**Case Neg – Mean Green Debate**

**Case – Cyber**

**1NC vs Cyber ADV**

**New Russian attacks wont reach the threshold of article V**

**The Hill 6/14**/2022

“Finland, Sweden’s NATO moves prompt fears of Russian cyberattacks”, <https://thehill.com/policy/cybersecurity/3488518-finland-swedens-nato-moves-prompt-fears-of-russian-cyber-attacks/>

Finland and Sweden’s move to join NATO has raised concerns about potential cyber retaliation from Russia, which sees the expansion of the alliance as a direct threat.

While **it is too early to judge** how Russia might try to use its cyber capabilities against **Finland, Sweden or other NATO members**, including the U.S., experts said it will likely launch unsophisticated and small-scale cyberattacks as a form of protest against the expansion.

**Such attacks would not have the severity of cyber efforts** Moscow **launched against Ukraine** amid the Russian invasion of that country.

**No cyber war or retaliation**

**Rodet 18**

Jasmine, Master’s Degree in Cyber Security, Strategy, and Diplomacy from the University of New South Wales, Cyber Security Program Manager at Fortescue Metals Group, “The Threat of Cyber War is Exaggerated”, 11/11/2018, linkedin.com/pulse/threat-cyber-war-exaggerated-jasmine-rodet/

For the regular person on the street, the term ‘cyber war’ is more likely to bring to mind the 1983 movie “WarGames” and the doomsday articles that appear regularly in the media about the ‘cyber battlefield’ and an impending World War III. This essay argues that the threat of cyber war is **exaggerated** and although it can, by definition, be stated that we are already in a state of cyber war, the impact on states is **negligible** compared to conventional war domains.

The argument is presented in 3 steps. The first step is to define cyber war and cyber weapons, referencing scholars and experts in the area of conventional war and the cyber domain. The second step is to explore who has been exaggerating the threat of cyber war and what their motivations might be. The third is to explore the evidence and quantify the probability and impact that cyberwar has had on states to date.

‘Cyber war’ is a term often used interchangeably in media with cyber-crime, cyber-attacks, cyber-conflict and cyber-incidents, creating confusion amongst the public and scholars alike. Clausewitz (1989, 75), in his book, On War, defines war as ‘an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will’. Rid (2012, 7) on the other interprets Clausewitz use of ‘force’ as meaning ‘violent’ force. According to Rid, if an act is not potentially violent, it is not an act of war. However, Stone (2013, 107) describes ‘cyber war’ as a politically motivated act of force, not necessarily lethal and not necessarily attributable. The definition by Powers and Jablonski states more simply that cyber war is the utilisation of digital networks for geopolitical purposes (Nocetti 2016, 464). Neither of the latter two definitions requires violence to qualify as cyber war. Under these definitions, the Stuxnet cyber-incident in 2010 and the Estonia incident in 2007 would constitute an act of cyber war, and as such we could say that nations have been at cyber war in the past and are likely to continue to engage in cyber war in years to come.

For this essay, I will use Stones definition to argue that even though states may engage in cyber war, the concept of cyber war is exaggerated. It seems that cyber war is **deliberately exaggerated** in the media and by politicians for **financial** and **political** gains. There are countless examples in the media and in politics of the exaggeration of the threat of cyber war and the language used plays a big factor in creating a sense of fear in the community.

The Four Corners report, Hacked, is a classic example where the reporter, Andrew Fowler describes the current situation in Australia as ‘… a secret war where the body count is climbing every day’ (Fowler 2013). The documentary reveals nothing violent or lethal about cyber incidents. The documentary is actually about hackers working from locations overseas, having targeted key Federal Government departments and major corporations in Australia.

In another example, NATO may be interpreted as exaggerating the threat of Cyber War when they invited Charlie Millar to present at their Conference for Cyber Conflict at the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in 2017. Millar is an independent security evaluator, and his presentation was titled ‘Kim Jong-il and me: How to build a cyber army to attack the US’. He later presented similar content at Def Con 2018. His presentation described the steps he would take to mount a cyber war, including the types of people he would engage, how much he would pay them, what his strategy would be and how much it would cost in total.

Who stands to gain from the exaggeration and hype? Logically, one group would be those that gain financially from the sale of cyber protective services and software. According to Valerino, 57% of technical experts surveyed said that we are currently in a cyber arms race and 43% said that the worst-case scenarios are inevitable (Valeriano and Ryan 2015). Translate this into sales and Gartner projects worldwide security spending will reach $96 Billion in 2018, up 8 Percent from 2017 and to top $113 billion by 2020 (Gartner 2017).

Additionally, there may be **political motivations** to exaggerate the threat of cyber war. Cyberspace is not well understood by the general public and fear is natural. In the US’s cyber security debate, observers have noted there is a tendency for policymakers, military leaders, and media, among others, to use frightening ‘cyber-doom scenarios’ when making a case for action on cyber security (Dunn 2008, 2).

There is some evidence to suggest that more recently in the political arena; we may be maturing in our understanding of the real threat of cyber war. The Tallinn Manual, an academic, non-binding study on how international law applies to cyber conflicts and cyber warfare, was written at the invitation of the Tallinn-based NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. It was first published in 2013 with the title ‘The Tallinn Manual on the International Law of Cyber War’. In 2017, it was re-released with the revised title ‘Tallinn Manual 2.0 on the International Law of Cyber Operations’. The change in title from ‘war’ to ‘operations’ signifies a more moderate use of language from NATO and is an acknowledgement that cyber incidents generally fall below the threshold at which International Law would declare them to be a formal act of war. Experience over the 4 short years from 2013 to 2017 has demonstrated that cyber incidents tend to have a low-level impact on the target state. As the book’s authors put it ‘the focus of the original Manual was on the most severe cyber operations, those that violate the prohibition of the use of force in international relations, entitle states to exercise the right of self-defence, and/or occur during armed conflict’ while the new version ‘adds a legal analysis of the more common cyber incidents that states encounter on a day-to-day basis and that fall below the thresholds of the use of force or armed conflict’ (Leetaru 2017).

To get a better sense if cyber war is exaggerated, we must also consider the probability of cyber war in the future. The probability of cyber war should be weighed up against the probability of conventional war. Where tensions are already high, for example, between North Korea and the US or Russia and Estonia, I would argue that cyber war is more likely than conventional war. This is due to factors including; cyber warfare is less costly than conventional warfare, states are less rational in their decision space in the cyber realm, states find cyber attribution very difficult to achieve so attacks can be undertaken covertly and cyber war is considered ‘a challenge’ and central to the hackers’ ethos (Junio 2013, 128). Further, Sanger describes in his book, The Perfect Weapon, cyber weapons (such as cyber vandalism, Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS), intrusions and advanced persistent threat (APT)) as the ‘perfect weapons’ for the following reasons;

They are cheap: When compared to Nuclear weapons, there are only a handful of nations globally that can afford the technology to create a nuclear weapon.

They are easily accessible: Unlike a Nuclear bomb that requires uranium, a highly protected metal, in the production process, a cyber weapon can be created with minimal investment and highly available IT infrastructure.

They can be dialled-up or dialled-down relatively easily. A ballistic missile, the force of the explosion cannot be adjusted as easily as a DDOS attack. A DDOS attack can be adjusted to last an hour, a few days or a few weeks.

They have a huge range in how they are used: Sabotage as with Stuxnet, Espionage as with the Chinese industrial spying on the US, North Korea’s infiltration of Sony, the Iranians attack on Las Vegas Sands Corp. casino operators.

The significant factor is that cyber weapons can and are being used every day for discrete, **low-level** cyber conflicts to undermine and disrupt rivals, but historically it has **not progressed** to open conflict, nor has it **warranted** a **military response** (Sanger 2018). Additionally, massive cyber operations would necessarily impact the civilian population and violate the immunity of non-combatants. The conditions of war dictate that this is **“taboo”** and to date, rival states have **shown restraint** in their use of cyber weapons for this reason (Valeriano and Ryan 2015). It appears that the threat that cyber weapons represent to national security is overstated and the threat of cyber war is **overstated**.

The US and likely other **highly networked nations** appear **reticent** about using cyber weapons for significant cyber conflict given their **vulnerabilities**. Ironically, NSA programs such as PRISM have made the US more of a target given the sheer volume of sensitive information stored in one place. Regardless of US defences, there is no way to make this information completely secure from intrusion, and as such, the very act of storing the information makes them more vulnerable.

Rid (2012) is among some academics who argue that cyber war has never and will likely **never eventuate**. The benefits of being on this side of the debate mean that public funding can be allocated away from offensive cyber security initiatives to other, potentially more important initiatives, such as public health and housing. The government is constantly under pressure to prioritise public spending and it is imperative that they have realistic, accurate projections regarding the risk of cyber war, the probability and the impact, to allow them to focus spending on the most important areas.

**Cyber threats are *OVERBLOWN* – most recent studies prove**

**Maschmeyer & Kostyuk 2/8**/2022

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The specter of cyber war is back. Not only does Russia’s massive military buildup along Ukraine’s borders bring a growing risk of the largest-scale military clash since World War II, but many analysts stress the potential for destabilizing and devastating cyber-attacks in its wake. Jason Healey predicts that if Russia invades, “the opening salvo is likely to be with offensive cyber capabilities.” William Courtney and Peter A. Wilson from RAND warn of the “massive employment” of cyber warfare tools to create “shock and awe causing Ukraine’s defenses or will to fight to collapse.” Accordingly, the United States and the United Kingdom have deployed cyber warfare teams to help Ukraine defend against an impending strategic cyber strike against critical infrastructure. Some go further, suggesting that Russia may not need to use military force at all, because cyber strikes can “achieve much **the same effect** from across the border.” This assessment is apparently shared by policymakers working on countering the Russian threat to Ukraine, with an (anonymous) senior Biden administration official recently stating as much.

These predictions suggest that cyber operations will provide significant strategic advantages to Russia either as complements to military force, or as standalone instruments — or at least that policymakers and commentators think that they will. Current warnings of escalating cyber warfare conjure deep-seated fears of cyber doom and the recurring specter of a “**cyber Pearl Harbor**” strategic surprise attack. In practice, **however**, **cyber warfare has been a failure**. Our research shows **that cyber operations have remained irrelevant on the battlefield**, while standalone operations to weaken Ukraine through election interference, critical infrastructure sabotage, and economic disruption largely failed to contribute to Russia’s strategic goals of making Ukraine abandon its pro-European Union and pro-NATO foreign policy. Consequently, current fears of cyber warfare defy not only Russia’s track record in Ukraine, but also strategic logic. Given that Russia’s cyber operations **have failed** to produce significant strategic value to date, **why would we expect this to suddenly change now**? Or, to put it more pointedly: If cyber operations offer such effective and potent instruments, why did Russia go through the trouble (and costs) to mobilize its troops? **Current predictions of cyber onslaught do not offer a persuasive answer**.

Giving in to these fears risks fighting phantom threats, playing into Russia’s hands by distracting from the need to counter its military threat and sowing fear and confusion — at least among Western audiences. A level-headed analysis of the threat that distinguishes what is theoretically possible from what is practically feasible is urgently needed. Our research suggests that, contrary to hysteria, cyber operations **will remain of secondary importance** and at best provide marginal gains to Russia.

**2NC/1NR – Cyber Attacks wont trigger Article V**

**New attacks against NATO, Finland, or Sweden are *UNLIKELY* to trigger article V**

**The Hill 5/14**/2022

“Finland, Sweden’s NATO moves prompt fears of Russian cyberattacks”, <https://thehill.com/policy/cybersecurity/3488518-finland-swedens-nato-moves-prompt-fears-of-russian-cyber-attacks/>

“I think it’s unlikely that Russia will launch the types of cyberattacks against Finland and Sweden like it did with Ukraine, primarily **because the aims are different**,” said Jason Blessing, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Blessing said that since Russia has no intention, at least for the moment, to invade Finland or Sweden, it may use different cyber tactics than it did with Ukraine to get its message across.

He added that it’s likely that Russia will launch unsophisticated types of attacks including website defacement and distributed denial-of-service attacks to disrupt its enemies’ networks rather than starting a **full-scale cyber warfare**.

**Russian cyberattacks on Finland and Sweden wont trigger follow-up military actions**

**Orenstein 6/7**/2022

Mitchell Orenstein is a Senior Fellow at FPRI’s Eurasia Program and Professor and Chair of Russian and Eastern European Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, “Russia’s Use of Cyberattacks: Lessons from the Second Ukraine War”, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/06/russias-use-of-cyberattacks-lessons-from-the-second-ukraine-war/> -- ECM

Russia also deploys cyberattacks as a poignant warning or **threat**, often to put more force behind diplomatic actions.

For instance, on April 8, 2022, while Ukrainian President Zelensky gave an invited address to the Finnish Parliament, the Finnish foreign and defense ministries were hit by a distributed denial of service attack. Finnish government systems were back up in an hour, but given the circumstances, this cyberattack appears to have been designed to signal Russia’s displeasure with Finland’s plans to join NATO and its support of Ukraine. This attack was presaged by Russian diplomatic statements warning Finland of “**retaliatory steps” to joining NATO**. To date, it remains the only significant cyberattack against Finland or Sweden as they planned their applications to join the alliance. This attack bears similarities to other instances where Russia used cyberattacks to emphasize diplomatic warnings.

Following the 2015 doping scandal that resulted in the Russian Olympic team being banned from the Olympics through 2022, Russian military intelligence launched a significant cyberattack against the Swedish Sports Confederation while Sweden was issuing a bid to host the 2026 Winter Olympics. These cyberattacks were part of a “systematic campaign” targeting FIFA, the World Anti-Doping Agency, and the United States Anti-Doping Agency in furtherance of diplomatic goals rather than military or societal disruption.

Three Distinct Uses of Cyberattacks

Russia uses cyberattacks in three different ways. First, it deploys cyberattacks to prepare and facilitate military conflict by attacking critical infrastructure such as government websites, IT servers, banks, media outlets, and power plants. As the Second Ukraine War shows, Russia seeks to disrupt and disable **critical infrastructure to advance its military goals**.

Russia also deploys cyberattacks **as part of a hybrid war strategy** that substitutes for war. These attacks may be persistent over longer periods of time. However, Russia deploys cyberattacks in smaller quantities and often combined with other hybrid or political war techniques, such as disinformation campaigns and civil actions in targeted countries. **In these instances**, **Russia does not** appear to intend imminent military action, but may seek to degrade defensive capabilities.

Cyberattacks may also be deployed as a more isolated threat signal and complement to diplomatic warnings, when a country takes actions that Russia interprets as unfriendly. For these purposes, cyberattacks are more frequently combined with traditional diplomacy.

**2NC/1NR – XT 2 & 3 No Escalation**

**Empirics prove – You should subscribe a low risk to their advantage**

**Orenstein 6/7**/2022

Mitchell Orenstein is a Senior Fellow at FPRI’s Eurasia Program and Professor and Chair of Russian and Eastern European Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, “Russia’s Use of Cyberattacks: Lessons from the Second Ukraine War”, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/06/russias-use-of-cyberattacks-lessons-from-the-second-ukraine-war/> -- ECM

**The empirical record of cyber conflict**, however, suggests that what is feasible in practice is far more **limited**. Ukraine has been a “giant test lab” where Russia, one of the world’s foremost cyber powers, has experimented with cyber operations for eight years. Yet these operations **have failed** to produce significant strategic value either as force complements or standalone tools.

The substitutability argument — that states can or do substitute cyber operations for the use of force — has little empirical support since Russia levied no major cyber operations against Ukraine in the runup to the military escalation of the conflict in 2014. While it is possible that we do not know about such operations given their veil of secrecy, it is clear that any attempted but undetected cyber surprise strike failed to produce any measurable effects.

Evidence supporting the complementarity perspective is similarly sobering. One of us has examined the role of low-level disruptive cyber operations in the military conflict and their relevance for battlefield events (and outcomes). Disruptive attacks can directly affect military operations as they seek to sabotage an opponent’s ability to fight. For example, the Russia-backed separatists in the Donbas and Luhansk regions used malware to retrieve data from mobile devices on the locations of Ukrainian artillery troops, facilitating better reconnaissance against these troops. Pro-Ukrainian hackers hijacked CCTV cameras behind enemy lines to obtain intelligence on the movement of Russian artillery in the separatist-controlled territories.

Focusing on the period of the most intense fighting, between 2014 and 2016 — the time when, if cyber tools are an effective complement to armed force, Russia would have been most likely to use them — we applied a series of statistical tests to thousands of cyber and military operations. **The findings showed a strong, escalatory dynamic between military operations by both sides but no significant correlation in either direction between military and cyber operations**, **and no reciprocity between cyber op**eration**s**. This evidence demonstrates that in one of the first armed conflicts where both sides used low-level cyber operations extensively, digital operations unfolded independently from the events on the ground and had no discernible effect on them. Hence, in stark contrast to expectations about the force-multiplying advantages of cyber operations, these findings suggest hacking groups faced considerable difficulties in responding to battlefield events, much less shaping them.

**Limiting challenges mean no risk of cyber doom**

**Orenstein 6/7**/2022

Mitchell Orenstein is a Senior Fellow at FPRI’s Eurasia Program and Professor and Chair of Russian and Eastern European Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, “Russia’s Use of Cyberattacks: Lessons from the Second Ukraine War”, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/06/russias-use-of-cyberattacks-lessons-from-the-second-ukraine-war/> -- ECM

Considering the underwhelming track record of cyber warfare in Ukraine to date, **there is little reason to expect cyber doom of the kind** that some now predict. For these warnings of a Russian cyber onslaught to become reality, cyber operations would need to produce effects at a scope and scale that they have previously failed to attain. Importantly, current warnings fail to make a persuasive case on why we should expect such a transformation.

Rather, they rest on the implicit assumption that with the change in strategic context, the role of cyber operations will change as well. This comes out clearest in Maggie Miller’s recent commentary suggesting that military escalation in Ukraine would finally herald “**a true cyberwar**” where Russia could “take down the power grid” or launch a disinformation campaign to undermine the government in Kyiv. Dmitri Alperovitch offers a more level-headed analysis, underlining that cyber operations alone will fall short of achieving Russia’s goals. However, he also suggests that they can complement force as an “extension of warfare itself,” disrupting command and control to provide battlefield advantages, sabotaging critical infrastructure, and undermining public trust in the government to “send a powerful signal that resistance is futile.” **Yet**, as we have seen, Russia has attempted most of these objectives in the past and has failed. Even in a full-scale invasion, we have the same aggressor, with the same hacking groups, with the same skill level going after the same sets of possible targets. Why would we expect different results?

Changing the strategic context of deployment does not change the mechanism of action that cyber operations rely upon to produce outcomes — and its intrinsic constraints. Cyber operations rely on a mechanism of subversion that exploits vulnerabilities in adversary systems to use them against the adversary. This mechanism holds great strategic promise but poses **significant operational challenges**. It requires creativity and cunning to remotely manipulating complex systems that others designed and operate without alerting the victim to one’s presence. These challenges produce an operational trilemma between the speed, intensity of effects, and level of control that actors have over these effects. This trilemma limits strategic value, since **in most circumstances** cyber operations will be **too slow, too weak, and too volatile** to contribute measurably to strategic goals. The constraining role of this trilemma is evident across all five of Russia’s disruptive cyber operations against Ukraine thus far, underlining their relevance. Importantly, **all available** evidence indicates that these intrinsic constraints limit the strategic value of cyber operations regardless of strategic contexts.

**No large-scale cyber-attacks or retaliation**

**Nye 19**

Dr. Joseph S., Jr., University Distinguished Service Professor and Former Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, “Global Cyber Conflicts Will Be Hard To Control”, The Statesman (Pakistan), 10/14/2019, Lexis

The problem of perceptions and controlling escalation is not new. In August 1914, the major European powers expected a short and sharp “Third Balkan War.” The troops were expected to be home by Christmas. After the assassination of the Austrian archduke in June, Austria-Hungary wanted to give Serbia a bloody nose, and Germany gave its Austrian ally a blank check rather than see it humiliated. But when the Kaiser returned from vacation at the end of July and discovered how Austria had filled in the check, his efforts to de-escalate were too late. Nonetheless, he expected to prevail and almost did.

Had the Kaiser, the Czar, and the Emperor known in August 1914 that a little over four years later, all would lose their thrones and see their realms dismembered, they would not have gone to war. Since 1945, nuclear weapons have served as a crystal ball in which leaders can glimpse the catastrophe implied by a major war. After the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, leaders learned the importance of de-escalation, arms-control communication, and rules of the road to manage conflict.

Cyber technology, of course, lacks the clear devastating effects of nuclear weapons, and that poses a different set of problems, because there is no crystal ball. During the Cold War, the great powers avoided direct engagement, but that is not true of cyber conflict. And yet the threat of cyber **Pearl Harbor**s has been **exaggerated**. Most cyber conflicts occur **below the threshold** established by the rules of armed conflict. They are **economic** and **political**, rather than **lethal**. It is **not credible** to threaten a **nuclear response** to cyber theft of intellectual property by China or cyber meddling in elections by Russia.

According to American doctrine, deterrence is not limited to a cyber response (though that is possible). The US will respond to cyberattacks across domains or sectors, with any weapons of its choice, **proportional** to the damage that has been done. That can range from **naming** and **shaming** to economic sanctions to kinetic weapons. Earlier this year, a new doctrine of “persistent engagement” was described as not only disrupting attacks, but also helping to reinforce deterrence. But the technical overlap between intrusion into networks to gather intelligence or disrupt attacks and to carry out offensive operations often makes it difficult to distinguish between escalation and de-escalation. Rather than relying on tacit bargaining, as proponents of “persistent engagement” sometimes emphasize, explicit communication may be necessary to limit escalation.

**Case – Heg**

**1NC vs Heg ADV**

**Hegemony is unsustainable – a peaceful transition toward offshore balancing prevents economic crisis, prolif, terrorism**

**Walt 19**

Stephen - Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School and the author of **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**, "The End of Hubris," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-04-16/end-hubris

Today's world presents a seemingly endless array of challenges: a more powerful and [assertive China](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/china-plan-rule-asia), novel threats from cyberspace, a rising tide of refugees, resurgent xenophobia, persistent strands of violent extremism, climate change, and many more. But the more complex the global environment, the more Washington needs clear thinking about its vital interests and foreign policy priorities. Above all, a successful [U.S. grand strategy](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/topics/grand-strategy) must identify where the United States should be prepared to wage war, and for what purposes. For all the talk of how U.S. foreign policy and the country's place in the world will never be the same after the presidency of Donald Trump, the best strategic road map for the United States is a familiar one. Realism-the hard-nosed approach to foreign policy that guided the country throughout most of the twentieth century and drove its rise to great power-remains the [best option](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-06-14/realist-world). A quarter century ago, after the Cold War ended, foreign policy elites abandoned realism in favor of an unrealistic grand strategy-liberal hegemony-that has weakened the country and caused considerable harm at home and abroad. To get back on track, Washington should return to the realism and restraint that served it so well in the past. If Washington rediscovered realism, the United States would seek to preserve the security and prosperity of the American people and to protect the core value of liberty in the United States. Policymakers would recognize the importance of military strength but also take into account the country's favorable geographic position, and they would counsel restraint in the use of force. The United States would embrace a strategy of "offshore balancing" and abstain from crusades to remake the world in its image, concentrating instead on maintaining the balance of power in a few key regions. Where possible, Washington would encourage foreign powers to take on the primary burden for their own defense, and it would commit to defend only those areas where the United States has vital interests and where its power is still essential. Diplomacy would return to its rightful place, and Americans would promote their values abroad primarily by demonstrating democracy's virtues at home. IF IT AIN'T BROKE... In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the United States was weak, leaders from George Washington to William McKinley mostly avoided foreign entanglements and concentrated on building power domestically, expanding the country's reach across North America and eventually expelling the European great powers from the Western Hemisphere. In the first half of the twentieth century, U.S. presidents such as Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt used the country's newfound strength to restore the balance of power in strategically critical regions outside the Western Hemisphere. But they let other great powers do most of the heavy lifting, and thus the United States emerged relatively unscathed-and stronger than ever-from the world wars that devastated Asia and Europe. Letting other states shoulder the burden was not possible during the Cold War, so the United States stepped up and led the alliances that contained the Soviet Union. American leaders paid lip service to democracy promotion, human rights, and other idealistic concerns, but U.S. policy was [realist at its core](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-08-28/truth-about-liberal-order). Through the Bretton Woods system and its successors, the United States also helped foster a more open world economy, balancing economic growth against the need for financial stability, national autonomy, and domestic legitimacy. Put simply, for most of U.S. history, American leaders were acutely sensitive to the balance of power, passed the buck when they could, and took on difficult missions when necessary. But when the Soviet Union collapsed and the United States found itself, as the former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft put it in 1998, "standing alone at the height of power . . . with the rarest opportunity to shape the world," U.S. leaders rejected the realism that had worked well for decades and tried to remake global politics in accordance with American values. A new strategy-[liberal hegemony](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-06-14/liberal-world)-sought to spread democracy and open markets across the globe. That goal is the common thread linking President Bill Clinton's policy of "engagement and enlargement," President George W. Bush's "freedom agenda," and President Barack Obama's embrace of the Arab revolts of 2010-11 and his declaration that "there is no right more fundamental than the ability to choose your leaders and determine your destiny." Such thinking won broad support from both political parties, the federal bureaucracies that deal with international affairs, and most of the think tanks, lobbies, and media figures that constitute the foreign policy establishment. At bottom, liberal hegemony is a highly revisionist strategy. Instead of working to maintain favorable balances of power in a few areas of vital interest, the United States sought to transform regimes all over the world and recruit new members into the economic and security institutions it dominated. The results were dismal: failed wars, financial crises, staggering inequality, frayed alliances, and emboldened adversaries. HEGEMONIC HUBRIS When Clinton took office in 1993, the United States was on favorable terms with the world's other major powers, including China and Russia. Democracy was spreading, Iraq was being disarmed, and Iran had no nuclear enrichment capacity. The Oslo Accords seemed to herald an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Washington seemed well positioned to guide that process. The European Union was adding new members and moving toward a common currency, and the U.S. economy was performing well. Americans saw terrorism as a minor problem, and the U.S. military seemed unstoppable. The wind was at the country's back. Life was good. But those circumstances fueled a dangerous overconfidence among American elites. Convinced that the United States was "the indispensable nation," as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright famously put it in 1998, they believed they had the right, the responsibility, and the wisdom to shape political arrangements in every corner of the world. That vision turned out to be a hubristic fantasy. Repeated attempts to broker peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians all failed, and the two-state solution sought by three U.S. presidents is no longer a viable option. Al Qaeda attacked the U.S. homeland on September 11, 2001, and Washington responded by launching a global war on terrorism, including invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Those campaigns were costly failures and shattered the U.S. military's aura of invincibility. Much of the Middle East is now embroiled in conflict, and violent extremists operate from Africa to Central Asia and beyond. Meanwhile, India, Pakistan, and North Korea tested and deployed nuclear weapons, and Iran become a latent nuclear weapons state. The collapse of the U.S. housing market in 2008 exposed widespread corruption in the country's financial institutions and triggered the [worst economic crisis](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-09-13/crisis-next-time) since the Great Depression-a calamity from which the global economy has yet to fully recover. In 2014, Russia seized Crimea, and it has interfered in a number of other countries since then-and its relations with the West are now worse than at any time since the Cold War. China's power and ambitions have expanded, and cooperation between Beijing and Moscow has deepened. The eurozone crisis, the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the EU, and energetic populist movements have raised doubts about the EU's future. Democracy is in retreat worldwide; according to Freedom House, 2018 was the 13th consecutive year in which global freedom declined. Illiberal leaders govern in Hungary and Poland, and the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Democracy Index has downgraded the United States from a "full" to a "flawed" democracy. The United States was not solely responsible for all these adverse developments, but it played a major role in most of them. And the taproot of many of these failures was Washington's embrace of liberal hegemony. For starters, that strategy expanded U.S. security obligations without providing new resources with which to meet them. The policy of "dual containment," aimed at Iran and Iraq, forced the United States to keep thousands of troops on the Arabian Peninsula, an additional burden that also helped convince Osama bin Laden to strike at the U.S. homeland. NATO expansion committed Washington to defend weak and vulnerable new members, even as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom let their military forces atrophy. Equally important, U.S. efforts to promote democracy, the open-ended expansion of NATO, and the extension of the alliance's mission far beyond its original parameters poisoned relations with Russia. And fear of U.S.-led regime change encouraged several states to pursue a nuclear deterrent-in the case of North Korea, successfully. When the United States did manage to topple a foreign foe, as it did in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, the results were not thriving new democracies but costly occupations, failed states, and hundreds of thousands of dead civilians. It was delusional for U.S. leaders to expect otherwise: creating a functional democracy is a difficult process under the best of circumstances, but trying to do it in fractured societies one barely understands is a fool's errand. Finally, globalization [did not deliver](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2018-10-15/how-save-globalization) as promised. Opening up markets to trade and investment brought great benefits to lower and middle classes in China, India, and other parts of the developing world. It also further magnified the already staggering wealth of the world's richest one percent. But lower- and middle-class incomes in the United States and Europe remained flat, jobs in some sectors there fled abroad, and the global financial system became much more fragile. This sorry record is why, in 2016, when Trump called U.S. foreign policy "a complete and total disaster" and blamed out-of-touch and unaccountable elites, many Americans nodded in agreement. They were not isolationists; they simply wanted their government to stop trying to run the world and pay more attention to problems at home. Trump's predecessors seemed to have heard that message, at least when they were running for office. In 1992, Clinton's mantra was "It's the economy, ~~stupid~~." In 2000, Bush derided Clinton's efforts at "nation building" and called for a foreign policy that was "strong but humble." Obama pledged to end foreign wars and focus on "nation building at home." These expressions of restraint were understandable, as surveys had repeatedly shown that a majority of Americans believed the country was playing the role of global policeman more than it should and doing more than its share to help others. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2013, 80 percent of Americans agreed that "we should not think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home," and 83 percent wanted presidents to focus more on domestic issues than on foreign policy. Clinton, Bush, and Obama all understood what the American people wanted. But they failed to deliver it. So has Trump. Although his Twitter feed and public statements often question familiar orthodoxies, the United States is still defending wealthy NATO allies, still fighting in Afghanistan, still chasing terrorists across Africa, still giving unconditional support to the same problematic Middle Eastern clients, and still hoping to topple a number of foreign regimes. Trump's style as president is radically different from those of his predecessors, but the substance of his policies is [surprisingly similar](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-06-13/trump-traditionalist). The result is the worst of both worlds: Washington is still pursuing a misguided grand strategy, but now with an incompetent vulgarian in the White House. REALISM IN PRACTICE Four presidents have now pursued a grand strategy built around the goal of American hegemony, and all four have fared poorly. As the political scientist John Mearsheimer and I have argued previously [in these pages](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/case-offshore-balancing), it is time for the United States to return to its traditional approach of offshore balancing. This strategy begins by recognizing that the United States remains the most secure power in modern history. It has thousands of nuclear weapons and powerful conventional forces, and it faces no serious rivals in the Western Hemisphere. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans still insulate the country from many threats, giving U.S. leaders enormous latitude in choosing where and when to fight. In addition to working to maintain U.S. hegemony in the Western Hemisphere, American policymakers have long sought to prevent other great powers from imitating the United States by dominating their own regions. A peer competitor with no serious rivals nearby would be free to project power around the world-as Washington has for decades. From an American perspective, it is better if the major powers in Eurasia have to keep a wary eye on one another, making it harder for them to interfere near American shores. The United States intervened in the world wars to prevent Wilhelmine Germany, Nazi Germany, and imperial Japan from dominating Europe and Asia. This same principle inspired the Cold War strategy of containment, although in that case, the United States could not pass the buck and had to bear most of the costs itself. Today, there is no potential regional hegemon in Europe, whose states should gradually take [full responsibility](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2017-08-15/pay-europe) for their own defense. The countries of the European Union are home to more than 500 million people and boast a combined annual GDP exceeding $17 trillion, whereas Russia-the main external threat to EU states-has a population of just 144 million and an annual GDP of only $1.6 trillion. Moreover, NATO's European members together annually spend more than three times what Russia does on defense. The idea that the EU (whose roster includes two nuclear-armed powers) lacks the wherewithal to defend itself against a neighbor whose economy is smaller than Italy's is risible. NATO still has ardent defenders on both sides of the Atlantic, but they are living in the past. The alliance played an invaluable role in containing the Soviet Union and preventing the return of an aggressive, expansionist Germany. But the Soviet Union is long gone, and Germany is now a liberal democracy firmly committed to the status quo. NATO's leaders have worked overtime to devise new missions since the Berlin Wall came down, but the alliance's attempts at nation building in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Libya have not gone well. Unless NATO's European members decide to back a U.S.-led effort to balance against China (and it is not clear that they will or should), it is time for the United States to gradually disengage from NATO and turn European security over to the Europeans by beginning a coordinated withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Europe, allowing a European officer to serve as NATO's supreme allied commander, and making it clear that the United States will no longer be Europe's first line of defense. Washington should take these steps not with rancor or resentment but with a sense of accomplishment and a commitment to cooperate on issues on which American and European interests align, such as climate change, counterterrorism, and the management of the world economy. Washington should also return to its traditional approach to the Middle East. To ensure access to the energy supplies on which the world economy depends, the United States has long sought to prevent any country from dominating the oil-rich Persian Gulf. But until the late 1960s, it did so by relying on the United Kingdom. After the British withdrew, Washington relied on regional clients, such as Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. U.S. forces stayed offshore until January 1991, a few months after Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq, seized Kuwait. In response, the George H. W. Bush administration assembled a coalition of states that liberated Kuwait, decimated Iraq's military, and restored balance to the region. Today, Washington's primary goal in the Middle East remains preventing any country from impeding the flow of oil to world markets. The region is now deeply divided along several dimensions, with no state in a position to dominate. Moreover, the oil-producing states depend on revenue from energy exports, which makes all of them eager to sell. Maintaining a regional balance of power should be relatively easy, therefore, especially once the United States ends its counterproductive efforts to remake local politics. U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria would be withdrawn, although the United States might still maintain intelligence-gathering facilities, prepositioned equipment, and basing arrangements in the region as a hedge against the need to return in the future. But as it did from 1945 to 1991, Washington would count on local powers to maintain a regional balance of power in accordance with their own interests. As an offshore balancer, the United States would establish normal relations with all countries in the region, instead of having "special relationships" with a few states and profoundly hostile relations with others. No country in the Middle East is so virtuous or vital that it deserves unconditional U.S. support, and no country there is so heinous that it must be treated as a pariah. The United States should act as China, India, Japan, Russia, and the EU do, maintaining normal working relationships with all states in the region-[including Iran](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2018-10-24/pompeos-dangerous-delusions). Among other things, this policy would encourage rival regional powers to compete for U.S. support, instead of taking it for granted. For the moment, Washington should also make it clear that it will reduce its support for local partners if they repeatedly act in ways that undermine U.S. interests or that run contrary to core U.S. values. Should any state threaten to dominate the region from within or without in the future, the United States would help the rest balance against it, calibrating its level of effort and local presence to the magnitude of the danger. With its relationships with Europe and the Middle East right-sized and rationalized, an offshore-balancing United States could focus primarily on the country that is its only potential peer competitor and the world's only other would-be regional hegemon: China. If China's power continues to grow, it is likely to press its neighbors to distance themselves from Washington and accept China as the dominant power in the Asia-Pacific. Were China to become a regional hegemon in Asia, it would be better positioned to project power around the world and extend its influence into the Western Hemisphere. To counter this possibility, the United States should maintain and deepen its current security ties with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea and continue to nurture its strategic partnerships with India, Singapore, and Vietnam. Once the United States is no longer subsidizing its wealthy European allies or squandering trillions of dollars on costly quagmires in the greater Middle East, it can more readily afford the military capabilities needed to balance China. Maintaining an effective Asian coalition will not be easy, however. Washington's Asian allies are separated from one another by water and vast distances, and they are reluctant to jeopardize their commercial ties with China. The relationship between Japan and South Korea has a troubled history that makes close cooperation difficult. Local powers will be tempted to let Washington do most of the work, and sophisticated U.S. leadership will be necessary to hold this coalition together and ensure that each member contributes its fair share. Trump's missteps-abandoning the Trans-Pacific Partnership, starting trade disputes with Japan and South Korea, and indulging in an amateurish flirtation with North Korea-have not helped. OFFSHORE VENTURE Defenders of the status quo will no doubt mischaracterize this course of action as a return to isolationism. That is nonsense. As an offshore balancer, the United States would be deeply engaged diplomatically, economically, and, in some areas, militarily. It would still possess the world's mightiest armed forces, even if it spent somewhat less money on them. The United States would continue to work with other countries to address major global issues such as climate change, terrorism, and cyberthreats. But Washington would no longer assume primary responsibility for defending wealthy allies that can defend themselves, no longer subsidize client states whose actions undermine U.S. interests, and no longer try to spread democracy via regime change, covert action, or economic pressure. Instead, Washington would use its strength primarily to uphold the balance of power in Asia-where a substantial U.S. presence is still needed-and would devote more time, attention, and resources to restoring the foundations of U.S. power at home. By setting an example that others would once again admire and seek to emulate, an offshore-balancing United States would also do a better job of promoting the political values that Americans espouse. This approach would also involve less reliance on force and coercion and a renewed emphasis on diplomacy. Military power would remain central to U.S. national security, but its use would be as a last resort rather than a first impulse. It is worth remembering that some of Washington's greatest foreign policy achievements-the Marshall Plan, the Bretton Woods system, the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and the peaceful reunification of Germany-were diplomatic victories, not battlefield ones. In recent years, however, both Democratic and Republican administrations have tended to eschew genuine diplomacy and have relied instead on ultimatums and pressure. Convinced they hold all the high cards, too many U.S. officials have come to see even modest concessions to opponents as tantamount to surrender. So they have tried to dictate terms to others and have reached for sanctions or the sword when the target state has refused to comply. But even weak states are reluctant to submit to blackmail, and imposing one-sided agreements on others makes them more likely to cheat or renege as soon as they can. For diplomacy to work, both sides must get some of what they want. Moreover, offshore balancing requires a sophisticated understanding of regional politics, which only knowledgeable diplomats and area specialists can provide. In particular, creating an effective coalition to check China's ambitions in Asia will be as much a diplomatic task as a military mission, and success would depend on a deep bench of officials who are intimately familiar with the history, languages, cultures, and sensitivities of the region. A return to offshore balancing should also be accompanied by a major effort to rebuild and professionalize the U.S. diplomatic corps. Ambassadorships should be reserved for qualified diplomats rather than VIPs or campaign donors, and the State Department must develop, refine, and update its diplomatic doctrine-the ways the United States can use noncoercive means of influence-much as the armed services continually refine the military doctrines that guide their conduct in war. The ranks of the Foreign Service should be significantly increased, and as their careers advance, career diplomats should receive the same opportunities for professional education that senior military officers currently enjoy. OUT WITH THE OLD Despite the disappointments of the past 25 years, the American foreign policy elite remains convinced that global leadership is their birthright and that Washington must continue trying to force other countries to conform to U.S. dictates. This perspective is an article of faith at almost every foreign policy think tank inside the Beltway and is repeatedly invoked in task-force reports, policy briefs, and op-eds. A similar groupthink pervades the U.S. media, where unrepentant neoconservatives and unchastened liberal internationalists monopolize the ranks of full-time pundits; proponents of realism, restraint, and nonintervention appear sporadically at best. The result is that foreign policy debates are heavily skewed in favor of endless intervention. Moving back to a more realist grand strategy will require broadening the parameters of debate and challenging the entrenched interests that have promoted and defended a failed foreign policy. The clubbiness of the foreign policy establishment has also produced a disturbing lack of accountability. Although the community contains many dedicated, imaginative, and honorable individuals, it is dominated by a highly networked caste of insiders who are reluctant to judge one another lest they be judged themselves. As a result, error-prone officials routinely fail upward and receive new opportunities to repeat past mistakes. Consider the officials responsible for (and the commentators who cheered on) the bungled Middle East peace process, the misguided expansion of NATO, the botched wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the CIA's torture of detainees in the war on terrorism, the National Security Agency's warrantless surveillance of Americans, the disastrous NATO intervention in Libya, and the American machinations in Ukraine that gave Russia a pretext to seize Crimea. None of those officials or commentators has suffered significant professional penalties for his or her mistakes or malfeasance. Indeed, nearly all of them still enjoy prominent positions in government, think tanks, the media, or academia. No one is infallible, of course, and a desire to hold people accountable could be taken too far. Policymakers often learn from past mistakes and become more effective over time. But when the same people keep making the same errors and neither recognize nor regret them, it is time to look for new people with better ideas. Despite the stagnation within the foreign policy establishment, the prospects for a more realist, more restrained U.S. foreign policy are better today than they have been in many years. For all his flaws, Trump has made it easier to propose alternatives to liberal hegemony by expressing such disdain for the elite consensus. Younger Americans are more skeptical of their country's imperial pretensions than are their elders, and some new members of Congress seem bent on clawing back some of the control over foreign policy that presidents have amassed over the past 70 years. Furthermore, powerful structural forces are working against liberal hegemony and in favor of offshore balancing. China's rise and the partial revival of Russian power are forcing the United States to pay closer attention to balance-of-power politics, especially in Asia. The intractable problems of the Middle East will make future presidents reluctant to squander more blood and treasure there-especially in chasing the siren song of democracy promotion. Pressure on the defense budget is unlikely to diminish, especially once the costs of climate change begin to bite, and because trillions of dollars' worth of domestic needs cry out for attention. For these reasons, the foreign policy elite will eventually rediscover the grand strategy that helped build and sustain American power over most of the nation's history. The precise path remains uncertain, and it will probably take longer to get there than it should. But the destination is clear.

**China will never match US hegemony – but maintaining offensive postures makes war from Chinese decline inevitable**

**Beckley 20**

Michael, Tufts University; American Enterprise Institute, “Conditional Convergence and the Rise of China: A Political Economy Approach to Understanding Global Power Transitions”, Journal of Global Security Studies DB

The conventional wisdom about current trends in the balance of power relies heavily on power transition theory, which assumes that economic convergence is an unconditional process in which poorer countries inevitably catch up with richer countries. **Economists**, however, **have shown that convergence is rare and conditional on a set of geographic, institutional, and demographic factors that, so far, have not been incorporated into major theories of international change**. In this article, I have discussed these factors and analyzed the growth prospects of the United States and China in light of them. **The results cast doubt on China’s ability to rival the United States as an economic and military superpower**. The good news is that **the world is unlikely to experience a full-blown hegemonic rivalry anytime soon**. This is an extraordinary development for global security. In the past five hundred years alone, there have been sixteen hegemonic competitions in which a rising power challenged a ruling power for top-dog status. Twelve of them ended in catastrophic wars, and even some of the peaceful cases were brutal cold wars that inflicted tremendous harm. During the Cold War, for example, the United States and the Soviet Union divided the globe into rival blocs, waged proxy wars that killed millions of people, and brought the world to the brink of nuclear Armageddon. Today, by contrast, the United States does not face a peer competitor, and the world, though far from perfect, is more peaceful and prosperous than ever before. The bad news is that **China may become more authoritarian at home and aggressive abroad as its economic growth slows, and this shift may undermine global security in numerous areas**. **History suggests that when a rising power peaks and starts to decline before its ambitions have been fulfilled, its people tend to become disgruntled, and its leaders usually respond by suppressing domestic dissent and demonizing foreign adversaries**. Russia, for example, has become more hostile, revanchist, and disruptive since the collapse in world oil prices in the late 2000s gutted the Russian economy and crimped President Vladimir Putin’s popularity. China seems to be going down a similar path. Over the past decade, China’s economic growth rates have been cut in half, and the Chinese government has responded by massively expanding its internal security system, exporting parts of that system to other countries, waging information warfare on democratic countries, promoting “internet sovereignty,” flouting international trade rules, and ramping up its military presence on and around disputed features in the East and South China Seas in flagrant violation of international law. These actions may be just a preview of what is to come in the years ahead, as the economic, geographic, and demographic problems highlighted above grow worse. Trade disputes and territorial conflicts are only the most obvious risks posed by a stagnating and recalcitrant China. Less obvious are transnational problems, such as climate change and disease, which may fester without Chinese cooperation. Avoiding this fate requires other countries, and especially the United States, to handle China with a blend of reassurance and deterrence. **Unfortunately, the widespread view that China is an emerging superpower has caused the United States to abandon engagement in favor of unbridled competition**. In just the past few years, the United States has labeled China a rival, imposed steep tariffs on Chinese goods and severe restrictions on Chinese investment and immigration, **inserted US forces into East Asian territorial disputes**, and made plans to hit China early and hard in the event of war. **This competition has not only increased the risk of US–China conflict but also threatened global security by hamstringing the World Trade Organization and effectively killing the Paris Climate Accord and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty**. Thus, **the stage has been set for tragic conflict: China is becoming more recalcitrant as it suffers slowing growth, while the United States, consumed by false prophecies of China’s inexorable rise, is becoming more confrontational**. **The main threat to global security, therefore, is not a US-China power transition driven by economic convergence but divergence in US and Chinese perceptions about the long-term trends in the balance of power**. **China may not be able to stem its growth slowdown, but Americans can take note of it and recalibrate US policy accordingly**.

**Unipolarity is statistically the most conflict-prone system.**

**Monteiro 14**

Assistant Professor of Political Science at Yale [Nuno, *Theory of Unipolar Politics*, p. 181-184

At the same time, the first two-and-a-half decades of our unipolar system have been anything but peaceful in what concerns U.S, involvement in interstate conflict. U.S. forces have been employed in four interstate wars – Kuwait (1991), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001-), and Iraq (2oo3-2011) – in addition to many smaller interventions including Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, and Sudan.5 As a result, the United States has been at war for **fifteen of the twenty-five years** since the end of the Cold War, In fact, the first two-and-a-half decades of unipolarity — representing around 1o percent of U.S. history account for more than 30 percent of the nation's total wartime.6 For critics of U.S. interventionism, "**the central question** [of contemporary international politics] is how to **contain and moderate the use of military force by the** **U**nited **S**tates."8

Table 5 presents a list of great powers divided into three periods: from 1816 to 1945, multipolarity; from 1946 to 1989, bipolarity; and unipolarity since 1990.9 Table 6 then presents summary data about the incidence of war during each of these periods. Unipolarity is by far **the most conflict prone of all systems** according to two important criteria: the percentage of years that great powers spend at war and the incidence of war involving great powers. In multipolarity, 18 percent of great-power years were spent at war versus 16 percent in bipolarity. In unipolarity, in contrast, a remarkable **64 percent** of great-power years have been until now spent at war – by far the **highest** percentage **in all systems**. Furthermore, during multipolarity and bipolarity the probability that war involving a great power would, break out in any given year was, respectively, 4.2 percent and 3.4 percent. Under unipolarity, it is 16.o percent – or around **four times higher**.

It might be argued that the higher number of years that great powers spent at war under unipolarity are merely the result of the long, grinding, and unforeseen occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq by U.S. forces.11 But even if these two wars had gone according to U.S. plans – if the Afghanistan War had ended in the spring of 2002 and the Iraq War in the summer of 2003 – unipolarity would still be particularly **prone to great-power involvement in war**. Even if the United States had not occupied either Afghanistan or Iraq, it would still have spent 16.0 percent of the post-Cold War years at war, which is about the same as the respective percentages for bipolar and multipolar systems. In other words, even if the United States had refrained from any military occupations, the frequency of its use of military force in major operations would still give us **no reason to believe that unipolarity is any more peaceful** than any other past configuration of the international system.

As things turned out in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the last two-and-a-half decades saw a sharp increase in both the incidence of conflict and the percentage of great-power years spent at war. This is a particularly puzzling finding given that the current unipole – the United States – is a democracy in a world populated by more democracies than at any time in the past. In light of arguments about how democracies are better able to solve disputes peacefully, choose to engage only in those wars they can win, and tend to fight shorter wars, the United States should have spent fewer years at war than previous nondemocratic great powers.12

As we can see, post-Cold War history can be used in support of both the widespread claim that the overall level of conflict has declined and of the claim that the United States has experienced an **unprecedented level of involvement in interstate war**. Reality seems to be chafing against the view that unipolarity produces no incentives for conflict; at least in what concerns the unipole's involvement in interstate wars, the past two-and-a-half decades seem to point in the opposite direction.

**2NC/1NR – Unipolarity Bad**

**Heg doesn’t solve stability -- empirical analysis proves it destabilizes the world and multipolar systems aren’t worse.**

**Cambanis 12** [Thanassis - Fellow at The Century Foundation and Professor at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs “The lonely superpower,” http://bostonglobe.com/ideas/2012/01/22/the-lonely-superpower/FRkSf1s5n9lXku4VqvEtqJ/story.html]

Now, however, with a few decades of experience to study, a young international relations theorist at Yale University has proposed a provocative new view: American dominance has destabilized the world in new ways, and the United States is no better off in the wake of the Cold War. In fact, he says, a world with a single superpower and a crowded second tier of distant competitors encourages, rather than discourages, violent conflict--not just among the also-rans, but even involving the single great power itself. In a paper that appeared in the most recent issue of the influential journal International Security, political scientist Nuno P. Monteiro lays out his case. America, he points out, has been at war for 13 of the 22 years since the end of the Cold War, about double the proportion of time it spent at war during the previous two centuries. “I’m trying to debunk the idea that a world with one great power is better,” he said in an interview. “If you don’t have one problem, you have another.” Sure, Monteiro says, the risk of apocalyptic war has decreased, since there’s no military equal to America’s that could engage it in mutually assured destruction. But, he argues, the lethal, expensive wars in the Persian Gulf, the Balkans, and Afghanistan have proved a major drain on the country. Even worse, Monteiro claims, America’s position as a dominant power, unbalanced by any other alpha states actually exacerbates dangerous tensions rather than relieving them. Prickly states that Monteiro calls “recalcitrant minor powers” (think Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan), whose interests or regime types clash with the lone superpower, will have an incentive to provoke a conflict. Even if they are likely to lose, the fight may be worth it, since concession will mean defeat as well. This is the logic by which North Korea and Pakistan both acquired nuclear weapons, even during the era of American global dominance, and by which Iraq and Afghanistan preferred to fight rather than surrender to invading Americans. Of course, few Americans long for the old days of an arms race, possible nuclear war, and the threat of Soviet troops and missiles pointed at America and its allies. Fans of unipolarity in the foreign policy world think that the advantages of being the sole superpower far outweigh the drawbacks -- a few regional conflicts and insurgencies are a fair price to pay for eliminating the threat of global war. But Monteiro says that critics exaggerate the distinctions between the wars of today and yesteryear, and many top thinkers in the world of security policy are finding his argument persuasive. If he’s right, it means that the most optimistic version of the post-Cold War era -- a “pax Americana” in which the surviving superpower can genuinely enjoy its ascendancy -- was always illusory. In the short term, a dominant United States should expect an endless slate of violent challenges from weak powers. And in the longer term, it means that Washington shouldn’t worry too much about rising powers like China or Russia or the European Union; America might even be better off with a rival powerful enough to provide a balance. You could call it the curse of plenty: Too much power attracts countless challenges, whereas a world in which power is split among several superstates might just offer a paradoxical stability. From the 1700s until the end of World War II in 1945, an array of superpowers competed for global influence in a multipolar world, including imperial Germany and Japan, Russia, Great Britain, and after a time, the United States. The world was an unstable place, prone to wars minor and major. The Cold War era was far more stable, with only two pretenders to global power. It was, however, an age of anxiety. The threat of nuclear Armageddon hung over the world. Showdowns in Berlin and Cuba brought America and the Soviet Union to the brink, and the threat of nuclear escalation hung over every other superpower crisis. Generations of Americans and Soviets grew up practicing survival drills; for them, the nightmare scenario of thermonuclear winter was frighteningly plausible. It was also an age of violent regional conflicts. Conflagrations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America spiraled into drawn out, lethal wars, with the superpowers investing in local proxies (think of Angola and Nicaragua as well as Korea and Vietnam). On the one hand, superpower involvement often made local conflicts far deadlier and longer than they would have been otherwise. On the other, the balance between the United States and the USSR reduced the likelihood of world war and kept the fighting below the nuclear threshold. By tacit understanding, the two powers had an interest in keeping such conflicts contained. When the Soviet Union began its collapse in 1989, the United States was the last man standing, wielding a level of global dominance that had been unknown before in modern history. Policy makers and thinkers almost universally agreed that dominance would be a good thing, at least for America: It removed the threat of superpower war, and lesser powers would presumably choose to concede to American desires rather than provoke a regional war they were bound to lose. That is what the 1991 Gulf War was about: establishing the new rules of a unipolar world. Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, Monteiro believes, because he miscalculated what the United States was willing to accept. After meeting Saddam with overwhelming force, America expected that the rest of the world would capitulate to its demands with much less fuss. Monteiro compared the conflicts of the multipolar 18th century to those of the Cold War and current unipolar moment. What he found is that the unipolar world isn’t necessarily better than what preceded it, either for the United States or for the rest of the world. It might even be worse. “Uncertainty increases in unipolarity,” Monteiro says. “If another great power were around, we wouldn’t be able to get involved in all these wars.” In the unipolar period, a growing class of minor powers has provoked the United States, willing to engage in brinkmanship up to and including violent conflict. Look no further than Iran’s recent threats to close the Strait of Hormuz to oil shipping and to strike the American Navy. Naturally, Iran wouldn’t be able to win such a showdown. But Iran knows well that the United States wants to avoid the significant costs of a war, and might back down in a confrontation, thereby rewarding Iran’s aggressive gambits. And if (or once) Iran crosses the nuclear threshold, it will have an even greater capacity to deter the United States. During the Cold War, on the other hand, regional powers tended to rely on their patron’s nuclear umbrella rather than seeking nukes of their own, and would have had no incentive to defy the United States by developing them. Absent a rival superpower to check its reach, the United States has felt unrestrained, and at times even obligated, to intervene as a global police officer or arbiter of international norms against crimes such as genocide. Time and again in the post-Cold War age, minor countries that were supposed to meekly fall in line with American imperatives instead defied them, drawing America into conflicts in the Balkans, Somalia, Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This wasn’t what was supposed to happen: The world was supposed to be much safer for a unipolar superpower, not more costly and hazardous.

**2NC/1NR – No Impx to Heg**

**No impact to heg – it’s unsustainable and causes war**

**Mearsheimer 18**

John J, smartest man alive, “The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities”, National Interest, 10/5, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/great-delusion-liberal-dreams-and-international-realities-32737> DB

Liberal hegemony is an ambitious strategy in which a state aims to turn as many countries as possible into liberal democracies like itself while also promoting an open international economy and building international institutions. In essence, **the liberal state seeks to spread its own values far and wide**. My goal in this book is to describe what happens when a powerful state pursues this strategy at the expense of balance-of-power politics. Many in the West, especially among foreign policy elites, consider liberal hegemony a wise policy that states should axiomatically adopt. Spreading liberal democracy around the world is said to make eminently good sense from both a moral and a strategic perspective. For starters, it is thought to be an excellent way to protect human rights, which are sometimes seriously violated by authoritarian states. And because the policy holds that liberal democracies do not want to go to war with each other, it ultimately provides a formula for transcending realism and fostering international peace. Finally, proponents claim it helps protect liberalism at home by eliminating authoritarian states that otherwise might aid the illiberal forces that are constantly present inside the liberal state. **This conventional wisdom is wrong**. **Great powers are rarely in a position to pursue a full-scale liberal foreign policy**. **As long as two or more of them exist on the planet, they have little choice but to pay close attention to their position in the global balance of power and act according to the dictates of realism**. Great powers of all persuasions care deeply about their survival, and there is always the danger in a bipolar or multipolar system that they will be attacked by another great power. In these circumstances, liberal great powers regularly dress up their hard-nosed behavior with liberal rhetoric. **They talk like liberals and act like realists**. Should they adopt liberal policies that are at odds with realist logic, they invariably come to regret it. But occasionally a liberal democracy encounters such a favorable balance of power that it is able to embrace liberal hegemony. That situation is most likely to arise in a unipolar world, where the single great power does not have to worry about being attacked by another great power since there is none. Then the liberal sole pole will almost always abandon realism and adopt a liberal foreign policy. Liberal states have a crusader mentality hard-wired into them that is hard to restrain. Because liberalism prizes the concept of inalienable or natural rights, committed liberals are deeply concerned about the rights of virtually every individual on the planet. **This universalist logic creates a powerful incentive for liberal states to get involved in the affairs of countries that seriously violate their citizens’ rights**. To take this a step further, the best way to ensure that the rights of foreigners are not trampled is for them to live in a liberal democracy. **This logic leads straight to an active policy of regime change, where the goal is to topple autocrats and put liberal democracies in their place**. Liberals do not shy from this task, mainly because they often have great faith in their state’s ability to do social engineering both at home and abroad. Creating a world populated by liberal democracies is also thought to be a formula for international peace, which would not just eliminate war but greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the twin scourges of nuclear proliferation and terrorism. And lastly, it is an ideal way of protecting liberalism at home. This enthusiasm notwithstanding, **liberal hegemony will not achieve its goals, and its failure will inevitably come with huge costs**. The liberal state is likely to end up fighting endless wars, which will increase rather than reduce the level of conflict in international politics and thus aggravate the problems of proliferation and terrorism. Moreover, the state’s militaristic behavior is almost certain to end up threatening its own liberal values. **Liberalism abroad leads to illiberalism at home**. Finally, **even if the liberal state were to achieve its aims—spreading democracy near and far, fostering economic intercourse, and creating international institutions—they would not produce peace**. The key to understanding liberalism’s limits is to recognize its relationship with nationalism and realism. This book is ultimately all about these three isms and how they interact to affect international politics. Nationalism is an enormously powerful political ideology. It revolves around the division of the world into a wide variety of nations, which are formidable social units, each with a distinct culture. Virtually every nation would prefer to have its own state, although not all can. Still, we live in a world populated almost exclusively by nation-states, which means that liberalism must coexist with nationalism. Liberal states are also nationstates. There is no question that liberalism and nationalism can coexist, but when they clash, nationalism almost always wins. The influence of nationalism often undercuts a liberal foreign policy. For example, **nationalism places great emphasis on self-determination, which means that most countries will resist a liberal great power’s efforts to interfere in their domestic politics—which, of course, is what liberal hegemony is all about**. These two isms also clash over individual rights. Liberals believe everyone has the same rights, regardless of which country they call home. Nationalism is a particularist ideology from top to bottom, which means it does not treat rights as inalienable. In practice, the vast majority of people around the globe do not care greatly about the rights of individuals in other countries. They are much more concerned about their fellow citizens’ rights, and even that commitment has limits. Liberalism oversells the importance of individual rights. **Liberalism is also no match for realism**. At its core, liberalism assumes that the individuals who make up any society sometimes have profound differences about what constitutes the good life, and these differences might lead them to try to kill each other. Thus a state is needed to keep the peace. But **there is no world state to keep countries at bay when they have profound disagreements**. **The structure of the international system is anarchic, not hierarchic, which means that liberalism applied to international politics cannot work**. Countries thus have little choice but to act according to balance-of-power logic if they hope to survive. There are special cases, however, where a country is so secure that it can take a break from realpolitik and pursue truly liberal policies. The results are almost always bad, largely because nationalism thwarts the liberal crusader. My argument, stated briefly, is that nationalism and realism almost always trump liberalism. Our world has been shaped in good part by those two powerful isms, not by liberalism. Consider that five hundred years ago the political universe was remarkably heterogeneous; it included city-states, duchies, empires, principalities, and assorted other political forms. That world has given way to **a globe populated almost exclusively by nation states**. Although many factors caused this great transformation, two of **the main driving forces behind the modern state system were nationalism and balance-of-power politics**. The American Embrace of Liberal Hegemony This book is also motivated by a desire to understand recent American foreign policy. The United States is a deeply liberal country that emerged from the Cold War as by far the most powerful state in the international system. 1 The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 left it in an ideal position to pursue liberal hegemony. 2 The American foreign policy establishment em braced that ambitious policy with little hesitation, and with abundant optimism about the future of the United States and the world. At least at first, the broader public shared this enthusiasm. The zeitgeist was captured in Francis Fukuyama’s famous article, “The End of History?,” published just as the Cold War was coming to a close. 3 Liberalism, he argued, defeated fascism in the first half of the twentieth century and communism in the second half, and now there was no viable alternative left standing. The world would eventually be entirely populated by liberal democracies. According to Fukuyama, these nations would have virtually no meaningful disputes, and wars between great powers would cease. The biggest problem confronting people in this new world, he suggested, might be boredom. It was also widely believed at the time that the spread of liberalism would ultimately bring an end to balance-of-power politics. The harsh security competition that has long characterized great-power relations would disappear, and realism, long the dominant intellectual paradigm in international relations, would land on the scrap heap of history. “In a world where freedom, not tyranny, is on the march,” Bill Clinton proclaimed while campaigning for the White House in 1992, “the cynical calculus of pure power politics simply does not compute. It is ill-suited to a new era in which ideas and information are broadcast around the globe before ambassadors can read their cables.” Probably no recent president embraced the mission of spreading liberalism more enthusiastically than George W. Bush, who said in a speech in March 2003, two weeks before the invasion of Iraq: “The current Iraqi regime has shown the power of tyranny to spread discord and violence in the Middle East. A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress into the lives of millions. America’s interests in security, and America’s belief in liberty, both lead in the same direction: to a free and peaceful Iraq.” Later that year, on September 6, he proclaimed: “The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country. From the Fourteen Points to the Four Freedoms, to the Speech at Westminster, America has put our power at the service of principle. We believe that liberty is the design of nature; we believe that liberty is the direction of history. We believe that human fulfillment and excellence come in the responsible exercise of liberty. And we believe that freedom—the freedom we prize—is not for us alone, it is the right and the capacity of all mankind.” Something went badly wrong. **Most people’s view of U.S. foreign policy today, in 2018, is starkly different from what it was in 2003, much less the early 1990s**. **Pessimism, not optimism, dominates most assessments of America’s accomplishments during its holiday from realism**. Under Presidents Bush and Barack Obama, Washington has played a key role in sowing death and destruction across the greater Middle East, and there is little evidence the mayhem will end anytime soon. American policy toward Ukraine, motivated by liberal logic, is principally responsible for the ongoing crisis between Russia and the West. The United States has been at war for two out of every three years since 1989, fighting seven different wars. We should not be surprised by this. Contrary to the prevailing wisdom in the West, a **liberal foreign policy is not a formula for cooperation and peace but for instability and conflict**. In this book I focus on the period between 1993 and 2017, when the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations, each in control of American foreign policy for eight years, were fully committed to pursuing liberal hegemony. Although President Obama had some reservations about that policy, they mattered little for how his administration actually acted abroad. I do not consider the Trump administration for two reasons. First, as I was finishing this book it was difficult to determine what President **Trump**’s foreign policy would look like, although it is clear from his rhetoric during the 2016 campaign that he **recognizes that liberal hegemony has been an abject failure and would like to abandon key elements of that strategy**. Second, **there is good reason to think that with the rise of China and the resurrection of Russian power having put great power politics back on the table, Trump eventually will have no choice but to move toward a grand strategy based on realism, even if doing so meets with considerable resistance at home**.

**2NC/1NR – Transition Wars**

**Hege is unsustainable and makes Russia/China nuclear war inevitable – allowing limited Russian/Chinese influence checks revisionism without risking transition wars**

**Allison 20**

Graham, Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at the Harvard Kennedy School, “The New Spheres of Influence: Sharing the Globe With Other Great Powers.”, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 99, Iss. 2 DB

COME HOME, AMERICA? In the heady aftermath of the Cold War, American policymakers pronounced one of the fundamental concepts of geopolitics obsolete. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described a new world "in which great power is defined not by spheres of influence … or the strong imposing their will on the weak." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that "the United States does not recognize spheres of influence." Secretary of State John Kerry proclaimed that "the era of the Monroe Doctrine is over," ending almost two centuries of the United States staking claim to its own sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere. Such pronouncements were right in that something about geopolitics had changed. But they were wrong about what exactly it was. U.S. policymakers had ceased to recognize spheres of influence--the ability of other powers to demand deference from other states in their own regions or exert predominant control there--not because the concept had become obsolete. Rather, **the entire world had become a de facto American sphere**. Spheres of influence had given way to a sphere of influence. The strong still imposed their will on the weak; the rest of the world was compelled to play largely by American rules, or else face a steep price, from crippling sanctions to outright regime change. **Spheres of influence hadn't gone away; they had been collapsed into one, by the overwhelming fact of U.S. hegemony**. **Now, however, that hegemony is fading, and Washington has awakened to what it calls "a new era of great-power competition," with China and Russia increasingly using their power to assert interests and values that often conflict with those of the United States**. **But American policymakers and analysts are still struggling to come to grips with what this new era means for the U.S. role in the world**. **Going forward, that role will not only be different; it will also be significantly diminished**. While leaders will continue announcing grand ambitions, diminished means will mean diminished results. **Unipolarity is over, and with it the illusion that other nations would simply take their assigned place in a U.S.-led international order**. **For the United States, that will require accepting the reality that there are spheres of influence in the world today--and that not all of them are American spheres**. THE WORLD AS IT WAS Before making pronouncements about the new rules of geopolitics, post-Cold War U.S. secretaries of state should have looked back to the final months of World War II, when U.S. policymakers were similarly resistant to accepting a world in which spheres of influence remained a central feature of geopolitics. Competing views on the issue lay at the core of a debate between two top Soviet experts in the U.S. government. On February 4, 1945, President Franklin Roosevelt met with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Yalta. At Roosevelt's side was his translator and principal adviser on the Soviet Union, Charles Bohlen. Just that morning, Bohlen had opened an urgent private missive from his close colleague George Kennan in Moscow. Kennan correctly forecast that the Soviet Union would attempt to maintain control of as much of Europe as it could. The question was what the United States should do about that. Kennan asked, "Why could we not make a decent and definitive compromise with it--divide Europe frankly into spheres of influence--keep ourselves out of the Russian sphere and keep the Russians out of ours?" Bohlen was appalled. "Utterly impossible," he erupted in response. "Foreign policy of that kind cannot be made in a democracy." Reflecting on this moment later, Bohlen explained: "The American people, who had fought a long, hard war, deserved at least an attempt to work out a better world." Between 1945 and 1947, Bohlen worked alongside other leading figures in the Roosevelt and then the Truman administration to realize their "one world" vision, in which the allies who had fought together to defeat the Nazis would remain allied in creating a new global order. But he ultimately resigned himself to the world as it was--in short, Kennan had been right. "Instead of unity among the great powers on the major issues of world reconstruction--both political and economic--after the war, there is complete disunity between the Soviet Union and the satellites on one side and the rest of the world on the other," Bohlen acknowledged in the summer of 1947 in a memo to Secretary of State George Marshall. "There are, in short, two worlds instead of one." When he finally came to share Kennan's diagnosis, Bohlen did not shrink from the implications. His memo to Marshall concluded: Faced with this disagreeable fact, however much we may deplore it, the United States in the interest of its own well-being and security and those of the free non-Soviet world must … draw [the non-Soviet world] closer together politically, economically, financially, and, in the last analysis, militarily in order to be in a position to deal effectively with the consolidated Soviet area. This conviction became a pillar of the United States' strategy for the coming decades, and it rested on the acceptance of spheres of influence. There would be areas that would be subjected to Soviet domination, with often terrible consequences, but the best course for the United States was to bolster those powers on the periphery of this Soviet sphere while reinforcing the strength and unity of its own sphere. For the four decades that followed, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in the great-power competition that we know as the Cold War. In the Soviet sphere, the captive nations of Eastern Europe remained under the boot of an "evil empire." American presidents faced repeated crises in which they had to choose between sending troops into Soviet-dominated nations to support freedom fighters seeking to exercise rights that the American creed declares universal and standing by as those freedom fighters were slaughtered or suppressed. Without exception, U.S. presidents chose to watch instead of intervene: consider Dwight Eisenhower when Hungarians rose up in 1956 and Lyndon Johnson during the Prague Spring of 1968 (or, after the Cold War, George W. Bush when Russian troops attacked Georgia in 2008 and Barack Obama when Russian special forces seized Crimea). Why? Each had internalized an unacceptable yet undeniable truth: that, as U.S. President Ronald Reagan once explained in a joint statement with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." This bit of Cold War history should serve as a reminder: a nation that is simultaneously idealistic and realistic will always struggle to reconcile rationales and rationalizations of purpose, on the one hand, with realities of power, on the other. The result, in the foreign policy analyst Fareed Zakaria's apt summary, has been "the rhetoric of transformation but the reality of accommodation." Even at the height of U.S. power, accommodation meant accepting the ugly fact of a Soviet sphere of influence. TECTONIC SHIFTS After nearly half a century of competition, when the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union disappeared, in 1991, the United States was left economically, militarily, and geopolitically dominant. In the first two decades of the post-Cold War era, U.S. defense spending exceeded the defense budgets of the next ten nations combined (five of them U.S. treaty allies). Operationally, that meant that, as Secretary of Defense James Mattis's 2018 National Defense Strategy put it, the United States "enjoyed uncontested or dominant superiority in every operating domain. We could generally deploy our forces when we wanted, assemble them where we wanted, and operate how we wanted." The United States and its allies could welcome new members into NATO, applying to them its Article 5 security guarantee, without thinking about the risks, since the alliance faced no real threat. In that world, strategy in essence consisted of overwhelming challenges with resources. But that was then. The tectonic shift in the balance of power that occurred in the first two decades of the twenty-first century was as dramatic as any shift the United States has witnessed over an equivalent period in its 244 years. To paraphrase Vaclav Havel, then the president of Czechoslovakia, it has happened so fast, we have not yet had time to be astonished. The U.S. share of global GDP--nearly one-half in 1950--has gone from one-quarter in 1991 to one-seventh today. (Although GDP is not everything, it does form the substructure of power in relations among nations.) **And as the United States' relative power has declined, the menu of feasible options for policymakers has shrunk**. Consider, for example, the U.S. response to China's Belt and Road Initiative. With currency reserves of almost $3 trillion, China can invest $1.3 trillion in infrastructure linking most of Eurasia to a China-centered order. When Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the United States would increase its own investments in the Indo-Pacific in response, he was able to come up with just $113 million in new investments. China has, of course, been the chief beneficiary of this transformation. In the past generation, its GDP has soared: from 20 percent of the U.S. level in 1991 to 120 percent today (measured by purchasing power parity, the metric that both the CIA and the International Monetary Fund use to compare national economies). Although China faces many internal challenges, there are more reasons to expect this basic economic trend to continue than to bet that it will stop soon. With four times as many citizens as the United States, and if Chinese workers become as productive as Portuguese workers are today (that is, around half as productive as Americans), China will see its GDP rise to double that of the United States. **In Asia, the economic balance of power has tilted especially dramatically in China's favor**. As the world's largest exporter and second-largest importer, China is the top trading partner of every other major East Asian country, including U.S. allies. (And as an aggressive practitioner of economic statecraft, Beijing does not hesitate to use the leverage this provides, squeezing countries such as the Philippines and South Korea when they resist Chinese demands.) **Globally, China is also rapidly becoming a peer competitor of the United States in advanced technologies**. Today, of the 20 largest information technology companies, nine are Chinese. Four years ago, when Google, the global leader in artificial intelligence (AI), the most significant advanced technology, assessed its competition, Chinese companies ranked alongside European companies. Now, that state of affairs is barely visible in the rearview mirror: Chinese companies lead in many areas of applied AI, including surveillance, facial and voice recognition, and financial technology. **China's military spending and capabilities have surged**, as well. A quarter century ago, its defense budget was one-25th that of the United States; now, it is one-third and on a path to parity. And whereas the U.S. defense budget is spread across global commitments, many of them in Europe and the Middle East, China's budget is focused on East Asia. Accordingly, in specific military scenarios involving a conflict over Taiwan or in the South China Sea, China may have already taken the lead. Short of actual war, the best tests of relative military capabilities are war games. In 2019, Robert Work, a former U.S. deputy secretary of defense, and David Ochmanek, one of the Defense Department's key defense planners, offered a public summary of the results from a series of classified recent war games. Their bottom line, in Ochmanek's words: "When we fight Russia and China, 'blue' [the United States] gets its ass handed to it." As The New York Times summarized, "In 18 of the last 18 Pentagon war games involving China in the Taiwan Strait, the U.S. lost." Russia is a different matter. Whatever President Vladimir Putin might want, Russia will never again be his father's Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union dissolved, the resulting Russian state was left with less than half the GDP and half the population and saw its borders rolled back to the days before Catherine the Great. **Yet Russia remains a nuclear superpower with an arsenal that is functionally equivalent to that of the United States; it has a defense industry that produces weapons the world is eager to buy (as India and Turkey have demonstrated in the past year); and it boasts military forces that can fight and win--as they have demonstrated repeatedly in Chechnya, Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria**. On a continent where most of the other nations imagine that war has become obsolete, and maintain military forces more for ceremonial than combat operations, military prowess may now be Russia's major comparative advantage. BACK TO BASICS **The claim that spheres of influence had been consigned to the dustbin of history assumed that other nations would simply take their assigned places in a U.S.-led order**. **In retrospect, that assumption seems worse than naive**. Yet because many U.S. analysts and policymakers still cling to images of China and Russia formed during this bygone era, their views about what the United States should and should not do continues to reflect a world that has vanished. Over the course of centuries of geopolitical competition, policymakers and theorists developed a set of core concepts to help clarify the complexities of relations among states, including spheres of influence, balances of power, and alliances. These concepts must be adapted to take account of specific conditions in the twenty-first century. Yet they remain the sturdiest building blocks available for understanding and constructing international order. Where the equilibrium of forces between one state and another shifts to the point where the first becomes predominant, the resulting new balance of power casts a shadow that becomes, in effect, a "sphere of influence." That specific term entered the vocabulary of diplomacy in the early nineteenth century, but the concept is as old as international relations itself. (As Thucydides noted, after the defeat of the Persians in the fifth century BC, Sparta demanded that Athens not rebuild the walls around its city-state to leave itself vulnerable.) Traditionally, great powers have demanded a degree of deference from lesser powers on their borders and in adjacent seas, and they have expected other great powers to respect that fact. Recent actions by China and Russia in their respective neighborhoods are just the most recent examples of that tradition. Spheres of influence also extend beyond geography. When the United States led the world in the creation of the Internet, and the hardware and software that empowered it, the United States enjoyed what Michael Hayden, a former director of the National Security Agency, later called a "golden age of electronic surveillance." Since most countries were unaware of the surveillance capabilities revealed by the former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, the United States had an unparalleled ability to exploit technology to listen to, track, and even influence them. But post-Snowden, many states are resisting the current U.S. campaign to prevent them from buying their 5G wireless infrastructure from the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei. As the leader of a country currently considering the choice recently put it, Washington is trying to persuade other countries not to buy Chinese hardware because it will make it easier for China to spy and instead to buy American hardware, which would make it easier for the United States to spy. A REALISTIC RECKONING **From the perspective of American interests and values, the consequences of increases in China's and Russia's power relative to that of the United States are not good**. As great powers, China and Russia can use their power to suppress protesters' freedom in Hong Kong or block Ukrainian membership in NATO. The South China Sea is likely to become more like the Caribbean than the Mediterranean--that is, China's neighbors in Southeast Asia will be as beholden to China as Latin Americans have been to their hemispheric hegemon. Ukraine will have to get over the loss of Crimea as countries in Russia's "near abroad" learn to be both more fearful of and more deferential to the Kremlin. For many other nations and individuals around the world who have found shelter under the American security umbrella and found inspiration in a vision of an American-led international order that safeguards core liberties, the consequences will be tragic. Recent events in Syria offer a preview of what's to come. As the Arab Spring erupted in late 2010 and 2011, Obama famously declared that Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad "must go." But Putin had other ideas, and he was willing to act on them. He demonstrated that a nation Obama had dismissed as a "regional power" could use its military forces to defy the United States and help the Syrian leader consolidate his control. This has been a horror for Syrians, and the millions of displaced people have had a major impact on neighboring countries and Europe. But did Obama, or, later, President Donald Trump, conclude that this outcome was so costly that it would be better to send large numbers of U.S. troops to fight and perhaps die in Syria? Can Americans sleep soundly in a world in which Putin and Assad now smile when they ask visitors who is gone and who is still standing? U.S. inaction speaks for itself. Sadly, Americans will come to accept such outcomes as good enough--at least for the foreseeable future. Like Assad's atrocities, Russia's absorption of Crimea and China's militarization of the South China Sea are now facts on the ground that no one will contest militarily. **Acknowledging that other powers have spheres of influence does not, of course, mean that the United States can do nothing**. It is a reflection of the recent overmilitarization of U.S. foreign policy that restraint in the use of military force is often equated with acquiescence. Washington has other ways in which it can shape other countries' calculations of costs and benefits: through the condemnation of unacceptable actions; the denial of legal status; the imposition of economic sanctions on countries, companies, and individuals; and support for local resisters. But such tools can rarely decisively alter a decision another power has made when interests it sees as vital are at stake. And it is worth remembering how often a refusal to recognize and accept realities on the ground in the shadow of other powers has led to major U.S. policy failures. From General Douglas MacArthur's rush to the Chinese border during the Korean War (which triggered Chinese intervention and a bloody, inconclusive war) to George W. Bush's insistence that NATO offer membership to Georgia and Ukraine (which led to Georgian overconfidence, ending in the country's partial dismemberment by Russia), a stubborn disregard of brute facts has been counterproductive. THE MUSEUM OF RETIRED INTERESTS When it comes to doing what it can, Washington should focus above all on its alliances and partnerships. If China is destined to be "the biggest player in the history of the world," as the longtime Singaporean leader Lee Kuan Yew once claimed, the United States must work to assemble allied powers who together will constitute a correlation of forces to which China will have to adjust. This logic is most evident in the economic arena. Before the Trump administration ended U.S. participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, that trade agreement promised to bring together countries accounting for 40 percent of global GDP under a common set of rules on everything from tariffs to state-owned enterprises to labor and environmental standards--providing a counterweight to Chinese economic might that could have made Beijing a rule-taker rather than a rule-maker. Thanks to the efforts of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the TPP is now a reality--but without the United States. If American policymakers could find a way to allow strategic interests to trump politics, the United States could rejoin the TPP. If that new TPP were combined with the parallel trade agreement between the United States and the European Union that was being negotiated at the end of the Obama administration, nearly 70 percent of the world's GDP could be on one side of the balance, versus China's approximately 20 percent on the other. In the military arena, the same logic applies, but with more complexity. Washington will need partners--but partners that bring more in assets than they introduce in risks. Unfortunately, few of the United States' current allies meet this standard. The U.S. alliance system should be subjected to a zero-based analysis: every current ally and partner, from Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand to Latvia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, should be considered in terms of what it is doing to enhance U.S. security and well-being, and with what risks and costs. Alliances are not forever. Historically, when conditions have changed, particularly when a focal enemy has disappeared or balances of power have shifted dramatically, so, too, have other relationships among nations. Most Americans today have forgotten an era in which NATO had a counterpart in Asia, SEATO (the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), and even an analogue in the Middle East, CENTO (the Central Treaty Organization); both of those are now artifacts in the museum of retired national interests. As Kennan noted, "There is more respect to be won … by a resolute and courageous liquidation of unsound positions than by the most stubborn pursuit of extravagant or unpromising objectives." To understand the risks entailed in the inheritance of current U.S. alliances, consider two scenarios U.S. defense planners worry about today. If, watching China's suppression of protests in Hong Kong, Taiwan should make a dramatic move toward independence that leads China to react violently, would the United States go to war with China to preserve Taiwan's status? Should it? On the European front, if in response to an uprising of ethnic Russian workers in Riga's shipyards, the Latvian government cracked down on ethnic Russians and sparked Russia's annexation of a swath of Latvia--Crimea 2.0--would NATO launch an immediate military response, in accordance with its Article 5 guarantee? Should it? If the answer to any of those questions is not a straightforward yes--and it is not--then the time has come for an alliance-focused version of the stress tests for banks used after the 2008 financial crisis. **Such an approach is all the more important given the realities of nuclear weapons in this new world**. **Both China and Russia have reliable second-strike nuclear capabilities--that is, the ability to withstand an initial nuclear attack and conduct a retaliatory strike that could destroy the United States**. Accordingly, not only is nuclear war not a viable option; even a **conventional war that could escalate to nuclear war risks catastrophe**. Competition must thus be tempered by caution, constraints, and careful calculations in risk taking. **For a nation that has accumulated a long list of entanglements with nations that may have, or may imagine they have, a blank check from Washington, this creates a big problem**. **The line between reassuring an ally and emboldening its leadership to act recklessly is a fine one**. **If the balance of military power in a conventional war over Taiwan or the Baltics has shifted decisively in China's and Russia's favor, current U.S. commitments are not sustainable**. **The gap between those commitments and the United States' actual military capabilities is a classic case of overstretch**. What a zero-based assessment would mean for the current alliance system, and for U.S. relations with each of more than 50 treaty allies and partners, should emerge as a result of an analysis of the evidence. But it would likely lead the United States to **shed some allies**, **double down on others** whose assets are as important for U.S. security as U.S. assets are for them, and radically revise the terms of each commitment to make obligations and restraints as prominent as reassurances and guarantees. This process would also enhance the credibility of the commitments that the United States chose to renew. While the veterans of the Cold War rightly claim that NATO has been the greatest alliance in the history of the world, neither Trump nor Obama before him was convinced. Tellingly, American military commanders doubted that the North Atlantic Council would authorize a military response to the Russian annexation of Crimea or that the U.S. government would be able to make a decision about how to respond before the event was over. **Rethinking the United States' commitments to its allies would enhance American security and make these same pacts stronger**. PRESENT AT THE (RE-)CREATION Strategy is the purposeful alignment of means and ends. Among the many ways in which a strategy fails, the two most common are mismatch--when the means an actor can organize and sustain are insufficient to achieve the stated ends--and vision blindness, when an actor is mesmerized by an ideal but unachievable end. The United States' twenty-first-century wars in the Middle East offer vivid examples of both. **Going forward, U.S. policymakers will have to abandon unattainable aspirations for the worlds they dreamed of and accept the fact that spheres of influence will remain a central feature of geopolitics**. That acceptance will inevitably be a protracted, confusing, and wrenching process. Yet it could also bring a wave of strategic creativity--an opportunity for nothing less than a fundamental rethinking of the conceptual arsenal of U.S. national security. The basic view of the United States' role in the world held by most of today's foreign-policy makers was imprinted in the quarter century that followed the U.S. victory in the Cold War. That world is now gone. The consequences are as profound as those that Americans confronted in the late 1940s. Accordingly, it is worth remembering how long it took individuals now revered as "wise men" to understand the world they faced. Nearly five years passed between Kennan's "Long Telegram," an early warning of Cold War competition, and the policy paper NSC-68, which finally laid out a comprehensive strategy. The confusion that reigns in the U.S. foreign policy community today should thus not be a cause for alarm. If it took the great strategists of the Cold War nearly five years to forge a basic approach, it would be beyond hubris to expect this generation to do better.

**Case – U.S. – China Coop**

**1NC vs US – China Coop**

**Too many alt causes too coop**

* Multiple reasons = divergence on core issues Biden’s antognistic approach preferring confrontation rather than cooperation

**Haenle & Bresnick 2/21**/2022

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Fifty years ago this week, former U.S. President Richard Nixon flew to China, setting the stage for a dramatic shift in relations between the two countries. Much has changed since that visit, not always for the better. Despite a flurry of diplomatic activity over the past year, **U.S.-China ties remain tense**. Discussions in Alaska and Tianjin yielded few, if any, breakthroughs. While friendlier in tone, the recent summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Joe Biden led only to agreements to hold yet more talks, albeit on important issues such as strategic stability. The lone bilateral bright spot has been some cooperation on climate.

Since the summit, the Biden administration announced its diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympics and added more Chinese companies to its trade restriction list while Congress passed a bill aimed at countering China’s forced labor abuses in Xinjiang. The two sides’ antagonistic stances on issues related to **security**, economics, **tech**nology, **and ideology have largely crystalized**, leaving little space for the adjustments that could relieve simmering tensions. Below, Paul Haenle and Sam Bresnick analyze how the two countries got here and how they can move forward.

WHY ARE THE TWO SIDES STUCK?

Former U.S. President Donald Trump ushered in a more confrontational era in U.S.-China relations, and Biden has largely maintained his predecessor’s approach to Beijing, albeit with a more equanimous tone and embrace of multilateralism. The U.S. government has for decades been concerned by China’s mercantilism, rapid military modernization, and illiberal approach to human rights, but it had held out hope that China might liberalize through increasingly robust contact with the rest of the world. That has not happened, and the United States and others have lost patience with China’s state capitalist system, militarization of the South China Sea, and increasingly authoritarian governance.

But **Beijing is not backing down**. Despite facing pronounced international pushback during the pandemic, Xi has become even more confident in China’s economic system, governance model, and approach to international affairs. “**Time and momentum are on China’s side**,” he argued last year at a high-level meeting, though many analysts accuse the party of overconfidence. At the same time, Chinese officials are increasingly looking askance at their U.S. counterparts. Many appear to believe that the United States, though still a formidable power, is in the early stages of an inevitable decline. Just as China resumes its rightful place atop the hierarchy of Asian nations, Beijing’s thinking goes, the United States’ unresolved racial justice issues, income inequality, and political polarization will catalyze an irreversible diminution of U.S. power in Asia and across the globe.

**Or – SQ solves AND collaboration is high**

**Andrews 3/16**/2022

Edmund L. Andrews is a economics reporter for The New York Times, “China and the United States: Unlikely Partners in AI”, <https://hai.stanford.edu/news/china-and-united-states-unlikely-partners-ai> -- ECM

Despite both rivalry and rising tensions between the United States and China, the two nations have become **the world’s leading collaborators in research on** **A**rtificial **I**ntelligence.

The newly released AI Index Report, **which tracks AI trends** on a host of fronts and is published by the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, **finds that U.S. and Chinese AI researchers teamed up on far more published articles than collaborators between any other two nations**.

Overall, U.S.-China collaborations on AI research **have quintupled since 2010** and totaled 9,660 papers in 2021—much faster than the increase in collaborations between any other two nations. Collaborations between the United States and United Kingdom, the second most prolific source of cross-border research, increased almost threefold to 3,560 papers.

**No emerging tech impact.**

**Sechser** et al. **19**,

Todd S., Pamela Feinour Edmonds and Franklin S. Edmonds, Jr. Discovery Professor of Politics and Public Policy at the University of Virginia and Senior Fellow at the Miller Center of Public Affairs, \*\*Neil Narang, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara, \*\*\*Caitlin Talmadge, Associate Professor of Security Studies in the School of Foreign at Georgetown University. ( “Emerging technologies and strategic stability in peacetime, crisis, and war”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42:6, pg. 728-729

Yet the **history of technological revolutions** counsels **against** alarmism. Extrapolating from current technological trends is problematic, both because technologies often **do not live up to their promise**, and because technologies often have **countervailing** or **conditional effects** that can **temper** their **negative consequences**. Thus, the fear that **emerging technologies** will necessarily cause **sudden** and **spectacular changes** to international politics should be treated with **caution**. There are at least two reasons to be circumspect. First, very **few** technologies fundamentally reshape the dynamics of international conflict. Historically, most technological innovations have amounted to **incremental advancements,** and some have **disappeared into irrelevance** despite widespread hype about their promise. For example, the introduction of **chemical weapons** was widely expected to immediately change the nature of warfare and deterrence after the British army first used poison gas on the battlefield during World War I. Yet chemical weapons quickly turned out to be less **practical**, easier to **counter**, and **less effective** than conventional high-explosives in inflicting damage and disrupting enemy operations.6 Other technologies have become important only after advancements in other areas allowed them to reach their full potential: until armies developed tactics for effectively employing firearms, for instance, these weapons had little effect on the balance of power. And even when technologies do have significant strategic consequences, they often take **decades to emerge**, as the invention of airplanes and tanks illustrates. In short, it is easy to **exaggerate** the strategic effects of nascent technologies.7 Second, even if today’s emerging technologies are poised to drive important changes in the international system, they are likely to have variegated and even contradictory effects. Technologies may be destabilising under some conditions, but stabilising in others. Furthermore, other factors are likely to **mediate** the effects of **new technologies** on the international system, including **geography**, the **distribution of material power, military strategy**, **domestic** and **organisational politics**, and social and cultural variables, to name **only a few**.8 Consequently, the strategic effects of new technologies often **defy** simple classification. Indeed, more than 70 years after nuclear weapons emerged as a new technology, their consequences for stability **continue** to be debated.9

**2NC/1NR – Collab increasing now**

**Collab on AI is *INCREASING* despite geopolitical friction.**

**Andrews 3/16**/2022

Edmund L. Andrews is a economics reporter for The New York Times, “China and the United States: Unlikely Partners in AI”, <https://hai.stanford.edu/news/china-and-united-states-unlikely-partners-ai> -- ECM

The startling trend highlights a paradox. Even as China and the U.S. race for leadership in what they view as a strategically important technology, **researchers on both sides appear to see benefits in** sharing expertise and **working together**.

“What’s clear is that the amount of collaboration between the **U**nited **S**tates **and China has gone up** dramatically, and it has gone up much more than collaborations between any two other countries,” says Raymond Perrault, Distinguished Computer Scientist at SRI International in Menlo Park and co-chair of the AI Index Steering Committee.

To some extent, the surge in U.S.-China research simply reflects the fact that both nations have poured vast resources into artificial intelligence and produce huge amounts of research. On top of that, many Chinese researchers were trained in the United States and retain close professional ties to their American colleagues.

But the practice is consistent with patterns observed during previous technological revolutions in textiles, steel, and chemical engineering. Research by Jeffrey Ding, a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford HAI, has shown that the full economic impact of historic tech advances stemmed less from which nation pioneered a technology than from which ones were best at applying it across a broad range of industries. That dispersion of technology requires sharing information across industries as well as borders, much as the United States catapulted applied British advances in steel machinery to develop manufacturing approaches that catapulted it to economic dominance.

That said, **the collaboration in AI** comes at a time of growing friction between the United States and China over trade, human rights, and strategic power in the Pacific Rim. Former President Donald Trump villainized China over its trade practices, and President Joe Biden imposed a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympics over China's human rights abuses.

**2NC/1NR – Alt Causes**

**Human rights thump**

**East-West Center.Org**

“US-CHINA RELATIONS: IS THERE A WAY OUT OF THE ABYSS?”, <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/news-center/east-west-wire/us-china-relations-there-way-out-the-abyss> --ECM

Mingjiang Li, **an associate professor and provost’s chair in international relations at Nanyang** Technological University in Singapore, said that US-China relations are at a “**very crucial moment**,” and many **analysts worry that the relationship could** “**slip into a new Cold War**.”

Li suggested, however, that the US could smooth tensions by focusing less attention on human rights issues that China says are internal matters. “Too much US intervention in China's domestic politics may actually not be helpful in changing China politically,” he said.

But America’s concerns about China’s human rights abuses **are not likely to go away**, according to Rick Waters, US deputy assistant secretary of state for China, Taiwan and Mongolia. In addition, he said, “The challenge of managing this relationship is complicated immensely by the increased aggressiveness of Chinese foreign and external policies. We face a competitor potentially capable of combining economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to mount a type of sustained challenge that we have not seen in the international system.”

**2NC/1NR – No AI impx**

**AI impact is fake**

**Miller 17**

Ron, “Artificial intelligence is not as smart as you (or Elon Musk) think”, TechCrunch, 7/25, <https://techcrunch.com/2017/07/25/artificial-intelligence-is-not-as-smart-as-you-or-elon-musk-think/> DB

In March 2016, DeepMind’s AlphaGo beat Lee Sedol, who at the time was the best human Go player in the world. It represented one of those defining technological moments like IBM’s Deep Blue beating chess champion Garry Kasparov, or even IBM Watson beating the world’s greatest Jeopardy! champions in 2011. Yet **these victories, as mind-blowing as they seemed to be, were more about training algorithms and using brute-force computational strength than any real intelligence**. Former MIT robotics professor Rodney Brooks, who was one of the founders of iRobot and later Rethink Robotics, reminded us at the TechCrunch Robotics Session at MIT last week that **training an algorithm to play a difficult strategy game isn’t intelligence, at least as we think about it with humans**. He explained that as strong as AlphaGo was at its given task, it actually couldn’t do anything else but play Go on a standard 19 x 19 board. He relayed a story that while speaking to the DeepMind team in London recently, he asked them what would have happened if they had changed the size of the board to 29 x 29, and the AlphaGo team admitted to him that had there been even a slight change to the size of the board, “we would have been dead.” “I think people see how well [an algorithm] performs at one task and they think it can do all the things around that, and it can’t,” Brooks explained. Brute-force intelligence As Kasparov pointed out in an interview with Devin Coldewey at TechCrunch Disrupt in May, it’s one thing to design a computer to play chess at Grand Master level, but it’s another to call it intelligence in the pure sense. **It’s simply throwing computer power at a problem and letting a machine do what it does best**. “**In chess, machines dominate the game because of the brute force of calculation and they [could] crunch chess once the databases got big enough and hardware got fast enough and algorithms got smart enough, but there are still many things that humans understand**. **Machines don’t have understanding**. **They don’t recognize strategical patterns**. **Machines don’t have purpose**,” Kasparov explained. Gil Pratt, CEO at the Toyota Institute, a group inside Toyota working on artificial intelligence projects including household robots and autonomous cars, was interviewed at the TechCrunch Robotics Session, said that the fear we are hearing about from a wide range of people, including Elon Musk, who most recently called AI “an existential threat to humanity,” could stem from science-fiction dystopian descriptions of artificial intelligence run amok. “The deep learning systems we have, which is what sort of spurred all this stuff, are remarkable in how well we do given the particular tasks that we give them, but they are actually quite narrow and brittle in their scope. So I think it’s important to keep in context how good these systems are, and actually how bad they are too, and how long we have to go until these systems actually pose that kind of a threat [that Elon Musk and others talk about].” Brooks said in his TechCrunch Sessions: **Robotics talk that there is a tendency for us to assume that if the algorithm can do x, it must be as smart as humans**. “**Here’s the reason that people — including Elon — make this mistake**. When we see a person performing a task very well, we understand the competence [involved]. And I think they apply the same model to machine learning,” he said. Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg also criticized Musk’s comments, calling them “pretty irresponsible,” in a Facebook Live broadcast on Sunday. Zuckerberg believes AI will ultimately improve our lives. Musk shot back later that Zuckerberg had a “limited understanding” of AI. (And on and on it goes.) It’s worth noting, however, that Musk isn’t alone in this thinking. Physicist Stephen Hawking and philosopher Nick **Bostrom** also have expressed reservations about the potential impact of AI on humankind — but chances are they are talking about a more generalized artificial intelligence being studied in labs at the likes of Facebook AI Research, DeepMind and Maluuba, rather than the more narrow AI we are seeing today. Brooks pointed out that **many of these detractors don’t actually work in AI, and suggested they don’t understand just how difficult it is to solve each problem**. “There are quite a few people out there who say that AI is an existential threat — Stephen Hawking, [Martin Rees], the Astronomer Royal of Great Britain…a few other people — and **they share a common thread in that they don’t work in AI themselves**.” Brooks went onto say, “**For those of us who do work in AI, we understand how hard it is to get anything to actually work through product level**.” AI could be a misnomer Part of the problem stems from the fact that we are calling it “artificial intelligence.” **It is not really like human intelligence at all**, which Merriam Webster defines as “the ability to learn or understand or to deal with new or trying situations.” Pascal Kaufmann, founder at Starmind, a startup that wants to help companies use collective human intelligence to find solutions to business problems, has been studying neuroscience for the past 15 years. He says the human brain and the computer operate differently and **it’s a mistake to compare the two**. “The analogy that the brain is like a computer is a dangerous one, and blocks the progress of AI,” he says. Further, Kaufmann believes we won’t advance our understanding of human intelligence if we think of it in technological terms. “It is a misconception that [algorithms] works like a human brain. People fall in love with algorithms and think that you can describe the brain with algorithms and I think that’s wrong,” he said. When things go wrong **There are in fact many cases of AI algorithms not being quite as smart as we might think**. One infamous example of AI out of control was the **Microsoft Tay chatbot**, created by the Microsoft AI team last year. **It took less than a day for the bot to learn to be racist**. Experts say that it could happen to any AI system when bad examples are presented to it. In the case of Tay, it was manipulated by racist and other offensive language, and since it had been taught to “learn” and mirror that behavior, it soon ran out of the researchers’ control. A widely reported study conducted by researchers at Cornell University and the University of Wyoming found that **it was fairly easy to fool algorithms that had been trained to identify pictures**. The researchers found that when presented with what looked like “scrambled nonsense” to humans, algorithms would identify it as an everyday object like “a school bus.” What’s not well understood, according to an MIT Tech Review article on the same research project, is why the algorithm can be fooled in the way the researchers found. What we know is that humans have learned to recognize whether something is a picture or nonsense, and **algorithms analyzing pixels can apparently be subject to some manipulation**. Self-driving cars are even more complicated because there are things that humans understand when approaching certain situations that would be difficult to teach to a machine. In a long blog post on autonomous cars that Rodney Brooks wrote in January, he brings up a number of such situations, including how an autonomous car might approach a stop sign at a cross walk in a city neighborhood with an adult and child standing at the corner chatting. The algorithm would probably be tuned to wait for the pedestrians to cross, but what if they had no intention of crossing because they were waiting for a school bus? A human driver could signal to the pedestrians to go, and they in turn could wave the car on, but a driverless car could potentially be stuck there endlessly waiting for the pair to cross because they have no understanding of these uniquely human signals, he wrote. **Each of these examples show just how far we have to go with artificial intelligence algorithms**. Should researchers ever become more successful at developing generalized AI, this could change, but for now **there are things that humans can do easily that are much more difficult to teach an algorithm, precisely because we are not limited in our learning to a set of defined tasks**.