

# Seven Revolutions

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Have you considered how a global population of 9 billion people by the middle of the century will impact your life? What are the challenges for the availability of food, water, and energy resources? How will society balance the benefits of technological innovation and advanced communication with the threat of cyber security? How will global economic integration and governance affect trade, markets, and commerce overall?

To answer questions like these, the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) embarked on an initiative in 1992 to address and analyze the key policy challenges that policymakers, business figures, and other leaders will face out to the year 2030. It is an effort to promote strategic thinking about the long-term trends that too few take the time to consider. Though our research is constantly evolving, we created this as a snapshot for what we call the Seven Revolutions.

## So what are the Seven Revolutions?

- **POPULATION: GROWTH, AGING, MIGRATION, & URBANIZATION**  
Over the next 20 years, the vast majority of the world's population growth will occur in the developing world, in nations least capable of supporting this growth politically, environmentally, or economically. The developed world will face its own set of challenges, including declining populations, rising aging segments, and changing migration patterns.
- **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: FOOD, WATER, ENERGY, & CLIMATE**  
Have we reached or surpassed the limits of sustainability? What will it take to support a global population of some 9.3 billion by the middle of the century? To begin addressing these questions, one must look at the strategic resources of food, water, and energy and the complex interlinkages between them. How leaders meet the challenge of managing these resources will affect economic development, poverty reduction, social welfare, geopolitics, and stability and security the world over.

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## Seven Revolutions

### ■ **TECHNOLOGY:** COMPUTATION, ROBOTICS, BIOTECHNOLOGY, & NANOTECHNOLOGY

We are entering an era in which the world is starting to look more like science fiction movies. Computers are becoming faster and more ubiquitous, medical breakthroughs are prolonging and enriching lives, and machines are becoming smaller by the day. At the same time, as new technologies become embedded in our lives, we are forced to address issues of ethics, privacy, discrimination, and even basic human interaction. Technology will increasingly test the ability of individuals, cultures, and governments to adapt to new opportunities and dangers.

### ■ **INFORMATION:** DATA GROWTH, ACCESS/PRIVACY, EDUCATION

Our world is defined more than ever before by our creation of data, what we do with it, and how we process it. Communication technologies are fueling this evolution by spreading new ideas and innovations to ever-greater numbers of people each day, legally or through intellectual property theft. The best students and entrepreneurs in the world are no longer limited by geography and their countries' stage of economic development.

### ■ **ECONOMICS:** GLOBAL INTEGRATION, NEW PLAYERS, DEBT, POVERTY & INEQUALITY

Despite the international debate surrounding economic liberalization—one that is given fodder by the current global recession—it is likely that by 2030 the world will be more economically interdependent than it is today. The BIC countries—Brazil, India, and China—and other rapidly emerging economies will increasingly become the world's major economic players with respect to both production and consumption.

### ■ **SECURITY:** NEW SECURITY DYNAMICS, WMD, HEALTH, & CYBERSECURITY

Today's current security environment poses unique challenges. In preparing for future events, governments and militaries now have to cope with not only state vs. state competition, but rogue actors and transnational threats like drugs, terrorism, human trafficking, corruption, cyber, and health.

### ■ **GOVERNANCE:** CIVIL SOCIETY/NGOs, MULTILATERALS, & THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

We have crossed into a new period of governance—from the Westphalian nation-state system to a world with a powerful set of actors outside of traditional governments. The challenges of the previous revolutions will test our leaders as they seek innovative solutions. Strategic coalitions consisting of governments, corporations, NGOs, and academic institutions will be necessary in mounting effective responses and capitalizing on important opportunities.