

INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITION

Geopolitics has become a ubiquitous term in international affairs, as developments in national, regional and global security are often traced back to great power competition. However, this does not mean that geopolitics produce universal realities or one-size-fits-all policies. The fundamental interests of great powers do determine certain collision courses, but the dynamics of their interactions vary from region to region, leading to elusive but critical dilemmas for regional actors. Indeed, though the geopolitical game field is dominated by great powers, smaller players must master the rulebook and the actual game of geopolitics as well.

The purpose of this book is to highlight how geopolitics play out at the intersection of great power collision courses. Specifically, it focuses on the rivalry between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, and its implications for Hungary. Today's political and academic discourse suggests a wide array of options for addressing the challenge of U.S.–China collision courses, ranging from decoupling and derisking to friendshoring and hedging. But for small states like Hungary, the practical latitude offered by these theoretical concepts is limited, especially when the dynamics of international affairs are volatile.

World politics nowadays is perhaps more turbulent than ever before. Within a year of first publishing this book in Hungarian, we have witnessed an astonishing comeback of a Trump Presidency, an increase in tensions between the West and China in trade and technology, while the war between Russia and Ukraine has passed its milestone of one thousand days and the cataclysm of violence has returned to the Middle East. These developments did not overwrite but confirmed the conclusions of this book. The authors' manuscripts were finalised in the spring of 2023, but the respective chapters address lasting issues of geopolitical competition.

Accordingly, the book continues to offer a clear view of the rivalry between Washington and Beijing along with the complex theoretical and strategic dilemmas it carries for Budapest. As recent events have shown, understanding this competition requires a firm grasp of the domestic political, ideological and legal conditions, the international economic and business considerations, along with the new challenges in the realm of cyberspace and online media. Thus, the analyses in this book are valuable for all who are interested in the scale and scope of small state manoeuvre in the era of renewed geopolitical competition and in a turbulent political and security environment.¹

The editors

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