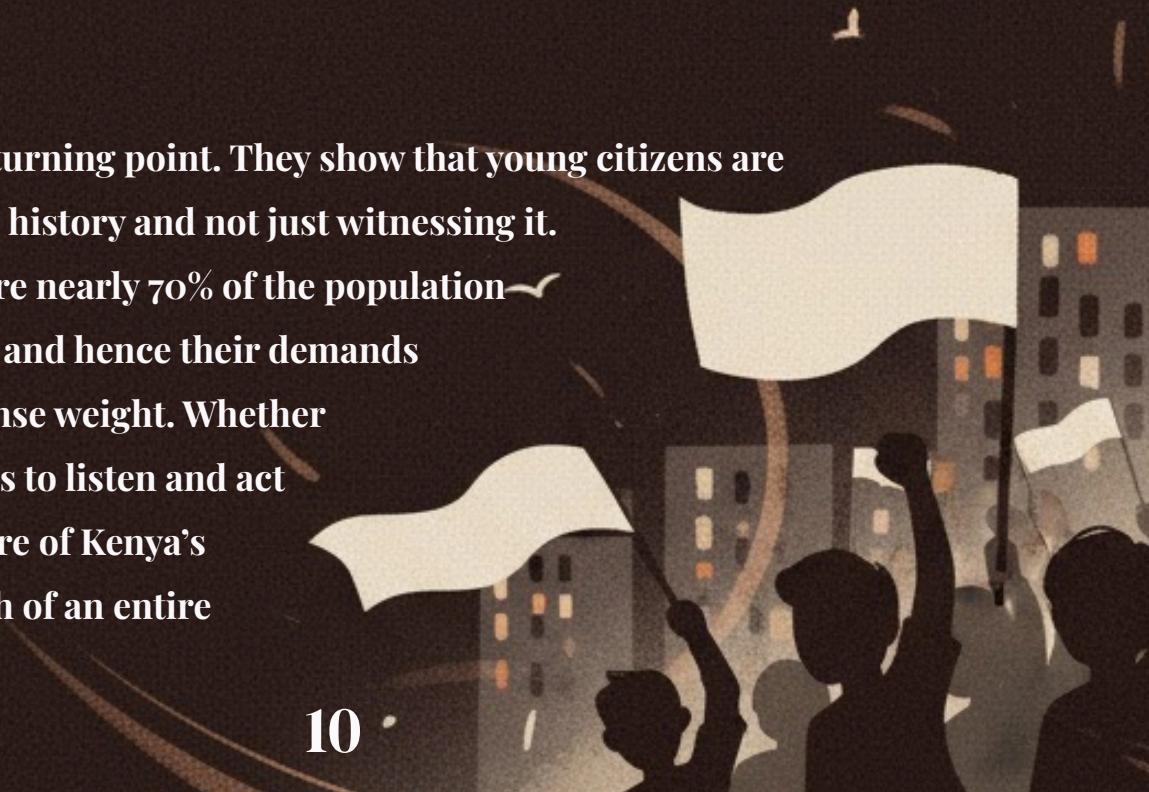
The protests have been met with severe responses from law enforcement. In cities like Nairobi, Mombasa, and Nakuru, police have used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse crowds and shut down protests. Reports by journalists have recorded intimidation by higher officials, and media outlets were ordered to stop live reporting. According to local news sources, several protesters and bystanders have been injured, and some have even lost their lives in the clashes.

The Kenyan government has promised investigations and reforms towards the peoples demands, including the prosecution of officers involved in Ojwang's death. Despite this, many remain sceptical as such promises have been made by the government before and have rarely been followed through. However, what the protests have made clear is that Kenya's youth is no longer willing to remain silent

N O M O R E S I L E N C E

These protests mark a turning point. They show that young citizens are participants in shaping history and not just witnessing it.

Kenya is a country where nearly 70% of the population is under 35 years of age and hence their demands for change carry immense weight. Whether the government chooses to listen and act will determine the future of Kenya's democracy and the faith of an entire generation.

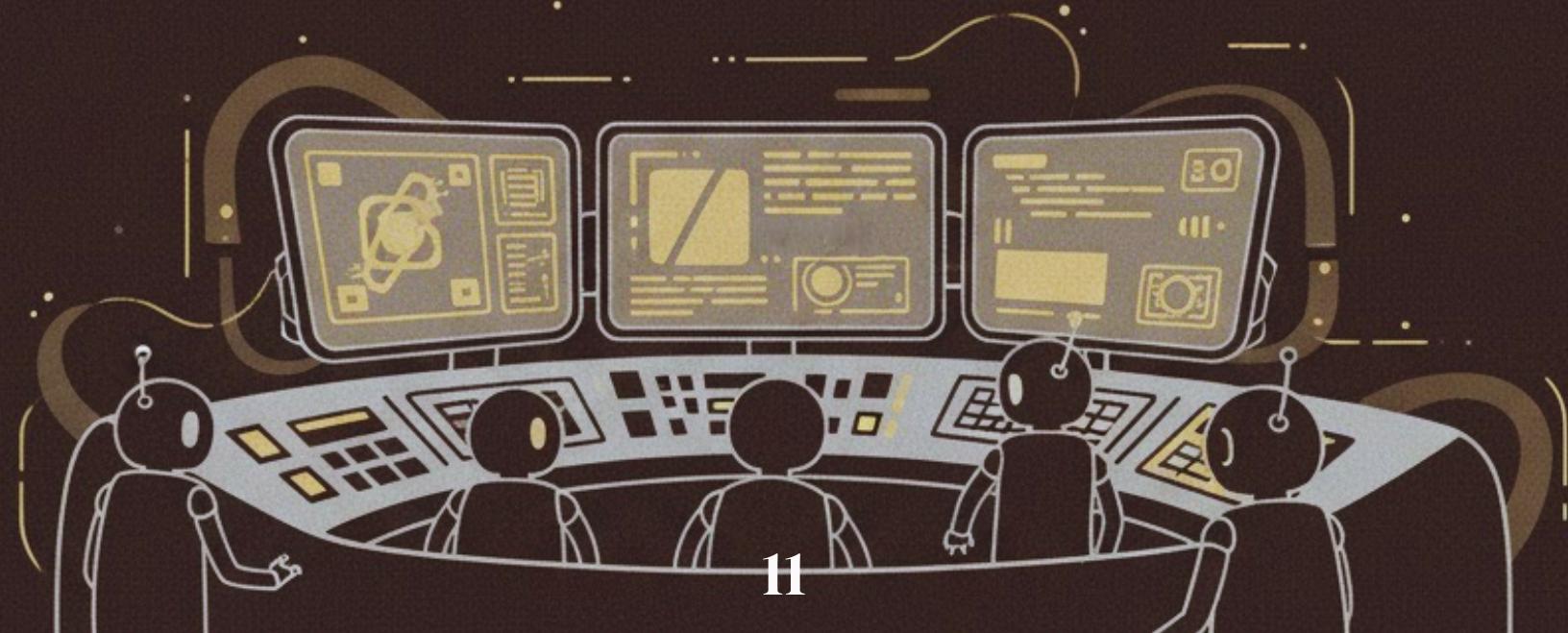


AI IS THE NEW NUCLEAR

Manaansh Jain

In the mid-20th century, countries rushed to develop nuclear weapons, thinking that the world would be ruled by the first to master atomic power. The same race has reappeared today, but this time, intelligence itself is the weapon. Nations compete for control of the algorithms, talent, cloud capacity, and chips that provide a clear military and economic edge. Artificial intelligence (AI), like the nuclear bomb, is a technology that could alter the balance of power in the contemporary world. It is a destructive as well as a creative tool.

This race is enormous in scope. The United States alone contributed over \$100 billion to the \$252 billion global private investment in AI in 2024, with China coming in second. It now costs hundreds of millions of dollars to train frontier AI models, and it takes a lot of energy and compute clusters. Global private investment in AI reached \$252 billion in 2024, with the United States alone contributing over \$100 billion, followed closely by China

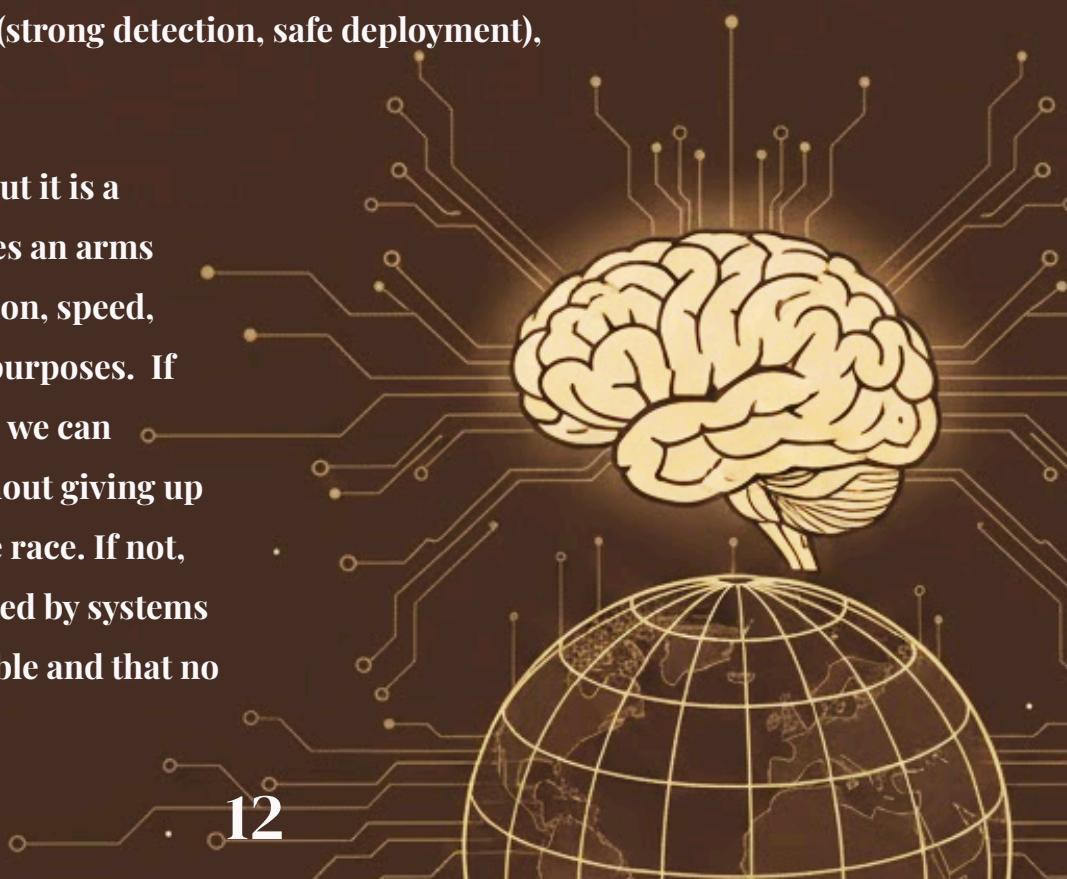


Training AI models now costs hundreds of millions of dollars and requires vast compute clusters and energy resources. This concentration of data, hardware, and expertise in a few nations mirrors the nuclear monopoly of the Cold War. Whoever controls the chips and algorithms today controls development, progress, and potentially, war.

While AI does not detonate like nuclear weapons do, its threats become imperceptible. Disinformation campaigns, cyberwarfare, and autonomous weapons all allude to its potentially disastrous nature. AI works covertly through automation, control, and manipulation. Military systems with AI capabilities could significantly cut down on decision-making time, which raises the possibility of unintended escalation.

But the difference between the atomic and the algorithmic is that one is easier to get to. Nuclear weapons need strict, technical control over fissile material. AI's parts, on the other hand - code, models, data, and compute - are more flexible, spread out, and able to be improved over time. This makes it impossible to completely ban weapons. Instead, the most important thing to do is layered governance: controls on exports and hardware where they are needed, transparency and safety and testing standards, investment in defensive capabilities (strong detection, safe deployment).

AI is not a real atomic bomb, but it is a strategic technology that causes an arms race because of its concentration, speed, and ability to be used for two purposes. If we take the problem seriously, we can use AI's amazing potential without giving up our future to whoever wins the race. If not, we risk a century that is changed by systems that no one can hold accountable and that no one country can fully control.





CHINA'S GLOBAL GOVERNANCE ORDER

Ananya Kanodia

Under the shadow of the Western-dominated liberal order, China's Global Governance Initiative (GGI) is taking shape. Where the BRI laid down concrete, the GGI seeks to lay down new norms of international cooperation, ones that emphasize sovereign equality, non-interference, and development over democracy. These principles are set squarely against Western ideologies of liberal democracy and human rights-oriented diplomacy.

It's known as a soft-power gambit, however its fans title it as a much-needed rebalancing. If Beijing knows anything, it's how to read a room, and the room, particularly in Africa, Latin America, and certain parts of Asia, is becoming more and more disillusioned with Western institutions.

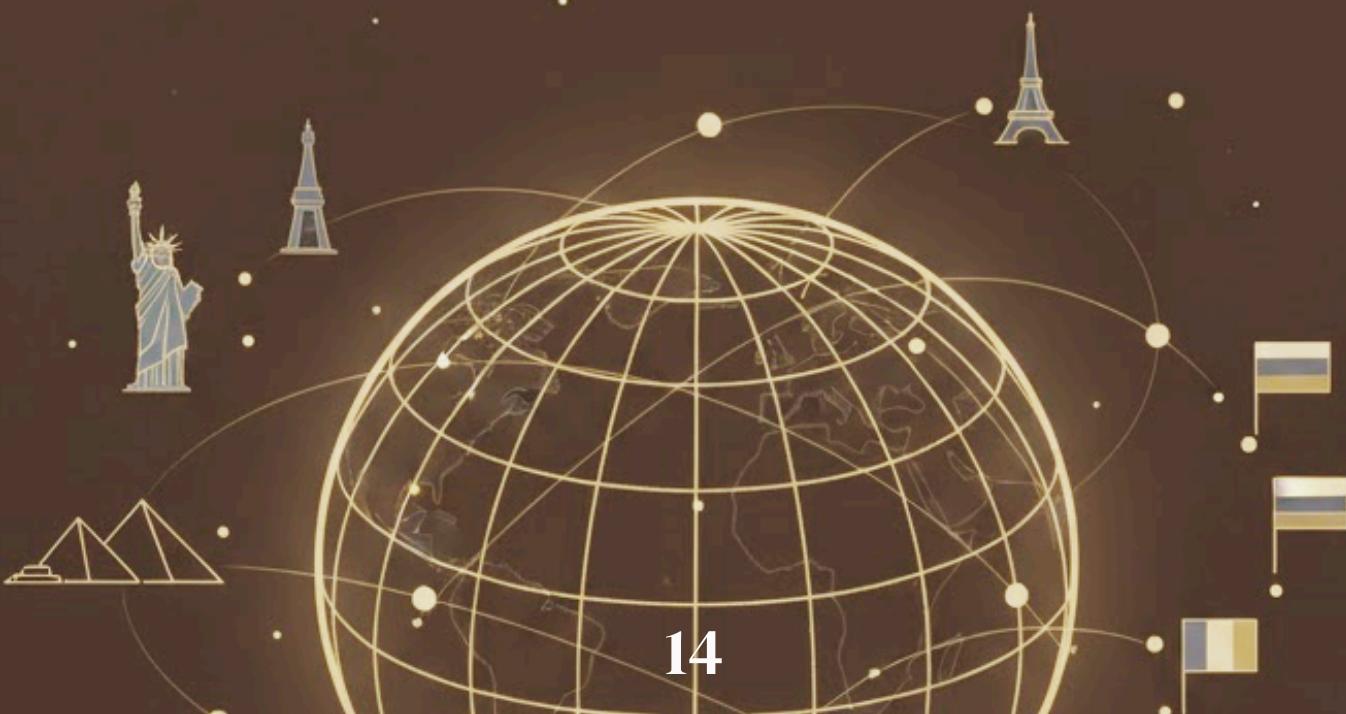
For the Global South, institutions like the IMF, World Bank, even the United Nations Security Council, have come to feel like clubs from which they were excluded, high entry barriers and tone-deaf responses to local contexts. China's GGI, by contrast, stands self-consciously as open, non-prescriptive, and respectful of national sovereignty.

In April 2023, as great-power rivalries intensified and faith in customary multilateral institutions eroded, China launched the Global Governance Initiative (GGI), a design not only for diplomacy but for remaking the very architecture of global cooperation. Presented as one element of a wide-ranging "Three Global Initiatives" effort, along with the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and Global Security Initiative (GSI), the GGI is China's most overt effort to date to provide an alternative to Western-led global governance.



Below the slick press releases and government white papers, what does the GGI actually signify? And more fundamentally, how is it shaking up the equation for the Global South and the institutions that set the rules of the international order? At the core of the GGI is an argument: that the current international system, largely constructed by Western powers after World War II, no longer corresponds to the nature of a multipolar, interdependent world. In Beijing's view, the institutions that were meant to represent all nations, such as the UN Security Council, the World Bank, or the IMF, have routinely marginalized the voices of developing nations, particularly in Africa, Latin America, and certain areas of Asia.

This model presents a new avenue in place of the mainstream aid-industrial complex and creates opportunities for nations to use competition between China and the West to negotiate improved terms. The GGI isn't solely about physical infrastructure. It's also about values and norms, redefining ideas such as human rights, governance, and development away from liberal universalism and towards a more pluralistic understanding. In other words, China is saying: "There isn't only one model of progress, and you don't have to follow Washington's script."





THE RUSSIAN ELECTION INTERFERENCE

Adyant Gupta

Countries that once burned Soviet flags are now getting dangerously close to aligning themselves with Moscow, moving to embrace the remnants of the same institutions their people once rejected. Most people know that Russia has a part to play, but aren't aware of the true extent of Russia's role in this process of democratic backsliding. This article will explore how Russia wields such a great degree of influence over the European East

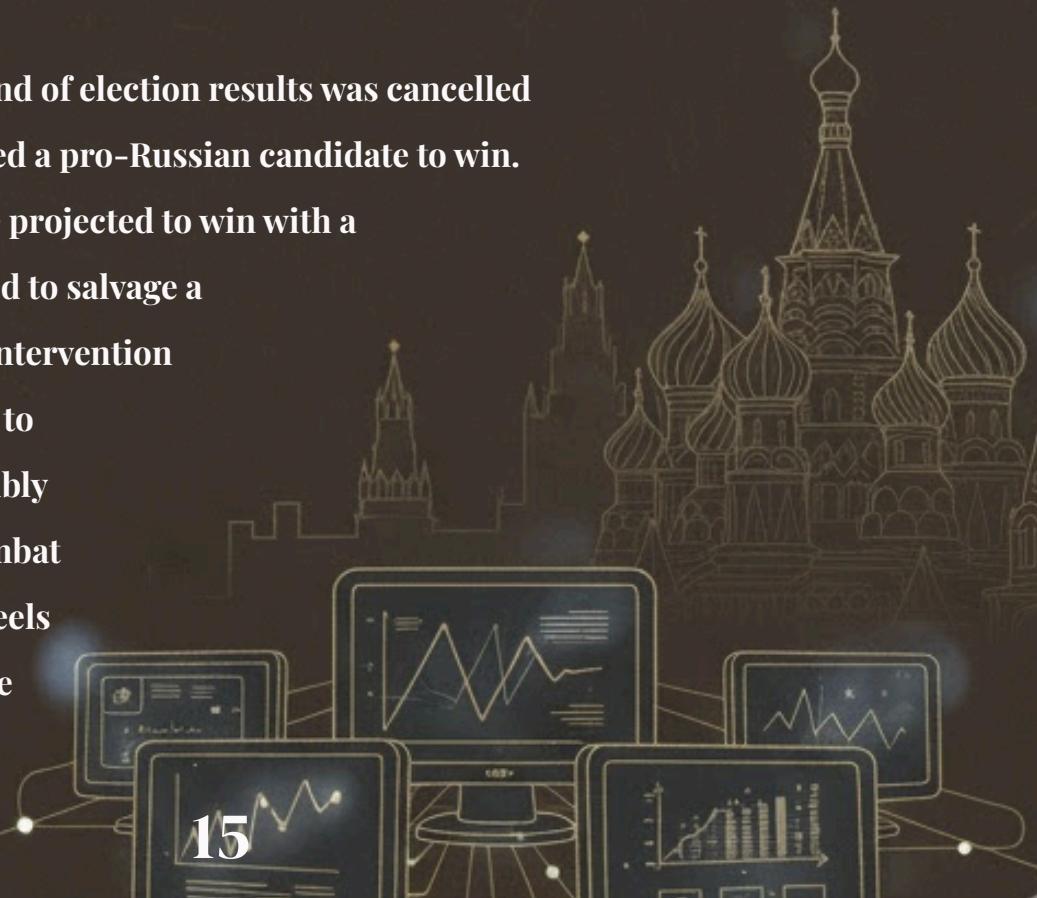
Russia employs broadly three tactics in its pursuit of controlling Eastern Europe. The first is financial support to pro-Russian candidates. This support, given covertly to ensure the party's legitimacy remains intact, enables these parties (from the PSRM in Moldova to Fidesz in Hungary) to host grander rallies, put up billboards and banners across the capital hailing their leader as a national icon, and buy hours on end of airtime on media networks.

In Romania, the entire first round of election results was cancelled after election interference caused a pro-Russian candidate to win.

In Moldova, a pro-EU candidate projected to win with a landslide victory barely managed to salvage a majority. Because most of this intervention

is covert and nearly impossible to trace back to Russia, it's incredibly challenging for countries to combat

it. Banning opposition parties feels like a disproportionate response and a violation of the freedom of association.





Second, Russia attempts to manipulate voters' behaviour. This occurs on different scales in various countries. In Romania, this was a widespread misinformation campaign, where thousands of bot accounts consistently peddled pro-Russian propaganda and commented favourably on content posted by pro-Russian leaders. These bots specifically employed polarising language to trick social media platforms' algorithms into recommending these posts as much as possible. These posts painted the EU as a tool of cultural propagation, intent on forcing Eastern Europe to, for example, legalise gay marriage, and embrace liberal reform, with the Russian Orthodox Church being depicted as the defender of traditional values.

It's not just social media, but even legacy media is a vessel for Russian misinformation. In Moldova, around 70% of people relied (to a significant degree) on news from Russian news networks. As a result, Russia controls what people see and think. In countries where this doesn't work, Russia uses tactics such as physical ballot-stuffing (in Georgia) and large-scale vote-buying (in Moldova), by giving thousands of dollars in cash to naive supporters of pro-EU parties. Finally, Russia also indirectly influences people's preferences through the Russian Orthodox Church, whose priests instil a deep regard for conservative beliefs on religious diversity and gender equality, antagonising the policies of pro-EU parties.

Third, in democracies with tight regulations and strict enforcement of electoral fairness, Russia cleverly targets only certain demographics. These are often ethnic minorities or communities known for their lack of political engagement. In particularly politically active communities that vote pro-West, Russia uses blackmail and threats to suppress political participation. This has resulted in a dangerous increase in democratic backsliding, demanding an immediate solution before the problem gets worse.

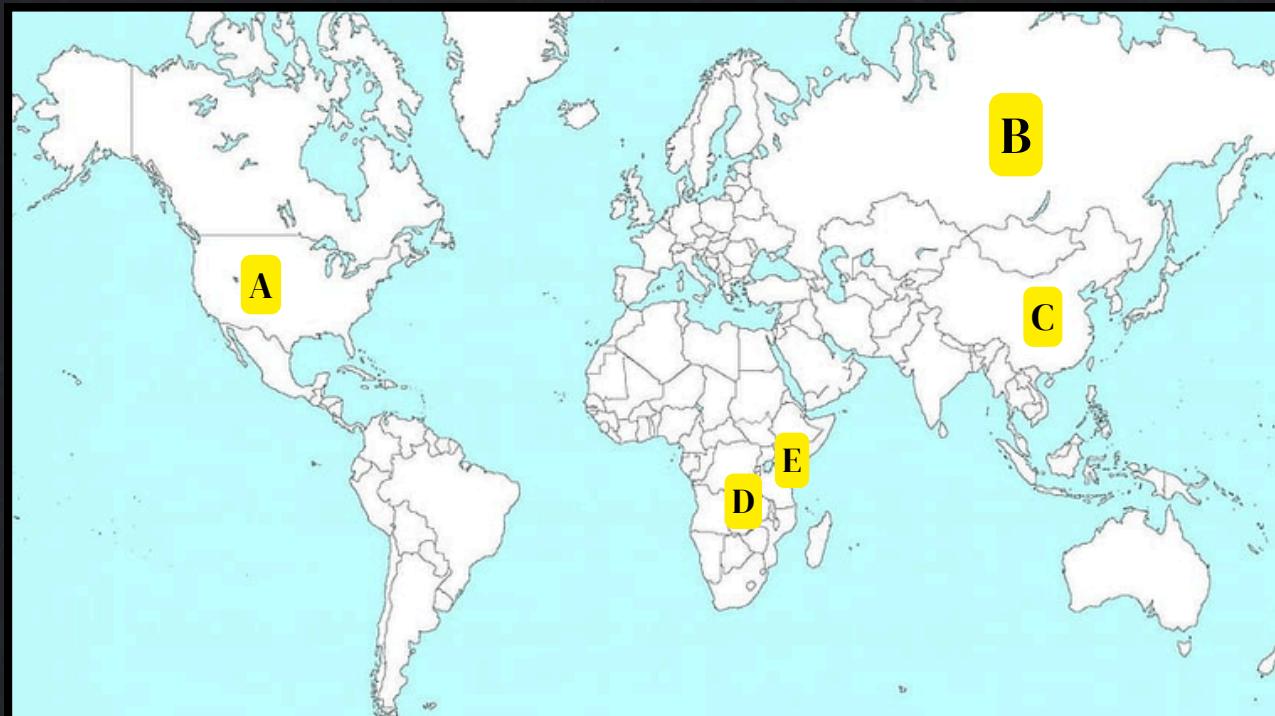


THE GLOBAL POWER WEB

The world is not just made of borders, it's made of power, pressure, and policy. Below is a simplified world map. Each numbered location is linked to a geopolitical flashpoint or foreign policy event from this issue.

Match the countries to their recent roles on the world stage

- 1 Youth-led protests demanding reform after a teacher's death in custody
- 2 Government accused of supporting rebel movements across the border (M23)
- 3 Country leading AI investment and tech dominance push
- 4 Soft-power diplomacy through the Global Governance Initiative (GGI)
- 5 Election interference via disinformation and Orthodox Church



CRISIS ROOM: YOUR THE DIPLOMAT!

You're a delegate who's country is under threat and requires you to take action. Make correct choice to decisively solve the problem. Remember, each decision has a critical outcome...

