If nuclear arms symbolised the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 20th century, the digital revolution has become the signifier of great power contestation in the 21st century.

STATE POWER ENHANCED

What is unmistakable, though, is the fact that the state is back. Gone is the notion that the digital revolution will diminish the power of the state. Instead, it has made the state more powerful. Even as states expand their power vis-à-vis their citizens, they are also locked in conflict with other states. The origins of the digital revolution coincided with an exceptional period of international relations at the end of the 20th century - a period of relative harmony among major powers. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the integration of China into the global economic and political order seemed to herald an era of ever deeper economic interdependence among major powers and few incentives for cooperation. That illusion of the march towards a multilateral world, however, didn’t last long. By the second decade of the 21st century, the rivalry among the great powers was beginning to reemerge. The United States’ relations with both Russia and China have shifted from the cooperation of the cold war to the competition of the 21st century. The 2008 financial crisis, the European debt crisis, and the shift of economic power to China and the BRICs have all contributed to this new trend. The United States, Russia, and China are all vying for dominance in the global economy and political order. The digital revolution has added a new dimension to this rivalry. The ability to control and shape the digital space is becoming a key factor in the competition for power.

Invitation

Technopolitics: The digital revolution and return of great power rivalry

In the early days of the digital revolution two decades ago, there was growing optimism about its social, economic and political benefits. The new information and communication technologies, it was hoped, would promote individual freedoms, bring down the barriers between nations and create a networked international society at peace with itself. That optimism has been reduced to a few new technologies, such as social media and the Internet, which have been used to foster division and conflict. The trends expected at the beginning of the digital age have turned out to be false. Instead, the digital revolution has allowed states to mount unprecedented violations of the citizenry. As digital technologies empower states across all human behaviour, physical as well as emotional, the prospect of an all-knowing surveillance state is at hand.

It is not just governments that continuously observe citizens. While governments can claim they monitor individuals for the sake of collective security, the corporate world is doing it for profit. In a world where information is power, companies and governments can collect and monetise consumer data. Artificial intelligence and big data are creating new threats. These emerging dangers are more “deterministic” than the cold war; they are more “digital” than the information war. The urge for information is now more powerful than ever before. This has led to the creation of new surveillance states, where citizens are monitored and controlled by a constant stream of data. The digital revolution has made it easier than ever to track and control individuals.

The growing intensity of state capabilities and the corporations have strewn the civil liberties of citizens demanding the right to individual privacy and autonomy. The European Union’s new regulations, which limit the ability of companies to collect and use personal data, are a reflection of this movement. The threat to individual freedom is real, and it is not just the state that is affected. The impact of the digital revolution on individual freedom is far-reaching.

China

China has become a rising power on the global stage. The rise of China has been accompanied by an increase in its digital capabilities. The Chinese government has invested heavily in technology and has become a major player in the global digital economy. The Chinese government has also been accused of using its digital capabilities to control and manipulate its citizens. The Chinese government has been accused of using mass surveillance and data collection to stifle dissent and control the population. The Chinese government has also been accused of using its digital capabilities to influence foreign governments and organizations.

The United States

The United States has been a key player in the digital revolution. The U.S. government has been a leader in the development of new technologies and has been a major player in the global digital economy. The U.S. government has also been accused of using its digital capabilities to control and manipulate other countries. The U.S. government has been accused of using mass surveillance and data collection to stifle dissent and control the population. The U.S. government has also been accused of using its digital capabilities to influence foreign governments and organizations.

The rise of China and the United States as digital powers has led to a new era of competition. The two countries are vying for dominance in the digital space, with each seeking to establish its own cyber hegemony. The United States has been accused of using its digital capabilities to surveil and control other countries, while China has been accused of using its digital capabilities to manipulate and influence other countries. The competition between the United States and China in the digital space is expected to continue for many years to come.

The digital revolution has brought about a new era of competition, with the two countries vying for dominance in the digital space. The competition between the United States and China in the digital space is expected to continue for many years to come.