# Hegemony Bad

# 1NC Shells

## 1NC Shells---Offense

### 1NC---China War

#### Heg causes US-China War – Thucydides’s trap

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Hegemonic Grand Strategy in the Context of Thucydides’s Trap Alison’s work captured the attention of leaders in both Washington and Beijing. As a confidence-building measure, China laid out the concept of ‘New Type of Great Power Relation’ in 2013 based on cooperation; respect to each other’s core interests; and dialogue between Washington and Beijing. The concept emphasizes that the United States and other neighboring countries should respect the core interests of China, in other words acknowledging Beijing’s territorial Journal of Strategic Security, Vol. 15, No. 2 https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol15/iss2/2 DOI: https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.15.2.1983 7 claims in the East China Sea and the South China Sea.25 The United States distanced itself from Beijing’s proposed framework as Washington realized giving recognition to Beijing’s “core interest” would tantamount to legitimizing China’s disputed territorial claims as well as giving away lopsided concessions in East Asia.26 While United States is well within its right to protect its interests, China views Washington’s skepticism as arrogantly holding on to its primacy in the international system and denying a rising China her rightful place. China claims such attitude “dangerous or even irresponsible” because it can exacerbate both countries’ progress towards the apocalyptic Thucydides’s Trap, thereby, exploiting “perceptions of the trap by blaming the United States for trying to keep China down.”27 One of the reasons for China’s ability to peddle such a narrative is due to U.S. foreign policy stubbornly holding on to a hegemonic grand strategy even in a multipolar world. Christopher Layne defined U.S. hegemonic grand strategy as a “strategy of preponderance”–in simple terms–a strategy to maintain primacy in the world through preeminent U.S. political, military, and economic power.28 With China already an established pole, Beijing expects Washington to share the economic-security dual leadership of the world. The key implication here is that China’s outward-facing policies will inevitably clash with United States’ preponderance or hegemonic status. In 2008, U.S. National Intelligence Council report argued that America should adjust its international ambitions and forgo continued primacy in favor of accommodating the rising powers in the interest of greater global governance.29 If the United States continues to pursue its hegemonic grand strategy, it will accelerate the conflict which might trigger the Thucydides’s Trap. The way for the United States to avoid the trap is neither to gravitate toward confrontation nor adopt a passive accommodation. Rather, there should be a shift in United States grand strategy that suits the multipolar world. Realist Interpretation of China’s Rise and the Likelihood of a Trap A realist interpretation of China’s rise is even more gloomy for the future United States-China relationship. Offensive realists claim that it makes “good strategic sense for states to gain as much power as possible to ensure one’s own survival.”30 Founder of offensive realism, John J. Mearsheimer writes, “fearful of other states, and knowing that Goswami: Balancing Grand Strategy for America Produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press, 2022 8 they operate in a self-help world, states quickly realize that the best way to survive is to be especially powerful.”31 Therefore, offensive realists argue that a rising power like China will not stop at simply achieving ‘balance of power’ with United States but turning that balance in its favor. This makes the case for the emergence of a trap in their bilateral relationship even more likely. More worryingly, leadership in Beijing have increasingly come to believe that destiny is on their side. After the recent rupture of democratic norms in the United States as well her embarrassing departure from Afghanistan and the growing desire among American people to reduce their country’s footprint in the world; Chinese leaders are increasingly looking at America as a declining power. Underestimation of America’s capacity as well as her desire to retaliate could inspire Beijing to formulate super ambitious foreign policies regarding Taiwan or the disputed waters of South China Sea or the East China Sea that could force the Americans to intervene militarily. Various wargames drawn up by multiple studies in the United States opines that a violent confrontation between the **U.S. and China** could **escalate** from many sources of **conflict like Taiwan**, accidental collusion at sea, third party instigation, and trade which ultimately leads to one destination: a **nuclear holocaust.** The resurgence of China and its desire for irredentist overreach has put U.S. in a catch-22 situation. Maintain primacy or hegemony and it will only make Beijing more resentful towards America, fueling further Chinese revisionism in Asia. On the other hand, if the United States retreats from East Asia as a step towards abandoning hegemony, Beijing could interpret it as a sign of decline of American national power. Sensing weakness, China may next target the post-World War international order that has been carefully built by America and that has been so critical to preserving its national interests. Rewriting the rules of the current international world order to its benefit is an essential part for any aspiring hegemon and China has always held a grudge against the current one. Critics of Thucydides’s Trap argue that war between America and China is unlikely, either due to Chinese civilizational belief of peaceful rise and co-existence or due to nuclear weapons that guarantees Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).32 There are also criticism that Thucydides Trap promotes iron law of inevitability of war between two competing nations.33 Rather it’s the performance of leaders and dynamics of decision-making (acting in the interest of their citizens and aided by Journal of Strategic Security, Vol. 15, No. 2 https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol15/iss2/2 DOI: https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.15.2.1983 9 insights from Thucydides’s History), they say, that determines the path to an eventual war.34 There are also arguments that these dynamics of decision-making that can impact China and the United States’ foreign policy decisions which may trigger the Thucydides’s Trap also leaves open the possibility of a United States-China war due to psychological misperceptions. These psychological misperceptions can be mitigated by rising powers giving sufficiently credible cooperative signals that should remove uncertainty about the riser’s intentions in the mind of the declining state.35 However, in real world situation, credible cooperative signals rarely fall so neatly as credible or cooperative to the declining states. In the run up to the First World War, repeated assurances by the Germans about its naval built-up failed to dissuade the fears of the British. From the prism of offensive realism, British act of counter-arming the Royal Navy is a predictable move to accumulate more power in order to preserve its security and primacy in the open seas. Finally, there are the optimists who totally discard the possibilities of war by claiming that war between China and the United States is not a viable option for both countries in formulating policy toward each other. Factors like the huge gap of comprehensive power between China and the United States, the close economic ties and security cooperation between China and U.S. allies, the flourishing cultural and people-to-people exchanges among all related countries, and the changing public attitude toward war, will drive China and the United States to seek resolution to their disputes by peaceful means.36 However, realist argument of relative gains does not make for such an optimistic assessment. States pursue relative gains over others which necessarily makes international relation a zero-sum game in which China’s gain is inevitably a loss for America. At the more immediate future, the battle for relative gains will break out over cornering advantages in maritime domain, cyber spying or hacking, the shadow of A2 or AD and Air Sea Battle, and a closer strategic alignment between competing nations.37 To that effect, changes are already happening on ground with China pursuing aggressive maritime policies, to which United States is responding by drawing up support from likeminded nations to uphold the freedom of seas (Quad and AUKUS). On the other hand, China is shoring up support in its own way by courting and coaxing Russia and other authoritarian nations by fanning illiberal policies at home and abroad. Beijing is also increasing its defense Goswami: Balancing Grand Strategy for America Produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press, 2022 10 spending to develop an Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) plan that “entails missile, air, and sea forces capable of neutralizing U.S. bases as far away as Guam, and searching out and destroying U.S. naval battle groups in the region that might engage Chinese forces.”38 Both sides will try to accumulate relative gains as much as possible under the logic of offensive realism to tilt the balance of power in their favor. Right now, the scale is tilted in favor of the United States. However, a question begets here. If China manages to narrow the gap in their respective national powers in future, then what will be the reaction and response of the American leadership and people at the slow death of their superior position in the world? Sparta had to face this dilemma 2500 years ago, so did the British twice in early part of 20th century and the Americans themselves for fifty long years in the previous century. In an analysis of the last 500 years, Graham Alison claims that out of the 16 cases of rising versus ruling power case, 12 has been settled by war. Statistics like that are quite unhelpful for optimists.

#### US-China war goes nuclear – wargaming proves

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Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has raised the specter of nuclear war, as Russian President Vladimir Putin has placed his nuclear forces at an elevated state of alert and has warned that any effort by outside parties to interfere in the war would result in “consequences you have never seen.” Such saber-rattling has understandably made headlines and drawn notice in Washington. But if China attempted to forcibly invade Taiwan and the United States came to Taipei’s aid, the threat of escalation could outstrip even the current nerve-wracking situation in Europe. A recent war game, conducted by the Center for a New American Security in conjunction with the NBC program “Meet the Press,” demonstrated just how quickly such a conflict could escalate. The game posited a fictional crisis set in 2027, with the aim of examining how the United States and China might act under a certain set of conditions. The game demonstrated that China’s military modernization and expansion of its nuclear arsenal—not to mention the importance Beijing places on unification with Taiwan—mean that, in the real world, a fight between China and the United States could very well **go nuclear.** Beijing views Taiwan as a breakaway republic. If the Chinese Communist Party decides to invade the island, its leaders may not be able to accept failure without seriously harming the regime’s legitimacy. Thus, the CCP might be willing to take significant risks to ensure that the conflict ends on terms that it finds acceptable. That would mean convincing the United States and its allies that the costs of defending Taiwan are so high that it is not worth contesting the invasion. While China has several ways to achieve that goal, from Beijing’s perspective, using nuclear weapons may be the most effective means to keep the United States out of the conflict. GEARING FOR BATTLE China is several decades into transforming its People’s Liberation Army (PLA) into what the Chinese President Xi Jinping has called a “world-class military” that could defeat any third party that comes to Taiwan’s defense. China’s warfighting strategy, known as “anti-access/area denial,” rests on being able to project conventional military power out several thousand miles in order to prevent the American military, in particular, from effectively countering a Chinese attack on Taiwan. Meanwhile, a growing nuclear arsenal provides Beijing with coercive leverage as well as potentially new warfighting capabilities, which could increase the risks of war and escalation. China has historically possessed only a few hundred ground-based nuclear weapons. But last year, nuclear scholars at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies and the Federation of American Scientists identified three missile silo fields under construction in the Xinjiang region. The Financial Times reported that China might have carried out tests of hypersonic gliders as a part of an orbital bombardment system that could evade missile defenses and deliver nuclear weapons to targets in the continental United States. The U.S. Department of Defense projects that by 2030, China will have around **1,000 deliverable warheads**—more than triple the number it currently possesses. Based on these projections, Chinese leaders may believe that as early as five years from now the PLA will have made enough conventional and nuclear gains that it could fight and win a war to unify with Taiwan. A fight between China and the United States could very well go nuclear. Our recent war game—in which members of Congress, former government officials, and subject matter experts assumed the roles of senior national security decision makers in China and the United States—illustrated that a U.S.-Chinese war could escalate quickly. For one thing, it showed that both countries would face operational incentives to strike military forces on the other’s territory. In the game, such strikes were intended to be calibrated to avoid escalation; both sides tried to walk a fine line by attacking only military targets. But such attacks crossed red lines for both countries, and produced a tit-for-tat cycle of attacks that broadened the scope and intensity of the conflict. For instance, in the simulation, China launched a preemptive attack against key U.S. bases in the Indo-Pacific region. The attacks targeted Guam, in particular, because it is a forward operating base critical to U.S. military operations in Asia, and because since it is a territory, and not a U.S. state, the Chinese team viewed striking it as less escalatory than attacking other possible targets. In response, the United States targeted Chinese military ships in ports and surrounding facilities, but refrained from other attacks on the Chinese mainland. Nevertheless, both sides perceived these strikes as attacks on their home territory, crossing an important threshold. Instead of mirror-imaging their own concerns about attacks on their territory, each side justified the initial blows as military necessities that were limited in nature and would be seen by the other as such. Responses to the initial strikes only escalated things further as the U.S. team responded to China’s moves by hitting targets in mainland China, and the Chinese team responded to Washington’s strikes by attacking sites in Hawaii. A NEW ERA One particularly alarming finding from the war game is that **China found it necessary to threaten to go nuclear from the start in order to ward off outside support for Taiwan.** This threat was repeated throughout the game, particularly after mainland China had been attacked. At times, efforts to erode Washington’s will so that it would back down from the fight received greater attention by the China team than the invasion of Taiwan itself. But China had difficulty convincing the United States that its nuclear threats were credible. In real life, China’s significant and recent changes to its nuclear posture and readiness may impact other nations’ views, as its nuclear threats may not be viewed as credible given its stated doctrine of no first use, its smaller but burgeoning nuclear arsenal, and lack of experience making nuclear threats. This may push China to preemptively detonate a nuclear weapon to reinforce the credibility of its warning. China might also resort to a demonstration of its nuclear might because of constraints on its long-range conventional strike capabilities. Five years from now, the PLA still will have a very limited ability to launch conventional attacks beyond locations in the “second island chain” in the Pacific; namely, Guam and Palau. Unable to strike the U.S. homeland with conventional weapons, China would struggle to impose costs on the American people. Up until a certain point in the game, the U.S. team felt its larger nuclear arsenal was sufficient to deter escalation and did not fully appreciate the seriousness of China’s threats. As a result, China felt it needed to escalate significantly to send a message that the U.S. homeland could be at risk if Washington did not back down. Despite China’s stated “no-first use” nuclear policy, the war game resulted in Beijing detonating a nuclear weapon off the coast of Hawaii as a demonstration. The attack caused relatively little destruction, as the electromagnetic pulse only damaged the electronics of ships in the immediate vicinity but did not directly impact the U.S. state. The war game ended before the U.S. team could respond, but it is likely that the first use of a nuclear weapon since World War II would have provoked a response. The most likely paths to nuclear escalation in a fight between the United States and China are different from those that were most likely during the Cold War. The Soviet Union and the United States feared a massive, bolt-from-the-blue nuclear attack, which would precipitate a full-scale strategic exchange. In a confrontation over Taiwan, however, Beijing could employ nuclear weapons in a more limited way to signal resolve or to improve its chances of winning on the battlefield. It is unclear how a war would proceed after that kind of limited nuclear use and whether the United States could de-escalate the situation while still achieving its objectives.

### 1NC---Econ Decline

#### Heg is unsustainable and causes long-term economic decline

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Revisiting the 1980s’ Debate on American Decline: The ‘‘Declinists’’ Were Right Of course, this is not the first time that the United States has been gripped by fear of decline.5 In the 1980s, Paul Kennedy’s The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers triggered an intense but brief debate about whether America’s power was in relative decline (Kennedy 1987). In arguing that the United States was experiencing the relative decline of its economic power, Kennedy was not alone. Other prominent scholars making this case included Chace (1981), Calleo (1982), Gilpin (1987), and Huntington (1988b). The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers reso- nated because it dovetailed with popular fears that the United States, enervated by the costs of the Cold War, was being surpassed economically by Japan and West Germany. While Kennedy’s thesis struck a chord with the public, the US foreign policy elite lashed out at the notion that the United States was declining. Two leading establishment scholars, Harvard profes- sors Samuel P. Huntington and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., went so far as to label Kennedy and the others as ‘‘dec- linists’’—a subtle twist of the English language imply- ing that they were advocates of US decline rather than dispassionate analysts of what they regarded as worrisome trends in the United States’ great-power trajectory (Nye 1991; Huntington 1988a).6 Contrary to the way their argument was portrayed by many of their critics, the 1980s declinists did not claim either that the United States already had declined steeply, or that it soon would undergo a rapid, catastrophic decline. Rather, they pointed to domestic and economic drivers that were in play and which, over time, would cause American economic power to decline relatively and produce a shift in global distribution of power. The declinists con- tended that the **United States was afflicted by a slow—’’termite’’—decline caused by fundamental structural weaknesses in the American economy.**7 Kennedy himself was explicitly looking ahead to the effects this termite decline would have on United States’ world role in the early twenty-first century. As he wrote, ‘‘The task facing American statesman over the next decades. .. is to recognize that broad trends are under way, and that there is a need to ‘manage’ affairs so that the relative erosion of the United States’ position takes place slowly and smoothly, and is not accelerated by policies which bring merely short-term advantage but longer-term disadvantage’’ (Kennedy 1987:534; my emphasis). When one goes back and re-reads what the 1980s declinists pinpointed as the drivers of American decline, their analyses look farsighted because the same drivers of economic decline are at the center of debate today: too much consumption and not enough savings; persistent trade and current account deficits; chronic federal budget deficits and a mount- ing national debt; and de-industrialization. **Over time**, 1980s declinists said, **the United States’ goals of geopolitical dominance and economic prosperity would collide.** Today, their warnings seem eerily pre- scient. Robert Gilpin’s 1987 description of America’s economic and grand strategic plight could just as easily describe the United States after the Great Recession: **With a decreased rate of economic growth and a low rate of national savings, the United States was living and defending commitments far beyond its means. In order to bring its commitments and power back into balance once again, the United States would one day have to cut back** further on its overseas commitments, reduce the American standard of liv- ing, or decrease domestic productive investment even more than it already had. In the meantime, **American hegemony was threatened by a potentially devastating fiscal crisis.** (Gilpin 1987:347–348) In the Great Recession’s wake—doubly so since it is far from clear that either the United States or glo- bal economies are out of the woods—the United States now is facing the dilemmas that Gilpin and the other declinists warned about. Counterfactual questions—‘‘What would have hap- pened if?’’—are difficult to answer. Nevertheless, it is useful to ask where the United States might be today had the warnings of the ‘‘declinists’’ been heeded. Perhaps the United States would have taken corrective economic and fiscal steps two decades ago that would have ameliorated the crisis in which it now finds itself. However, the debate about US decline ended abruptly when, in short order, the United States’ main geopolitical and economic riv- als—the Soviet Union and Japan, respectively—expe- rienced dramatic reversals of fortune. The Soviet Union unraveled, and in the early 1990s Japan’s eco- nomic bubble burst, plunging it into a cycle of defla- tion and low growth from which, two decades later, it has yet to recover. Seemingly overnight the threats to the United States’ military and economic suprem- acy were removed from the international chessboard. The 1990s subsequently witnessed a euphoric American triumphalism that wiped away any thoughts of US decline. On the contrary, **the ‘‘unipolar moment’’** and the ‘‘end of history’’—along with the emergence of the so-called Washington consen- sus—**seemed to confirm that both America’s power and its ideology were unchallengeable** in the post- Cold War world (Fukuyama 1989; Krauthammer 1990–1991). **The Great Recession has put paid to such fantasies and put the spotlight on the domestic drivers of American decline.** Domestic Drivers of American Decline: Debt, Deficits, and the Dollar’s Uncertain Future **China’s rise is one powerful indicator of America’s relative decline. The United States’ mounting economic and fiscal problems**—evidenced in summer 2011 by the debt ceiling debacle and Standard & Poors’ down- grading of US Treasury bonds—**are another. There are two closely interconnected aspects of the United States’ domestic difficulties that merit special attention: the spiraling US national debt and deepening doubts about the dollar’s future role as the international economy’s reserve currency.** Between now and 2025, the looming debt and dollar crises almost certainly will compel the United States to retrench strategically, and to begin scaling back its overseas military commitments. The causes of the looming US fiscal crisis are com- plex. For understanding, a good starting point is the late political scientist Arnold Wolfers’ observation that modern great powers must be both national security states and welfare states (Wolfers 1952). States must provide both guns—the military capabili- ties needed to defend and advance their external interests—and butter, ensuring prosperity and sup- plying needed public goods (education, health care, pensions). Since World War II, the United States has pretty much been able to avoid making difficult ‘‘guns or butter’’ decisions precisely because of its hegemonic role in the international economy. The dollar’s role as the international system’s reserve currency allows the United States to live beyond its means in ways that other nations cannot. As long as others believe that the United States will repay its debts, and that uncontrollable inflation will not dilute the dollar’s value, the United States can finance its external ambitions (‘‘guns’’) and domes- tic social and economic programs (‘‘butter’’) by bor- rowing money from foreigners. As Figure 4 shows, this is what the United States has had to do since the early 1980s when it started running a chronic current account deficit. As Figure 5 illustrates, the majority of US government debt is owed to foreign, not domestic, investors, and China is the United States government’s largest creditor. Following the Great Recession, it has become increasingly apparent that unless dramatic measures to reign-in federal spending are implemented, by the end of this decade there will be serious ques- tions about the United States’ ability to repay its debts and control inflation.8 The causes of mounting US indebtedness are many. One is the Great Reces- sion, which caused the Obama administration and the Federal Reserve to inject a massive amount of dollars into the economy, in the form of stimulus spending, bail-outs, and ‘‘quantitative easing,’’ to avert a replay of the Great Depression of the 1930s. A longer-term cause is the mounting costs of entitle- ment programs like Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid—costs which will escalate because of the aging of the ‘‘Baby Boomer’’ generation. **Another factor is the cost of wars** in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have been **financed by borrowing from abroad rather than raising taxes to pay for them.** These wars have been expensive. Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel lau- reate in economics, and his coauthor Linda Bilmess have calculated that the ultimate direct and indirect costs of the Iraq war will amount to $3 trillion (Sti- glitz and Bilmiss 2008). No similar study has as yet been done of the Afghanistan war’s costs. However, the United States currently is expending about $110–120 billion annually to fight there, and fiscal considerations played a major role in the Obama administration’s decision to begin drawing down US forces in Afghanistan (Woodward 2010; Cooper 2011). **Because of the combined costs of federal govern- ment expenditures**—on stimulus, defense, Iraq and Afghanistan, and entitlements—**in 2009 the Congres- sional Budget Office forecast that the United States will run unsustainable annual budget deficits of $1 trillion or more until at least the end of this decade**, and observed that, **‘‘Even if the recovery occurs as projected and the stimulus bill is allowed to expire, the country will face the highest debt ⁄ GDP ratio in 50 years and an increasingly urgent and unsustain- able fiscal problem’’** (CBO 2009:13). In a subse- quent 2010 report, the CBO noted that if the United States stays on its current fiscal trajectory, the ratio of US government debt to GDP will be 100% by 2020 (CBO 2010). Economists regard a 100% debt-to-GDP ratio as critical indicator that a state will default on its financial obligations. In an even less sanguine 2011 analysis, the International Monetary Fund forecast that the United States will hit the 100% debt-to-GDP ratio in 2016 (IMF 2011). If these estimates are correct, over the next decade the grow- ing US national debt—and the budget deficits that fuel it—could imperil the dollar by undermining for- eign investors’ confidence in the United States’ abil- ity to repay its debts and keep inflation in check. This is important because, for the foreseeable future, **the United States will depend on capital inflows from abroad** both to finance its deficit spending and private consumption and **to maintain the dollar’s position as the international** economic system’s **reserve currency.** America’s geopolitical preeminence hinges on the dollar’s reserve currency role. If the dollar loses that status, US hegemony will literally be unaffordable. The dollar’s reserve currency status has, in effect, been a very special kind of ‘‘credit card.’’ It is spe- cial because the United States does not have to earn the money to pay its bills. Rather, when the bills come due, the United States borrows funds from abroad and ⁄ or prints money to pay them. The Uni- ted States can get away with this and live beyond its means, spending with little restraint on maintaining its military dominance, preserving costly domestic entitlements, and indulging in conspicuous private consumption, as long as foreigners are willing to lend it money (primarily by purchasing Treasury bonds). Without the use of the ‘‘credit card’’ provided by the dollar’s reserve currency status, the United States would have to pay for its extravagant external and internal ambitions by raising taxes and interest rates, and by consuming less and saving more; or, tightening its belt and dramatically reduc- ing its military and domestic expenditures. In other words, the United States would have to learn to live within its means.9 As a leading expert on interna- tional economic affairs observed just before the Great Recession kicked in, the dollar’s vulnerability ‘‘presents potentially significant and underappreci- ated restraints upon contemporary American politi- cal and military predominance’’ (Kirshner 2008). Although doubts about the dollar’s long-term health predated the Great Recession, the events of 2007–2009 have amplified them in two key respects (Helleiner 2008; Kirshner 2008). First, the other big players in the international economy now are either geopolitical rivals like China or ambiguous ‘‘allies’’ like Europe, which has its own ambitions and no longer requires US protection from the now- vanished Soviet threat. Second, the dollar faces an uncertain future because of concerns that its value will diminish over time. Indeed, China, which has vast holdings of American assets (more than $2 tril- lion), is worried that America’s fiscal incontinence will leave Beijing holding the bag with huge amounts of depreciated dollars. China’s vote of no confidence in the dollar’s future is reflected in its calls to create a new reserve currency to replace the dollar, the ren- minbi’s gradual ‘‘internationalization,’’ and in the lectures China’s leaders regularly deliver telling Washington to get its fiscal house in order. Alarm bells about the dollar’s uncertain status now are ringing. In April 2011, Standard & Poor’s warned that in the coming years there is a one-in-three chance that the United States’ triple A credit rating could be reduced if Washington fails to solve the fis- cal crisis—and in August 2011 S& P did downgrade the US credit rating to AA. In June 2011, the IMF said that unless the United States enacts a credible plan to reign in its annual deficits and accumulating national debt, it could face a sovereign risk crisis in the next several years. In a May 2011 report, the World Bank declared that the dollar probably will lose its status as the primary reserve currency by 2025 (World Bank 2011). In the coming years, the United States will have to defend the dollar by reassuring foreign lenders (read: China) both that there will be no runaway inflation and that it can pay its debts. This will require some combination of budget cuts, entitle- ments reductions, tax increases, and interest-rate hikes. Because exclusive reliance on the last two options could choke off growth, there will be strong pressure to slash the federal budget in order to hold down taxes and interest rates. It will be almost impossible to make meaningful cuts in federal spending without deep reductions in defense expen- ditures (and entitlements), because, as Figure 6 shows, that is where the money is. With US defense spending currently at such high levels, domestic political pressures to make steep cuts in defense spending are bound to increase. As the Cornell international political economist Jona- than Kirshner puts it, the absolute size of US defense expenditures is ‘‘more likely to be decisive in the future when the U.S. is under pressure to make real choices about taxes and spending. When borrowing becomes more difficult, and adjustment more difficult to postpone, choices must be made between raising taxes, cutting non-defense spending, and cutting defense spending’’ (Kirshner 2008:431). In the spring of 2011, the Obama administration proposed to cut US defense spending by $400 mil- lion over eleven years. But that is a drop in the bucket, and cuts of a much larger magnitude almost certainly will be needed.10 Big defense cuts mean that during the next ten to fifteen years, the United States will be compelled to scale back its overseas military commitments. This will have two conse- quences. First, as the United States spends less on defense, China (and other new great powers) will be able to close the military power gap with the United States. Second, the United States’ ability to act as a regional stabilizer and a guardian of the global commons will diminish. In this respect, America’s fiscal crisis and the dollar’s uncertain future are important drivers of American decline. The End of the Pax Americana US decline has profound implications for the future of international politics. Hegemonic stability theory holds that an open international economic system requires a single hegemonic power to perform critical military and economic tasks. Militarily, the hegemon is responsible for stabilizing key regions and for guarding the global commons (Posen 2003). Econom- ically, the hegemon provides public goods by opening its domestic market to other states, supplying liquidity for the global economy, and providing a reserve cur- rency (Kindelberger 1973; Gilpin 1975). As US power continues to decline over the next ten to fifteen years, the United States will be progressively unable to discharge these hegemonic tasks. The United States still wields preponderant military power. However, as discussed above, in the next ten to fifteen years the looming fiscal crisis will compel Washington to retrench strategically. As the United States’ military power diminishes, its ability to com- mand the commons and act as a hegemonic stabilizer will be compromised. The end of the United States’ role as a military hegemon is still over horizon. How- ever, the Great Recession has made it evident that the United States no longer is an economic hegemon. An economic hegemon is supposed to solve global economic crises, not cause them. However, it was the freezing-up of the US financial system triggered by the sub-prime mortgage crisis that plunged the world into economic crisis. The hegemon is sup- posed to be the lender of last resort in the interna- tional economy. The United States, however, has become the borrower of first resort—the world’s largest debtor. When the global economy falters, the economic hegemon is supposed to take responsibil- ity for kick-starting recovery by purchasing other nations’ goods. From World War II’s end until the Great Recession, the international economy looked to the United States as the locomotive of global eco- nomic growth. As the world’s largest market since 1945, America’s willingness to consume foreign goods has been the firewall against global economic downturns. This is not what happened during the Great Recession, however. The US economy proved too infirm to lead the global economy back to health. Others—notably a rising China—had to step up to the plate to do so. The United States’ inability to gal- vanize global recovery demonstrates that in key respects it no longer is capable of acting as an eco- nomic hegemon. Indeed, President Barak Obama conceded as much at the April 2009 G-20 meeting in London, where he acknowledged the United States is no longer able to be the world’s consumer of last resort, and that the world needs to look to China (and India and other emerging market states) to be the motors of global recovery. Other recent exam- ples of how relative decline and loss of economic hegemony have eroded Washington’s ‘‘agenda set- ting’’ capacity in international economic manage- ment include the US failure to achieve global economic re-balancing by compelling China to reva- lue the renminbi, and its defeat in the 2009–2010 ‘‘austerity versus stimulus’’ debate with Europe.

#### Economic decline causes a plethora of security threats and risks nuclear war

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The conclusions reached in this thesis demonstrate how economic considerations within states can figure prominently into the calculus for future conflicts. The findings also suggest that security issues with economic or financial underpinnings will transcend classical determinants of war and conflict, and change the manner by which rival states engage in hostile acts toward one another. The research shows that security concerns emanating from economic uncertainty and the inherent vulnerabilities within global financial markets will present new challenges for national security, and provide developing states new asymmetric options for balancing against stronger states. The security areas, identified in the proceeding chapters, are likely to mature into global security threats in the immediate future. As the case study on South Korea suggest, the overlapping security issues associated with economic decline and reduced military spending by the United States will affect allied confidence in America’s security guarantees. The study shows that this outcome could cause regional instability or realignments of strategic partnerships in the Asia-pacific region with ramifications for U.S. national security. Rival states and non-state groups may also become emboldened to challenge America’s status in the unipolar international system. The potential risks associated with stolen or loose WMD, resulting from poor security, can also pose a threat to U.S. national security. The case study on Pakistan, Syria and North Korea show how financial constraints affect weapons security making weapons vulnerable to theft, and how financial factors can influence WMD proliferation by contributing to the motivating factors behind a trusted insider’s decision to sell weapons technology. The inherent vulnerabilities within the global financial markets will provide terrorists’ organizations and other non-state groups, who object to the current international system or distribution of power, with opportunities to disrupt global finance and perhaps weaken America’s status. A more ominous threat originates from states intent on increasing diversification of foreign currency holdings, establishing alternatives to the dollar for international trade, or engaging financial warfare against the United States. The importance of this paradigm shift in U.S. national security, which places new emphasis on the causal relationships between economics and global security threats, will require innovative strategies.

### 1NC--- Indo-Pak War

#### Root case of Indo-Pak War is US hegemony

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{Muktsar Sahib, Punjab, India, April 2019, “Conflict, Peace and Security: An International Relations Perspective with Special Reference to India,” <https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/0976399619825691>KRS}

In the post-Cold War period, the US role in imparting or implanting democracy has got a big boost. Following the disintegration of the USSR, the USA had successfully mobilized the Eastern European countries into adopting a liberal–democratic regime. However, what followed in these countries has been a phenomenal upsurge of violence, upheaval, political instability, economic backwardness as well as conflicts based on ethnicity, race, tribe and culture. In other words, the US role in post-conflict transformation has been pretty dismal. Further, in the immediate aftermath of withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, the USA had successfully imposed a puppet democratic regime under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. Moreover, while the Soviet forces left Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and Taliban stayed back and pose a scathing challenge to the West, and especially the USA. The 9/11 in the USA and 7/7 bombings in London have compelled the USA to pursue its ‘War on Terror’ with greater enthusiasm. Afghanistan and Sri Lanka are at the stages of conflict transformation, whereas we can argue that the most intractable conflict, the Indo-Pak dispute, operates on the plane of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The democratic churnings of the Arab Spring are primarily aimed at promoting democracy by the mighty hyper-power the USA. Moreover, the USA has now become the world’s sole policeman. The USA has not performed its reconstruction programme in any of these countries with any zeal. Thus, the USA has failed in the post-conflict transformation project in every nook and corner of the world, be it Somalia, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and, more recently, in Darfur (Sudan). The crisis in Ukraine represents a ‘New Cold War’ between the USA and Russia that is being played out in the contemporary world. Varun Sahni, in a 2004 article, has aptly pointed out the nature of US hegemony: We can see in this part of the world US forces performing the entire range of tasks that ‘imperial powers’ have performed through recorded history: to conquer (Iraq), to deter (the Pacific Fleet, American forces in Japan and South Korea, and American strategic bombers on Guam), to punish (Afghanistan) and to police (Iraq). The policing function, which would require the conversion of a significant part of US military capability into an imperial constabulary, is the only one that the American forces are not performing well. It is therefore, perfectly logical that Washington is keen to subcontract this vital military task to other states. (Sahni, 2004, p. 248)

#### Indo-Pak nuke production increasing- extinction in multiple ways

**Strain**, writer quoting Jerry Peterson, a professor emeritus in the Department of Physics, **19**

(Daniel , University of Colorado at Boulder,https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191002144251.htm//KRS)

A nuclear war between India and Pakistan could, over the span of less than a week, kill 50-125 million people -- more than the death toll during all six years of World War II, according to new research. A new study conducted by researchers from the University of Colorado Boulder and Rutgers University examines how such a hypothetical future conflict would have consequences that could ripple across the globe. Today, India and Pakistan each have about 150 nuclear warheads at their disposal, and that number is expected to climb to more than 200 by 2025. The picture is grim. That level of warfare wouldn't just kill millions of people locally, said CU Boulder's Brian Toon, who led the research published today in the journal Science Advances. It might also plunge the entire planet into a severe cold spell, possibly with temperatures not seen since the last Ice Age. His team's findings come as tensions are again simmering between India and Pakistan. In August, India made a change to its constitution that stripped rights from people living in the long-contested region of Kashmir. Soon after, the nation sent troops to Kashmir, moves that Pakistan criticized sharply. "An India-Pakistan war could double the normal death rate in the world," said Toon, a professor in the Laboratory of Atmospheric and Space Physics. "This is a war that would have no precedent in human experience." It's a subject that Toon, also of the Department of Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences, has had on his mind for decades. He came of age during the height of the Cold War when schoolchildren still practiced ducking-and-covering under their desks. As a young atmospheric scientist in the early 1980s, he was part of a group of researchers who first coined the term "nuclear winter" -- a period of extreme cold that would likely follow a large-scale nuclear barrage between the U.S. and Russia. Toon believes that such weapons are still very much a threat -- one that's underscored by current hostilities between India and Pakistan. "They're rapidly building up their arsenals," Toon said. "They have huge populations, so lots of people are threatened by these arsenals, and then there's the unresolved conflict over Kashmir." In his latest study, Toon and his colleagues wanted to find out just how bad such a conflict could get. To do that, the team drew on a wide range of evidence, from computer simulations of Earth's atmosphere to accounts of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in 1945. Based on their analysis, the devastation would come in several stages. In the first week of the conflict, the group reports that India and Pakistan combined could successfully detonate about 250 nuclear warheads over each other's cities. There's no way to know how powerful these weapons would be -- neither nation has conducted nuclear tests in decades -- but the researchers estimated that each one could kill as many as 700,000 people. Most of those people wouldn't die from the blasts themselves, however, but from the out-of-control fires that would follow. "If you look at Hiroshima after the bomb fell, you can see a huge field of rubble about a mile wide," Toon said. "It wasn't the result of the bomb. It was the result of the fire." For the rest of the globe, the fires would just be the beginning. The researchers calculated that an India-Pakistan war could inject as much as 80 billion pounds of thick, black smoke into Earth's atmosphere. That smoke would block sunlight from reaching the ground, driving temperatures around the world down by an average of between 3.5-9 degrees Fahrenheit for several years. Worldwide food shortages would likely come soon after.

### 1NC--- Iran War

#### American hegemony entrap it into an Iran-Israel conflict

Kurtzer et. al 21 - Kurtzer is former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt and former U.S. Ambassador to Israel and S. Daniel Abraham Professor of Middle East Policy Studies at Princeton University’s School of Public and International Affairs, Miller received his PhD in Middle East and U.S. diplomatic history from the University of Michigan and a former State Department Middle East analyst, and Simon is Professor in the Practice of International Relations at Colby College and has previously served on the U.S. National Security Council and in the Department of State, 4/26/21 (Daniel, Aaron, and Steven, “Israel and Iran Are Pulling the United States Toward Conflict”, Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2021-04-26/israel-and-iran-are-pulling-united-states-toward-conflict>, accessed 7/5/22)//jd

Israel and Iran aren’t yet on the verge of a major escalation or war, and continued progress on the Iran nuclear talks in Vienna would likely forestall one, if Israel judges that trying to undermine a deal would exact too great a cost in its relations with Washington. But the factors that might well produce a significant blowup are now aligning in frightening fashion. An April 11 explosion at the Natanz nuclear facility—presumed to be the work of Israel—was a dramatic salvo in the shadow war over Iran’s nuclear program. In response to the attack, Iran ramped up its enrichment capacity. An errant Syrian missile landed near Dimona in Israel on April 22, and Israel struck back at the launch site in Syria. Such chains of events risk escalating, even unintentionally, to open conflict. The Biden administration, understandably preoccupied with the politics of domestic recovery, has expressed its intention to reenter the 2015 Iran nuclear deal but appears to be in no particular hurry to do so. Yet without intensified U.S. diplomacy designed to restrain both Israel and Iran, the administration could easily find itself drawn into a conflict it neither wants nor needs and that undermines its real priorities at home. A FRUSTRATED IRAN Briefing Congress on April 14, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines identified Iran as one of the four top threats facing the United States. She noted, “We expect that Iran will take risks that could escalate tensions and threaten U.S. and allied interests in the coming year.” That assessment rises in part from Iran’s growing frustrations at home and abroad. Sanctions have devastated the Iranian economy; COVID-19 cases are spiking; and Iran’s maximalist positions—demanding the removal of all U.S. sanctions, including those consistent with the nuclear deal, while refusing to engage directly with Washington—have put sanctions relief out of reach for the moment. Sooner or later, Israel will likely use military force to try to prevent Iran from weaponizing its enriched uranium. To date, Tehran has been quite risk averse in responding to U.S. and Israeli strikes, including the assassination of a top Iranian scientist and the sabotage of Iranian nuclear sites. But that posture could change. Frustrated by the lack of sanctions relief and confounded by the ease with which Israel has penetrated its internal security, Iran may become more willing to take risks—much as it was in 1996, when it attacked a U.S. military installation in Saudi Arabia, and in the fall of 2019, when it struck Saudi oil facilities. Iran’s decision to begin enriching uranium at 60 percent is a clear demonstration that the country has the capacity to get to 90 percent, which is weapons grade, relatively quickly. The fact of this capability by no means suggests that Tehran can build a bomb instantaneously or even has made the decision to do so. But if negotiations fail, Iran will continue to move forward with advanced centrifuges to create enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon. The Israeli government has issued stark warnings that a return to the nuclear deal without changes would be intolerable. If the United States and Iran return to compliance under these circumstances, the potential for escalation might increase. Sooner or later, Israel will likely use military force to try to prevent Iran from weaponizing its enriched uranium—and the United States will be dragged into the conflict. PREOCCUPATION AND CONSTRAINT During his presidential campaign, Joe Biden promised a quick return to the 2015 Iran nuclear accord. He probably shouldn’t have. He is confronting the most daunting task of national recovery of any president since Franklin Roosevelt, and domestic priorities and politics make reentry into the Iran nuclear deal particularly difficult. Complicating the task are the policies of Biden’s predecessor, former U.S. President Donald Trump. The Trump administration imposed sanctions against Iran on human rights and counterterrorism grounds. Because these sanctions are not covered by the nuclear deal, a return to the agreement won’t make them disappear. Iran, however, has demanded that all these sanctions be lifted before it will comply with its nuclear obligations. Little constituency exists in Washington for returning to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran on precisely the same terms as before. Republicans and even some crucial Democrats oppose it. All these factors, combined with the need to reserve political capital for the administration’s domestic agenda, have rendered Biden cautious and averse to taking risks with Iran’s nuclear development. A DESPERATE CALCULUS Israel’s escalating actions against Iran reflect Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s security concerns and his increasing distrust of the United States. Netanyahu does not believe that the United States fully accounts for the threats that Iran’s nuclear program, missile capabilities, and support for terrorism pose to Israel. In his view, the draconian sanctions that the Trump administration imposed on Iran upon its withdrawal from the deal should be given more time to shape Iran’s economy and political decisions. If, instead, the United States reenters the nuclear agreement without altering it to address Iran’s ballistic missile program or its activities in the region, Israel will find itself in an untenable position. Escalation with Iran may prove attractive to Netanyahu as he faces domestic problems, including corruption charges and a political stalemate. Netanyahu has reasons to be confident in his country’s ability to take these matters into its own hands. Unlike several years ago, when the Israeli military had a restraining influence, Netanyahu now enjoys the support of a hawkish army chief of staff, Lieutenant General Aviv Kochavi. Israel’s military capabilities vis-à-vis Iran are much more advanced than even a few years ago. Israel has secured flight routes over Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states and ordered enhanced fuel tankers from the United States. Together, these advances dramatically improve the Israeli air force’s ability to fly repeated sorties against targets within Iran. In addition, Israel now has access to bases in the United Arab Emirates from which to conduct surveillance or raids against Iran, just across the Persian Gulf. Moreover, escalation with Iran may prove attractive to Netanyahu as he faces domestic problems, including corruption charges and a political stalemate. The Israeli prime minister is too responsible to lead his country to war solely in order to escape his legal troubles. But he does stand to benefit, as the Israeli public would not want to encumber a wartime prime minister with a trial, which would likely be postponed, and as political opponents would be forced to rally around him in a national unity coalition. AMERICA INTO THE BREACH There are no easy options available to the United States to divert a determined Netanyahu from the path of escalation that he is on. Netanyahu believes he knows how to handle Washington. He has considerable support within the Republican Party and among many Democrats; he also has calculated that the Biden administration will not want to jeopardize its domestic legislative agenda by engaging in a public dispute with Israel. Indeed, the only U.S. policy that might deter Netanyahu from the path leading to war would be firm refusal and strong diplomacy. Washington would have to make Netanyahu understand that further escalation with Iran would damage U.S.-Israeli relations and that the administration will not back down in the face of domestic political pressure. At the same time, the administration would need to press the other signatories to the nuclear deal to tell Iran in no uncertain terms that its actions are provocative, that some of its positions in the Vienna talks are unreasonable, and that the clock is running out for returning to full compliance. A firm stance with Israel and tough diplomacy on the nuclear deal just might allow the United States to avert the slide toward dangerous escalation between Israel and Iran. PARTNERSHIP AT A CROSSROADS Israel and Iran have temporarily settled into a low level, carefully calibrated conflict. Under these conditions, the Iranian nuclear program takes two steps forward and the Israelis push it at least one step back. With no brakes on its policy, Israel is likely to continue assassinations, cyberattacks, and bombings in order to hobble the Iranian program, frustrate U.S. efforts to reenter the nuclear deal, and dissuade Iranian authorities from returning to compliance. Israel will also continue to ramp up its military capability. The scenario is an ugly one whose long-term stability may not hold, either because Israel’s real objective is to provoke an Iranian response that would provide cover for an attack on Iran’s facilities or simply because neither country’s strategy is as clever or finely tuned as it imagines. In September 2019, Iran launched a drone attack on the Saudi oil company Aramco, which took half of Saudi Arabia’s oil production offline in a matter of minutes and caught both Riyadh and Washington by surprise. Israel cannot know which of its incremental attacks will incur an Iranian response that could lead to spiraling escalation—and no one knows what level of nuclear enrichment or accumulation of fissile material will trigger an all-out Israeli assault on Iran. One way or another, escalation will suck the United States into a war it did not seek, at a time and place it did not choose. The Biden administration must make a decision. It can bet that a fragile stability will last until its legislative agenda is complete, in which case it does not need to intervene. Or it can step in now, on the assumption that the near-term consequences of a political confrontation with Israel and muscular diplomacy with Iran will be more manageable than the consequences of a war within the next two years. This week, some of Israel’s most senior security officials—its national security adviser and director of military intelligence, along with the head of the Mossad—will visit Washington for intensive talks on Iran against the backdrop of Israeli concerns that Washington is not showing sufficient regard for Israel’s views. According to Israeli press reports, however, Israeli officials have been instructed not to talk about the details of current negotiations in Vienna over the nuclear deal. The Israeli government, pursuing its own strategy, is working at cross-purposes with a U.S. administration that sees its objectives as crucial to domestic cohesion and Middle Eastern stability. Netanyahu’s current campaign perpetuates the Israeli prime minister’s battles with Democratic presidents and undermines the cooperation that supposedly characterizes the two countries’ long-standing alliance. Perhaps U.S. and Israeli interests are simply incompatible. Israel’s prime minister surely has a duty to preserve his country’s security; but so does an American president. In the ebb and flow of international relations, the pivotal moments are not always obvious—but the crisis precipitated by the Israeli government’s open challenge to the United States surely looks like one of them

#### **Iran war goes nuclear**

Avery 13 – Lektor Emeritus & Associate Professor, U of Copenhagen

John Scales Avery, Lektor Emeritus, Associate Professor, at the Department of Chemistry, University of Copenhagen, since 1990 he has been the Contact Person in Denmark for Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, An Attack On Iran Could Escalate Into Global Nuclear War, 11/6/13, http://www.countercurrents.org/avery061113.htm

Despite the willingness of Iran's new President, Hassan Rouhani to make all reasonable concessions to US demands, Israeli pressure groups in Washington continue to demand an attack on Iran. But such an attack might escalate into a global nuclear war, with catastrophic consequences. As we approach the 100th anniversary World War I, we should remember that this colossal disaster escalated uncontrollably from what was intended to be a minor conflict. There is a danger that an attack on Iran would escalate into a large-scale war in the Middle East, entirely destabilizing a region that is already deep in problems. The unstable government of Pakistan might be overthrown, and the revolutionary Pakistani government might enter the war on the side of Iran, thus introducing nuclear weapons into the conflict. Russia and China, firm allies of Iran, might also be drawn into a general war in the Middle East. Since much of the world's oil comes from the region, such a war would certainly cause the price of oil to reach unheard-of heights, with catastrophic effects on the global economy. In the dangerous situation that could potentially result from an attack on Iran, there is a risk that nuclear weapons would be used, either intentionally, or by accident or miscalculation. Recent research has shown that besides making large areas of the world uninhabitable through long-lasting radioactive contamination, a nuclear war would damage global agriculture to such an extent that a global famine of previously unknown proportions would result. Thus, nuclear war is the ultimate ecological catastrophe. It could destroy human civilization and much of the biosphere. To risk such a war would be an unforgivable offense against the lives and future of all the peoples of the world, US citizens included.

### 1NC---Laundry List

#### Heg causes a laundry list of impacts including endless war, climate change, financial crisis, and damage to democracy

**Wertheim 20** (Stephen Wertheim, Research Scholar at the Arnold A. Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University, April 2020—exact day not published, “The Price of Primacy”, *Foreign Affairs,* accessed 7/1/2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2020-02-10/price-primacy)//sfs

Both champions and critics of U.S. grand strategy after the Cold War have christened the project “liberal hegemony.” But American objectives and methods were always more hegemonic than liberal. Despite diverging over whether and how to promote liberalism, U.S. policymakers have for nearly three decades converged around the premise that Pentagon planners set forth in 1992: the United States should maintain a military superiority so overwhelming that it would dissuade allies and rivals alike from challenging Washington’s authority. That superiority quickly became an end unto itself. By seeking dominance instead of merely defense, the strategy of primacy plunged the United States into a downward spiral: American actions generated antagonists and enemies, who in turn made primacy more dangerous to pursue.

For most of the 1990s, the costs of this strategy remained somewhat hidden. With Russia flattened and China poor, the United States could simultaneously reduce its defense spending and expand NATO, launch military interventions in the former Yugoslavia and for the first time station tens of thousands of troops in the Middle East. Yet by the end of the decade, U.S. dominance had begun to generate blowback. Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist group declared war on the United States in 1996, citing the U.S. military’s presence in Saudi Arabia as their top grievance; two years later, al Qaeda bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 224 people. U.S. policymakers, for their part, were already exaggerating the threat posed by weak “rogue states” and gearing up for ambitious military interventions to promote democracy and human rights. These pathologies shaped Washington’s overly militarized reaction to the 9/11 attacks, as the United States entered into successive conflicts in which its capabilities and interests did not exceed those of local actors. The result was endless war.

Now, as the United States struggles to extricate itself from the Middle East, China is growing into an economic and political powerhouse and Russia is asserting itself as a spoiler. That outcome is exactly what primacy was supposed to prevent. The rise of a near-peer competitor does not necessarily pose a grave danger to the United States, whose nuclear deterrent secures it from attack. But clinging to the dream of never-ending primacy will ensure trouble, mandating the containment of rivals and provoking insecurity and aggression in return. China has yet to undertake a costly bid for military dominance in East Asia, let alone the world, but U.S. actions could push Beijing in that direction.

Primacy has not merely failed to provide security as it is narrowly defined. It has also damaged the environment, undercut the economic interests of most Americans, and destabilized democracy. The U.S. military consumes more oil and produces more greenhouse gases than any other institution on earth, according to Brown University’s Costs of War Project. In 2017, the U.S. military’s emissions exceeded those of entire industrialized countries, such as Denmark and Sweden.

Nor does primacy offer a net economic benefit. From the 1940s through the 1960s, U.S. military preponderance lubricated international capitalism by containing communism and facilitating the expansion of the dollar, to which all other currencies were pegged. But after the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system and then of the Soviet Union, currencies were floated, and global markets were integrated. As a result, U.S. military strength became largely detached from the international economic order. Today, the status of the U.S. dollar as a reserve currency, which allows Americans to borrow cheaply, rests largely on path dependence, the currency’s stability, and the dearth of attractive alternatives—factors that no longer rely on the global projection of U.S. force that helped usher them in originally. And the quest for primacy is now leading the United States to erode its own financial position by maintaining unnecessary hostilities with states such as Iran, imposing crippling sanctions on them and forcing third parties who use the dollar to follow suit. These actions have compelled European states to seek alternatives to the dollar and have driven down the dollar’s share in global foreign exchange reserves.

The U.S. military contributes to global commerce by protecting the sea-lanes through which goods (including oil) flow. But doing so does not require globe-spanning dominance; it requires effective local partners to handle day-to-day tasks, with a light U.S. air and naval presence that can be reinforced if and when those partners cannot overcome a genuine challenge to maritime security. Whatever economic benefits primacy may indirectly yield, what is certain is that year after year, the United States spends half of its federal discretionary budget to fund a military that is costlier than the next seven largest armed forces combined. Military spending is one of the least efficient ways to create jobs, ranking behind tax cuts and spending on education, health care, infrastructure, and clean energy. The estimated $6.4 trillion poured into the “war on terror” so far could have rebuilt communities across the United States that were devastated by the financial crisis and the recession that followed. Now, many members of those communities resent the political elites who allowed them to crumble.

Primacy has also corroded the U.S. political system, which has in turn produced irresponsible leaders to wield primacy’s power. During the Cold War, the need to counter a threatening adversary sometimes worked to unify disparate political factions and social groups in the United States. The post–Cold War quest for primacy offers a perverse contrast. The United States has acquired a kaleidoscope of foreign enemies, whom U.S. officials and the mass media have encouraged the American public to fear and punish. Small wonder that in the second decade of the war on terror, a demagogue was able to turn hatred of foreigners into a premise that propelled him to the presidency, dividing the country further still.

### 1NC---Multilateralism

#### A reimagined multilateralism is key to prevent existential climate change

Gallagher and Kozul-Wright 19 [5-8-2019, Gallagher, Kevin P., Dr. Kevin P. Gallagher is a professor of global development policy at Boston University (BU), where he directs the Global Development Policy Center (GDP Center. The GDP Center’s mission is to advance policy-relevant research for financial stability, human wellbeing, and the environment on a global scale., Kozul-Wright, Richard, Mr Richard Kozul-Wright is Director of the Globalisation and Development Strategies Division in United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)., “A New Multilateralism for Shared Prosperity”, Boston University Global Development Policy Center, <https://www.bu.edu/gdp/research/global-economic-governance/a-new-multilateralism/report/>]//AA

A NEW MULTILATERALISM FOR A GLOBAL GREEN NEW DEAL The rules and practices of the multilateral trade, investment and monetary regime are in need of urgent reform. These rules are currently skewed in favor of global financial and corporate interests, and powerful countries, leaving national governments, local communities, households, and future generations to bear the costs of economic insecurity, rising inequality, financial instability, and climate change. The rules of the global trade and investment regime have been instrumental in delivering this unbalanced outcome. These limitations are now widely recognized and a number of efforts are underway, particularly in the developing world, to establish policies for reform.32 The most effective efforts will be those that recognize the systemic nature of the challenge, rather than piecemeal policy tinkering. A renewed multilateralism is required to provide the global public goods needed to deliver shared prosperity and a healthy planet, to cooperate and coordinate on policy initiatives that demand collective action, to mitigate common risks, and to ensure that no nation’s pursuit of these broader goals infringes on the ability of other nations to pursue them. The “Geneva Principles for a Global Green New Deal” advances an urgent research and policy agenda for a New Multilateralism to calibrate the global economy toward a 21st century vision of stability, shared prosperity, and environmental sustainability. The original New Deal, launched in the United States in the 1930s and replicated in distinct ways elsewhere in the industrialized world, particularly after the end of the Second World War, established a new social contract and accompanying development path that focused on four broad components: recovery from Depression, extensive public investment, regulation of finance, and redistribution of income. While these broad features were consistent with specific policy goals tailored to particular economic and political circumstances, they made job creation, the expansion of productive investment and faster productivity growth common features of successful post-war economies. In building a global new deal today, we can learn from those core principles. As before, states require the space to tailor proactive fiscal and public policies to boost investment and raise living standards, supported by regulatory and redistributive strategies that tackle the triple challenges of large inequalities, demographic pressures and environmental problems. However, the original New Deal was neither directed at development of the Global South, nor at global climate change. The specific challenges of inequality and insecurity in the 21st century will require innovative and global approaches. The “Geneva Principles for a Global Green New Deal” articulates a set of cohesive principles for the design of a reformed multilateral trade and investment regime. Five broad strategic goals should frame any such deal: 1. A productive global economy built around full and decent employment at livable wages, for all countries 2. A just society that targets closing socio-economic gaps, within and across generations, nations, households, race and gender 3. A caring community that protects vulnerable populations and promotes economic rights 4. A participatory politics that defeats policy capture by narrow interest groups and extends the democratic principle to economic decision making 5. A sustainable future based on the mobilization of resources and policies to decarbonize growth and recover environmental health in all its dimensions These goals will be manifest differently in different nations across varying stages of economic development. Specific policy programs and measures will necessarily reflect local circumstances, but there will be a series of initiatives that will likely surface across countries regardless of their level of development. Governments everywhere need to end austerity and boost demand in support of sustainable and inclusive economies using an active mix of fiscal and monetary policies as part of a general expansion of government spending that covers physical and social infrastructure but also employing, whenever appropriate, public employment schemes. Significant public investment in clean transport and energy systems is imperative to establish low carbon growth paths and to transform food production for a growing global population as well as addressing problems of pollution and environmental degradation more generally. This will need to be supported by a green industrial policy, using a mixture of general and targeted subsidies, tax incentives, equity investments, loans and guarantees, as well as accelerated investments in research, development and technology adaptation, and a new generation of intellectual property and licensing rules. Specific measures and support will be required in developing countries to help them leapfrog the old, dirty development path of the Global North. Raising wages in line with productivity will be key to moving to a fairer society; this is best achieved by giving workers a secure and protected right to organize into unions. At the same time, job insecurity also needs to be corrected through appropriate legislative action (including on informal and precarious work contracts) and active labor market measures. And again, more progressive tax policies, including on income, wealth, corporations, property and other forms of rent income, could help address income inequalities. Regulating private financial flows will be essential to steering private finance toward these broader social goals. Curtailing restrictive business and predatory financial practices will be key to reigning in corporate rentierism and crowding in private investment to productive activities included in the green economy But countries cannot be expected to undertake any such policy programs in isolation. At the global level, a new multilateralism is urgently needed to pursue these in a way that maximizes the effectiveness of national development strategies without creating negative global spillovers to partner nations. A new multilateralism will require the following design principles: 1. Global rules should be calibrated toward the overarching goals of social and economic stability, shared prosperity, and environmental sustainability and be protected against capture by the most powerful players 2. States share common but differentiated responsibilities in a multilateral system built to advance global public goods and protect the global commons 3. The right of states to policy space to pursue national development strategies should be enshrined in global rules 4. Global regulations should be designed both to strengthen a dynamic international division of labor and to prevent destructive unilateral economic actions that prevent other nations from realizing common goals 5. Global public institutions must be accountable to their full membership, open to a diversity of viewpoints, cognizant of new voices, and have balanced dispute resolution systems STEPS FORWARD Only through extensive reforms can the financial and trading systems support a more stable global economy, help deliver prosperity for all, and backstop the public investment drive needed to move, at the required speed, to carbonfree and inclusive growth paths. As things stand, current arrangements fall far short of providing countries with the resources and predictability needed to support a global green new deal. A properly resourced, and more democratically governed, IMF and World Bank will need to get back to their original business of stabilizing exchange rates, controlling unruly capital flows and funding infrastructure projects in a low carbon and inclusive manner. These institutions will need to coordinate with — and not attempt to coopt — an emerging set of development finance institutions that are ramping up their lending activities to provide additional public financing to the system. The WTO needs to return to its roots as a venue for the negotiation of rules regarding trade per se, and not as a universal engine of laissez-faire. Bilateral trade agreements, in which powerful nations strong-arm weaker ones, should be shunned in favor of true multilateralism. All of these institutions will need to calibrate their efforts toward these broader goals, and adhere to these “Geneva Principles for a Global Green New Deal” in order to succeed. The financing requirements will be in the trillions of dollars with private investments crowded in to the mix through a properly funded public investment push. Financing for such a push will need to come from a mixture of tax and debt instruments; returning to the progressive tax structures common before the 1980s, along with new structures to prevent the abusive fiscal strategies employed by transnational corporations. Doing so will require concerted international efforts and dedicated institutional support mechanisms. But the growth, over the last four decades, of financial markets from 12 trillion to 300 trillion dollars serves as an indicator of the transformative role that a properly managed credit regime could play in financing a global new deal. If only a fraction of this increase had been directed to meeting environmental and social challenges the threat of a climate breakdown would be far less daunting today. Other more tailored mechanisms such as for addressing forest-related degradation and water scarcity will also have to be added to an institutional landscape tailored to delivering sustainable outcomes. Significant attention will need to be paid to the debt sustainability of nations, corporations, and households as the global community scales to meet these broader goals. More debt relief for heavily indebted nations, including orderly processes analogous to corporate bankruptcies, are required. However, given that private capital flows will remain a feature of the interdependent economic order, even a well-managed economy may succumb to a sustained and major attack on its currency, and a liquidity problem can then be rapidly transformed into an international debt crisis. Pursuing a global green new deal must accept that international finance is under-regulated and that avoiding the threat of a downward spiral into debt deflation requires new responses such as capital controls and sovereign debt restructuring mechanisms — both of which are increasingly difficult under international trade and investment treaties. The crisis of the multilateral trading system is also an opportunity to redirect it toward the goal of sustainable development.33 Reforms to trade and investment rules are perhaps the highest priority given the laws and regulations in the trade and investment regime now stretch across the global financial, trading, investment system — as well as deep into national policy making. Trade and investment rule reform must ensure the maximum space to undertake financial regulations and debt workouts, innovation and industrial policy, and policies for social welfare that are in line with the demands of a global green new deal, including the effective use of subsidies to support structural transformation and the development of alternative energies and to reengineer the production process of carbon-intensive industries. Rolling back the numerous free trade agreements and bi-lateral investments treaties, which have been particularly destructive of policy space, is a priority. New efforts for reform at the WTO are an opportunity to put these Geneva principles into forward looking action.

#### Warming causes extinction

David Spratt 19, Research Director for Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration, Ian Dunlop, member of the Club of Rome, formerly an international oil, gas and coal industry executive, chairman of the Australian Coal Association, May 2019, “Existential climate-related security risk: A scenario approach,” https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/148cb0\_b2c0c79dc4344b279bcf2365336ff23b.pdf

An existential risk to civilisation is one posing permanent large negative consequences to humanity which may never be undone, either annihilating intelligent life or permanently and drastically curtailing its potential.

With the commitments by nations to the 2015 Paris Agreement, the current path of warming is 3°C or more by 2100. But this figure does not include “long-term” carbon-cycle feedbacks, which are materially relevant now and in the near future due to the unprecedented rate at which human activity is perturbing the climate system. Taking these into account, the Paris path would lead to around 5°C of warming by 2100.

Scientists warn that warming of 4°C is incompatible with an organised global community, is devastating to the majority of ecosystems, and has a high probability of not being stable. The World Bank says it may be “beyond adaptation”. But an existential threat may also exist for many peoples and regions at a significantly lower level of warming. In 2017, 3°C of warming was categorised as “catastrophic” with a warning that, on a path of unchecked emissions, low-probability, high-impact warming could be catastrophic by 2050.

The Emeritus Director of the Potsdam Institute, Prof. Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, warns that “climate change is now reaching the end-game, where very soon humanity must choose between taking unprecedented action, or accepting that it has been left too late and bear the consequences.” He says that if we continue down the present path “there is a very big risk that we will just end our civilisation. The human species will survive somehow but we will destroy almost everything we have built up over the last two thousand years.”11

Unfortunately, conventional risk and probability analysis becomes useless in these circumstances because it excludes the full implications of outlier events and possibilities lurking at the fringes.12

Prudent risk-management means a tough, objective look at the real risks to which we are exposed, especially at those “fat-tail” events, which may have consequences that are damaging beyond quantification, and threaten the survival of human civilisation.

Global warming projections display a “fat-tailed” distribution with a greater likelihood of warming that is well in excess of the average amount of warming predicted by climate models, and are of a higher probability than would be expected under typical statistical assumptions. More importantly, the risk lies disproportionately in the “fat-tail” outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 1.

### 1NC---NATO Cohesion

#### Russia’s invasion of Ukraine reinvigorates NATO cohesion, but it’s not guaranteed.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine has reinvigorated the Western alliance and bolstered transatlantic solidarity. After being declared “brain dead” by French President Emmanuel Macron in 2019, NATO has sprung to life, deploying forces to its eastern flank and coordinating the provision of sophisticated weapons that have helped Ukraine impede Russia’s invasion. For the first time in its history, the European Union has financed the purchase and delivery of lethal aid. Western countries have vastly exceeded expectations in implementing coordinated financial sanctions that have ~~crippled~~ Russia’s economy. Even neutral Switzerland joined the fray. But no matter how remarkable this solidarity may be in the short term, there is no guarantee that it will last: if policymakers are complacent, powerful trends predating the Ukraine crisis could overwhelm and ultimately derail it. Protectionist sentiment and self-defeating trade wars have pulled at the seams of Western economic integration. Former U.S. President Donald Trump’s threats to pull out of NATO and the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 have chipped away at military trust between the United States and Europe. A Marine Le Pen victory later this month in France would pose additional challenges to the alliance, and looming concerns about the 2024 presidential election raise doubts about the United States’ commitment. If not managed intelligently, the reawakening of Europe as a diplomatic and military actor and the reexamination of global economic interdependence catalyzed by Russia’s invasion could result not in a strengthened transatlantic alliance but in a more worrying outcome: the emergence of three distinct blocs, one centered around the United States, a second around Europe, and a third around China (which would include Russia). Such a world—with the United States and Europe often collaborating, but also at odds when their interests diverge—would make the management of China and Russia more difficult, as the two would have opportunities to trigger and exploit U.S.-European tensions. It would also represent a major missed opportunity for the United States and Europe.

#### U.S. hegemony undermines NATO cohesion

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Utilizing ideal points, we proposed cohesion, deviation, and adhesion measures to empirically explore security alliance cohesion, Member State deviations, and third state adhesions. Our findings suggest that security alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact had higher cohesion than other UN members, that external threat increased security alliance cohesion, and that the United States turned out to be the most significant deviating member in NATO Since 1980, while third countries such as Australia, South Korea, and Japan were more aligned with the NATO alliance whereas Israel was more aligned with the United States. By using our measures, one can study any alignment pattern among any state groups in the UN, even without a priori identifications of state groupings. Measures developed and tested in this study can provide researchers with strong diagnostic tools. The study contributes to the overall UNGA voting literature by providing statistical inferences about the validity of the data. We believe that the approach and new measures presented here could be useful to investigate cohesion levels in other intergovernmental organizations such as the EU and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as economic communities like BRICS, while pinpointing each state’s political distance vis-à-vis each other or to a defined group of states. Furthermore, using this approach and these new measures could help researchers to concentrate on specific questions (e.g., whether the foundation of BRICS really brought Member States together on the issues of high politics, or whether Brexit could have been predicted). In other words, while the approach offered here was utilized more for descriptive purposes, it presents a superior alternative to measure variance across time, increasing our predictive power for actual or potential dramatic policy shifts at Member State and at (any) group level by using the UNGA voting data. As the Trump administration threatened to abandon NATO, and as Russia revives and China rises, “How long can NATO last in a post-US hegemonic, multipolar world?” became one of the most important questions in contemporary world politics. Contrary to Trump’s withdrawal rhetoric, we found that the height of the US ally deviation from NATO was during 2001–2008, coinciding with the presidential term of George W. Bush. In fact, our findings suggest that Trump’s NATO deviation scores came behind those of two Democrat presidents, Obama and Clinton, when they were put into an ordinal scale for heuristic purposes. Throughout this article, we deliberately tried to avoid any discussion that might not be empirically verified, keeping the scope of the article rather descriptive. Still, we believe studying the past of the security alliances would give us considerable explanatory and even predictive power. We observed that threat perception, both for external and internal (i.e., intra-alliance) threats, played a significant role in political alignments for security alliances. The 9/11 attacks and activation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty led to a turning point for the NATO allies, as free riding was replaced by joining costly global wars that were arguably triggered by US hegemony in the world. In the past, the United States provided deterrence against the Soviet Union as a public good for NATO members. Over the past two decades, however, an increasing number of NATO members have come to believe that they are being dragged into “American wars.” In this case, the problem would not be one of US abdication or abandonment but balancing the hegemon.59 NATO has survived US ally deviation for four decades. The height of US deviation was actually in the past, not in the present. While alliance cohesion was an important topic, especially after the end of the Cold War, discussions about NATO have happened largely at a theoretical level, revolving around realist, liberal and constructivist propositions about whether NATO would collapse or survive.60 The present research, in contrast, was conducted at an empirical level. By applying this approach to NATO, we were able to measure the flexibility of the arrangement and obtain evidence to show what was really happening with the United States and NATO, despite what might have been expected from the rhetoric of Trump. While our findings support some earlier proposals, such as the external threat hypothesis, they also contradict some others, including the literature on the decline of US hegemony and its policy implications. We therefore hope that the new approach developed here to measure foreign policy preferences by using a spatial model and UNGA voting data might reignite interest for more empirically driven future research on NATO and other alliances, as well as cohesion of states in other organizations, while also strengthening the overall validity and therefore confidence in using UNGA voting data with spatial models.

#### NATO cohesion checks Russia and China war through deterrence

Marcus Kolga 21, Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute Center for Advancing Canada’s Interests Abroad, “Improving NATO’s cohesion is critical to combat Russia and China’s threat,” <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/improving-natos-cohesion-critical-combat-russia-chinas-threat/micahw> [GRU = Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie]

A united NATO is critically important to projecting credible deterrence. The erosion of domestic trust and confidence in the Alliance among its member states, including Canada, represents a threat to this cohesion. A proposal to withdraw Canada from NATO was tabled at a recent policy conference for one of Canada’s three major political parties. The proposal was defeated, but it represents a fringe anti-NATO narrative within Canada’s illiberal left; if left unaddressed, such a narrative could grow.

If countries like Russia perceive NATO as an atomized collection of states with varied priorities rather than a unified front, the Alliance is exposed to a significant risk of miscalculation in which a foreign adversary might believe they can cross a red line and only face a limited response. Thus, gaps in cohesion within the alliance directly threaten to undermine political and military deterrence. The Alliance and members states must work towards improving communications strategies to foster greater basic general understanding of NATO’s purpose, its missions and its role in protecting its members against external threats.

Similarly, if we see threats as atomized or disparate, we may lack the capacity to adequately respond. Organized GRU terrorist attacks in Czechia, the Salisbury poisonings, transnational repression and censorship, cyberwarfare, disinformation, and overt military posturing all pose threats that are aimed at the same essential goal: undermining and supplanting the power of liberal democracy and advancing authoritarianism. Through this lens, challenges posed by other actors, including China, must also be considered as part of the broader range of shared threats posed to the democratic community as a whole.

### 1NC---Oil Wars

#### Oil wars now from US heg.

Jeff D. Colgan 13, Richard Holbrooke Associate Professor of Political Science at Brown University and the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, Oct. 2013, "Oil, Conflict, and U.S. National Interests," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/oil-conflict-and-us-national-interests>, kav

Bottom Lines

Oil Is a Leading Cause of War. Between one-quarter and one-half of interstate wars since 1973 have been linked to oil.

Fracking Does Not Change the Fundamentals. Although hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") is transforming the U.S. oil and gas sector, the United States will not be isolated from foreign markets and events. Its allies will continue to have vital energy needs, and disruptions in the integrated world market will continue to affect domestic markets. The United States therefore has an enduring interest in maintaining an open global oil market.

Watch Out for Unexpected Sources of Conflict. The oil industry can cause or exacerbate conflict in multiple ways: competition over shipping lanes and pipelines, oil-related terrorism, petro-aggression, and resource scarcity in consumer states are all potential sources of international conflict.

Oil as a Leading Cause of War

Although the threat of "resource wars" over possession of oil reserves is often exaggerated, the sum total of the political effects generated by the oil industry makes oil a leading cause of war. Between one-quarter and one-half of interstate wars since 1973 have been connected to one or more oil-related causal mechanisms. No other commodity has had such an impact on international security.

The influence of oil on conflict is often poorly understood. In U.S. public debates about the 1991 and 2003 Iraq wars, both sides focused excessively on the question of whether the United States was fighting for possession of oil reserves; neither sought a broader understanding of how oil shaped the preconditions for war.

Oil fuels international conflict through eight distinct mechanisms: (1) resource wars, in which states try to acquire oil reserves by force; (2) petro-aggression, whereby oil insulates aggressive leaders such as Saddam Hussein or Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini from domestic opposition, and therefore makes them more willing to engage in risky foreign policy adventurism; (3) the externalization of civil wars in oil-producing states ("petrostates"); (4) financing for insurgencies—for instance, Iran funneling oil money to Hezbollah; (5) conflicts triggered by the prospect of oil-market domination, such as the United States' war with Iraq over Kuwait in 1991; (6) clashes over control of oil transit routes, such as shipping lanes and pipelines; (7) oil-related grievances, whereby the presence of foreign workers in petrostates helps extremist groups such as al-Qaida recruit locals; and (8) oil-related obstacles to multilateral cooperation, such as when an importer's attempt to curry favor with a petrostate prevents multilateral cooperation on security issues. These mechanisms can contribute to conflict individually or in combination.

The linkages between oil and international conflict are growing increasingly important in light of three transitions under way in global energy markets. The first is the shift in patterns of global oil production away from traditional suppliers in the Middle East and toward (1) suppliers of unconventional oil reserves in North America and (2) new suppliers of conventional oil, especially in Africa. As many as sixteen developing countries will become oil exporters in the near future, creating a swath of new international security concerns. Second, the low oil prices of the 1990s have given way to higher and more volatile prices, increasing the magnitude of the consequences one can expect from oil-conflict linkages. Third, the relative decline of U.S. hegemony may reduce the provision of public goods such as security of shipping lanes and pipelines. Although these transitions alter some of the ways in which the oil industry contributes to international conflict, none eliminates linkages between the two or allows the United States to disengage from global markets.

The Role of Fracking

Understanding the eight mechanisms linking oil to international security can help policymakers think beyond the much-discussed goal of energy security, defined as reliable access to affordable fuel supplies. Achieving such an understanding is important in light of recent changes in the United States. As hydraulic fracturing—"fracking"—of shale oil and gas accelerates, energy imports are projected to decline, and North America could even achieve energy independence, in the sense of low or zero net overall energy imports, in the next decade. Yet the United States will continue to import large volumes of oil, and the world price of oil will continue to affect it. Moreover, so long as the rest of the world remains dependent on global oil markets, the fracking revolution will do little to reduce many oil-related threats to international security. The emergence of aggressive, revolutionary leaders in petrostates would likely continue to pose threats to regional security. Petrostates will continue to be weakly institutionalized and thus subject to civil wars, creating the kind of security problems that demand responses by the international community, as occurred in Libya in 2011. Petro-financed insurgent groups such as Hezbollah will persist, as will threats to the shipping lanes and oil transit routes that supply important U.S. allies, such as Japan.

In sum, energy autarky is not the answer. Self-sufficiency will bring economic benefits to the United States, but few gains for national security. So long as the oil market remains globally integrated, national oil imports matter far less than total consumption. Rather than viewing energy self-sufficiency as a panacea, the United States should contribute to international security by making long-term investments in research and development to reduce oil consumption and provide alternative fuel sources in the transportation sector. In addition to the economic and environmental benefits of reducing oil consumption, substantial evidence exists that military and security benefits will accrue from such investments.

Unexpected Sources of Conflict

Policymakers must also think systematically about oil-security linkages when monitoring emerging security threats as the global oil industry transforms itself. With sixteen additional countries potentially exporting oil in the near future, new international dynamics will materialize, especially in Africa. Furthermore, if oil prices remain high, incentives for resource grabs will grow. Resource wars are most likely to occur in unpopulated territories or naval zones, as oil can be extracted from these areas without the need to manage a populated, potentially hostile territory. Thus, policymakers should be most concerned about disputed territories in the East China and South China Seas and naval borders in the Caspian Sea. There are already competing sovereignty claims to territory in those regions, and considerable uncertainty about the magnitude of the energy resources located there, creating conditions ripe for miscalculation and mutual suspicion. Policymakers should be especially concerned about security threats that arise from unexpected sources, such as allies' energy needs or seemingly benign actions that prompt hostile responses from rivals.

#### US heg is linked to oil power over the globe. China would fill in US vacuum with renewable dev.

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By contrast, oil was the **quintessential energy source** for the “Neotechnic” age of steel, internal combustion, chemicals, and electricity—**the Second Industrial Revolution**. Without access to patents jealously guarded by German chemical companies through their alliances with oil companies, coal producers had no ability to produce synthetic fuels or enter the petrochemical industry.31 The latter, in particular, was a major consumer for petroleum besides transportation and **power generation**. The petrochemical industry that emerged after World War II became the world’s primary source of synthetic rubber and helped spearhead the “green revolution” through the diffusion of fertilizers developed from petrochemicals (not to mention the oil-fueled mechanization of agriculture).

The close relationship between the **oil industry** and the **health of the global economy** and **petroleum’s indispensable role in modern warfare** means it is no surprise that the superpowers that emerged from World War II possessed large domestic supplies of oil. But U.S. hegemony depended on more than mere self-sufficiency, which mostly evaporated after 1948.32 A large U.S. domestic industry created the wherewithal to expand overseas both for markets and for new supplies. This process incentivized American diplomats to solidify U.S. predominance in Latin America and influence over **budding oil producers** in areas once of marginal interest to the United States (such as the Persian Gulf). Oil also shifted the **naval balance in favor of the United States** even before World War I, particularly in the Pacific, where Great Britain and Japan were relatively starved of oil while the U.S. Navy enjoyed prolific oilfields in California.33

Oil also gave the United States an **immense advantage** during the Second Industrial Revolution. Germany was a leader in the development of the internal combustion engine and was unchallenged within the realm of chemicals, but it could not keep pace with U.S. motorization or follow Great Britain and the United States into converting its battle fleet to oil before World War I.34 Even Britain for its oil depended on sources controlled directly or indirectly by the United States and relied after World War I on **U.S. security and financial assistance** to maintain access. Oil combined with industrial power—both aircraft production and petrochemicals—similarly allowed the United States **to exert dominion** over the newest domain of warfare—the air—even if the results never matched the claims of enthusiasts such as Giulio Douhet35 (although recent studies suggest that the firebombing of Japan during World War II was far more effective at producing social disorder than it was in Germany36). In effect, American **predominance on the high seas and in the air** restricted potential rivals’ access to oil in the 20th century far more extensively than British control of coaling stations ever did a century prior.

U.S. commercial ascendancy in the oil industry contributed to the pricing of even foreign oil in dollars. Obviously, the fact that oil often required payment in dollars or hard currencies convertible into dollars was a profound handicap for countries suffering from balance of payments deficits. Likewise, reliance on dollars and U.S. banks as financial intermediaries became yet another source of vulnerability for countries such as Japan: Its access to oil in 1941 was effectively blocked without a formal embargo when the United States froze Japanese accounts in the American banks.37

The growing demand for oil priced in dollars throughout the 20th century enabled a form of seigniorage whereby the United States could pay for imported oil using dollars that lost some of their value before foreigners could recycle them into U.S. goods and services. The fact that oil is traded in dollars encouraged foreign central and private banks to hold dollars as a reserve currency even after the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in 1971–1973; it also incentivized the use of dollars for cross-border trade even when a U.S. actor is not the counterparty, because dollars can always be exchanged for goods and services around the world. Nations always had an incentive to earn or accumulate dollars even if they traded little with the United States—yet another form of “exorbitant privilege” that so enraged critics of American power, albeit one with major costs for certain sectors of the U.S. economy. Specifically, if the dollar was to retain its predominance after Washington severed the link with gold, the United States had to embrace full capital mobility and commit to providing ample liquidity to satisfy economic growth. These developments depressed domestic manufacturing by artificially raising U.S. exchange rates and encouraged U.S. firms to look for cheaper labor abroad.38 One of the major beneficiaries of this process was, of course, China.

Furthermore, unlike coal, oil is produced in relatively few geographic locales, two of which (North America and the Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean) were in the U.S. orbit. The United States has (with the assistance of Great Britain at least until 1971) worked consistently to ensure that **no rival foreign or domestic power** (Nasserist Egypt, Ba’athist Iraq, or revolutionary Iran) could dominate the Middle East, long before President Jimmy Carter articulated his Carter Doctrine in 1980.39 Most oil is transported by tanker (thanks in part to pipelines’ vulnerability to sabotage or economic blackmail), which gives the **dominant naval power** extraordinary coercive ability in the event of war or crisis since it is difficult for either producing or consuming nations to stockpile more than **a few months’ worth of oil**. Even then, doing so entails a tremendous financial and material cost due to the vast quantity and diversity of petroleum that modern nations require, and because it is impossible to recycle oil or petroleum in the same way as other critical commodities, such as copper, nickel, tungsten, chromium, and others.40

Ultimately, oil—its ubiquity in modern societies and centrality to military affairs, the operations of the industry, and geopolitical competition over access—has served to create **an American hegemony that has no historical parallel** in either its **military or financial dimensions**. Moreover, hydrocarbons have preserved this power even as the United States, like Great Britain before it, relinquished its status as the world’s dominant **industrial power and oil producer**. While nations such as Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union overtook the United States as an oil producer in the 1970s, U.S. firms continued to dominate the international trade in oil. Even more important, oil-related transactions continued to be denominated in dollars.

A century before, coal sustained British primacy but ultimately proved to be a hindrance as technological, social, and political change affected the structures of nations, economies, and conventional warfare. Even supplies in coal-rich Great Britain were vulnerable to labor unrest, and the coal unions’ close links to the Labour Party forced the government to nationalize the industry even as its profitability declined. To make matters worse, British earnings from coal exports after World War I shrank as new sources came online and demand slackened from the ongoing conversion to oil.

Before 1914, this last factor was most pronounced in the naval dimension, but thereafter it spread to other domains of warfare thanks to the internal combustion engine. Coal was not suitable for internal combustion, and the transition away from steam left Great Britain saddled with obsolete infrastructure around the world (coaling stations and mines—a version of the “stranded asset” problem). Finally, Britain had to restructure its naval and maritime power by converting from coal to oil during a period of financial duress. This shift occurred at a time when Britain was already under pressure from rising naval challenges from Germany, Japan, and the United States. Even though Britain managed to defeat its German rival and win Japan as an ally during World War I, it did so with U.S. oil and dollars, while the growth in U.S. naval power and dominance in oil global production meant that the United States controlled Britain’s access to oil even after British firms began developing the Middle East, where security in wartime was always questionable.

**Oil, therefore, in many ways created as well as sustained American hegemony**. One might assume that the resurgence of U.S. domestic oil production during the “shale revolution” would presage a new era of American geopolitical dominance, but that is a short-sighted perspective that assumes the future will mimic the past. The fact of anthropogenic climate means that any future premised on hydrocarbon-fueled growth is out of the question. Unless the United States recognizes and acts on this fact, oil may end up posing a greater risk to its hegemony than coal did for British primacy.

In the United States, the oil and gas industry has long enjoyed **special political privileges** (tax breaks and incentives) and has used them to stifle alternatives. Preserving control over the access **to oil and the global oil market** has also encouraged the United States to devote vast resources to the strategic sinkhole that is the Middle East.41 This status quo no longer seems tenable. Even before the recent pandemic, climate change threatened to turn the **oil and gas industries’** reserves into stranded assets and therefore erode the industry’s **financial and political power**.42 And the opportunity costs of delaying action must not be overlooked. The United States stopped investing in battery technology after World War II because oil was so cheap and plentiful. Conversely, China currently possesses the **lion’s share of minerals** essential for **lithium batteries** and has undertaken the leading role in the latter’s construction.43

Perhaps most important, China is poised to take **a decisive role** in the global effort to **curtail carbon dioxide emissions**. On the one hand, this is welcome news from the country with the largest share of emissions. On the other hand, it is worrying because **American denialism** about climate change and **China’s growing importance** within the global economy are both forcing stalwart U.S. allies such as the Europeans to seek collaboration with Beijing, even as China’s foreign policy becomes more bellicose.44

Hydrocarbons were undeniably a necessary condition for Anglo-American predominance, but there is a possibility that the latter can thrive only if the world depends on the former for its energy needs. The era of Euro-American predominance was always an outlier in human history; until at least the 15th century, if not the 18th century, Asia accounted for a larger share of global economy activity because of its larger population and more efficient administrative and production techniques.45 What if the transition away from hydrocarbons accelerates the process of the world returning to a premodern economic balance of power—that is to say, an Asia-dominated or even Sino-centric world order?

To return to the introductory thesis, it was the combination of **American industrial power** and **American preponderant influence** over the **global oil trade** that served as a **key pillar of U.S. hegemony** after 1945. If there is indeed a close link between the control of energy and geopolitical primacy or even hegemony, then China appears well positioned to leapfrog the United States in **a world that depends on renewables** rather than fossil fuels for its energy needs.46 JFQ

#### Oil wars cause disease, disability, environmental destruction, violence, and humanitarian disasters--extinction.

Klare, PhD, 11

(Michael, Five Colleges professor of Peace and World Security Studies, The Public Health Implications of Resource Wars  
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/global>)

Competition for resources between or within nations is likely to become an increasingly common cause of armed conflict. Competition for **petroleum** is especially likely to **trigger armed conflict** because petroleum is a highly valuable resource whose supply is destined to contract. Wars fought over petroleum and other resources can create **public health concerns** by causing **morbidity and mortality**, **damaging societal infrastructure**, **diverting resources**, **uprooting people**, and **violating human rights**. Public health workers and the organizations with which they are affiliated can help prevent resource wars and minimize their consequences by (1) promoting renewable energy and conservation, (2) documenting the impact of past and potential future resource wars, (3) protecting the human rights of affected noncombatant civilian populations during armed conflict, and (4) developing and advocating for policies that promote peaceful dispute resolution. War has enormous **tragic impacts** **on people's lives and the environment.** War accounts for **more death and disability than** many **major diseases** do. It **destroys families, communities,** and sometimes **entire nations** and cultures. It **siphons** human and **financial resources** away **from health** and other human services. It damages the infrastructure that supports the health of society, such as systems that provide safe food and water, electrical power, transportation, and communication. War **violates human rights**. It uproots people, forcing them to migrate to other countries or to become internally displaced persons within their own countries. It contributes to the **spread of infectious disease**. The mindset of war—which endorses the notion that violence is the best way to resolve conflicts or disputes—contributes to **domestic violence**, **street crime,** and many other kinds of violence throughout the world. War, and the preparation for war, **contaminates** and damages the **environment** and uses vast amounts of nonrenewable fuels and other resources. In sum, war damages not only the health of people but also the very fabric of society.1 Wars today tend to be fought within nations (civil wars) instead of between nations. They are fought mainly with small arms and light weapons, and they usually involve attacks on civilians. In the past 20 years, since the end of the Cold War and withdrawal of US and Soviet military assistance to many less developed countries, military forces and armed groups in some countries have had to become more self-reliant, for example by engaging in illicit enterprises and exploiting local natural resources. As the International Committee of the Red Cross has demonstrated, insurgent groups frequently acquire weapons by trading resources (such as minerals) that are under their control, often illegally.2 Such resources have come to be called “conflict minerals” or “conflict resources.” Also in the past 20 years, control over armed forces has become decentralized, with military power deriving from control of resources, arms, or drugs, or from the intensity of fear created in the local population. The US government has recognized a **clear link** between illegal resource extraction and contemporary conflicts on the one hand and **humanitarian disasters** with resultant public health consequences on the other. The preamble to Section 1502 of the Wall Street Reform Act of 2010 states: It is the sense of Congress that the exploitation and trade of conflict minerals originating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is helping to finance conflict characterized by extreme levels of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly sexual- and gender-based violence, and contributing to an emergency humanitarian situation therein.3 In an effort to combat this trade, the act requires US corporations to take appropriate measures to identify the source of minerals used in their products and to eliminate those deemed to be conflict minerals. The sale of diamonds to finance other military activities of this type has contributed to additional humanitarian disasters, prompting additional efforts to curb illicit trafficking. Resource wars are violent conflicts that are largely driven by competition for control over vital or valuable natural materials, such as oil, water, land, timber, animals (or animal products), gold, silver, gems, and other key minerals. Resource wars can occur between states as (1) wars of conquest, in which a state or empire employs force to acquire resource-rich territories or colonies; (2) territorial disputes, in which 2 or more states fight over a border region or offshore territory with valuable resource deposits; or (3) access wars, in which a state fights to gain access to a critical resource deposit in another country. Resource wars can also occur within states, when groups fight for control over key sources of raw materials or over the allocation of the fees and royalties (or “rents”) obtained by governments from private entities that extract resources from areas owned or controlled by the state. A desire to gain control over a valuable resource supply or the wealth it generates is a dominant factor leading to war; however, conflicts over resources are usually driven by other factors as well, such as ethnic animosities and historical grievances.4,5 In the current article, we examine what makes resource wars distinctive and an important issue for public health, and we outline ways in which public health workers and the organizations and professional associations with which they are affiliated can minimize the consequences of these wars and contribute to their prevention. Much of this article is focused on wars fought over petroleum; in a recent commentary we examined armed conflicts over water and what public health workers can do to address them.6 Go to: WHY RESOURCE WARS ARE RELEVANT TO PUBLIC HEALTH We believe that resource wars are relevant to public health because of their **profound consequences for public health** and because public health workers have potential roles and responsibilities to minimize these consequences and to help prevent resource wars. Public health has been defined as what we, as a society, do collectively “to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy.”7 Resource wars threaten the conditions in which people can be healthy. Although public health is a societal function, it is a function performed mainly by public health workers in government agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and private-sector entities who work to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy. Although most public health workers do not address resource wars, some have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to help document the health consequences of resource wars, to raise awareness of these consequences, and to advocate for policies and programs for minimizing these consequences and for helping to prevent resource wars. Public health has a responsibility to address the fundamental causes of disease and to prevent adverse health outcomes.8 War is a major cause of **disease, disability, and death;** thus, war is a major public health problem.1,9 The Public Health Oath, which some public health students recite at orientation and graduation, includes the declaration: I will work to ensure that people have the chance to live full and productive lives, free from avoidable disease and disability.10 Resource wars threaten people's ability to live full and productive lives; they also provide opportunities for public health workers to help prevent avoidable disease, disability, and death.

### 1NC---Russia War

#### **US is willing to go great extents to maintain heg and weaken Russia, including war---Ukraine proves**

Dogan 2/22/22 [Dogan, Haluk, Haluk Dogan is a PhD candidate in Strategy and Security within the Department of Politics at the University of Exeter, where he also completed his MA in International Relations. His research focuses on international relations theory, foreign policy analysis, and West-Russia relations., “The US provoked the Russian invasion to maintain its global primacy”, TRT World, [https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/the-us-provoked-the-russian-invasion-to-maintain-its-global-primacy-55000]//AA](https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/the-us-provoked-the-russian-invasion-to-maintain-its-global-primacy-55000%5d//AA)

In a moot effort to cling to its hegemony and keep NATO relevant, Washington has, in turn, allowed the invasion to happen. Following a long period of escalation, Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered troops into Eastern Ukraine’s two breakaway regions, prompting immediate Western condemnation and an emergency UN Security Council meeting. While Moscow stands accused by the West of increasing acts of aggression on the Ukrainian border, the invasion was not a one-sided event. For months, the Anglo-American bloc has been unwilling to de-escalate the crisis. Washington and London have aimed to resuscitate the case for the NATO alliance, to invalidate arguments for a separate European Union-wide security arrangement, and to weaken Russia in seeking to prevent the emergence of rival blocs in Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific regions. However, to put it bluntly, this strategy will not reverse the decline of American hegemony. Is the ‘transatlantic alliance’ back? A couple of days before the invasion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed his disappointment at the failure of his Western “friends” to support Ukraine vis-a-vis Russian aggression. This perception is consistent with Ukrainian officials’ previous accusation that US President Joe Biden gave Moscow a “green light” to invade. Kiev’s disappointment is completely understandable. Giving Moscow the green light is as much about transatlantic relations as it is about West-Russia or Ukraine-Russia relations. The US’ post-World War II hegemony is predicated on its domination in continental Europe, with NATO acting as the principal mechanism for achieving American primacy. The Anglo-American strategy now focuses on preventing European states from acting independently. The Russian threat is thought to serve that aim, pushing Europe to be in need of American and British power. The Anglo-American bloc has never been happy with France’s attempts to establish an alternative European security mechanism, or with Germany’s relations with Russia – especially in terms of cooperation on the Nord Stream gas pipeline. The growing economic ties between the European Union and China are also causes of concern for the Anglo-American alliance. In this context, it is not surprising Biden pointed out at the 2021 Virtual Munich Security Conference: “America is back. The transatlantic alliance is back…The partnership between Europe and the United States, in my view, is and must remain the cornerstone of all that we hope to accomplish in the 21st Century, just as we did in the 20th Century.” Eliminating Russia in the ‘Great Game’? Neither NATO nor Western states will go to war with Russia over the invasion of Ukraine. The invasion justifies their efforts to undermine Russia economically and politically. However, the strategy of weakening Russia is not only about its military activities in Eastern Europe. The Kremlin has long embraced an approach that emphasises Russia’s great power status in a multipolar world, in direct opposition to the US’ vision of a unipolar world in which it reigns supreme. Therefore, the Anglo-American goal is not only to weaken Russia via economic sanctions, or harm Moscow’s economic interests in Europe, but also to divert its attention and energy away from the Indo and Asia-Pacific in particular, with the aim of hindering Russia’s partnerships with India and China. India has decades-long ties with Russia, and New Delhi recently started receiving Russian S-400 defence systems. But India is also a member of Quad – an alliance involving the US, Japan, and Australia, which aims to counter China’s growing assertiveness. Both the US and Britain have long been pushing India to cooperate with them in dealing with China. At the last Quad meeting, the US requested that India stand by its side in the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Another important topic for discussion was the growing economic and diplomatic relationships between Russia and China. The Anglo-American bloc hopes that the Ukraine invasion will severely wound Russia, preventing it from being an important rival actor in their confrontation with China. The question of American decline Anglo-American domination will push Europe into submission to some extent, and Russia will be wounded. But will this reverse the unravelling of American hegemony in the long term? As Russian President Vladimir Putin made clear in his televised speech just before the invasion, sanctions imposed by the West will not dissuade Russia from attempting to preserve its standing on the world stage. NATO has already lost prestige and power, and the invasion of Ukraine will only worsen this situation. Increasing the Anglo-American bloc’s weight in Europe due to the conflict in Eastern Europe will also have a negative impact on their ability to contain China in Asia. As it follows Russia’s annexation of Crimea, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will not cause France to abandon its call for strategic autonomy for the EU entirely, nor will it change the interdependence of Europe and Russia on gas. The Anglo-American coalition’s gas diversification efforts in favour of Europe will affect the strategic dynamics in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Yet it is not likely to obstruct the Nord Stream 2 project, despite Washington wanting to see this. Due to the steady erosion of the US’ hegemonic position in the world economy, it appears that China will continue to be the EU’s biggest trading partner. India has already signalled that it will remain neutral on the Ukraine crisis, which implies that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will have little impact on the close ties between Moscow and New Delhi. More crucially, this situation appears to have given Moscow and Beijing further reasons to act together and get closer, despite their conflicting interests in Asia. They share a common desire to challenge the Western-dominated international system. Should Russia be wounded by Western sanctions, it will rely on China in economic terms to some extent, while their collective security actions will hasten the demise of US hegemony. In the case of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there is no absolute winner. Indeed, nothing will change in terms of the ongoing and gradual unravelling of global American hegemony.

#### Only US-Russia nuclear war causes extinction

Bostrom ’2 [Nick; Oxford philosophy professor; “Existential Risks: Analyzing Human Extinction Scenarios and Related Hazards,” nickbostrom website]

A much greater existential risk emerged with the build-up of nuclear arsenals in the US and the USSR. An all-out nuclear war was a possibility with both a substantial probability and with consequences that might have been persistent enough to qualify as global and terminal. There was a real worry among those best acquainted with the information available at the time that a nuclear Armageddon would occur and that it might annihilate our species or permanently destroy human civilization.[4] Russia and the US retain large nuclear arsenals that could be used in a future confrontation, either accidentally or deliberately. There is also a risk that other states may one day build up large nuclear arsenals. Note however that a smaller nuclear exchange, between India and Pakistan for instance, is not an existential risk, since it would not destroy or thwart humankind’s potential permanently. Such a war might however be a local terminal risk for the cities most likely to be targeted. Unfortunately, we shall see that nuclear Armageddon and comet or asteroid strikes are mere preludes to the existential risks that we will encounter in the 21st century.

## 1NC Shells---Defense

### 1NC---AT: Heg Solves War/Sustainable

**US hegemony is unsustainable – tensions lead to war in the long-term**

**Ward 14** [August 22, 2014, Ward, Alex, Alex is a reporter covering the White House, with a focus on foreign policy and national security, as well as a co-host of Vox's "Worldly" podcast. Before joining Vox, Alex was an associate director in the Atlantic Council's Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security where he worked on military issues and US foreign policy. He also wrote the #NatSec2016 newsletter for War on the Rocks where he covered the 2016 presidential election and the candidates' views on national security., “Only US Can Prevent Great Power War”, The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/08/only-us-can-prevent-great-power-war/>]//AA

As the World War I centennial is celebrated, repressed thoughts of great power war once again begin to surface. With today’s highly “interconnected global economy” underwritten by a liberal order leading to the “rise of the rest,” it appears unlikely that any state would want to disrupt the current system. And yet, the constant stream of somber news reignites fears of a calamitous global catastrophe. In times of international flux, where the worst seems possible, it is important to turn to those who can best interpret these eras. In the case of great power or “hegemonic” wars, there is hardly a greater authority than Robert Gilpin. In his seminal work on the subject, War and Change in World Politics, Gilpin argues that three preconditions must be met for a hegemonic war to occur. First, Gilpin believes that the soon-to-be warring parties must feel there is a “‘closing in’ of space and opportunities.” Second, there must be a general “perception that a fundamental historical change is taking place.” Finally, events around the world start to “escape human control.” Notably, **all three** of these **conditions currently exist in the world.** Closing In Europe, where great power conflict took place for centuries, was heavily congested and contested. As powers like Britain, France, Germany and others rose, they fought for influence and geography at the expense of the others’ territory. Due to the close quarters, **any desire for expansion on one country’s part would cause concern in the others.** Today, some say, the world is different. The two powers that would compete in a war — the United States and China — are separated by a vast ocean, supposedly making it hard for each to antagonize the other. This, however, is not true. The map may show an expansive world, but new technologies — leading to hyperconnectivity and shorter travel times, especially for military equipment — have made the world “claustrophobic.” To wit, when China announced an “Air Defense Identification Zone” the United States quickly deployed two B-52 bombers to challenge its claim. And that was using old equipment. **Both China and the United States are developing hypersonic missiles and vehicles.** Humanity has already conquered physical space with commercial flight and fast ships. Now, it continues to shrink space even further for potentially decisive advantage. It is also hard to claim that China and the United States are far apart when they regularly bump up against each other as they have in the South China Sea. Perception Since the dawn of “Pax Americana” after World War II, belief in the United States as the undisputed global hegemon remained fairly stable. Until now. According to a recent Pew poll, **Americans’ views of the United States as a global power have reached a 40-year low.** Indeed, only 17 percent believe that America plays a “more important and powerful role than ten years ago.” Rightly or wrongly, this perception exists. Even though most people still find the United States preferable to China, regional powers can use the widespread belief that America is declining to make their cases for running the system. In fact they are already doing so to a degree. For example, China’s Global Times reports that 47 percent of people believe China has achieved “major power” status. Should both perceptions keep trending in the same direction — the United States is declining while China rises — then the feeling of an historic shift is almost inevitable. Human Control As current events prove, **even the great powers cannot stop horrendous things from happening in the world.** From Latin America and Africa to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, chaos and turmoil run rampant. While this is a particularly bad period for international affairs, it is naïve to think this may be an isolated epoch. In fact, there is reason to think **the world might grow more unstable in the years ahead.** Over the next 11 years, the world can expect another one billion people, reaching a total of around 8 billion by 2030. As technology becomes more powerful, it will do two things. First, it will empower the individual, or a group of individuals, to do great good or great harm. Second, it will allow individuals to be more aware of how the middle class lives. People around the world will demand similar things, causing stress on governments and brewing civil unrest and instability. Thus, as people are further empowered and further angered, the probability that these non-state actors — indeed, normal, everyday people — disrupt international affairs or geopolitics is high. Governments will continue to have less and less control of the citizenry, allowing the regular citizen to do with her newfound power what she wills. In essence, we will see, in a big way, the diffusion of power.

### 1NC---AT: Transition Wars Violent

**US heg collapse doesn’t cause war** – power disparities and a shared contentment regarding status quo contentment between the US and other major powers such as China prove

**Paudel 20** [September 3, 2020, Paudel, Sirish, Sirish Paudel is currently studying B. Sc. CSIT (Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Technology) at New Summit College., “Decline in US Hegemony: Will this Result in Hegemonic War or not?”, Modern Diplomacy, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/09/03/decline-in-us-hegemony-will-this-result-in-hegemonic-war-or-not/>, Arzoumanidis]

One of the contemporary issues in international relations is that the current hegemon, the United States, has undergone a relative decline. It is argued that American hegemony that emerged aftermath the Second World War is undergoing a decline and with the rise of a potential challenger in China looming, one major issue concerning IR scholars is whether or not the relative decline of US hegemony will result in a hegemonic war. Hegemonic wars occur when a rising challenger – revisionist power – isn’t content with the current international order and wants to change it so as to become a preponderant force and dictate terms of a new world order. This article assumes that **although the US is in a relative decline it is still a dominant power and the rising power is content with the current status quo so no war occurs between the dominant and the rising power.** In order to support the argument that a hegemonic war does not occur, this article provides explanation using several theoretical perspectives. Structural Realism and Balance of Power To begin with, prominent neorealist Kenneth Waltz contends that the end of the Cold War has changed the structure of international politics from bipolar to unipolar with the US being the dominant power. According to Waltz, days of US being unipolar force in world politics is numbered and slowly the world is moving towards bipolarity or multipolarity because changes in the structure of international system brings about changes in state behavior. It does not matter how much self-restraint and self-control a preponderant power is in its conduct of international relations; states are always wary and fear the dominant power and thus he maintains that balancing is universal. [1] In order to explain why, he has resorted to the Balance of Power (theory). In most basic sense, international politics is a state of anarchy where there is no central government and states rely on themselves to protect their autonomy and perpetuate their survival. Balance of Power contends that states involve in a balancing act to check the powers of preponderant force so that no any single state has enough power to become a global hegemon. [2] **With the relative decline of US, China and America can enter into bipolar relationship** much like the US and the USSR during the Cold War. Since **Waltz** himself **posits bipolarity as the most stable of international configurations**, it can be argued that act of **balancing** between the US and China brings the international distribution of power into an equilibrium and **averts the risk of war.** Socialization of Hegemonic Power Most scholars posit that hegemons use threats and rewards to get compliance from secondary states. Contrary to popular wisdom, scholars Ikenberry and Kupchan have contended that in addition to material power, hegemons also have the power of socialization to achieve compliance from secondary states. They call this the socialization process which involves ‘altering of the belief systems’ of elites. Basically, hegemons project their vision of international order through normative principles (norms and values) and not by material incentives; elites in secondary states internalize them, and devise policies that are compatible to the hegemon’s ideal of the international order. The authors contend that **the world order thus created can sustain even when hegemon undergoes a decline** because the world order created is relatively inexpensive to maintain in the sense that altering of states preferences are by virtue of ideals rather than use of coercion. Thus, by virtue of socialization of hegemonic power, relative changes in hegemon’s distribution of material power (military and economy) does not put strain on the international system. So, on viewing the world from the lens of socialization, it can be argued that the expansion of US normative principles on liberal economic norm to its former allies and enemies aftermath the second world war that led to the formation of the current liberal economic world order provides an explanation as to why in spite of US’ relative decline there is continuity for America’s liberal economic order. [3] The rising challenger China can be considered to have been socialized – it has accepted US led international norms, and participates in various International Organizations. Thus, it makes less sense for China to wage war against the hegemon whose ideals it has internalized. Hegemonic Stability Theory According to this theory, a hegemon creates a stable international economic order characterized by market openness but its decline results in global instability. This hegemonic effect of open trade benefits all participants, especially, weaker states that do not have any burden of public goods. In this sense, global economic stability is born out of hegemony and provides provision of collective public goods and in doing so facilitates a stable international system. The motivation to create an economic openness lie in the interest of the hegemon – it has the largest economy and so benefits most from open markets. In addition, only hegemons have the material capability (political and military) to provide public goods and induce other states to embrace open trade. [4] By virtue of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the hegemon is an important element in creation and maintenance of the international system. As stated earlier, open trade benefits all participants, even the rising challengers that are accommodated in the system. In contemporary world politics, China is the fastest rising power and it is also reaping the benefits of the open economic order created by the US. By participating in the globalized economy, China has earned a comparative advantage in labor-market and its economy has been growing. On top of that China is an export-based economy and thus, it has very little incentive to jeopardize this benefit by engaging with the hegemon and thereby disrupting the order. In his article, Artur Stein has argued that decline in hegemony does not bring about a complete collapse of the trade regime as long as hegemonic power is committed to economic openness. Taking these two points in consideration, it can be argued that it is not in the interest of China to challenge US hegemony. On account, likelihood of war is averted. [5] Robert Keohane and Institutionalist Approach In After Hegemony, Robert Keohane uses an institutional approach to explain inter-state cooperation. He posits that states have common interest and in order to realize it requires achieving mutually beneficial agreements which is where international regimes come in. These regimes foster cooperation by making it easier to reach mutually beneficial inter-state agreements. They help overcome the problem of lack of qualitative and asymmetrical information, through institutional embeddedness reduces transaction costs, legal costs reduce incentive to cheat thereby reducing uncertainty and building confidence among states. Since hegemonic leadership is required to create regimes in the first place, even after the erosion of hegemony, they have high stakes and play important role in fostering cooperation (US role in the IMF and WTO). Because cooperation fosters absolute gain, all participants are benefitted. [6] By this approach, states see cooperation more beneficial than conflict. Thus, it can be argued from institutionalist approach that **international regimes foster cooperation thereby reducing likelihood of conflict in the event of hegemonic decline.** Conclusion The article provided four distinct perspectives with regards to declining US hegemony and potential of a hegemonic war. Using these approaches the article concludes that **in spite of decline in American hegemony there will not be a significant change in the current structure of the international system mainly due to power differentials between the US and its nearest challenger China.** The US is undergoing a relative decline but still, it is the largest economy boasts strongest military and has highest political leverage. In sum, **prospect of a hegemonic war in contemporary world politics is only a far-fetched dream.**

### 1NC---Offshore Balancing Good

#### Offshore balancing is the best foreign policy option for the US – it preserves hegemony while using the least resources possible

Mearsheimer ’16 – Professor of Political Science [John; JOHN J. MEARSHEIMER is R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. STEPHEN M. WALT is Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School; 6-13-16; "The Case for Offshore Balancing”; https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/case-offshore-balancing; Foreign Affairs; accessed 7-7-2022; AH]

There is a **better way**. By pursuing a strategy of “offshore balancing,” Washington would forgo ambitious efforts to remake other societies and concentrate on what **really matters**: pre­serving U.S. dominance in the Western Hemisphere and countering potential hegemons in Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf. Instead of policing the world, the United States would encourage other countries to take the lead in checking rising powers, intervening itself only when necessary. This does not mean abandoning the United States’ position as the world’s sole superpower or retreating to “Fortress America.” Rather, by husbanding U.S. strength, offshore balancing would **preserve U.S. primacy** far into the future and **safeguard liberty** at home. SETTING THE RIGHT GOALS The United States is the luckiest great power in modern history. Other leading states have had to live with threatening adversaries in their own backyards—even the United Kingdom faced the prospect of an invasion from across the English Channel on several occasions—but for more than two centuries, the United States has not. Nor do distant powers pose much of a threat, because two giant oceans are in the way. As Jean-Jules Jusserand, the French ambassador to the United States from 1902 to 1924, once put it, “On the north, she has a weak neighbor; on the south, another weak neighbor; on the east, fish, and the west, fish.” Furthermore, the United States boasts an abundance of land and natural resources and a large and energetic population, which have enabled it to develop the world’s biggest economy and most capable military. It also has thousands of nuclear weapons, which makes an attack on the American homeland even less likely. These geopolitical blessings give the United States enormous latitude for error; indeed, only a country as secure as it would have the temerity to try to remake the world in its own image. But they also allow it to remain powerful and secure without pursuing a costly and expansive grand strategy. Offshore balancing would do just that. Its principal concern would be to keep the United States as **powerful as possible**—ideally, the dominant state on the planet. Above all, that means main­taining hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. Unlike isolationists, however, offshore balancers believe that there are regions outside the Western Hemisphere that are worth expending American blood and treasure to defend. Today, three other areas matter to the United States: Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf. The first two are key centers of industrial power and home to the world’s other great powers, and the third produces roughly 30 percent of the world’s oil. In Europe and Northeast Asia, the chief concern is the rise of a regional hegemon that would dominate its region, much as the United States dominates the Western Hemisphere. Such a state would have abundant economic clout, the ability to develop sophisticated weaponry, the potential to project power around the globe, and perhaps even the wherewithal to outspend the United States in an arms race. Such a state might even ally with countries in the Western Hemisphere and interfere close to U.S. soil. Thus, the United States’ principal aim in Europe and Northeast Asia should be to maintain the regional balance of power so that the most powerful state in each region—for now, Russia and China, respectively—remains too worried about its neighbors to roam into the Western Hemisphere. In the Gulf, meanwhile, the United States has an interest in blocking the rise of a hegemon that could interfere with the flow of oil from that region, thereby damaging the world economy and threatening U.S. prosperity. Offshore balancing is a realist grand strategy, and its aims are limited. Promoting peace, although desirable, is not among them. This is **not to say that Washington should welcome conflict** anywhere in the world, or that it cannot use diplomatic or economic means to discourage war. But it should not commit U.S. military forces for that purpose alone. Nor is it a goal of offshore balancing to halt genocides, such as the one that befell Rwanda in 1994. Adopting this strategy would not preclude such operations, however, provided the need is clear, the mission is feasible, and U.S. leaders are confident that intervention will not make matters worse. HOW WOULD IT WORK? Under offshore balancing, the United States would calibrate its military posture according to the distribution of power in the three key regions. If there is no potential hegemon in sight in Europe, Northeast Asia, or the Gulf, then there is **no reason to deploy** ground or air forces there and little need for a large military establishment at home. And because it takes many years for any country to acquire the capacity to dominate its region, Washington would see it coming and **have time to respond.** In that event, the United States should turn to regional forces as the first line of defense, letting them uphold the balance of power in their own neighborhood. Although Washington could provide assistance to allies and pledge to support them if they were in danger of being conquered, it should refrain from deploying large numbers of U.S. forces abroad. It may occasionally make sense to keep certain assets overseas, such as small military contingents, intelligence-gathering facilities, or prepositioned equipment, but in general, Washington should **pass the buck** to regional powers, as they have a far greater interest in preventing any state from dominating them. If those powers cannot contain a potential hegemon on their own, however, the United States must help get the job done, deploying enough firepower to the region to shift the balance in its favor. Sometimes, that may mean sending in forces before war breaks out. During the Cold War, for example, the United States kept large numbers of ground and air forces in Europe out of the belief that Western European countries could not contain the Soviet Union on their own. At other times, the United States might wait to intervene after a war starts, if one side seems likely to emerge as a regional hegemon. Such was the case during both world wars: the United States came in only after Germany seemed likely to dominate Europe. In essence, the aim is to remain offshore as long as possible, while recognizing that it is sometimes necessary to come onshore. If that happens, however, the United States should make its allies do as much of the heavy lifting as possible and remove its own forces as soon as it can. Offshore balancing has **many virtues**. By limiting the areas the U.S. military was committed to defending and forcing other states to pull their own weight, it would **reduce the resources** Washington must devote to defense, allow for greater investment and consumption at home, and put fewer American lives in harm’s way. Today, allies **routinely free-ride** on American protection, a problem that has only grown since the Cold War ended. Within NATO, for example, the United States accounts for 46 percent of the alliance’s aggregate GDP yet contributes about 75 percent of its military spending. As the political scientist Barry Posen has quipped, “This is welfare for the rich.” Offshore balancing would also reduce the **risk of terrorism**. Liberal hegemony commits the United States to spreading democracy in unfamiliar places, which sometimes requires military occupation and always involves interfering with local political arrangements. Such efforts invariably foster nationalist resentment, and because the opponents are too weak to confront the United States directly, they sometimes turn to terrorism. (It is worth remembering that Osama bin Laden was motivated in good part by the presence of U.S. troops in his homeland of Saudi Arabia.) In addition to inspiring terrorists, liberal hegemony facilitates their operations: using regime change to spread American values undermines local institutions and creates ungoverned spaces where violent extremists can flourish. Offshore balancing would alleviate this problem by eschewing social engineering and minimizing the United States’ military foot­print. U.S. troops would be stationed on foreign soil only when a country was in a vital region and threatened by a would-be hegemon. In that case, the potential victim would view the **United States as a savior** rather than an occupier. And once the threat had been dealt with, U.S. military forces could go back over the horizon and not stay behind to meddle in local politics. By respecting the sovereignty of other states, offshore balancing would be less likely to foster anti-American terrorism. A REASSURING HISTORY Offshore balancing may seem like a radical strategy today, but it provided the guiding logic of U.S. foreign policy for many decades and **served the country well**. During the nineteenth century, the United States was preoccupied with expanding across North America, building a powerful state, and establishing hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. After it completed these tasks at the end of the century, it soon became interested in preserving the balance of power in Europe and Northeast Asia. Nonetheless, it let the great powers in those regions check one another, intervening militarily only when the balance of power broke down, as during both world wars. During the Cold War, the United States had no choice but to go onshore in Europe and Northeast Asia, as its allies in those regions could not contain the Soviet Union by themselves. So Washington forged alliances and stationed military forces in both regions, and it fought the Korean War to contain Soviet influence in Northeast Asia. In the Persian Gulf, however, the United States stayed offshore, letting the United Kingdom take the lead in preventing any state from dominating that oil-rich region. After the British announced their withdrawal from the Gulf in 1968, the United States turned to the shah of Iran and the Saudi monarchy to do the job. When the shah fell in 1979, the Carter administration began building the Rapid Deployment Force, an offshore military capability designed to prevent Iran or the Soviet Union from dominating the region. The Reagan administration aided Iraq during that country’s 1980–88 war with Iran for similar reasons. The U.S. military stayed offshore until 1990, when Saddam Hussein’s seizure of Kuwait threatened to enhance Iraq’s power and place Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil producers at risk. To restore the regional balance of power, the George H. W. Bush admin­istration sent an expeditionary force to liberate Kuwait and smash Saddam’s military machine. For nearly a century, in short, **offshore balancing prevented the emergence of dangerous regional hegemons** and pre­served a global balance of power that enhanced American security. Tellingly, when U.S. policymakers deviated from that strategy—as they did in Vietnam, where the United States had no vital interests—the result was a **costly failure**. Events since the end of the Cold War teach the same lesson. In Europe, once the Soviet Union collapsed, the region no longer had a dominant power. The United States should have steadily reduced its military presence, cultivated amicable relations with Russia, and turned European security over to the Europeans. Instead, it expanded NATO and ignored Russian interests, helping **spark the conflict over Ukraine** and driving Moscow closer to China. In the Middle East, likewise, the United States should have moved back offshore after the Gulf War and let Iran and Iraq balance each other. Instead, the Clinton administration adopted the policy of “dual containment,” which required keeping ground and air forces in Saudi Arabia to check Iran and Iraq simultaneously. The George W. Bush administration then adopted an even more ambitious strategy, dubbed “regional transformation,” which produced costly failures in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Obama administration repeated the error when it helped topple Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya and when it **exacerbated the chaos** in Syria by insisting that Bashar al-Assad “must go” and backing some of his opponents. Abandoning offshore balancing after the Cold War has been a **recipe for failure.**

# Uniqueness

## UQ---Heg Unsustainable

### 2NC---Generic

**Heg is unsustainable and leads to domestic decay**

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**Crisis Instability** Unfortunately, the unipolar era will not be totally free from conflict. Although unipolarity precludes hegemonic rivalry, **it may increase the risk that crises between the United States and weaker nations will escalate to war.**12 The reason is that U.S. military superiority could embolden the United States to stand firm in a crisis while simultaneously inciting weaker opponents to shoot first, in a desperate attempt to stun the United States before the U.S. military wipes out their offensive forces.13 Under unipolarity, this dynamic looms over U.S. relations with all nations. It is most dangerous, however, with regard to North Korea, China, and Russia, because these countries can inflict apocalyptic damage on American cities and have ongoing disputes with the United States over territory (e.g., Taiwan, Crimea, the Korean Peninsula), the U.S. military presence abroad, freedom of navigation, and human rights. In the years ahead, many events can, and almost surely will, spark crises between the United States and these countries. A primary goal of U.S. security policy, therefore, must be to reduce the risk that such crises escalate to major wars. How? NORTH KOREA The North Korean case is the gravest, but also the simplest, because the United States has no good options and only one nonhorrible option: deter- rence.14 North Korea will never give up its nuclear arsenal, which is its main insurance policy against a U.S. or South Korean attack, and the U.S. military cannot reliably destroy North Korea’s nuclear weapons or conven- tional artillery before it has a chance to use them.15 Deterrence may feel unsatisfying, because it places U.S. security at least partly in North Korea’s hands. Like old age, however, deterrence only seems intolerable until one considers the alternative.16 The U.S. Depart- ment of Defense estimates that a U.S.-North Korean war would kill 20,000 people per day in South Korea alone, even if no nuclear weapons were used. It also admits that the U.S. national missile defense system only has a 50 percent chance of intercepting a North Korean ballistic missile headed for the U.S. mainland.17 Given these dire statistics, the United States should learn to live with a North Korean nuclear capability—just as it learned to live with the Soviet and Chinese nuclear arsenals. Deterrence, however, does not mean doing nothing. The United States should continue to make clear that it will “totally destroy” North Korea if it attacks the United States or its allies or transfers nuclear materials to other states or groups.18 To back up these threats, the United States should inte- grate additional terminal and midcourse interceptors to its national missile defense system and develop boost-phase interceptors.19 It also should redouble efforts to improve civil defenses and counterforce capabilities.20 These measures will enhance America’s ability to emerge from a nuclear war relatively unscathed, and thereby hopefully deter North Korea from starting a war in the first place.21 At the same time, the United States should engage in diplomacy with North Korea and contingency planning with China. North Korea will never negotiate away its nuclear arsenal, but it might accept limits on that arsenal in exchange for U.S. security assurances. The United States therefore should offer to recognize North Korea as a nuclear weapons state, forswear mili- tary strikes, and lift economic sanctions so long as North Korea abides by “three no’s”: no additional nuclear weapons, no improved nuclear weap- ons or delivery vehicles, and no export of nuclear materials.22 To compel North Korea to accept this bargain, the United States needs to tighten sanctions on North Korea, which in turn requires making a side deal with China. Currently the Chinese government looks the other way when Chinese companies smuggle goods into North Korea. China could crack down on these violations, but will do so only if it feels assured that a North Korean collapse, which would be made more likely by tighter sanc- tions, would not result in U.S. forces swarming up the Korean Peninsula toward China’s border. Recent research suggests that China is willing to abandon North Korea, but not if it means American troops on the banks of the Yalu.23 The United States, therefore, should offer China a deal: in return for full Chinese sanctions on North Korea, the United States will let China dictate the terms of a joint contingency plan for a North Korean collapse. As part of this plan, the United States would promise to keep its troops south of the 38th parallel and offer to withdraw its forces entirely from the Korean Pen- insula once the dust has settled if China will accede to a U.S. alliance with a reunified Korea. The U.S. military will probably hate this proposal, because it cedes con- trol of North Korea’s territory and nuclear sites to China without a fight. Allowing China to secure North Korea, however, would keep U.S. troops out of a potential nuclear hellhole and reduce the likelihood of a U.S.-China clash.24 The geographic reality is that Chinese forces can occupy North Korea before U.S. reinforcements even mobilize for an attack—China has at least 150,000 troops perched on its border with North Korea, which is only sixty miles from North Korea’s main nuclear sites and two-thirds of its mis- sile sites.25 Given that Chinese troops will be first on the scene, the U.S. military should stay out of their way. Instead of going to war with China over North Korea’s carcass, the United States should help China secure the area by providing intelligence on North Korea’s nuclear sites and technical expertise to dismantle them. CHINA AND RUSSIA The situations with China and Russia are less dire than the North Korean case, but more complicated, because China and Russia have more ways to hurt the United States but also more to offer it. Even as the United States competes with these powers for influence, it cooperates with them in numerous areas. Adopting a policy of pure deterrence, therefore, would be shortsighted and dangerous. Unfortunately, there is widespread disagreement among strategists about what the United States should do to enhance crisis stability with these two regional powers, aside from some fairly obvious confidence building mea- sures, including codes of conduct for military forces and for civilian aircraft and ships, backchannels for diplomats to work out face-saving compro- mises, crisis hotlines linking the top leaderships, military-to-military exchanges, cyber and nuclear risk reduction centers, and joint peace and humanitarian operations.26 Some scholars argue that the United States should simply retrench from East Asia and Eastern Europe and grant China and Russia broad spheres of influence.27 The most extreme of these proposals would have the United States abrogate its alliances in Asia and Europe and pull its forces out of both regions. Retrenchment has its appeal.28 Indeed, it seems the logical, God-given strategy for a self-sufficient superpower protected by two vast oceans. Yet large-scale retrenchment not only would sap U.S. influence in Asia and Europe, but also reduce crisis stability by undermining deterrence.29 China or Russia might be emboldened by a U.S. withdrawal from their regions and ramp up coercive pressure on their demoralized neighbors. Successful security policy requires a balance of reassurance and deterrence.30 Retrench- ment is skewed too heavily toward the former. A better way to enhance crisis stability while preserving the territorial status quo in Asia and Europe would be to combine economic and political engagement with an “active denial” military strategy.31 The overarching goal of this strategy would be to create local “situations of strength” that raise the costs of military aggression for China and Russia, but without backing them into a corner.32 Such a strategy would have three main elements. First, the United States would bolster the antiaccess/area-denial (A2/ AD) capabilities of China and Russia’s neighbors by providing them with loans, arms, training, and intelligence. The objective would be to turn China and Russia’s neighbors into prickly “porcupines,” capable of denying terri- tory to China and Russia but not to take and hold territory themselves.33 In East Asia, this means helping China’s maritime neighbors acquire advanced anti-air and anti-ship missiles plus the platforms and targeting capabilities to launch them. In Eastern Europe, it means prepping the Baltic States to wage guerilla warfare.34 Second, the United States would create buffers between U.S. forces on the one hand and Chinese and Russian forces on the other. American forces would remain in Asia and Europe and roam wherever international law allows, but they would be stationed in dispersed and hardened bases scat- tered around the periphery of each region, where they could be called on in the event of war but otherwise kept beyond the reach of Chinese and Rus- sian forces. Decreasing the number of American soldiers based near China and Russia’s borders would reduce the likelihood of incidents, help reas- sure China and Russia that the United States does not intend to launch massive strikes on their homelands at the outset of a crisis, and increase the resilience of U.S. forces in the region by reducing their exposure to Chinese or Russian preemptive attacks. Third, the United States would backstop the local balances of power in Asia and Europe, but would plan to do so gradually. In minor conflicts, the United States would try to convince China or Russia to back down by using nonmilitary forms of coercion.35 As described in chapter 5, the United States is uniquely empowered to impose painful sanctions and embargoes on hostile countries (and to deny enemies the ability to respond in kind) because of its central role in global banking, plentiful energy resources, and unparalleled ability to disrupt international ship- ping.36 In the initial stages of a conflict, therefore, the United States could use financial sanctions, embargoes, or cyber operations to try to achieve “victory without violence,” as it did in compelling Iran to negotiate curbs on its nuclear program and in deterring Russia from annexing eastern Ukraine.37 If the conflict escalated to war, the United States could initially “lead from behind,” supporting local forces with logistics, intelligence, and if absolutely necessary, limited air and missile strikes on Chinese or Russian forces operating in the combat theater rather than those stationed on the Chinese or Russian mainlands. These strikes could be conducted from sub- marines, stealth-aircraft, or road-mobile missile batteries—all of which are far less vulnerable to Chinese and Russian A2/AD forces than surface ships, nonstealth aircraft, and ground forces. If the United States needed to ratchet up the pain, it could escalate horizontally before doing so vertically; that is, by opening up new geographic fronts rather than throwing U.S. forces into the cauldron of the main combat theater. This strategy obviously sacrifices military effectiveness for crisis stability. The U.S. military could gain a major advantage over China or Russia if it simply unloaded on their bases, missile batteries, satellites, and radar installations at the outset of a war. The U.S. military generally favors this type of knockout punch strategy and for good reason: pinprick strikes and gradual escalation invite a grinding war of attrition.38 Why give the enemy a chance to fight back? Offensive doctrines make sense against weak states that do not have nuclear weapons. Against China or Russia, however, a military posture primed for rapid escalation could be a recipe for disaster. An offensive pos- ture not only risks turning minor disputes into major wars, it also could turn conventional wars into nuclear wars. Some of the systems that support China and Russia’s conventional military forces—missile batteries, radars, satellites, submarines—also support their nuclear arsenals, so Chinese or Russian leaders might mistake U.S. strikes on these systems as a preemp- tive U.S. attack on their nuclear deterrents. Moreover, China and Russia have declared that they would use nuclear weapons to retaliate against a conventional attack on their homelands. Perhaps these declarations are bluffs. But is it really so hard to imagine that, in the heat of battle and when facing the potential annihilation of their militaries, one of these nations might fire off a nuclear weapon in the hope of shocking the United States into a cease-fire? Such a scenario might sound alarmist, but Russia’s mili- tary doctrine explicitly calls for using nuclear weapons to “deescalate” con- ventional wars, and Chinese leaders have suggested that the PLA is prepared to do likewise.39 In a multipolar or bipolar world, it might make sense for the United States to risk nuclear war to prevent a peer competitor from overrunning Asia or Europe. Better to nip the problem in the bud than repeat the mis- takes of Munich and empower aggressors. In today’s unipolar world, how- ever, no rival power is capable of going on a Hitler-style rampage across Eurasia, so the stakes for the United States in a war there would be moder- ate, and the main danger would be in doing too much rather than too little. Instead of rushing into wars with China or Russia, therefore, the United States should pick its battles, escalate gradually, and let local actors do most of the heavy lifting. Imperial Overstretch The theory of imperial overstretch holds **that superpowers tend to expand beyond their means and collapse as a result.**40 Such overexpansion is driven in part by hubris. As Christopher Layne explains: “A hegemon eas- ily is lured into overexpansion. When it comes to hard power, hegemons have it, and seldom can resist flaunting it. Thus, we should expect a unipolar hegemon to initiate many wars and to use its military power promiscuously.”41 In addition to hubris, **superpowers also tend to suffer from a pervasive sense of insecurity.** As Robert Jervis explains: The very extent of the hegemon’s influence means that all sorts of geo- graphic and ideological disturbances can threaten it. Frontiers can be expanded, but doing so just recreates them. Hegemony thus also ironi- cally magnifies the sense of threat. The very fact that the United States has interests throughout the world leads to the fear that undesired changes in one area could undermine its interests elsewhere. Disturbances that would be dismissed in a multipolar or bipolar world loom much larger for the hegemon because it is present in all corners of the globe and everything seems interconnected.42 In short, **superpowers tend to become paranoid and militaristic, and these impulses, in turn, compel them to expand abroad**—thereby creating more “turbulent frontiers” to defend, interests to pursue, and threats to address.43 This self-perpetuating pattern of expansion ultimately exhausts the super- power’s resources because “the costs of empire tend to rise geometrically as its size increases, whereas its resources increase only arithmetically.”44 Is the United States doomed to follow this historical pattern and fritter away its resources on reckless adventures abroad? In the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is hard to argue with the assessment that “the United States is becoming the poster child for strategic overextension.”45 Yet, U.S. overextension is not inevitable. In fact, a clear-eyed recognition of the unipolar distribution of power could help the United States temper its imperial temptations. As the world’s only superpower, the United States is exceptionally secure and, therefore, can afford to play wait-and-see, allowing threats to emerge fully before responding. This situation stands in contrast to the Cold War, when anything that happened anywhere in the world seemingly had impli- cations for the U.S.-Soviet power balance. Allies had to be wooed and cod- dled to keep them from joining the other side. Communist advances, even in peripheral areas, had to be countered to maintain U.S. prestige and cred- ibility. Today, by contrast, there are no dominos that must be kept from fall- ing, and America’s survival does not hang in the balance of the crisis of the day. The U.S. military, therefore, can focus on first-order missions— deterring major powers and rogue states that brandish weapons of mass destruction—rather than playing globo-cop. The virtues of strategic restraint might seem obvious, but they often are lost in U.S. foreign policy debates.46 As Fareed Zakaria points out, the Amer- ican media and some policymaking elites in Washington remain wedded to a Cold War mindset that mistakes “activity for achievement.”47 In this view, every crisis abroad and every move by a foreign rival must be countered with a robust assertion of American power. To do otherwise, some pundits and policymakers argue, would abdicate American leadership, embolden enemies, and demoralize allies. Better for the United States to shoot first and develop a strategy later, they argue, then fail to intervene at all. This misguided mindset has kept the U.S. military at war for most of the past two decades—with little to show for it. Of the campaigns in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, only the first could be considered a clear vic- tory.48 The combined costs of these conflicts—seven thousand American dead, fifty thousand wounded, and $6 trillion—hardly seem justified. To regain strategic solvency, the United States should take three steps. First, American policymakers should resurrect the so-called Powell Doc- trine and make it the cornerstone of debate before every major military intervention.49 This doctrine, which was originally developed by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in the 1980s and then elaborated by chair- man of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell in the 1990s, consisted of a series of questions that had to be answered “yes” before sending American soldiers to fight and die abroad: 1. Is a vital national security interest threatened? 2. Do we have a clear attainable objective? 3. Have the risks and costs been fully and frankly analyzed? 4. Have all other nonviolent policy means been fully exhausted? 5. Is there a plausible exit strategy to avoid endless entanglement? 6. Have the consequences of our action been fully considered? 7. Is the action supported by the American people? 8. Do we have genuine broad international support? The core assumption of the Powell Doctrine is that the United States rarely needs to rush into war to keep itself safe. It is a doctrine designed to conserve U.S. power, so that when vital interests are threatened, the U.S. military can respond vigorously with forces that have not been chewed up in wars of choice over trivial issues in peripheral areas. In practice, the Powell Doctrine implies that the U.S. military should focus on preparing for wars against China and Russia, which are the only major powers not currently aligned with the United States, and against North Korea, which is the only minor power that currently has nuclear weapons and clear hostile intent toward the United States. The U.S. mili- tary also can allocate some resources to killing terrorists abroad, but this should be done primarily with special operations forces and drones rather than large-scale military occupations. The doctrine further implies that the United States should avoid fighting wars where victory depends on controlling the politics of chaotic countries. As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown, local leaders will rarely do what the United States wants if doing so conflicts with their interests, and no reasonable amount of American blood or treasure can change that fundamental fact.50 The United States can support local allies in troubled regions with tools short of military occupation, including diplomacy, aid, military training, intelligence, arms, special operations raids, and drone strikes. In general, however, the U.S. military should be allowed to focus on its core competency—destroying enemy militaries—rather than being asked to rebuild tattered nations. Second, Congress should reassert its authority to regulate the use of force.51 According to the U.S. Constitution, Congress is supposed to decide where and when the United States goes to war. The president can order short-term military interventions, but only when the nation’s security is in imminent danger. The United States followed this Constitutional principle for most of its history. Since the end of the Cold War, however, Congress has retreated from for- eign policy. It allowed the Clinton administration to send U.S. forces to Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo without congressional authorization; rubber- stamped the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq; and allowed the Obama administration to double U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2009 without a vote and attack Libya in 2011 without a single hearing. In the future, Congress should subject proposals for large-scale military interventions to public debate and a formal vote. The foreign affairs com- mittees could lead the way by holding hearings before each intervention and soliciting testimony from a wide-range of experts. These hearings could be paired with trips to the region in question, where members of Congress could meet with political actors and journalists, researchers, and aid workers. These practices were standard operating procedure in the 1970s and 1980s and should become so again. Congress also should pass legislation limiting the president’s ability to launch a preventive or unprovoked nuclear strike.52 The president should still be able to order retaliatory or preemptive strikes, but preventive or unprovoked strikes should require sober deliberation among multiple offi- cials. President Trump’s casual comments about nuclear war with North Korea underscore the risks of giving him unchecked authority to order an attack. To reduce these risks, Congress should require the unanimous con- sent of a small group of officials—including the vice president, the secre- tary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the four leaders of the House and the Senate—for any preventive or unprovoked nuclear strike. Third, the United States should institute a war tax for any military opera- tions that require supplemental funding. For nearly 200 years, from 1812 to 2001, the United States paid for its wars in part by raising special taxes on individuals and corporations. These “pay as you fight” taxes ensured that all Americans sacrificed for the common cause. Since 9/11, however, the United States has paid for its wars by borrowing, adding trillions of dollars to the national debt. This practice of putting wars on the credit card is not just fiscally irresponsible, it is dangerous, because people are much more likely to support a stupid war if they do not have to pay higher taxes to finance it.53 The flip side is that a mandatory war tax would make American leaders more judicious about when and where to send U.S. forces into battle.54 The three steps highlighted above would almost certainly reduce U.S. military involvement in the Middle East. That would be wonderful. The United States has three important interests in the region—oil, counterter- rorism, and democracy—but none requires a large U.S. military commit- ment. Instead, the United States should adopt an offshore balancing strategy in the Middle East, limiting its peacetime presence to a skeletal base structure, and put boots on the ground only if a local power threatens to dominate or destroy the region.55 The U.S. military does not need to guard Middle Eastern oil reserves, because no state is powerful enough to seize them or seriously disrupt world oil markets: Iraq’s military has already been neutered by the United States; Iran’s military has been ground down by decades of conflict and sanctions; Iranian-backed Shiite militias lack the heavy forces and air defenses needed for large-scale conquest; and Saudi Arabia’s military is geared for internal security and air superiority, not ground invasions.56 Iran could try to blockade the Strait of Hormuz, where most of the oil flowing out of the Persian Gulf is shipped, but rigorous campaign analyses suggest that Iran could destroy only twenty oil tankers, a number far from suffi- cient to shock the oil market, and the U.S. military could break an Iranian blockade with air and missile strikes launched from over the horizon.57 A Saudi civil war could threaten the free flow of oil, given that most of the Kingdom’s disgruntled Shia minority lives in the Eastern Province near the country’s oil production facilities. A mass uprising, however, is unlikely, because Saudi Arabia’s internal security forces are robust, roughly 90 per- cent of Saudi workers are government employees that depend on the mon- archy for their livelihoods, and the Saudi government has huge cash reserves to keep the gravy train running during economic downturns.58 Even if Saudi Arabia succumbs to civil war, sending U.S. Marines into Mecca and Medina would not pacify the situation.59 The United States also does not need a large military presence in the Middle East to contain Islamist terrorism. All of the deadly Islamist terror- ist attacks committed on American soil since 9/11 have been carried out by U.S. citizens or legal residents, so bombing or occupying the Middle East for the umpteenth time is unlikely to reduce the risk of attacks further.60 Moreover, that risk is already extremely low: since 1991, Americans have been four times more likely to drown in bathtubs than be killed by a jihadi.61 The main battles in the war on terror should be fought by U.S. intelligence agencies and domestic law enforcement, not by the U.S. mili- tary. In this regard, the United States already does more than enough: it has more than a thousand government organizations and two thousand private companies engaged in counterterrorism, giving it two counterter- rorism organizations for every Islamist terrorist suspect it has ever arrested.62 Finally, the United States should not use military force to promote democracy in the Middle East. If two decades of nation-building in Iraq and Afghanistan have taught us anything, it is that the U.S. military can- not install liberal democracy where powerful local actors do not want it.63 The United States succeeded in democratizing Germany and Japan after World War II only because their populations were war-weary and desper- ate for U.S. protection from the Soviet Union.64 In the Middle East today, by contrast, most people hate the United States and do not share a com- mon enemy with it. They therefore tend to view U.S. troops stomping around their homelands the same way the Vietnamese did in the 1960s. If the United States is serious about promoting democracy in the Middle East, it should reduce its support for corrupt authoritarian regimes there— that is, by becoming less involved in the region—not by occupying more countries militarily. Domestic Decay According to a tradition of political thought going back to Plato and Aristo- tle, **hegemons can become victims of their own success and collapse from within.**65 Having vanquished foreign rivals, various clans within the domi- nant nation may turn on each other, resulting in the weakening of national institutions and, in extreme cases, civil war. This pattern—peace abroad fueling conflict at home—has been docu- mented by numerous scholars, including Max Weber, Otto Hintze, Charles Tilly, and Michael Desch.66 These scholars have shown that during periods of great power competition nations tend to develop strong bureaucracies and efficient systems of taxation and espouse a strong sense of patriotism and national unity. During periods of low external threat, however, nation- states sometimes tear apart.67 For example, the relatively tranquil interna- tional environment in Europe from 1815 to 1853 (often called the Pax Britannica) witnessed an unprecedented breakdown in state cohesion and a series of revolutions in the late 1840s.68 Similarly, the benign external threat environment enjoyed by the United States in the 1850s exacerbated internal tensions that culminated in the Civil War.69 By contrast, during the World Wars and the first half of the Cold War, American national unity rose and government institutions expanded dramatically in scope and size.70 Recent trends in the United States fit this historical pattern: since the col- lapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, partisan divisions in the United States have surged to levels not seen since the Civil War, and gridlock has become America’s political norm, with recent Congresses ranking among the most polarized and least productive in the post–World War II era (figure 6.1).71 60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0% Moderation Gridlock 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0 Start year of Congress Figure 6.1. Historically dysfunctional: polarization and gridlock in the U.S. Congress, 1947–2013. Note: “Moderation” measures the proportion of centrist legislators in the House and Senate (lawmakers whose floor votes place them closer ideologically to the center of the chamber than to their own party median), divided by the ideological gulf between party medians. “Gridlock” measures the ratio of failed measures to all salient issues on Washington’s agenda. For an issue to be “salient,” it needed to inspire at least four New York Times editorials in a given Congress. Source: Binder 2003, 2014, 2015. The 9/11 terrorist attacks briefly brought Americans together, but the cama- raderie quickly evaporated, a fact that suggests that **the threat of terrorism is not serious enough to mobilize the nation the way a genuine hegemonic rivalry does.** If anything, the terrorist threat has probably exacerbated divi- sions within American society by inciting witch hunts for terrorist suspects and igniting vicious debates on immigration, torture, war, and privacy. Without a unifying national mission, Americans have sorted themselves into clans based on social class and culture. Consequently, the two major political parties are divided not just by policy preferences, but also by iden- tity. Rural whites now overwhelmingly vote Republican while most minor- ities and urban whites vote Democrat.72 This crude tribalism leaves little room for compromise. If the partisan divide were merely about policy, the parties could split the difference. Now that American politics has become a clash of cultures, however, both parties view compromise with the other side as immoral and dangerous. For this reason, policymaking in the unipolar era has lurched between grid- lock and partisan overreach, and many of the problems highlighted in earlier chapters have festered, including spiraling entitlement costs; crumbling infra- structure; declining rates of upward mobility and entrepreneurship; racially and economically stratified systems of education and healthcare; a bloated and racially biased criminal justice system; a convoluted tax code that incentivizes tax evasion rather than domestic investment; and a crazy patchwork of federal, state, and local regulations that benefit big firms with armies of lawyers rather than small start-ups or public infrastructure projects. **If present trends are not reversed, the United States may slip into a vicious cycle in which partisan gridlock undermines public trust in govern- ment, which incentivizes politicians to starve the government of resources and authority, which leads to even poorer government performance, which leads to more defunding of the bureaucracy. This downward spiral has already begun.** Non-defense discretionary spending, a category that includes everything besides interest payments on the national debt and spending on entitlements and defense (e.g. spending on education, infrastructure, transportation, R&D, housing, energy, envi- ronmental protection, job training, food, agriculture, childcare, justice, and international affairs), has shrunk to just 11 percent of the federal budget, down from 25 percent in the 1960s and 1970s.73 As journalist Ezra Klein has pointed out, the U.S. government is becoming nothing more than an insur- ance company with an army.74 Such a weak state might be great for lobby- ists and large corporations, but not for the average American. The United States thus faces a challenge: how to tackle national problems without a foreign bogeyman to unite the country and galvanize collective action. To meet this challenge, the United States needs to empower a cen- trist American majority, and doing that requires structural change to U.S. political institutions. What changes?

### 2NC---North Korea

#### Heg is unsustainable – terrorism and NoKo

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Having considered the above challenges to USA hegemony, it is also important to outline the external challenges to the USA hegemony. One of the fundamental external challenges of the USA hegemony is the problem of Nuclear Weapons. Such as those of North Korea, which continues to constitute a major hegemonic challenge and serious concern for the USA in the international system because of its belligerence toward USA and proscribed weapons technology including the likes of armed intercontinental ballistic missiles which threaten the homeland of USA by means of countering and thwarting any nuclear threats from the USA and other warheads ballistic missiles. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1993 had no effective outcome on the disarmament of North Korea. As such, North Korea still continues to amass these weapons of mass destruction esp. after it withdrew from the NPT in 2003 (Kim, 2010, p. 68). After this withdrawal, North Korea became independent and not obligated by any international agreement or law in the build-out of Nuclear weapons. Thus, this is often portrayed as an intimidating remark to its neighboring countries like South Korea which signed a Mutual Deference Treaty with the USA to host thousands of USA soldiers (Mclnnis et al., 2017, p. 5). A challenge in this instance is that, in the call for North Korea's denuclearization, championed by the USA in the international system, nothing significant was done. Worse, North Korea maintains that these weapons are for the purpose of deterrence (Bennett, 2010). Hence, this has bestowed greatly to what is called “a relationship-driven by crisis and mutual hostility” between North Korea and the USA (Armstrong, 2004, p. 13). Equally important is the issue of Terrorism in the international system which has become the apparent and continual trait of the post-cold war period. In the year 1995, terrorist activities were reinforced in the international security environment (Jones & Smith, 2001). As a result, this had constituted a major security challenge as they involved the killing of Rabin Yatzhak (Prime Minister) of Israel, the bombardment of Riyadh (Co-joined Military Centre) in Saudi Arabia, several bombardments in France, the bombardment of the embassy of Egypt in Pakistan which indicated a new epoch of Global terrorism which can be extremely severe and lethal than any other security threat undertaking (Burke, 2016; CCN World News, 1995; Ephron, 2016; Reuters, 2017). Based on the Rand-St Andrews Chronology of International Terrorism, at least 30,725 terrorist attacks are recorded in the midst of 1990 and 1996 which make up an estimated 4,000 thousand on an annual basis (Jones & Smith, 2001, p. 11). The foregoing records show well that there had been a recorded multiplication of terrorist attacks which make a huge security threat to the world and USA as a Superpower. Equally important is the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack which was recorded in the USA in order to furnish that this has become a security threat to the USA itself (Aras & Toktas, 2007, p. 1033). It was after this attack that the then-president George W Bush made announcement declaring a war on terror (Amadeo, 2019). Sen (2014, p. 29) argues extensively that globalization in combination with technological development had contributed immensely to the growth of terrorist organized crimes and terrorists in being able to perform terrorist activities very fast. They can also plan and execute terrorist attacks in various countries at a time, preserve collegiality in the times of challenges and also be able to seize both lethal and advanced weapons of mass destruction in the process. As a growing international security challenge, it also questions the capability or effectiveness of the USA as a superpower in the international system. As for Hoffman (1996, p. 79), all of these terrorist attacks symbolize and/ constitute a major terminal threat than traditional terrorist enemies to the US hegemony. One example of this is the Islamic State, which constitutes a crucial intimidating remark to the international system and USA. Arguably, it is its religious reasons, which underpin a great major concern to the global hegemony. The application and utility of religion had “attracted a network of global supporters, and disrupted international security with its campaigns of violence and terrorism” (Blanchard & Humud, 2017). Thus the remark: “ISIS is the outgrowth of broader global trends of Islamization that stress the tensions between religiosity and modernity, compounded by an increase in Islamic militancy” (Oosterveld & Bloem, 2017, p. 5). Another significant aspect of this discussion is interstate wars which make up a great deal of international security threat too, to the USA hegemony as they are often characterized by high volumes of refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and widespread infrastructural destruction and also the killing of innocent victims (Gesteyger, 1999, p. 69; Williamson & Simpson, 2011). The Rwandan genocide and Burundi's civil war (in the early 1990s) and the Sudanese Second civil war (1983–2005) and Darfur crisis (2003-ongoing) resulting in the killings of thousands to millions of people are the relevant examples in this instance (Daley, 2007, p. 333; Makki, 2004). The post-Cold War period with the USA as the global hegemony has seen an increase in regional violent confrontations of which to some extent included the fragmentations of states and also the intensive civil war strifes (Komlosy, 2016, p. 470). Both the South Sudanese Independence and the fragmentation of Yugoslavia are relevant case points.

### 2NC---Overstretch

#### Heg is unsustainable - multiple crises in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia are overstretching the US

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he first year of Joe Biden’s presidency ended as it began, with the United States facing crises on **multiple fronts**. In the spring of 2021, there were simultaneous war scares in eastern Europe and the western Pacific, thanks to a Chinese intimidation campaign against Taiwan and a Russian military buildup on the Ukrainian border. At the start of 2022, the world was no calmer. China’s menacing maneuvers near Taiwan continued. Russian President Vladimir Putin, having mobilized an even bigger force near Ukraine, was threatening to start Europe’s largest war in decades. Meanwhile, Tehran and Washington looked to be headed for a renewed crisis over Iran’s nuclear program and its drive for regional primacy. Being a global superpower means never having the luxury of concentrating on just one thing. That is a rude lesson for Biden, who took office hoping to reduce tensions in areas of secondary importance so that the United States could focus squarely on the problem that matters most: China. It also indicates a larger weakness in Washington’s global posture, one that Biden now owns but did not create. The United States is an **overstretched hegemon**, with a defense strategy that has come out of balance with the foreign policy it supports. Biden’s first year has already shown how hard it is to manage an unruly world when Washington has more responsibilities—and more enemies—than it has coercive means. Over the longer term, a superpower that fails to keep its commitments in line with its capabilities may pay an even **heavier price**. ASIA FIRST Biden’s initial theory of foreign policy was straightforward: don’t let smaller challenges distract from the big one. Of all the threats Washington faces, Biden’s interim national security strategy argued, China “is the only competitor” able to “mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system.” That challenge has become greater as China has accelerated its efforts to overturn the balance of power in Asia. When Biden took office, U.S. military leaders publicly warned that Beijing could **invade** Taiwan by 2027. Biden was not naive enough to think that other problems would simply vanish. With trouble brewing on this central front, however, he did seek a measure of calm on others. Biden avoided another doomed “reset” with Russia, but held an early summit with Putin in a bid to establish a “stable and predictable” relationship. He also sought to find a path back to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, thereby reducing the growing risk of confrontation in the Middle East. Finally, Biden ended the U.S. war in Afghanistan, a decision he justified by arguing that it was time to refocus attention and resources on the Indo-Pacific. Relations with U.S. allies followed the same pattern: the administration dropped U.S. opposition to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline linking Russia and western Europe, wagering that ending a contentious dispute with Germany would make it easier to win Berlin’s cooperation vis-à-vis Beijing. Biden’s emerging defense strategy has a similar thrust. The Trump administration made a major shift in U.S. defense planning, arguing that the Pentagon must relentlessly prepare for a conflict against a great-power challenge—particularly from China—even though that meant accepting **greater risk** in other regions. Biden’s Pentagon likewise spent 2021 focusing on how to deter or defeat Chinese aggression, withdrawing scarce assets such as missile defense batteries from the Middle East, and making longer-term budgetary investments meant to “prioritize China and its military modernization as our pacing challenge.” TROUBLE EVERYWHERE Biden is undoubtedly right that the Chinese challenge overshadows all others, despite unresolved debates in Washington over exactly when that challenge will become most severe. His administration has made major moves in the Sino-American competition during its first year—expanding multilateral military planning and exercises in the western Pacific, focusing bodies such as NATO and the G-7 on Beijing’s belligerence, and launching the AUKUS partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom. Yet Biden hasn’t enjoyed anything resembling a **respite** on other fronts. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan precipitated the **collapse** of the government there, generating a near-term **crisis** that consumed Washington’s attention and leaving longer-term legacies—strategic and humanitarian—that are likely to do the same. Meanwhile, a brutal internal conflict in Ethiopia destabilized one of Africa’s most important countries. Most problematic of all, U.S. relations with Iran and Russia became worse, not better. Iran has taken a hard-line stance in negotiations on a revived nuclear deal while steadily decreasing the amount of time it would need to produce a **potential weapon**. Tehran’s proxies have also conducted periodic attacks against U.S. personnel and partners in the Middle East as part of an ongoing effort to force an American withdrawal from the region. Putin, for his part, has authorized or at least permitted significant **cyberattacks** against critical infrastructure in the United States. He threatened war against Ukraine in the spring and has now mobilized forces for what U.S. officials fear could be a major invasion and prolonged occupation of that country. To preserve the peace, Moscow has demanded an acknowledged Russian sphere of influence and the rollback of NATO’s military presence in eastern Europe. What exactly Putin has in mind for Ukraine is uncertain, but “stable and predictable” is clearly not how he envisions his relationship with the United States. These are **ominous** signs for 2022. The United States could find itself facing **grave security crises** in Europe and the Middle East in addition to persistent and elevated tensions in the Pacific. And these possibilities hint at a **deeper problem** in U.S. statecraft, one that has been accumulating for years: **strategic overstretch**.

#### The US is backsliding now – adversaries are taking advantage of overextension to gain power

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This realization prompted a major change in U.S. defense planning. The Trump administration’s defense strategy declared that the two-war standard was history. The U.S. military would henceforth be sized and shaped to win one major war against a great-power competitor. The United States would still be capable of “deterring” aggression in other theaters, but, as a bipartisan commission that included several current Biden administration officials pointed out, how exactly the Pentagon would do so without the capability to defeat such aggression remained **ambiguous**. Shifting to a one-war standard was a sensible way to motivate the lethargic Pentagon bureaucracy to find creative solutions to the urgent, daunting challenge of war with a near-peer rival. It involved a sober recognition that losing a great-power war could inflict a **death blow** on the U.S.-led international order. Yet the 2018 defense strategy was also an acknowledgment of **overstretch**: the United States could focus on its primary challenge **only by reducing** its ability to focus on others. This limitation is the root of the problem Biden has inherited, and it has some **dangerous implications**. THE CREDIBILITY GAP The most glaring danger, highlighted by the concurrent crises in eastern Europe and East Asia, is that the United States could have to fight wars against China and Russia simultaneously. This would indeed be a **nightmare scenario** for a one-war military. But it wouldn’t take a global security meltdown to reveal the problems caused by Washington’s predicament. First, **overstretch limits U.S.** options in a crisis. Where the United States should draw the line against Russian aggression in eastern Europe, how hard it should push back against Tehran’s provocations in the Middle East, and whether it should use force to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear threshold state are matters that reasonable people can debate. But the fact that the United States increasingly has a China centric defense strategy has a constraining effect in other theaters. If a U.S. president knows that the Pentagon will need everything it has for an all-too-plausible war with China, he or she will be less inclined to use force against Iran or Russia, lest Washington be caught short if violence erupts in the Pacific. This issue leads to a second problem: the **loss of diplomatic influence** in situations short of war. Since the Taiwan and Ukraine crises of early 2021, some observers have speculated that Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping are coordinating their coercion as a way of threatening Washington with a two-front war. The reality is that explicit coordination is hardly necessary to **profit from U.S. overextension**. Leaders in Moscow and Tehran can see that the United States is stretched thin militarily and eager to pay more attention to China. This gives them an incentive to push Washington harder in hopes of achieving gains at the expense of a **distracted superpower**. As the Russia expert Michael Kofman has written, Putin’s strategy of using military coercion to revise the post-Cold War order in Europe is premised on his belief that the “greater threat from China” will eventually “force Washington to **compromise and renegotiate**.” The more intense its focus on China, the higher the price the United States may be willing to pay for **restraint in other places**. The **perils of overstretch**, however, are not confined to secondary theaters. Weakness at the periphery can ultimately cause weakness at the center. A decade ago, the United States withdrew its forces from Iraq to economize in the Middle East and pivot toward the Pacific. Iraq’s subsequent collapse forced Washington to reengage there, fighting a multi-year conflict that devoured resources and attention. Similarly, if the United States finds itself in a showdown with Iran or if Russia attempts to revise the status quo in eastern Europe, Washington may once again find itself **pivoting away** from the Pacific to reinforce under-resourced regions that still matter to U.S. security. America’s defense strategy is increasingly focused on the Indo-Pacific, but its foreign policy remains **stubbornly global**. That’s a recipe for **trouble** all around.

#### America’s hegemony risks imperial overstretch

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Twenty-nine years ago, historian Paul Kennedy coined the term "imperial overstretch" to describe what happens to great powers when their global commitments become too expensive to sustain. He also suggested that the U.S., which at the time was in the midst of a defense-spending boom under Ronald Reagan, might be overstretching things a bit. A lot of the points Kennedy made in the forward-looking final chapter of "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000" seem prescient today: The Soviet Union suffered from a much more extreme case of overstretch than the U.S., he argued. Check. The focus of global economic activity was going to shift toward Asia, with China becoming one of the world's leading economies. Check. The U.S. would continue to be beset by fiscal deficits, disappearing blue-collar jobs and declining relative economic power. Check. Kennedy, a professor at Yale University, also seemed convinced, though, that defense spending was going to represent an ever-growing burden for the U.S. He wrote: Great Powers in relative decline instinctively respond by spending more on "security," and thereby divert potential resources from "investment" and compound their long-term dilemma. Hasn't happened. Since Kennedy published those words in 1987, the share of U.S. gross domestic product going to the military has declined from 6.1 percent to 3.3 percent. The amount of spending was almost exactly the same, in constant dollars, in 2015 as in 1987; the shrinking of the military's share of GDP was due entirely to economic growth. Still, military spending didn't rise. It didn't rise because the collapse of the Soviet Union brought an end to the Cold War, which led to outright declines in military spending in the 1990s in the U.S. and around the world (all these numbers are from the military expenditure database maintained by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute): As you can see, spending stopped declining in the late 1990s, then rose strongly over the first decade of the new millennium. That was partly because the world's biggest military spender, the U.S., got involved in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and because other post-Cold War conflicts flared up in the Middle East and Africa. You can see evidence of those wars in the list of countries that devote the highest share of GDP to defense. 1 But global defense spending also rose in the 2000s because global economic growth was strong outside the U.S., allowing nations on the rise to invest in their militaries without overburdening their economies. The most dramatic example of this was China, where military spending rose more than tenfold, in constant-dollar terms, from 1989 to 2015, even as the percentage of GDP going to defense actually fell from 2.5 percent in 1989 to 1.9 percent in 2015. 2 In the process, China rose to second place in global military spending, with more than twice the expenditures of No. 3 Saudi Arabia. This is consistent with Kennedy's rise-and-fall story. Countries with faster-growing economies -- in this case China and India, mainly 3 -- are beginning to catch up with the dominant great power. They're still miles behind, India is increasingly looking like a U.S. ally and China doesn't seem to have anything like the global military ambitions that the Soviet Union did. But it is nonetheless possible to envision a near future in which U.S. military spending as a share of GDP starts rising steadily as perceived threats to the country's security grow faster than the economy. Defense spending isn't all bad, in economic terms. Because the U.S. makes its own weapons, buying more of them can have a stimulative effect -- although some economists argue that this effect disappears if the purchases are made with borrowed money. There's a long history of positive spillovers into the rest of the economy from military research and development. And sometimes spending more money on defense is essential to, you know, defend yourself. Still, Kennedy's "security" vs. "investment" tradeoff has to come into play at some point. Is the U.S. anywhere near it? Probably not yet. But I can't see any reason why we should be immune from imperial overstretch forever.

### 2NC---Trump

#### The Trump administration’s aggressive foreign campaign worsened the U.S.’s already severe imperial overstretch

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With the 2010s over, now is a good time to consider what characterized the United States’ foreign policy of the past decade. Many establishment voices have described the 2010s as a decade of American retreat from the world. In fact, it would be more accurate to call the past decade the “decade of imperial overreach” — a major expansion of U.S. foreign policy goals and power beyond what is prudent or constructive. The overreach began during the Obama years. Despite a demonstrable reluctance on the part of President Barack Obama at times, it was his administration, with strong congressional support, that extended U.S. foreign policy goals in the Middle East to include regime change in Libya and Syria and increased containment of Iran. It was the Obama administration that expanded the global war on terror to more countries in the Middle East and Africa. In Eastern Europe, the Obama White House, again with a huge assist from members of Congress, helped participate in a coup against the duly elected (though deeply corrupt) Viktor Yanukovych government in Ukraine and actively pursued a campaign to pull Ukraine exclusively into the Western camp — and to eliminate Russian influence in a country that historically had been closely aligned with Moscow. In East Asia, the Obama administration hyped a “pivot” to the region that was in fact simply an expansion of the United States' military and geoeconomic goals in the Asian-Pacific region. It entailed not just the ill-fated Trans-Pacific Partnership but new military deployments aimed at controlling the sea lanes and trade routes in East Asia, upon which China depends for its supply of oil and raw materials, as well as its transport of manufactured goods. U.S. overreach has only accelerated under President Trump. Despite his campaign promises to end forever wars and to pull forces out of the Middle East, Trump has gone along with the national security bureaucracy and a sanctions-happy Congress to extend the United States’ foreign policy and military reach. In the Middle East, the Trump administration stepped up Washington’s “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran — after abandoning the Obama administration’s successful, multilateral nuclear deal. And with the assassination of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani last week — without congressional approval — already-escalating tensions between the United States and Iran have been raised to new, extraordinarily dangerous levels. Incendiary rhetoric, military brinkmanship and Trump’s recklessness have brought us to the edge of war. Trump has also undertaken direct military strikes against Syria and placed American troops in the country in an effort to control the country’s oil resources and to block trade with Iraq and Iran. As part of its ongoing goal of countering Iranian influence in the region, the administration has sought to increase its influence in Lebanon and drive a wedge between Iran and Iraq’s governments. And, perhaps most ominously, it has increased the deployment of U.S. troops and weapons systems to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region. More than 4,000 additional forces are already headed there, with more promised. The greatest expansion of American power and goals, of course, has been reserved for the containment of Russia and China. Trump’s 2018 National Security Strategy named China and Russia as the United States’ greatest threats and committed to large military buildups to counter their influence. The goal of the strategy appears to have gone beyond deterrence and even containment to a form of active pressure — especially in the case of Russia. This entails not just the encirclement of Russia with U.S. and NATO forces but also a strategy of weakening Russia economically and politically with more stringent sanctions, such as those imposed against international companies working on the completion of the Nord Stream II pipeline. As in years past, NATO has been the principal vehicle used to advance Washington’s ambitious goals. Despite fears that Trump would act on his threats to dismantle the 70-year-old alliance, the administration has given it new missions — a NATO military buildup in Poland and the Baltic States, extension of the alliance’s ranks in the Balkans, adding space as an operational domain and naming China as a security challenge for the first time. As a result of these and other actions, the United States is now committed to a new cold war on two fronts, Russia and China, and perhaps three fronts when one adds the maximum-pressure campaign against Iran. These have opened up several new geopolitical theaters with expanded U.S. foreign policy goals. Under Trump, the goal of U.S. foreign policy has expanded from controlling the traditional sea lanes in the Euro-Atlantic, Asia-Pacific, and Middle East and Persian Gulf to controlling them in the Arctic, as well. Also under Trump, the United States has greatly increased geopolitical ambitions in controlling the world’s energy markets. The expansion of the United States’ foreign policy goals does not, however, mean the expansion of U.S. influence or greater U.S. security or economic well-being. Indeed, the United States’ influence arguably has declined even as its foreign policy ambitions have increased. Historically, imperial overstretch does not end well, and there is ample evidence that Trump’s foreign policy is failing nearly everywhere. With this past week’s offensive military action against Iran, it is clear the United States is not retreating under Trump. It is expanding, and in often stupid, militaristic and dangerous ways. It is that expansion that most threatens our security and economic well-being, and it is time that we begin to call out what is happening.

#### US heg is collapsing now – Covid allowed Beijing to take the lead

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Once in office, Trump soon bent the nation (but not the world) to his will, rupturing time-tested alliances, tearing up treaties, denying incontrovertible climate science, and demanding respect for American authority with a thundering, if largely empty, rhetoric that threatened military retaliation or economic reprisals globally. Despite the manifest inanity of his policies, the Republican Party capitulated, corporate tycoons applauded, and nearly half the American public cleaved to their newfound savior. As with all sellout shows, the best was saved for last. When the Covid-19 pandemic struck with full force in March 2020, Trump turned up at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, donning a MAGA hat, to proclaim his “natural ability” when it came to medical science, while distinguished doctors stood by like studio extras in mute testimony to his otherwise risible claims. As the pandemic began climbing toward its terrible, still developing toll, Trump hijacked White House briefings by medical experts to promote a succession of crackpot claims—wearing a mask was merely “politically correct”; Covid-19 was just another flu that “becomes weaker with warmer weather”; hydroxychloroquine was a cure; and shining ultraviolet “light inside of the body” or injecting “disinfectant” were possible treatments. A surprising number of Americans started drinking bleach to protect themselves from the virus, forcing months of public health warnings. After nearly a century in which the United States had been a world leader in promoting public health, the Trump administration, to escape blame for its own escalating failures, walked out of the World Health Organization. Lending the country the aura of a failed state, the CDC itself, once the world’s gold standard in medical research, bungled the development of a coronavirus test and so forfeited any serious, nationwide attempt to successfully track and trace the disease (the most effective means of controlling it). While smaller nations like New Zealand, South Korea, and even impoverished Rwanda effectively curbed Covid-19, by the end of Trump’s term the United States already had experienced more than 400,000 deaths and 24 million infections—significantly above any other developed nation’s death rate and a full quarter of the world’s total cases. Meanwhile, Beijing mobilized a rigorous public health campaign that quickly contained the virus to just 4,600 deaths in a population of 1.4 billion. In only four months, China virtually eliminated the virus (despite periodic new local breakouts) and had its economy humming along with a 5 percent increase in gross domestic product, which accounted for 30 percent of global growth last year. Meanwhile, after 11 months of an incessant pandemic, the United States remained mired in a crippling recession. This striking disparity in state performance only accelerated China’s quest to surpass the United States as the world’s largest economy and, with all that financial clout, become its preeminent power.

### 2NC---US Domestic Collapse

#### Internal divisions and crisis are driving US collapse now

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In this article, Hegemonic decline is defined as the hegemonic reverse from one superpower to another one, while ensuring that there is a military and political framework for the trans-border amassment of capital (Komlosy, 2016). Thus, in order for one to grasp the whole process, it is imperative to highlight and look into the principal attributes that underpin this, therefore, to put it forward that USA's hegemonic decline owes deeply to the following: USA's deep internal political cleavages, USA's inability to resolve the inflexibility that exist between the Democrats and the Republicans (Ferguson, 2014). Equally important is the acceptance that there is a decline and/ loss of the manufacturing employment capacity of the USA which slowly denies the country's industry of its principal role in the global economy as the leading manufacturing employment economy in the world (Skrabec, 2014). For statistical proof, the author was unable to place figures in this document due to technical aspects. Thus, for the readers' confirmation of the latter assertion, they can see Bailey and Bosworth (2014, p. 4) who have shown a figure depicting Manufacturing Value added and employment as a Share of the Total US Economy, 1960–2011. In making a quick document review of alternative scholars in this subject, it becomes apparent that other internal challenges including the outsourcing of the US manufacturing sector to the economical production sites of the Global South which often result in the emergence of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs). These include the likes of South Africa, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Turkey, Thailand etc. (Komlosy, 2016; Majaski, 2019). The foregoing is often epitomized by structural unemployment and social despairs which often sabotage social peace in the USA that exists between the labor force and the capital bosses. A case point would be the degeneration of the Fordist welfare State in the early 2000s. The 2008's Great Recession also contributed immensely to the hegemonic decline of US, which resulted in the USA promoting dictatorial leaders in other regions. This was led heavily by the desire to intensify the problems faced by other regions such as civil war victimization (in the Middle East) and mineral resource curse (in Africa). Thus moving from promoting and spearheading democracies to dictatorships in the world (Komlosy, 2016). Equally important is USA's strong adoption of privatization policies, which brought widespread practice of scams, profit gaming systems and also corruption to only show some signs of the Third World kleptocracy (Engelhardt, 2014). This had also projected USA as a prospective Third World Nation. Another significant point to consider in as the internal challenge is the issue of De-legitimization of the Presidency and the US Congress (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2019). This gained prominence in the year 2014 when the American confidence was proven at the polling outfits outlining well that Americans expressed the utmost confidence in the military with 50% and the Supreme Court in the second with 23% and the presidency in the third place with 11% and lastly was the Congress with 5% (Engelhardt, 2014). The Congress and President have been delegitimized to a point where they no longer possess the powers of declaring a war against countries, which abuse human rights like Syria (Lind, 2017; Nelson, 2016). In the process of delegitimizing the president, a relevant case point would be that of John Boehner's visit to Israel to sign the presidential deal with Benjamin Netanyahu with a letter of support signed by 47 Republican senators (Rudoren, 2015). The foregoing is also supported by the soaring of the National Security State as the fourth Branch of the US government. This branch of government is attested to be gaining prominence and autonomy very fast (Engelhardt, 2014). Equally important is the branch's ability to be able to authorize any of its desires with practically no resistance from Washington, which is the continual feature of the contemporary US politics (Engelhardt, 2014). Even though this fourth branch of government does not get too much attention from the media house and the government, it has become apparent that this branch of government has taken over the National Security State and incorporated it into its own, making it stronger with “labyrinthine structure” and that this whole process shows something very brand new in the American World [dis] order (Engelhardt, 2014). The other significant symptom of US hegemonic decline is the issue of demobilization of the people of America characterized heavily by abject poverty, inequality in wages and the collapse of labor market in line with the society's militarization. This process, started after world war II, is partially explained by Operation Magic Carpet (Everipedia, 2019). This process was initially enacted as a response to the rebellious and disruptive Vietnam-era draftees. This process involved the prioritization of advertising agencies over the citizens' army resulting in the public being sent to their homes, to never again interfere in the affairs of the military. Thus, this whole process also led to the weakening of the National policy of the USA to some extent, endangering the security of the USA nation (Everipedia, 2019). Having said that, it is important to highlight also that since the early 2000s, demobilization has been entrenched and made a normal thing for the security and safety of the people, but there are protests which were motivated by the militarization of the policemen and women in brown and black communities in the USA (Engelhardt, 2014).

### **2NC---China Rise**

**U.S. hegemony is over -- China will replace the U.S. as primary hegemon**

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American decline redux **Today the military, economic, institutional and ideational pillars that have supported the Pax Americana are being challenged by China.** This raises two fundamental and intimately connected questions: if China surpasses, equals or even approximates the United States in these dimensions of power, can the Pax Americana endure? And, if it cannot, what will replace it? Posing these questions raises the contentious issue—contentious at least in the US—of whether American power is, in fact, declining. During his abortive 2012 run for the Republican presi- dential nomination, Jon Huntsman—President Obama’s Ambassador to China, and now President Trump’s Ambassador to Russia—succinctly expressed the prevailing view of the US foreign policy establishment when he said: ‘Decline is un-American.’ Leading US security studies experts agree. These primacists argue that the extent of China’s rise—and hence of America’s decline—are, like prema- ture reports of Mark Twain’s death, greatly exaggerated. Primacists believe the international system is still unipolar, and that US power will keep it that way for a long time to come. This claim is increasingly dubious. Indeed, the case made by the ‘declinists’ of the 1980s—notably Paul Kennedy, Robert Gilpin, David Calleo and Samuel P. Huntington—looks stronger every day.23 Contrary to the portrayal of their argument by many of their critics, the 1980s declinists did not claim either that America’s post-Second World War power advantages had already dissipated, or that the United States was on the brink of a rapid, catastrophic decline. Rather, they pointed to domestic and international economic drivers that, over time, would cause American economic power to diminish relatively, thereby shifting the balance of power. In essence, the declinists believed that the United States was experiencing a slow—‘termite-like’—decline caused by fundamental structural weaknesses in the American economy that were gradually nibbling at its founda- tions.24 Kennedy himself was explicitly looking ahead to the effects this termite decline would have on the US world role in the early twenty-first century. As he wrote: The task facing American statesmen over the next decades … is to recognize that broad trends are under way, and that there is a need to ‘manage’ affairs so that the relative erosion of the United States’ position takes place slowly and smoothly, and is not accelerated by policies which bring merely short-term advantage but longer-term disadvantage.25 The unwinding of the Pax Americana Decline may be ‘un-American’, but that does not mean it isn’t happening. Ameri- ca’s ‘unipolar moment’ has turned out to be rather—well, momentary.26 The Great Recession that began in 2007–2008 did not end America’s unipolar ascen- dancy. It did, however, focus attention on, and accelerate, the ebbing of American power—the evidence of which has cumulated rapidly over the ensuing ten years. This slippage of US dominance is chipping away at each of the four pillars on which the Pax Americana was erected: military power; economic power; institu- tions; and soft power. **As these pillars erode, it becomes increasingly doubtful that the Pax Americana can endure. China’s challenge to American military power** Until now the dominant view within the US foreign policy establishment has been that military strength is the one area in which America’s advantage is insur- mountable (at least within any meaningful time-frame). American military power is considered by US policy-makers and many security studies scholars to be the geopolitical trump card—no pun intended—that will ensure continuing American dominance even if China closes the economic and technological gaps separating it from the United States.27 However, some within the foreign policy establish- ment are beginning to question this viewpoint. Important recent studies of the Sino-American military balance suggest that some analysts are taking a fresh look at the question of how long it will take China to catch up with the US militarily. China and the United States face different grand strategic challenges. As self- styled global hegemon, America must be able project decisive military power to the three regions it considers vital to both its security and its prosperity: Europe, the Middle East and east Asia. In contrast, China’s strategic goals, at least for now, are more limited. China aims at dominating its own geographic backyard: that is, it seeks regional hegemony in east and south-east Asia, which have become the focal points of Sino-American geopolitical competition. Even if China is not at present able to mount a global challenge to the US, there is evidence that it is beginning to draw level with the United States in regional military power in east Asia. In a recent report on the Sino-American military balance, the RAND Corporation refers to the ‘receding frontier of US military dominance’ in east Asia.28 According to RAND, the trend lines in the Sino-American military rivalry in east Asia are not favourable for the United States: **‘Although China has not closed the gap with the United States, it has narrowed it—and it has done so quite rapidly.** Even for many of the contributors to this report, who track military developments in Asia on an ongoing basis, the speed of change … was striking.’29 In a recent book, Roger Cliff, an east Asian security expert at RAND, says that by 2020 China’s military establishment will be almost on an equal footing with America’s with respect to doctrine, equipment, personnel and training (though still lagging behind in organizational structure, logistics and organizational culture). Consequently, he predicts that by 2020 American military dominance in east Asia will be significantly eroded.30 He predicts that the 2020s will witness a power transition in east Asia and that at this point China will be able to challenge the regional status quo.31 **American economic decline and the impairment of US economic hegemony** During the past decade, signs of waning US economic power—and China’s growing economic muscle—have become too numerous to ignore. Since the onset of the Great Recession, China has successively taken top position in the world in exports (passing Germany); in trade (passing the United States); and in manufacturing (claiming a title the United States had held for a century). In 2014 the World Bank made the stunning announcement that **China** had **vaulted past the United States to become the world’s largest economy** (measured by purchasing power parity (PPP);32 and in the early to mid-2020s China is predicted to overtake the United States in GDP measured by market exchange rate.33 These shifts in the relative economic power of China and the United States have enormous economic and geopolitical implications. Indeed, in July 2017 Christine Lagarde, managing director of the IMF, stated that in ten years’ time the organization’s headquar- ters—which are required by its by-laws to be located in its member country with the largest economy—could be in Beijing.34 Taken together, these indicators paint a clear picture of relative economic decline. American primacists have advanced a number of clever but unconvincing arguments in an attempt to downplay the significance of the ongoing economic power shift from America to China. For example, some primacists assert that per capita GDP is a better yardstick of national power than aggregate GDP; that newly developed metrics of national power have diminished the importance of GDP as a measure of a state’s economic power; that China is far behind the United States in advanced technology; and that China is incapable of doing innovation.35 This last claim is ubiquitous among primacists.36 It is, however, undermined by recent developments. For example, in September 2016 China began operating the world’s largest radio telescope, which is intended to project China’s ambitions deep into the universe, and bring back the kind of dramatic discoveries that win honours such as Nobel Prizes.37 In August 2016 China launched the world’s first quantum satellite, which could lead ‘to new, completely different methods for transmitting information’.38 In another example of how China is catching up with the United States in innovation and technology, in June 2016 a Chinese computer (using made-in-China microprocessors) topped the ranking of the world’s fastest supercomputers.39 In July 2017 China’s State Council announced an ambitious plan to sprint to the front of the pack in artificial intelligence (AI), including both military and civilian applications.40 Indeed, The Economist recently observed that already ‘China could be a close second to America—and perhaps even ahead of it—in some areas of AI’.41 And China is moving to the forefront in green technologies (solar panels and wind-generated power) and in electric cars.42 The waning of US economic dominance may not be obvious to primacists, but it is perfectly apparent to many observers in the real world.43 The weakening of US relative economic power, which became unmistakably clear during the Great Recession, has undercut the Pax Americana both by compromising the United States’ ability to manage the international economy and by shifting the Sino- American geopolitical balance in east Asia. During the Great Recession it became evident that in some (not all) respects the United States was unable to fulfil its responsibility as the international economy’s manager. After all, an economic hegemon is supposed to solve global economic crises, not cause them. But it was the freezing up of the US financial system triggered by the sub-prime mortgage crisis that plunged the global economy into hot water. The economic hegemon is supposed to be the lender of last resort in the international economy. The United States, however, has become the borrower of first resort—the world’s largest debtor. When the global economy falters, the economic hegemon is supposed to jump-start recovery by purchasing other nations’ goods. From the end of the Second World War until the Great Recession struck, it was America’s willingness to consume foreign goods that constituted the primary firewall against global economic downturns. When the Great Recession hit, however, the US economy proved too infirm to lead the global economy back to health. It fell to China to pull the global economy out of its nose-dive by stepping up to the plate with a massive stimulus programme. Barack Obama acknowledged the deeper implications of this when, at the April 2009 G20 meeting in London, he conceded that, in important respects, the United States’ days as the economic hegemon were numbered because it was too deeply in debt to continue as the world’s consumer of last resort. Instead, he said, the world would have to look to China (and other emerging market states, plus Germany) to be the motors of global recovery. ‘If there is going to be renewed growth,’ Obama stated, ‘it can’t just be the United States as the engine, everybody is going to have to pick up the pace.’ He added that in some ways the world has become accustomed to the United States being a voracious consumer market and the engine that drives a lot of economic growth worldwide. And I think that in the wake of the crisis, even as we’re doing stimulus, we have to take into account our own deficits.44 Another example of the slipping US grip on global economic leadership is Washington’s inability to prevail over Germany in the transatlantic ‘austerity versus stimulus’ debate that began in 2009. Reflecting their different historical experiences, the United States and Germany adopted divergent fiscal policies during the Great Recession. Economic policy-makers in the Obama administra- tion were guided by the Keynesian lessons learned from the Great Depression of the 1930s: in essence, that to dig out of a deep economic slump, the federal government should stimulate demand by pump-priming the economy through deficit spending, and the Federal Reserve should support this policy of stimulus with low interest rates and easy money. Obama administration policy-makers, and leading American economists, were haunted by the ‘1937 analogy’—the fear that, if stimulus is withdrawn prematurely, nascent recovery could be aborted. On the other hand, Germany—the EU’s economic engine—has long been haunted by the ‘1923 analogy’—the fear that inflation easily can become uncon- trollable, with potentially disastrous economic, social and political consequences.45 From the founding of West Germany after the Second World War until the advent of European monetary union, and eventually the euro, the primary missions of the West German central bank, the Bundesbank were to combat inflation, and to preserve the Deutschmark’s value. For the German government, assurance that the new European Central Bank would follow the Bundesbank’s sound money policy was a sine qua non for its decision to give up the Deutschmark in favour of the euro. The US–European divide on austerity versus stimulus manifested itself at the April 2009 London G20 summit. The US objective at this meeting was to achieve a rebalancing of the international economy by inducing the Europeans—which meant Germany—to lift the continent out of recession by emulating Washington’s use of deficit spending to spur economic revival. Washington wanted Germany to export less and import—and consume—more. Berlin flatly rejected US entreaties with respect to rebalancing. German Chancellor Angela Merkel argued that for states—especially ones already deeply in debt—to accumulate more debt in an effort to spend themselves out of recession would only set the stage for an even greater crisis down the road.46 Washington’s inability to persuade Berlin to adopt a policy of economic stimulus highlighted America’s flagging ability to act as the leader of the interna- tional economy. The then Treasury Secretary Jack Lew implicitly admitted this at the October 2015 IMF–World Bank biannual meetings when, echoing President Obama, he stated that the United States could not be the ‘sole engine’ of global growth. And the Trump administration, although it has complained loudly that Germany exports too much and imports too little, has like its predecessor been unable to push or persuade Berlin into reducing its trade surplus while simultane- ously increasing its consumption. Even as the US ability to manage the international economy is decreasing, China’s growing economic clout has profound implications for the Sino-American strategic balance. For example, the Obama administration’s ‘pivot’ to Asia was intended to reassure the nations of east and south-east Asia that the United States would use its military power to offset China’s growing economic influence in the region. As Jeffrey Bader, the Obama administration’s National Security Council director for Asia, put it: China’s emergence, China’s rise, is the focus of attention not only of the United States but among all countries in the region. None of them wants to have hostile or adversarial relations with China. At the same time, none wants to be dominated by China. The countries in the region welcome the US presence as, if you will, a kind of balance against China.47 However, the outlook for this ‘balancing’ strategy is clouded. Doubtless, Bader was correct: regional states do not want to be forced to choose between aligning either with China or with the United States. But economic trends suggest that they will be inexorably drawn into Beijing’s geopolitical orbit by the overpow- ering magnetic pull of the Chinese economy. The lessening of America’s regional economic influence, and the corresponding jump in that of China, have been dramatic. In 1993 China accounted for only 2 per cent of ASEAN’s trade in goods, and the United States accounted for 18 per cent. By 2013, however, the American share of ASEAN trade in goods had shrunk to 8.2 per cent while China’s had skyrocketed to 14 per cent.48 Growing economic dependence on China is reflected in geopolitical alignments. Since 2016, Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar and the Philippines have all tilted away from the United States and towards China. Even Australia, long a staunch US ally, is debating the merits of taking a more equidistant political stance between Washington and Beijing because of its economic dependence on China. In the coming years these trends are likely to continue, and China will be able to leverage its economic power to enhance its geopolitical position in east and south-east Asia—and diminish that of the United States. The institutional challenge to the Pax Americana Not only is the **Pax Americana** being **whittled away by** constraints on Washing- ton’s ability to continue playing its role as the manager of the global economy, and by **China’s ever-increasing economic dominance** of its region; even more strikingly, **the institutional framework is being challenged.** An important indicator of the Pax Americana’s erosion is the weakening of its legacy institutions amid calls, magnified by the Great Recession, for a major overhaul of the international institutional order. Examples include demands that the IMF and World Bank be reformed to give China (and other key emerging market economies) greater voting power, and a (so far unsuccessful) push to expand the membership of the UN Security Council by adding, among others, Brazil and India. Another indicator of the shifting global balance occurred in November 2008 when the G8 global economic summit was transformed into the G20 by the addition of China and other emerging market states including India, Indonesia and South Africa. The G20’s creation as the new focal point for coordinating international economic policy was a response to the insistence of China, and the other major emerging market states, that they be given a greater voice in interna- tional economic affairs. Implicitly, the G20’s emergence confirmed three trends. First, the necessity of conceding power to the emerging market states—especially China—confirmed that America’s relative power is declining. Second, the G20’s empowerment underscored the shift in power from the Euro-Atlantic world to Asia. Whereas only one Asian nation ( Japan) had been a G8 member, the G20 has six members from the region: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea. Finally, the G20’s emergence as the central organ of international economic management demonstrated that—as a result of the Great Recession— the prestige and authority of the United States and Europe as stewards of the international economy had slipped dramatically.49 The past decade or so also has seen the creation of new institutions that potentially could constitute a parallel—‘shadow’—international order outside the framework of the Pax Americana. The most important of these may be the Beijing- backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Other examples include the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organiza- tion, the Eurasian Economic Union and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). The staying power and impact of these institutions are uncertain; but at the very least they are important symbolically. They underscore the decline of the American-designed post-Second World War international order, and the rise of new powers such as China and India—and the resurgence of old ones such as Russia—demanding recognition of their status and prestige, and a concomitant voice in the management of the international system. Soft power: the end of the US monopoly One of the major impacts of the Great Recession was its effect on perceptions of US soft power. As Martin Wolf argued at the nadir of the meltdown, the collapse of the American financial system marked a ‘humiliating end to the “unipolar moment”’.50 The meltdown has also damaged America’s status and ideational power. As Martin Jacques has suggested, the fact ‘that the American-run interna- tional economic system has been plunged into such turmoil as a result of a crisis which had its origins in the United States has served further to accentuate the loss of American power and prestige’.51 US claims that the so-called Washington Consensus—based on free markets, democracy and globalization—is the only viable path for economic and political development have been discredited. As former US Deputy Treasury Secretary Roger Altman said, the Great Recession ‘put the American model of free market capitalism under a cloud’.52 In the wake of the meltdown, China has broken the US monopoly on soft power.53 Beijing has become increasingly adept at developing its own brand of soft power based on its culture, its diplomacy and the attractiveness of its own system— ‘market authoritarianism’—as an alternative to the American model.54 Indeed, even before the crash, Kurt Campbell and Michele Flournoy—both of whom would go on to hold senior national security positions in the Obama administra- tion—acknowledged that China, despite not being a democracy, might already have leapt ahead of the United States in soft power. This was, they observed, ‘a troubling indictment of our current course’.55 China’s challenge to the Pax Americana: the AIIB, and ‘one belt, one road’ In May 2016 leaders of 29 nations, and representatives from some 80 others, descended on Beijing to discuss China’s ambitious ‘one belt one road’ (OBOR) development initiative—also referred to by some as the ‘new Silk Road’. This plan is the follow-on to China’s creation several years ago of the AIIB, conceived as a new major international institution to foster economic development in south-east, south-west and central Asia. OBOR—a signature policy of Chinese President Xi Jinping—calls for the investment of massive amounts of money (US$1 trillion, according to some reports) to promote trade and economic devel- opment by constructing transport links that will tie together east Asian manufac- turing hubs with markets and raw material suppliers in south-east Asia, central Asia, south-west Asia and Africa.56 These new transport routes will also connect China and the participating Asian nations with Europe—thereby creating new markets for the goods and services it produces. Some analysts regard the devel- opmental aspects of OBOR as a Chinese version of the post-1945 Marshall Plan (albeit on a much grander scale). OBOR is also seen as an instrument for extending China’s geopolitical influence—especially in central Asia. Indeed, it has been suggested that OBOR is part of a strategy of establishing Beijing’s dominance over the Eurasian ‘heartland’, to use the term favoured by the early twentieth- century British geopolitical theorist Sir Halford Mackinder, who argued that control of the heartland was the key to dominating the international system.57 Since the early 1940s, leading American policy-makers and academic strategists have—explicitly or implicitly—embraced Mackinder’s ideas about geopolitics.58 The AIIB and OBOR are both indicators of receding US power, and they challenge the Pax Americana—not just geopolitically, but also with respect to international economic leadership and international institutions. Beijing envisions the AIIB as a rival to the IMF and World Bank. In discussions of Sino-American rivalry, less attention is usually paid to these issues than to the military balance between the United States and China, or to the flashpoints—the South China Sea, the East China Sea, Taiwan, the Korean peninsula—that could spark a conflict. But the contest for international economic and financial leadership, and for the guiding hand in reconfiguring the twenty-first century’s international institutions, will also shape relations between Washington and Beijing, and help determine the fate of the Pax Americana. The diminution of US influence—itself a signal of the Pax Americana’s erosion—was underscored by Washington’s inability to derail China’s plans to create the AIIB. This failure was not for lack of effort. When Beijing rolled out its AIIB plans, the Obama administration kicked into high gear diplomatically in an attempt to quash the project. As the New York Times reported, Washington ‘lobbied against the [AIIB] with unexpected determination and engaged in a vigorous campaign to persuade important allies to shun the project’.59 Washington’s attempt to dissuade its allies from joining the AIIB failed. Or, to put it more bluntly, in the face of China’s growing power, the United States could not keep its allies onside. The dam burst when, in a decision taken fittingly on the Ides of March in 2015, Britain—ostensibly America’s closest ally—announced it was going to become a member of the AIIB (Et tu, Britain?). London’s action set off a stampede as other states that previously had been on the fence rushed to sign up for membership in the new institution. Those joining the AIIB included traditional US allies such as Australia, France, Germany, Italy and South Korea. Beijing’s diplomatic coup in attracting widespread support for its AIIB initiative was viewed—correctly— as a direct challenge to America’s global geopolitical and economic leadership. Writing in the Financial Times, former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said that London’s AIIB decision and its aftermath ‘may be remembered as the moment the United States lost its role as the underwriter of the global economic system’.60 Beijing’s ability to persuade America’s allies to sign up to the AIIB also was a concrete demonstration of the lure of China’s financial and economic clout. **China’s AIIB initiative is important because it represents a double-barrelled challenge simultaneously to US leadership of the global economy and to the Pax Americana’s institutional (and ideational) foundations.** At the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, the United States took the lead in constructing the struc- ture of the post-Second World War international economy by creating the IMF and the World Bank, which were intended to anchor the postwar international economic system. Both of these institutions were structured to ensure Washington would have veto power over their decisions. As China’s importance in the world economy grew, however, Beijing demanded that voting power in the two Bretton Woods institutions be recalibrated. In April 2010, the IMF and World Bank agreed to increase China’s voting weight. However, to become effective, this agreement required approval by the US Congress; and the Obama administration was unable to persuade Congress to enact the necessary legislation until January 2016. Beijing’s frustration with the stalemate on voting rights helped drive its decision to launch its AIIB initiative.61 With the AIIB, Beijing seeks to enhance China’s roles both in the management of the international economy and in international development. The AIIB was also intended to signal that China was serious in demanding an increase in its voting power in the IMF and World Bank commensurate with its current economic and financial clout. The AIIB is—and is intended to be—a direct challenge to the primacy of both of these Bretton Woods legacy institutions.62 At the same time its impact reaches beyond international economic affairs, because it signals that **the Sino-American balance of power now is tilting towards Beijing.**

#### American Hegemony is collapsing now --- China is ahead in key areas

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THE THREE PILLARS OF US GLOBAL POWER In the late 1990s, at the absolute apex of US global hegemony, President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, far more astute as an armchair analyst than an actual practitioner of geopolitics, issued a stern warning about the three pillars of power necessary to preserve Washington’s global control. First, the United States must avoid the loss of its strategic European “perch on the Western periphery” of Eurasia. Next, it must block the rise of “an assertive single entity” across the continent’s massive “middle space” of Central Asia. And finally, it must prevent “the expulsion of America from its offshore bases” along the Pacific littoral. Drunk on the heady elixir of limitless global power following the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991, Washington’s foreign-policy elites made increasingly dubious decisions that led to a rapid decline in their country’s dominance. In an act of supreme imperial hubris, born of the belief that they were triumphantly at the all-American “end of history,” Republican neoconservatives in President George W. Bush’s administration invaded and occupied first Afghanistan and then Iraq, convinced that they could remake the entire Greater Middle East, the cradle of Islamic civilization, in America’s secular, free-market image (with oil as their repayment). After an expenditure of nearly $2 trillion on operations in Iraq alone and nearly 4,598 American military deaths, all Washington left behind was the rubble of ruined cities, more than 200,000 Iraqi dead, and a government in Baghdad beholden to Iran. The official US Army history of that war concluded that “an emboldened and expansionist Iran appears to be the only victor.” Meanwhile, China spent those same decades building industries that would make it the workshop of the world. In a major strategic miscalculation, Washington admitted Beijing to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, bizarrely confident that a compliant China, home to nearly 20% of humanity and historically the world’s most powerful nation, would somehow join the global economy without changing the balance of power. “Across the ideological spectrum,” as two former Obama administration officials later wrote, “we in the U.S. foreign policy community shared the underlying belief that U.S. power and hegemony could readily mold China to the United States’ liking.” A bit more bluntly, former national security adviser H.R. McMaster concluded that Washington had empowered “a nation whose leaders were determined not only to displace the United States in Asia, but also to promote a rival economic and governance model globally.” During the 15 years after it joined the WTO, Beijing’s exports to the United States grew nearly fivefold to $462 billion while, by 2014, its foreign currency reserves surged from just $200 billion to an unprecedented $4 trillion, a vast treasure it used to launch its trillion-dollar “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), aimed at uniting Eurasia economically through newly built infrastructure. In the process, Beijing began a systematic demolition of Brzezinski’s three pillars of US geopolitical power. THE FIRST PILLAR—EUROPE Beijing has scored its most surprising success so far in Europe, long a key bastion of American global power. As part of a chain of 40 commercial ports it’s been building or rebuilding around Eurasia and Africa, Beijing has purchased major port facilities in Europe, including outright ownership of the Greek port of Piraeus and significant shares in those of Zeebrugge in Belgium, Rotterdam in the Netherlands, and Hamburg, Germany. After a state visit from Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2019, Italy became the first G-7 member to officially join the BRI agreement, subsequently signing over a portion of its ports at Genoa and Trieste. Despite Washington’s strenuous objections, in 2020, the European Union and China also concluded a draft financial services agreement that, when finalized in 2023, will more fully integrate their banking systems. While China is building ports, rails, roads, and powerplants across the continent, its Russian ally continues to dominate Europe’s energy market and is now just months away from opening its controversial Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline beneath the Baltic Sea, guaranteed to increase Moscow’s economic influence. As the massive pipeline project moved to completion last December, Russian President Putin intensified pressures on NATO with a roster of “extravagant” demands, including a formal guarantee that Ukraine not be admitted to the alliance, removal of all the military infrastructure installed in Eastern Europe since 1997, and a prohibition against future military activity in Central Asia. In a power play not seen since Stalin and Mao joined forces in the 1950s, the alliance between Putin’s raw military force and Xi’s relentless economic pressure may indeed slowly be pulling Europe away from America. Complicating the US position, Britain’s exit from the European Union cost Washington its most forceful advocate inside Brussels’ labyrinthine corridors of power. And as Brussels and Washington grow apart, Beijing and Moscow only come closer. Through joint energy ventures, military maneuvers, and periodic summits, Putin and Xi are reprising the Stalin-Mao alliance, a strategic partnership at the heart of Eurasia that could, in the end, break Washington’s steel chains that have long stretched from Eastern Europe to the Pacific. THE SECOND PILLAR—CENTRAL ASIA Under its bold BRI scheme to fuse Europe and Asia into a unitary Eurasian economic bloc, Beijing has crisscrossed Central Asia with a steel-ribbed cat’s cradle of railroads and oil pipelines, effectively toppling Brzezinski’s second pillar of geopolitical power—that the United States must block the rise of “an assertive single entity” in the continent’s vast “middle space.” When President Xi first announced the Belt and Road Initiative at Kazakhstan’s Nazarbayev University in September 2013, he spoke expansively about “connecting the Pacific and the Baltic Sea,” while building “the biggest market in the world with unparalleled potential.” In the decade since, Beijing has put in place a bold design for transcending the vast distances that historically separated Asia and Europe. Starting in 2008, the China National Petroleum Corporation collaborated with Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to launch a Central Asia-China gas pipeline that will eventually extend more than 4,000 miles. By 2025, in fact, there should be an integrated inland energy network, including Russia’s extensive grid of gas pipelines, reaching 6,000 miles from the Baltic to the Pacific. The only real barrier to China’s bid to capture Eurasia’s vast “middle space” was the now-ended US occupation of Afghanistan. To join Central Asia’s gas fields to the energy-hungry markets of South Asia, the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) pipeline was announced in 2018, but progress though the critical Afghan sector was slowed by the war there. In the months before it captured Kabul, however, Taliban diplomats turned up in Turkmenistan and China to offer assurances about the project’s future. Since then, the scheme has been revived, opening the way for Chinese investment that could complete its capture of Central Asia. THE THIRD PILLAR—THE PACIFIC LITTORAL The most volatile flashpoint In Beijing’s grand strategy for breaking Washington’s geopolitical grip over Eurasia lies in the contested waters between China’s coast and the Pacific littoral, which the Chinese call “the first island chain.” By building a half-dozen island bases of its own in the South China Sea since 2014, swarming Taiwan and the East China Sea with repeated fighter plane forays, and staging joint maneuvers with Russia’s navy, Beijing has been conducting a relentless campaign to begin what Brzezinski called “the expulsion of America from its offshore bases” along that Pacific littoral. As China’s economy grows larger and its naval forces do, too, the end of Washington’s decades-long dominion over that vast ocean expanse may be just over the horizon. For one thing, China may at some point achieve supremacy in certain critical military technologies, including super-secure “quantum entanglement” satellite communications and hypersonic missiles. Last October, the chair of the US Joint Chiefs, Gen. Mark Milley, called China’s recent launch of a hypersonic missile “very close” to “a Sputnik moment.” While US tests of such weapons, which can fly faster than 4,000 mph, have repeatedly failed, China successfully orbited a prototype whose speed and stealth trajectory suddenly make US aircraft carriers significantly more difficult to defend. But China’s clear advantage in any struggle over that first Pacific island chain is simply distance. A battle fleet of two US supercarriers operating 5,000 miles from Pearl Harbor could deploy, at best, 150 jet fighters. In any conflict within 200 miles of China’s coast, Beijing could use up to 2,200 combat aircraft as well as DF-21D “carrier-killer” missiles whose 900-mile range makes them, according to US Navy sources, “a severe threat to the operations of U.S. and allied navies in the western Pacific.” The tyranny of distance, in other words, means that the US loss of that first island chain, along with its axial anchor on Eurasia’s Pacific littoral, should only be a matter of time. In the years to come, as more such incidents erupt around Eurasia’s ring of fire, readers can insert them into their own geopolitical model—a useful, even essential, means for understanding a fast-changing world. And as you do that, just remember that history has never ended, while the US position in it is being remade before our eyes.

#### US Econ downturn is happening now - China catching up and inflation are telltale signs

Donnan and Curran 22 [4 March 2022, Donnan, Shawn, Shawn Donnan is an award-winning senior writer for Bloomberg News where he reports on the US and global economies. He joined Bloomberg in 2018 from the Financial Times where he served as World Trade Editor and prior to that, World News Editor, coordinating the paper's global coverage of economics and politics. He also worked as a correspondent and editor for the FT in Indonesia and Hong Kong, from where he edited the paper's China coverage. He is a graduate of Boston University., Curran, Enda, Hailing from a farming family in the hills of County Wicklow, Ireland, Enda covers major themes and trends driving Asia’s economies as a correspondent for Bloomberg News. Recent coverage has focused on China’s transition, Myanmar’s fading star and Japan’s struggle for growth. Before joining Bloomberg News, Enda was at The Wall Street Journal where he covered the Asian operations of the world’s biggest financial institutions. Previous postings included London and Sydney., “America Flexes Its Financial Dominance”, Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2022-03-04/what-s-happening-in-the-world-economy-u-s-flexes-its-financial-dominance>]//AA

The Mighty Greenback Ever since Donald Trump entered the White House, the global economy has been shuffling into what strategic thinkers have warned is increasingly a bipolar world featuring **a rising China-led club of autocracies against the U.S. and its fellow declining guardians of liberal democracy.** This is the week that, thanks to Vladimir Putin and the U.S.-led reaction to his invasion of Ukraine, the shuffle arguably turned into a sprint towards that divided world. It’s also the week that a U.S. written off by many at home and abroad as a dysfunctional aging power reasserted its unique place in the global economy. **China Is Catching Up in Economic Weight...** Share of global GDP (at PPP) History moves frighteningly fast some times. But when it does so it also usually shines a light on truths that we’ve forgotten. And that second point above — the one about American power reasserting itself — may just be the forgotten truth to seize on this time. The dominant strategic narrative about the approaching bipolar world depended a lot on an ever-rising China being ready to offer an alternative to the U.S. This week we’re learning that it probably isn’t and that Xi Jinping has reasons to be nervous about that. ... But Far Behind in Financial Clout **The Chinese currency remains a bit-part player on the global scene** Source: SWIFT, International Monetary Fund As we write in today’s Bloomberg Big Take here, China may be catching up when it comes to economic output, the bit measured by GDP. But the U.S. still controls the financial architecture that makes the global economy run, which gives it and its allies the ability to turn off the switch and quickly isolate even big economies like Russia. Beijing’s efforts over more than a decade to create an alternative have so far fallen way short of presenting a meaningful alternative to the dollarized world. The renminbi accounts for just about 3% of global payments and a mere 2.7% of official foreign-exchange reserves. As analysts at the Rhodium Group wrote, the China Interbank Payment System set up as a way around dollar-based payments, so far features just 75 participants, all of which are overseas branches of Chinese banks. That may change. **The war in Ukraine and the sanctions against Russia’s central bank and its foreign reserves brought by the U.S. and Europe may precipitate a rush out of the dollar and a broad embrace of China’s new systems, as some have warned.** But there's an equally plausible opposing prediction — that the war and the economic lessons of the response serve as a reminder of the lack of real alternatives and cement the dollar's place for some time. —Shawn Donnan Got tips or feedback? Email us at ecodaily@bloomberg.net Sign up here to get the latest updates on the Russian invasion of Ukraine The Economic Scene G-7 Inflation **Consumer price indexes across major economies are already on the rise** Source: OECD \* Supply chains that rattled the global economy through the pandemic are unleashing another shock as efforts to choke off trade with Russia strain resources ranging from fertilizer needed for crops and palladium for car-making, to oil that’s used to produce almost everything. The upshot: **a world economy that again faces the prospect of stagflationary forces** as inflation quickens and growth fades, compelling central banks to choose which to tackle while fearing the challenge they don’t take on then gets out of hand. The choice is even starker now than it was during the early days of the pandemic. Back then, monetary policy makers elected to buoy demand as a recession hit. Now **inflation is at multi-decade highs**, forcing them to focus on runaway prices, although perhaps alert to the risk they may have to move more slowly than anticipated. “Were this 2022 supply shock a first, central banks would be more confident of its transitory inflation impact,” said Alan Ruskin, chief international strategist at Deutsche Bank AG. “But this is an inflation shock compounding pre-existing evidence of sticky inflation, so adding to concerns that policy will have to treat attendant higher prices as more than a temporary phenomena, even if growth slows.” Need-to-Know Research What’s the difference between 5% and 5.5%? When it comes to China’s growth target for 2022 — set to be announced by Premier Li Keqiang the morning of March 5 in Beijing — it amounts to a notably different trajectory for policy the rest of the year. So say JPMorgan Chase & Co. economists led by Zhu Haibin. Observers’ expectations have coalesced around a 5.5% goal and a 5% bottom line. The lower target would involve “neutral” policy, while the higher one would require stronger monetary easing, they wrote to clients this week. Reliable GDP Growth Targets China’s economy has almost never missed its target Sources: Government Work Reports; National Economic and Social Development Reports; National Bureau of Statistics Note: GDP growth targets: 2000, 2002-2004: ~7% | 2001: 7%; 2005-2011: ~8% | 2012: 7.5% | 2013-2014: ~7.5%; 2015: ~7% | 2016: 6.5%-7% | 2017-2018: ~6.5% | 2019: 6%-6.5%; 2020 no target | 2021 >6% One reason confidence in financial markets has yet to recover from the tumble in late 2021 and early this year is that policy settings aren’t in accord with 5.5% growth this year, they wrote. The team also provides some plain-English explanations of language that may come up during the week-and-a-half-long National People’s Congress gathering. “Efficiency” in fiscal policy refers to how well it’s coordinating with monetary policy. “Precision” means targeted support for manufacturing along with bigger cuts to taxes and fees, while “sustainability” refers to minding fiscal deficits and controlling local government debt risks.

## UQ---Other

### 2NC---UQ---Heg Low

#### Heg low now – COVID, climate change, and Ukraine

Guyer 3/1 – foreign policy journalist, 3/1/22. (Jonathan, “The Ukraine war shows the limits of US power”, Vox, <https://www.vox.com/22951264/russia-ukraine-war-american-superpower-limits>, accessed 7/7/22)//jd

Russia has violated Ukraine’s sovereignty and international law. The US response has been economic: sanctions against Russia that are the largest ever and yet simultaneously unlikely to alter the shape of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s aggression. So, how should we think about the US as a superpower in 2022? It’s too early to draw broad conclusions about what war in Eastern Europe means for the future of America in the world. But there are enough clues to suggest that America’s power has limits, and indeed it always has. With the Soviet Union’s demise, the United States achieved global dominance for a brief unipolar moment. Then President George W. Bush squandered it through destructive (and expensive) misguided regime-change wars. Subsequent presidents gaslit the American public on progress in the Middle East in two conflicts that killed hundreds of thousands. Despite all those unforced errors, the United States remains a superpower, though the limits of non-military power have been exposed. Thomas Pickering, who served as ambassador to Russia from 1993 to 1996, says that the “caricature” of America as a superpower has obscured the way most Americans think about how the world works. As a career diplomat over four decades, Pickering witnessed America’s global position change from the Cold War to the breakup of the Soviet Union to the height of US supremacy at the turn of the millennium. “If your assumption is that a superpower can do anything, anywhere, anytime it wishes, without suffering the consequences of risk and uncertainty, then you misperceived the current world situation,” he told me. Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, explained A superpower is not infallible and omnipotent. The United States will not send in troops but has shipped hundreds of millions of dollars of weapons to Ukraine, shepherded an international coalition to institute wide-ranging economic sanctions, and encouraged tech companies and global organizations like FIFA and the Olympics to pursue the cultural isolation of Russia. And yet the United States, even with the world’s largest military and most robust economy, has not been able to induce Russia toward a different path. So, Putin continues to deploy his army toward Kyiv. And stopping that incursion does not appear to be something America has the power to change without risking nuclear war. Superpowers need to pick their battles and engage in the same tough choices as any other country — especially when confronted with an adversary with nuclear capability, such as Russia. And rather than grasping the complexity of world affairs, many Americans have internalized the shibboleths that the US has never lost a war and that the US never compromises with enemies, especially during a conflict. Neither is true. Both factors show that, as a country, the United States has failed to recognize its own constraints, some of which have long existed and are simply accentuated by Russian aggression. How the unipolar moment ended When the Cold War ended in the ’90s, the United States possessed unrivaled economic and military power. Scholar Francis Fukuyama claimed the “End of History” and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright asserted the centrality of American exceptionalism in her coinage, “the indispensable nation.” Some argue that that unipolar moment was overstated. “Look, the Americans suffered from hubris after the end of the Soviet Union,” said Joseph Nye, a Harvard professor who has written widely about American power. “The unipolar moment, I think, was always illusory.” At the end of the Cold War, the US did continue to hold itself out as the guarantor of security. “The United States appointed itself as responsible for peace, security, and democracy in Europe,” Stephen Wertheim, a historian of US foreign policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, told me. In response to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, the United States, through NATO, took military action against Serbia. The intervention was relatively limited, and the outcome of it was a successful projection of US might. But that unilateral moment, real or imagined, was short-lived. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, were not what challenged that global supremacy, argues Wertheim. Rather, it was the 20 disastrous years of overreach in America’s response. The invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan exposed the limits of US power. It could be said that Osama bin Laden understood something about Americans that they didn’t understand about themselves, namely that in reaction to heinous terror attacks America would overreact. With the invasion and occupation of two countries, the US would face two decades of blowback that tore at the country’s seams, that undermined democratic values through the war on terrorism at home and abroad. “Basically, with the Iraq invasion, we bite off more than we can chew, and we get a comeuppance,” said Nye. The United States, mired in the Middle East and Afghanistan, continued to expand its role as global policeman through a network of US bases and military commitments that, counterintuitively, detracted from US power. It’s at this time that China began to rise as a counterbalancing force and Russia reemerged as a power in Europe. “As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have obvious problems, we start to enter into a gradual period of decline in belief that the United States can reshape other societies,” Wertheim explained. “One problem is that this led us to make commitments to Ukraine. That means that we suffer a loss of prestige when we don’t make good those commitments.” President Joe Biden speaks about the end of the war in Afghanistan from the White House on August 31, 2021. Evan Vucci/AP Now that the US is caught in a potential face-off with a nuclear superpower, it is clear that perhaps the biggest failure of recent years has been the de-emphasis on arms control and the reduction of nuclear weapons worldwide. President Barack Obama, who in his early life was a staunch anti-nuclear activist, negotiated a new START Treaty in 2011, which curbs and monitors the US and Russia’s nuclear warheads. That’s now been extended to 2026, but more is needed. Over decades, Washington and Moscow allowed the arms control regime to decline, which culminated in President Donald Trump’s withdrawal from the important 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces. “Slowly, the structures that kept US-Russian military competition visible and predictable fell away,” said Heather Hurlburt, of the think tank New America. “At the same time, Beijing” — itself a nuclear power — “is building up its arsenal and making it very clear that it’s not interested in the US-Soviet arms control model.” And other global crises, such as the pandemic, have exposed the inability of the US to lead as the indispensable nation. The lesser-discussed dynamics that have undermined US power Now the United States and Europe are waging an economic war against Russia. Underneath that, one can see America’s failure to imagine a post-oil economy or a globally urgent set of policies to address the climate crisis. Even as sanctions hobble Russia, the international market depends on Russian energy resources — with inevitable knock-on effects that damage everyone else. The human rights rhetoric from American leaders has also deluded Americans. Most US presidents, with the exception of Trump, have spotlighted abuses worldwide. But they have not stopped the American way of doing hefty business with prominent abusers like Russia and China. Europe also got comfortable with this equation, as Maximilian Popp writes in Spiegel International. It’s a contradiction that has empowered authoritarians like Putin. While the US has failed to act assertively on the global crises that it cannot avoid — climate and pandemic, to name only two — the diplomatic corps have also been hollowed out. Trump can be blamed for some of this disintegration but not all of it. Europe has wondered whether the problem wasn’t only Trump but, at its core, America. This is especially the case after the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan last summer. “The Afghanistan thing got to a deeper worry that they have about American power,” said Jeremy Shapiro of the European Council on Foreign Relations. Though European leaders may be muted about this issue now, he told me that there are concerns about American competence because of polarization in Washington, “because the Republicans and Democrats are playing domestic politics with everything.” US democracy and America’s capacity to promote human rights worldwide are connected, says Suzanne Nossel, the CEO of PEN America. “It’s now hit home at a much deeper level, that those two things are intertwined and that our democracy is seen as teetering and crumbling at the edges, that we cannot be an effective force for democracy globally,” she told me. A country that has depended on its standing as an economic force and a democratic authority worldwide is at its weakest and most dysfunctional in half a century or more. Hurlburt calls it “self-inflicted decline.” The combined result is that the US is effectively not showing up. It’s good that Biden has ruled out putting US troops into Russia’s new war in Europe, a potentially endless conflict for a country that took two decades to leave Afghanistan. That decision lays bare a reality that American foreign policy circles have too often ignored. As Hurlburt put it, “Gravity applies to us just like everybody else.”

#### Ukraine marks the limits of America’s influence, letting multipowers emerge

**Ashford**, PhD, **7/4**/22(Emma M., is currently a resident senior fellow with the New American Engagement Initiative in the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security and has a PhD in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia, published 7/4/22, accessed 7/7/22, “Ukraine and the Return of the Multipolar World”, <https://nationalinterest.org//ukraine-and-return-multipolar-world-203276>)//lexmw

It is therefore easy to see why many have hailed the [war in Ukraine](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/causes-and-consequences-ukraine-crisis-203182)—and the unexpected successes of the Ukrainian military in pushing back the initial Russian onslaught—as a repudiation of spheres of influence in world affairs, and a reassertion of the notion of an American-led liberal international order in which power and might matters less than norms and values. But nothing could be more mistaken. A [sphere of influence](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/04/12/americas-hypocrisy-over-ukraine-spheres-influence/) is not a normative concept, nor something a state cedes to another out of courtesy or pity. It is instead a simple fact: the place where one great power is unwilling or unable to commit the necessary resources to force another state to submit. In that regard, Ukraine is itself not a repudiation of the idea of spheres of influence, but rather a clear example of how they work in practice. **Ukraine** **is** both **a clear indicator of the limits of America’s** **global** **sphere of influence** in the post-Cold War period, and a demonstration of the extent to which Russia is able to defend what it sees as its own regional sphere. **The war in Ukraine** thus **does not mark a continuation of the** [**unipolar moment**](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1990-01-01/unipolar-moment), **but instead**, a dividing line between the period when the United States saw the whole world as its sphere of influence, and **a new, more multipolar world in which U.S. power is** [**constrained and limited**](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-world-limits-203217)**.** To put it another way: the war in Ukraine has demonstrated three things about the shifting balance of global power. First, **while America may** still **claim a global sphere of influence**, **it is not willing in practice to risk a** [**nuclear war**](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/does-nuclear-war-loom-russia-202331) **with Russia** to protect Ukraine. American arms, intelligence, and finance have undoubtedly served to tip the balance in the conflict, but it will not be fought by American troops. Second, spheres of influence are rarely uncontested, and Russia has thus far proven incapable of imposing its will on Ukraine, failing to achieve both its primary and secondary military goals in this war. As such, the boundaries of a potential Russian sphere of influence may in practice be far smaller than assumed prior to February 24. They may be limited to little more than Russia’s own borders. Third, **while** much of the coverage of **the war in Ukraine has been framed in this bipolar way**—presenting the conflict **as a struggle between Russia and the West**—the **response** to the war **has been** far [less clear-cut](https://www.barrons.com/articles/the-west-is-fully-behind-ukraine-developing-countries-see-a-double-standard-51652998228). Outside of Europe, most states have taken a more **nuanced** approach to the crisis. Poorer African and Asian states have joined UN votes condemning Russia but have not joined sanctions. India has refused to take sides, a decision rooted in its partial dependence on Russian military exports, and has benefitted from cut-rate Russian oil exports. The Gulf States have for the most part carefully cultivated their neutrality, refusing to increase oil production or even to call the conflict a war. Meanwhile, Beijing has pursued cautious support of Moscow but has resisted any deeper political or economic involvement. None of this suggests either that we are headed back into the post-Cold War unipolar moment, or that we are headed for a new Cold War-style showdown with Russia, or even with both Russia and China. Instead**, it suggests** that **the world** **is increasingly fracturing into a more complex and multipolar environment**, **one in which America’s** long-running foreign policy adventurism and overreach are liable to leave it **overextended**. For all the triumphalism of the Washington foreign policy narrative on Ukraine, it would be foolish for U.S. policymakers to assume that this war presents either a vindication of the [liberal order](https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/11/us-russia-war-ukraine-democracy-autocracy/) or a repudiation of power politics and spheres of influence. Instead, it suggests that they must learn to navigate a world that is not divided into black and white, but rather, into many shades of gray.

#### Russia challenging the US over Ukraine marks the end of US heg

**Walt**, PhD, **4/14**/22 (Stephen M., a columnist at Foreign Policy and the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international relations at Harvard University, He receives his bachelors from Stanford University, and his masters and PhD from UC Berkeley, published 4/14/22, accessed 7/7/22, published by Foreign Policy, “The Ukraine War Doesn’t Change Everything”, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/13/ukraine-war-realism-great-powers-unipolarity/)//lexmw

Whatever the outcome, many observers believe the war will have a [profound effect on the broader condition of world politics](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/04/war-ukraine-turning-point-history/). They see the war in Ukraine as a watershed moment: a giant fork in the road. If Russia loses big, the “liberal world order” will get a new lease on life and the forces of autocracy will suffer a setback. If Putin ekes out some sort of win, however, they foresee a [dark slide toward the totalitarian abyss](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-04-01/francis-fukuyama-liberalism-country). Existing norms against the acquisition of territory by force will be eroded, and other autocrats will presumably be empowered to launch similar campaigns whenever the geopolitical stars align in their favor. I see it differently. **The war in Ukraine** is a significant event, but not because the outcome will have a dramatic independent effect on the global balance of power or the normative environment that states have constructed (and sometimes adhere to). Rather, it is important because it **signals the end of the** brief “**unipolar moment**” (1993-2020) **when the U**nited **S**tates **was the world’s** sole genuine **superpower** and because it heralds a **return to patterns** of world politics **that were temporarily suppressed during** the short era of **unchallenged U.S. primacy**. The end of that era was in sight long before Russia invaded Ukraine, however, and the war itself is more of a punctuation mark. (For a similar take, see Stephen Kotkin [here](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2022-04-06/cold-war-never-ended-russia-ukraine-war).) I am less inclined to see the war in Ukraine as a transformative moment because I’ve heard that song too many times in recent decades. We were told that “everything had changed” when the Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet Union imploded, and the Warsaw Pact dissolved. A new world order was at hand, the “[cynical calculus of pure power politics simply [did] not compute](https://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/02/us/the-1992-campaign-excerpts-from-speech-by-clinton-on-us-role.html),” mankind had supposedly reached the “[end of history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_End_of_History_and_the_Last_Man),” and liberal capitalist democracy (preferably the American version) was now the only game in town. But then “everything changed” again on Sept. 11, 2001, and we were suddenly in a “global war on terror,” which some [overwrought analysts](https://www.amazon.com/World-War-IV-Struggle-Islamofascism/dp/0307386023) tried to repackage as “[World War IV](https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1006219259392114120).” But hold on! “Everything changed” yet again when financial markets collapsed in 2008 and Wall Street’s “masters of the universe” were revealed to be gullible, fallible, and corrupt. And then “everything changed” once more when Donald Trump became president and began trampling every norm in the U.S. political playbook. So forgive me if I have trouble seeing the war in Ukraine as a decisive turning point in the history of humanity. For all the damage and suffering that have already occurred, it has a long way to go before it reaches the levels of destruction wrought by the wars in Indochina, between Iran and Iraq, or in [central Africa](https://www.amazon.com/Africas-World-War-Continental-Catastrophe/dp/0199754209)—or by the [U.S. campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan](https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/summary). The war could still get there, of course—especially if weapons of mass destruction are used—but the odds are against it (a prediction that I fervently hope turns out to be correct). More importantly, what is different about the current war is that for the first time since the early 1990s—but hardly the first time in history—there are rival great powers on the opposite sides of a major war. But this is a reversion to familiar patterns of great-power conflicts (and proxy wars) and not something novel or unique. As suggested above, this war is more accurately seen as marking the official end of the brief quasi-peace that followed the end of the Cold War. War didn’t disappear in that period—the United States fought in a bunch of them and started several—but the conflicts during this period were either civil wars, wars between minor powers, gross mismatches between major powers and minor powers, or some combination of all three. **Direct great-power competition was muted because neither Russia nor China was strong enough to openly resist the U**nited **S**tates. Dartmouth College political scientist William Wohlforth was partly right when he wrote of the “[stability of a unipolar world](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539346)”: **Few countries wanted to** face the “focused enmity” of the United States or **take actions that might bring** the **U**nited **S**tates into the game in **opposition**. Where Wohlforth erred was his prediction that unipolarity might last even longer than Cold War bipolarity. That misjudgment was not entirely his fault, however, as he could not have foreseen the repeated blunders that hastened the end of the unipolar era. U.S. primacy and unipolar stability would have lasted longer if U.S. policymakers had been smarter, less ideologically driven, and more realistic (in every sense of that term). **Instead of preserving U.S. power**, resolving conflicts wherever possible, and working **to ensure that no** peer **competitor emerged**, **U.S. officials** mostly **did the exact opposite**. They [helped China rise more rapidly](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-10-19/inevitable-rivalry-cold-war) and squandered trillions of dollars in [costly and misguided crusades in the greater Middle East](https://www.amazon.com/Americas-War-Greater-Middle-East-ebook/dp/B0174PRIY4). Instead of extending liberal institutions gradually through mechanisms such as the Partnership for Peace, **they expanded NATO with scant regard for Russian concerns** **and** blithely **assumed that Moscow could or would do nothing to stop it.** Instead of taking a more measured approach to globalization and making sure its benefits were widely shared inside the United States, they embraced neoliberal approaches to global trade and investment and did not do enough to insulate endangered sectors of the U.S. workforce from globalization’s consequences. And instead of working overtime to make American democracy a model that other societies might want to emulate, U.S. politicians—and here I refer primarily to the Republican Party—repeatedly trampled on the principles and norms that are essential for true democracy to survive. The unipolar moment was never going to last forever, but repeated sins of omission and commission—for which no one was ever held accountable—brought it to a premature end. So where will this leave us? In the immortal words of Talking Heads: “[Same as it ever was, same as it ever was](https://youtu.be/5IsSpAOD6K8?t=104).” First, it is a world where hard power still matters, as everyone has now been reminded. If Russia succeeds in incorporating the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and a land bridge to Crimea, it will be because its military forces were able to accomplish that mission despite their earlier miscalculations and missteps. If Ukraine retains all or most of its former territory, it will be because of the hard power its citizens employed (with lots of outside help) to stop its larger neighbor. If the much ballyhooed “norm against conquest” gets reinforced, it will not be because Putin suddenly remembered that norms ought to be followed but because the combination of Ukrainian nationalism and effective weaponry proved too much for Moscow to overcome.

### 2NC---UQ---US Decline

#### Hegemony is declining, multilateralism is on the rise

**Kupchan 21** (Charles Kupchan, professor of international affairs at Georgetown University, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, 1/15/2021, “The Case for a Middle Path in U.S. Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Policy,* accessed 6/26/2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/15/judicious-retrenchment-isolationism-internationalism/)//sfs

Making matters more complicated is the fact that the United States is no longer a champion of open markets and treaty-based multilateralism. Amid job loss and stagnant wages, protectionism is in vogue on both sides of the aisle. In the meantime, most Republicans have lost their appetite for international partnership; Trump speaks for much of his party when he proclaims that “we will no longer surrender this country or its people to the false song of globalism. … We will never enter America into any agreement that reduces our ability to control our own affairs.” Democrats remain far more receptive to teamwork with other nations, but getting most treaties through the Senate may be out of reach for the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, the United States cannot afford to return to the stiff-necked unilateralism that guided its statecraft from the founding era until World War II. Broad international cooperation will be needed to address urgent challenges, including managing a globalized and interdependent economy, arresting climate change, shutting down terrorist networks, countering nuclear proliferation, promoting cybersecurity, and advancing public health. The United States will not be able to accomplish these goals without the help of like-minded partners.

With the globalization of the liberal order out of reach, a strategy of judicious retrenchment will entail a new emphasis on informal pacts. Contact groups, coalitions of the willing, and voluntary covenants will supersede alliances and standing institutions as the vehicles of choice for joint initiatives. Even as it seeks to refurbish its own democracy and revive camaraderie and cooperation among its democratic allies, Washington will need to look to a concert of major powers—a steering group inclusive of democracies and non-democracies alike—to flesh out new rules of the road, update norms and practices, and adapt existing institutions to new global realities.

Forging consensus across international as well as domestic divides is a must if a rules-based order is to survive the arrival of a world that is both multipolar and ideologically diverse. A strategy of retrenchment that acknowledges the need for liberal democracies to work comfortably with their illiberal counterparts constitutes a setback for the West, but it is time for the United States to strive for the workable and attainable, not the impossible.

The third principle of judicious retrenchment entails reestablishing the United States as the exceptional, but not indispensable, nation. Since 1941, the country’s exceptionalist calling has set it on a crusade to re-create the world in its own image. That approach was a clear departure from what came before. From 1789 until Pearl Harbor, the United States generally shunned foreign ambition in order to protect its unique experiment in political and economic liberty from a tainted world. Americans aspired to change the world from early on, but they were long content to do so only by example, by serving as a “city upon a hill.” When their elected leaders tried more activist approaches, such as the Spanish-American War and World War I, they did not much like the loss of blood and treasure that resulted—one of the main reasons for the isolationist retreat of the interwar era.

The exceptionalist narrative has for way too long been an excuse for doing too much abroad. Given the dilapidated state of the American experiment, the renewal of the nation’s unique calling must start at home.

Americans are once again disillusioned with the results of their exertions abroad, necessitating that liberal internationalists give considerable ground to the restraint school when it comes to democracy promotion. The United States needs to change back from democratic crusader to prudent exemplar if it is to cease its misguided efforts to topple unsavory regimes, avoid strategic overreach, and work with the world as it actually is. Reclaiming the nation’s original conception of exceptionalism also requires putting America’s own house in order. The United States cannot serve as a model when its political landscape is so deeply polarized and its institutions so dysfunctional. The first priority is to tackle the root causes of the nation’s political ills, including the pandemic, inequality, racial injustice, and the profound sense of economic insecurity that pervades much of the electorate. The country also needs a credible and effective immigration policy to help ensure that its exceptionalist narrative rejects nativism in favor of racial and ethnic pluralism.

Exceptionalism is inseparable from the American creed. And with illiberalism and intolerance on the march globally, the world urgently needs an anchor of republican and pluralist ideals—a role that only the United States has the power and credentials to fulfill. But the exceptionalist narrative has for way too long been an excuse for doing too much abroad. Given the dilapidated state of the American experiment, the renewal of the nation’s unique calling must start at home.

Judicious retrenchment offers restrainers and liberal internationalists alike a middle ground. So, too, would it offer the Democrats and Republicans opportunities to cease their partisan sniping and get behind a common foreign policy. Public opinion polls reveal the electorate’s decided weariness with U.S. wars in the Middle East, its interest in downsizing foreign entanglements, and its desire for increased focus on the ailing economy at home. It is no accident that U.S. President Barack Obama, during his reelection campaign, insisted that it was time for “nation building here at home.” In similar fashion, Trump readied for the 2020 election by downsizing the U.S. military presence in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan—and continued the drawdown, including in Somalia, even after losing the election.

Most Democrats and Republicans also agree on the need to maintain U.S. commitments in Europe and Asia. NATO, for example, enjoys strong support on both sides of the aisle. Indeed, Congress responded to Trump’s repeated attacks on the alliance by inviting NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg to address a joint session for the first time in history. Support for containing China is similarly broad. A strategy of pulling back from the periphery while standing firm in the core would get bipartisan traction.

To be sure, Democrats and Republicans will continue to come at foreign-policy issues from different perspectives, but there are points of overlap. Left-wing progressives opposed to high defense spending are already joining forces with right-wing libertarians opposed to foreign entanglements. Democrats who back multilateralism in principle can ally with Republicans who, in an era of economic duress, are looking to alliances and other international pacts as vehicles for sharing global burdens. Social progressives on the left and evangelicals on the right agree that the United States needs to refurbish its exceptionalist calling and reclaim its moral authority. Bipartisan support for retrenchment will need to be cobbled together, in other words, but it is within reach.

Observing the bitter arguments between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and America First isolationists over the role that the nation should play in World War II, the writer Walter Lippmann worried about the prospect of an America that was so divided that it would be unable to pursue a coherent foreign policy. “The spectacle of this great nation which does not know its own mind is as humiliating as it is dangerous,” Lippmann wrote, warning that “the nation must maintain its objectives and its power in equilibrium, its purposes within its means and its means equal to its purposes.”

Lippmann was premature but prescient. During World War II and the Cold War, partisan politics generally stopped at the water’s edge. But today, U.S. grand strategy swings wildly with every power change in Washington, and the nation’s objectives are dangerously out of kilter with its means. What’s required is a paced, measured retrenchment that puts strategic commitments and political will back into alignment. Judicious retrenchment is good policy, good politics, and the pathway toward the middle ground between doing too much and doing too little.

#### **The “American century” has reached its end** -- waning trust with allies and continuous conflict prove

Borger 21 [Borger, Julian, Julian Borger is the Guardian's world affairs editor. He was previously a correspondent in the US, the Middle East, eastern Europe and the Balkans., “After the chaos in Kabul, is the American century over?”, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/aug/21/after-the-chaos-in-kabul-is-the-american-century-over>]//AA

A few months ago there were US bases all over Afghanistan where you could immerse yourself in Americana, buy Coke and Snickers bars from vending machines and watch live sport on TV. Now the outpost has shrunk to one side of Kabul airport, a chaotic remnant of a 20-year stay where rearguard troops are trying to salvage the last scraps of dignity and honour, seemingly tossed aside by the political leadership in Washington, by trying to extract American stragglers and Afghan allies. Those allies, once inspired by talk of democracy, women’s rights and the free press, are now faced with the awful life-and-death dilemmas of preserving evidence of their work for or with the US-led coalition, in the hope of last-minute salvation, or destroying it, in a bid to escape execution. The speed and totality of the defeat at the end of the longest war in US history inevitably raises questions about its place in the broader sweep of modern history, and the biggest question perhaps is whether these scenes mark the last throes of the “American century”. It has been an era in which the US was supposed to act as the world’s policeman, maintaining order according to a fixed set of rules, and stepping in when necessary to stop the worst crimes against humanity. The reality often turned out to be far short of that ideal, but is the whole project, in theory and practice, now coming to an end? The term “American century” was coined in 1941 in an essay by the publishing tycoon Henry Luce, who suggested that: “We can make a truly American internationalism something as natural to us in our time as the airplane or the radio.” That ambition was certainly achieved in the years that followed. The liberation of Europe from the Nazis was followed by astoundingly successful exercises in nation-building in West Germany and Japan, which became prosperous democracies and reliable allies. The D-day landings in 1944 cemented America’s commitment to global intervention. There are other populations around the world who have reason to see the US global policeman as essentially a good cop, such as the Bosnians and Kosovans, for whom America stepped in when European powers failed to lead. “It certainly wasn’t the Cuban missile crisis, it certainly wasn’t Iraq, but [the Bosnian intervention] is a good showcase of what can be done when America has a moderate, benign, ambition,” said Sabina Ćudić, of the Bosnian liberal reformist party Naša Stranka. It was in the aftermath of the US-led intervention in Bosnia and the subsequent Dayton peace accords that the US secretary of state Madeleine Albright said: “If we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation.” Few if any US officials talk like that now, and the last Americans left in Afghanistan feel very dispensable indeed. In other parts of the world, the experience of American global policing has been quite different. It was there to allow the oil to flow and the tankers to sail unimpeded, enforcing a set of rules, albeit rules that were designed at the outset to benefit the US and the handful of great powers. In Latin America, the veneer was even thinner, and the policeman acted like the private security firm for a few corporate interests. The American century reached its zenith after the fall of the Berlin wall, and the emergence of the US as the world’s sole, unrivalled superpower. The Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, a neat half-century after Luce published his essay. The apotheosis would last a decade, until disaster arrived out of a clear blue sky on 11 September, 2001. Nearly 3,000 were killed in the attacks on New York and Washington, but it was America’s visceral reaction that would prove to be more damaging to US standing in the world. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 marked the high point of US power around the world. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 marked the high point of US power around the world. Photograph: Sipa Press / Rex Features It triggered the “forever wars” in Afghanistan and Iraq, which may be coming to an end for the US now, but which will continue to be the reality for the civilian populations left behind for years, perhaps decades, to come. Disaster followed disaster: the Arab spring was a grotesque inversion of the European democratic revolution it was supposed to emulate, leaving bloody chaos both where the old regimes fell, such as Libya, and where they held firm – Syria. The damage done by 9/11 did not unfold quite as terrorist leader Osama bin Laden intended, according to Nelly Lahoud, an analyst at the thinktank New America who has been sifting through his papers, but it did have a “catastrophic success” in changing the world. It was a case of the autoimmune response proving far more deadly than the infection it was supposed to fight. In a new book, Reign of Terror: How the 9/11 Era Destabilized America and Produced Trump, former Guardian journalist Spencer Ackerman argues that the worst damage was self-inflicted, through the impact of the “global war on terror” and all its excesses: torture, mass surveillance, militarism and authoritarianism. “Of all the endless costs of terrorism, the most important is the least tallied: what fighting it has cost our democracy,” Ackerman writes. “How like America it is not to recognise that the true threat was counterterrorism, nor terrorism.” The backlash produced a repugnance in US public opinion for foreign intervention. One of the few things that Donald Trump and Joe Biden had in common was their determination to leave Afghanistan, and Biden completed the withdrawal that Trump agreed with the Taliban in February 2020 in Doha. The 9/11 attacks provoked retaliatory action that even Osama bin Laden could not have anticipated. The 9/11 attacks provoked retaliatory action that even Osama bin Laden could not have anticipated. Photograph: Peter Morgan/Reuters The speed of the Afghan government’s collapse reflected not just military weakness but also a fecklessness and incompetence which had clearly spread through administrations. At the president’s prompting, officials were adamant that the events unfolding at Kabul airport were not a repeat of the evacuation of Saigon in 1975, photos of which had been an emblem of American defeat for more than a generation. But the similarities were unavoidable. “Having literally been in Saigon for the fall of Saigon, it certainly looks like Saigon to me,” said Viet Thanh Nguyen, a Pulitzer-prize winning author whose family fled Vietnam when he was four, in a tweet. The US evacuated 130,000 Vietnamese allies in 1975 and subsequently accepted hundreds of thousands of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. It was a test of humanity, but also power. A superpower that cannot or will not protect its allies is not worthy of the name. In a New York Times commentary Nguyen urged the Biden administration to do as much for the Afghans. “For these civilians, the war hasn’t ended, and won’t end for many years. Their future – and Mr Biden’s role in determining whether it’s one of resettlement and new beginnings or one of fear and misery – is what will determine whether America can still claim it will always stand by its allies,” he wrote. The withdrawal of US troops in 1973, and the fall of Saigon two years later, seemed at the time as serious a debacle as Kabul feels now. But it was by no means the end for America’s preeminent role in the world. Mobs scale the wall of the US embassy in Saigon, just before the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Mobs scale the wall of the US embassy in Saigon, just before the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Photograph: Neal Ulevich/AP “As it turns out, US strategy during the cold war – supporting freedom and resisting Soviet communism – succeeded, even in the face of Washington’s blunders in Vietnam and elsewhere,” said Daniel Fried, a former senior state department official now at the Atlantic Council thinktank. The US remains, by most measures, the world’s biggest economy, with a far stronger network of alliances than its rival, China. Josef Joffe, the veteran editor of Die Zeit now an international affairs professor at Johns Hopkins University, said the Kabul fiasco “certainly damages three critical assets of a great power: reliability, credibility and alliance cohesion.” “Nations will now think twice about committing to the US, hedging their bets by edging toward China and Russia,” Joffe said. “Decline, however, this is not. Great powers falter when their material assets wane – as in the case of Britain in the 20th century. By contrast, the US remains the greatest economic power, backed up by technological advantage and the world’s most sophisticated army that can intervene anywhere on the planet, not to speak of the vast cultural clout China and Russia do not have.” Even after Afghanistan, the US military reach around the globe will still be fearsome, with almost 800 bases in more than 70 countries. “The US is the most hyper-interventionist great power in modern history, so that even when the American pendulum sort of swings more toward non-interventionism, the US is still globally involved,” said Dominic Tierney, political science professor at Swarthmore College and the author of The Right Way to Lose a War: America in an Age of Unwinnable Conflicts. Tierney noted that the US war was not even necessarily over in Afghanistan. The administration has said it will continue to carry out air strikes from afar in the name of counterterrorism. Furthermore, the reduction in the military footprint in Afghanistan and the Middle East is intended to free resources for sharper competition with China. Donald Trump’s chaotic term as president unbalanced US geopolitical relationships around the world. “A retrenchment from the greater Middle East in the service of focusing on greater rivals is something that might well shore up US global hegemony, not weaken it. And I would think that is what most of the Biden administration thinks that they are doing,” said Stephen Wertheim, a historian and fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who examined the origins of the American century in his book, Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of US Global Supremacy. Wertheim argued however that the character of US military interventionism could change in the wake of the defeat in Afghanistan. “It’s hard to imagine that the idea of nation-building by force will survive the war in Afghanistan,” he said, expressing hope that humanitarian impulses would be channelled through non-military means. “That, to me, is a much more productive form of humanitarianism than the fraught project of trying to kill some people in order to save other people.” Few Bosnian Muslims, however, believe more humanitarian supplies would have prevented more Srebrenica-scale massacres in 1995. Ćudić, now a member of the federation parliament in Sarajevo, said: “With all the deserved criticism and analysis of the American foreign policy of the past decades, we will live to regret the decline of American ambition.” The concern in Sarajevo is that Russia and China are filling the space vacated by the US, but without the same interest in preventing the ultimate partition of Bosnia on ethnic lines. It is a pattern being witnessed around the world. “One of the great dangers for analysis that seeks to be critical of imperialism is the assumption that only the west, indeed only the USA, has imperial ambitions and scope. This is fatal,” said Priyamvada Gopal, professor of postcolonial studies at Cambridge University. “By the end of this century, if the world makes it there, the centre of imperial power will have shifted entirely. “What is important is that the centre of gravity of capitalism is shifting southwards, and players from Russia and China to India are emerging.”

#### Heg is declining ☹

**Larison 20** (Daniel Larison, published author and columnist, PhD in history from UChicago, 4/23/2020, “Please Tell The Establishment That U.S. Hegemony Is Over”, *The American Conservative,* accessed 6/26/2022, https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/somebody-tell-the-establishment-that-american-hegemony-is-over/)//sfs

More than 10 years ago, the columnist Charles Krauthammer asserted that American “decline is a choice,” and argued tendentiously that Barack Obama had chosen it. Yet looking back over the last decade, it has become increasingly obvious that this decline has occurred irrespective of what political leaders in Washington want.

The truth is that decline was never a choice, but the U.S. can decide how it can respond to it. We can continue chasing after the vanished, empty glory of the “unipolar moment” with bromides of American exceptionalism. We can continue to delude ourselves into thinking that military might can make up for all our other weaknesses. Or we can choose to adapt to a changed world by prudently husbanding our resources and putting them to uses more productive than policing the world.

There was a brief period during the 1990s and early 2000s when the U.S. could claim to be the world’s hegemonic power. America had no near-peer rivals; it was at the height of its influence across most of the globe. That status, however, was always a transitory one, and was lost quickly thanks to self-inflicted wounds in Iraq and the natural growth of other powers that began to compete for influence. While America remains the most powerful state in the world, it no longer dominates as it did 20 years ago. And there can be no recapturing what was lost.

Alexander Cooley and Dan Nexon explore these matters in their new book, Exit From Hegemony: The Unraveling of the American Global Order. They make a strong case for distinguishing between the old hegemonic order and the larger international order of which it is a part. As they put it, “global international order is not synonymous with American hegemony.” They also make careful distinctions between the different components of what is often simply called the “liberal international order”: political liberalism, economic liberalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism. The first involves the protection of rights, the second open economic exchange, and the third the form of international order that recognizes legally equal sovereign states. Cooley and Nexon note that both critics and defenders of the “liberal international order” tend to assume that all three come as a “package deal,” but point out that these parts do not necessarily reinforce each other and do not have to coexist.

While the authors are quite critical of Trump’s foreign policy, they don’t pin the decline of the old order solely on him. They argue that hegemonic unraveling takes place when the hegemon loses its monopoly over patronage and “more states can compete when it comes to providing economic, security, diplomatic, and other goods.” The U.S. has been losing ground for the better part of the last 20 years, much of it unavoidable as other states grew wealthier and sought to wield greater influence. The authors make a persuasive case that the “exit” from hegemony is already taking place and has been for some time.

Many defenders of U.S. hegemony insist that the “liberal international order” depends on it. That has never made much sense. For one, the continued maintenance of American hegemony frequently conflicts with the rules of international order. The hegemon reserves the right to interfere anywhere it wants, and tramples on the sovereignty and legal rights of other states as it sees fit. In practice, the U.S. has frequently acted as more of a rogue in its efforts to “enforce” order than many of the states it likes to condemn. The most vocal defenders of U.S. hegemony are unsurprisingly some of the biggest opponents of international law—at least when it gets in their way. Cooley and Nexon make a very important observation related to this in their discussion of the role of revisionist powers in the world today:

But the key point is that we need to be extremely careful that we don’t conflate “revisionism” with opposition to the United States. The desire to undermine hegemony and replace it with a multipolar system entails revisionism with respect to the distribution of power, but it may or may not be revisionist with respect to various elements of international architecture or infrastructure.

The core of the book is a survey of three different sources for the unraveling of U.S. hegemony: major powers, weaker states, and transnational “counter-order” movements. Cooley and Nexon trace how Russia and China have become increasingly effective at wielding influence over many smaller states through patronage and the creation of parallel institutions and projects such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). They discuss a number of weaker states that have begun hedging their bets by seeking patronage from these major powers as well as the U.S. Where once America had a “near monopoly” on such patronage, this has ceased to be the case. They also track the role of “counter-order” movements, especially nationalist and populist groups, in bringing pressure to bear on their national governments and cooperating across borders to challenge international institutions. Finally, they spell out how the U.S. itself has contributed to the erosion of its own position through reckless policies dating back at least to the invasion of Iraq.

The conventional response to the unraveling of America’s hegemony here at home has been either a retreat into nostalgia with simplistic paeans to the wonders of the “liberal international order” that ignore the failures of that earlier era or an intensified commitment to hard-power dominance in the form of ever-increasing military budgets (or some combination of the two). Cooley and Nexon contend that the Trump administration has opted for the second of these responses. Citing the president’s emphasis on maintaining military dominance and his support for exorbitant military spending, they say “it suggests an approach to hegemony more dependent upon military instruments, and thus on the ability (and willingness) of the United States to continue extremely high defense spending. It depends on the wager that the United States both can and should substitute raw military power for its hegemonic infrastructure.” That not only points to what Barry Posen has called “illiberal hegemony,” but also leads to a foreign policy that is even more militarized and unchecked by international law.

Cooley and Nexon make a compelling observation about how Trump’s demand for more allied military spending differs from normal calls for burden-sharing. Normally, burden-sharing advocates call on allies to spend more so the U.S. can spend less. But that isn’t Trump’s position at all. His administration pressures allied governments to increase their spending, while showing no desire to curtail the Pentagon budget:

Retrenchment entails some combination of shedding international security commitments and shifting defense burdens onto allies and partners. This allows the retrenching power, in principle, to redirect military spending toward domestic priorities, particularly those critical to long-term productivity and economic growth. In the current American context, this means making long-overdue investments in transportation infrastructure, increasing educational spending to develop human capital, and ramping up support for research and development. This rationale makes substantially less sense if retrenchment policies do not produce reductions in defense spending–which is why Trump’s aggressive, public, and coercive push for burden sharing seems odd. Recall that Trump and his supporters want, and have already implemented, increases in the military budget. There is no indication that the Trump administration would change defense spending if, for example, Germany or South Korea increased their own military spending or more heavily subsidized American bases.

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed how misguided our priorities as a nation have been. There is now a chance to change course, but that will require our leaders to shift their thinking. U.S. hegemony is already on its way out; now Americans need to decide what our role in the world will look like afterwards. Warmed-over platitudes about “leadership” won’t suffice and throwing more money at the Pentagon is a dead end. The way forward is a strategy of retrenchment, restraint, and renewal.

### 2NC---UQ---Retrenchment

#### Retrenchment is gradual now – perception and consistency are key.

**Shapiro 22**, director of research at the European Council on Foreign Relations, nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, 05-27-2022 (Jeremy, "Getting to Restraint, Responsibly," World Politics Review, <https://www-worldpoliticsreview-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/articles/29687/in-foreign-policy-united-states-must-get-to-restraint-responsibly>,  kav)

The right question is not whether reducing America’s global commitments should take place, but how it can be accomplished in the most responsible manner.

This fear often expresses itself as an appeal to American exceptionalism and its unique role in upholding world order. For many foreign policy thinkers in the United States, the long arm of U.S. global hegemony has become necessary for maintaining stability in the world and even democracy at home. “The only hope for preserving liberalism at home and abroad,” Robert Kagan informs us, “is the maintenance of a world order conducive to liberalism, and the only power capable of upholding such an order is the United States.”

A world without U.S. leadership, according to these commentators, is therefore one that is nasty, brutish and usually dominated by China. For the sake of all that is holy and democratic, the United States must therefore maintain its policy of global leadership and alliance commitments around the world, even if it means horning its way into disputes in the South Caucasus that are otherwise irrelevant to U.S. interests.

Among the Washington foreign policy cognoscenti, this vision of America’s role in the world is something of an article of faith. An appeal for less U.S. geopolitical involvement in the world, such as the one I published in April 2021 in Foreign Affairs, immediately elicits questions about whether, in the absence of the United States, stability will persist.

This special U.S. role in maintaining peace and democracy in far-flung regions would no doubt come as a surprise to the residents of many countries that have found themselves on the wrong end of U.S. precision-guided weapons or CIA-sponsored coups. A 2021 poll of 53 countries by the Alliance of Democracies found that globally, 44 percent of respondents believe that U.S. influence threatens democracy in their country, compared to 28 percent for the influence of Russia and 38 percent for that of China.

But it is true that the United States is a massive presence in international politics in almost every region of the world and that global politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum. Any major change in U.S. policies in volatile regions will create reactions from both U.S. allies and adversaries that will be at best unsettling for those invested in the status quo, and at worst destabilizing.

The net effect of those changes is much more difficult to predict. One can engage in fascinating counterfactual speculations on whether, for example, a U.S. military withdrawal from Europe will stimulate destabilizing Russian expansionism or inspire more effective European defense efforts. The Nagorno-Karabakh outcome suggests that the U.S. role in maintaining regional stability is often exaggerated or even romanticized by American observers. But the sheer alarm of U.S. allies at the prospect of U.S. withdrawal implies that if it is carried out too suddenly, it could inspire all sorts of overreactions. In the end, we cannot know.

Regardless of the effect, however, power shifts and polarized domestic politics have made retrenchment a geopolitical necessity. As Biden’s focus on China implies, the U.S. will want to concentrate its geopolitical efforts in the near future on East Asia, where the rise of China presents a direct threat to the United States that the public seems to accept. Unfortunately, Biden’s tendency to describe that effort as a global, ideological war against authoritarianism, reminiscent of the Cold War, encourages the U.S. to diffuse its efforts all around the world. This tendency to define the war in ideological terms and exaggerate the importance of peripheral theaters was arguably the central strategic mistake of the Cold War and led the U.S. to disasters in Vietnam and Central America. In the geopolitical contest with China, the United States simply cannot afford that diffusion of effort.

If retrenchment is a political and strategic necessity domestically, then it must happen despite the risks to stability. The right question, therefore, is not whether reducing America’s global commitments should take place, but how it can be accomplished in the most responsible manner. Specific political contexts will of course matter, but here are a few principles for responsible U.S. retrenchment.

The U.S. must be clear and declaratory in its intentions, with as long-term a planning horizon in each region as possible. To date, the U.S. is about as opaque and inconsistent as possible on this point, perplexing interested observers at home and abroad. One can understand their confusion.

The Biden administration, for instance, sometimes implies that it intends to reduce commitments in the Middle East and even Europe, and has given life to the idea of retrenchment by announcing a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan. But at the same time, it has made clear that the United States intends to remain and even increase its geopolitical presence in East Asia, even as Biden promotes the idea of a new global competition against authoritarianism and repeats the mantras of U.S. global leadership as if nothing fundamental is changing.

If Biden does want to reduce U.S. commitments, he should describe clearly what that means in the major regions of the world and for U.S. leadership globally.

This implies that Washington’s will toward leadership continues unabated, reflecting in part a difficult domestic political dynamic by which any effort to rationalize the U.S. approach to the world, particularly by a Democratic president, is met with charges of weakness and appeasement. Thus, even though the Trump administration also pursued a policy whose ultimate goal was withdrawal from Afghanistan, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell saw a political advantage in labeling Biden’s plan “a grave mistake.”

But Afghanistan, like most foreign policy issues, is a low priority for the voting public. If the Biden administration articulated a principled strategy of responsible retrenchment more broadly, it would certainly occasion howls from various think tanks in Washington and partisan attacks from Republican hawks in Congress, but it would have little impact on the administration’s domestic political standing. If the administration indeed does want to reduce U.S. commitments and pursue, as Biden often claims, a foreign policy for the middle class, it should be willing to describe clearly what that means in the major regions of the world and for U.S. leadership globally.

That could mean many things, but if Biden does intend to follow through on his pivot to Asia, he should articulate a clear and certain timeline for allies in Europe and the Middle East for when the U.S. intends to withdraw forces and military protection in those theaters.

U.S. withdrawal from any of its overseas commitments should be gradual and evolutionary, rather than revolutionary. This is related to the first principle, in that the United States can enhance stability in the wake of its departure if, rather than announcing it just months before it leaves, Washington articulates a glide path for a progressive drawdown over the course of several years. The task of removing U.S. troops from Europe or the Persian Gulf, for example, can and should proceed at a measured pace, albeit with interim benchmarks. In the end, it is closer to the work of a decade than of a presidential term. Such a pace will allow U.S. allies and partners, as well as their adversaries, to adjust slowly as well, enhancing their ability to find a new normal and maintain stability in those regions.

The U.S. should consciously and proactively promote adjustment mechanisms for partners and allies. Even as U.S. domestic politics has become suffused with demands for withdrawal, U.S. foreign policy—and the foreign policy establishment—continues to show ambivalence toward efforts by U.S. allies to take greater responsibility for their own security affairs. This is clearest in Europe, where movement toward European strategic sovereignty often elicits worries from U.S. commentators about “decoupling” and even occasionally rebukes from the U.S. government over the issue of defense procurement.

### 2NC---UQ---Econ Decline

#### **Economic downturn is on the brink now due to U.S. hegemony**

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The nine segments discussed in this article allow for a truly comprehensive analysis of Anglo-America’s structural power in global finance roughly from 2000 until 2014. There is no space in this article to attribute different weights to the nine segments (if that is indeed possible) – however, it is clear that financial wealth is by far the largest segment. All nine segments together constitute contemporary global finance – the financial structure in which other states and foreign corporations have to operate. Table 1 provides an overview of the different segments, specifying the latest share of Anglo-America (also split up into the share of the US and that of the other Anglo-American jurisdictions) as well as the trajectory observed in the period for which data have been available. The market shares in the different segments have to be seen against the backdrop that **Anglo-America represents about 31 per cent of global GDP.** In all segments, except inward direct investment, Anglo-America has a much higher share than this 31 per cent. Anglo-American dominance has been particularly strong (and increasing) in the first two segments of OTC trading. Here, NY-LON has a very dominant position. The third segment is about foreign exchange reserves. Here, the US dollar clearly dominates globally (being also the leading international payments currency). The US is the dominant country in terms of the market capitalisation of domestic publicly listed corporations, the subject of segment four. America accounts for about 22 per cent of global GDP, yet its corporations are responsible for 41 per cent of total global market capitalisation. Thus, US corporations are in a very powerful position globally, as also found by Starrs.Footnote 92 **Anglo-America as a whole even accounts for 53 per cent of global market capitalisation.** Table 1 Anglo-America’s dominance in nine key domains of global finance (latest year, in percentages). Source: Author. This dominant position is similar in segment five, external bank deposits. Again, the UK plays an important role here, helping to increase Anglo-America’s share in recent years. Segments six, seven, and eight have to be seen together. Segment six, inward direct investment, is the only one in which Anglo-America (28 per cent) has a global share below 43 per cent. However, this should not be interpreted as a weakness, because it is a manifestation of what Schwartz has called ‘global financial arbitrage’;Footnote 93 the US (and Anglo-America in general) invests more in high-yielding outward direct investment, whereas non-Anglophone investors mostly hold lower yielding portfolio investment (including US treasuries) and significantly less inward direct investment into (Anglo-)America. The four novel visualisations presented in this article show very clearly that the US-UK axis is the fulcrum of private global finance and that Anglo-America as a whole has a very dominant position in cross-border finance. The vast majority of non-Anglophone countries shown in the different visualisations is profoundly integrated into Anglo-American structures of global finance, making it extremely difficult for them to decouple. Finally, the analysis of global financial wealth – a good proxy for financial power – is very instructive. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Anglo-America’s share in financial wealth has increased since the financial crisis and remained stable since the early 2000s. If we assume that hegemony in international political economy is cyclical, as many world-system analysis scholars seem to suggest, than it would be logical to conclude that **the US is on a trajectory of perpetual decline vis-à-vis the rising powers**, such as China. Analysing the power position of the US in isolation misses the big picture, however. America has a ‘family’, so to speak, which is the group of the Anglophone countries. The Anglo-American countries and territories have deep common roots that manifest themselves in similar socioeconomic systems, likewise legal systems based on common law, and comparable overseas investment patterns. Moreover, the Anglosphere has its own corporate community via board interlocks as well as a distinct cross-border direct investment network.Footnote 94 Finally, the unparalleled global intelligence cooperation of the Anglophone countries is the most obvious indication that we should analyse Anglo-America together and not classify the individual jurisdictions solely on geographical grounds. Van der Pijl calls this formation the Lockean heartland of the global political economy, in which Anglo-American ‘civil society’ (primarily the business and financial elites) operates transnationally. That is arguably why Anglo-America is strongly integrated by private financial holdings. The very nature of the Lockean state/society complex implies that Anglo-America is not a formally organised and politically centralised entity. Instead, integration is more informal and often private (the Five Eyes cooperation, board interlocks, or ownership patterns), resulting in extremely elastic and flexible yet robust and ‘deep’ ties that are frequently overlooked by conventional analyses, but nonetheless bind. Occasional disagreements (for example, about joining the AIIB) do not contradict this. On the contrary, they are an immanent feature of the Anglo-American ‘family’ and should not be overrated. The findings of this article show that Anglo-America clearly dominates the structure of global finance with market shares in eight key segments between 43 per cent and 75 per cent. Hence, Anglo-America exerts dominant structural power in global finance. Arguably, today Anglo-American global finance – a complex amalgam of public and private authority – permeates almost every political economy in the world and influences political and economic decision-making. At least in the OECD-world, finance has become the ‘super-structure’, increasingly dominating the structures of production and knowledge (though not necessarily security). **The global financial crisis**, which developed in Anglo-America and then spread internationally, certainly **has led to growing scepticism and even resistance against the liberal Anglo-American model of global finance amongst citizens and politicians in a number of countries.**Footnote 95 However, business and financial elites of most countries are still strongly attracted towards Anglo-American markets and corporations. Once countries have integrated themselves into the open international financial order created and dominated by Anglo-America it becomes extremely costly to extricate themselves from it. This is comparable to what Walter Russell Mead has called the ‘sticky’ power of America.Footnote 96 The eurozone and Japan are certainly stuck to this Anglo-American global financial order. At present, the only conceivable challenger to Anglo-America is China, which is actively trying to increase its autonomy, for example, through the AIIB. The findings of this article suggest a coming dilemma for Beijing: if China wants to truly challenge Anglo-America in the global structure of finance, it eventually will need to abolish capital controls. This, however, would diminish Beijing’s control over domestic finance significantly and the interests of Chinese business and financial elites would, over time, increasingly align themselves to the Anglo-American centre, which, contrary to conventional wisdom, is not in perpetual decline but enjoys persistent structural power in global finance. A final note is in order, though. **The dominance of Anglo-America in global finance is** unambiguous yet at the same time **marked by a high degree of latent fragility. Global finance has not been re-regulated drastically after the global financial crisis;Footnote 97 significant imbalances, inequalities and contradictions persist and are even likely to grow, potentially undermining the legitimacy and the stability of the whole system.** However, most OECD countries (and increasingly China too), have integrated themselves in the open global financial order dominated by Anglo-America and are hence not inclined to directly challenge it – even though the Anglophone centre (NY-LON) seems to reap significantly larger benefits than them.

#### American hegemony is unsustainable and hinders economic development

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The Lockean heartland concept, developed by Kees van der Pijl, is an IPE approach integrating both political and economic dimensions.Footnote 18 The approach is named after John Locke who had generally argued for the withdrawal of the state from social and economic life and for self-regulation of civil society. According to van der Pijl, the Lockean state/society complex became recognisable in England in the late seventeenth century.Footnote 19 The Glorious Revolution of 1688 led to the constitutional limitation of state power and the protection of the genuinely ‘private’. The pattern of self-government that settlers from Britain brought with them to North America and Australia enabled the subsequent transnationalisation of the Lockean state/society complex. This formed the basis for the subsequent development of a transnational Lockean heartland spanning across the English-speaking countries: ‘with the Lockean pattern transmitted to the new areas of settlement, there emerged, on the foundations of industrial/commercial centrality and predominance, a heartland of the global political economy’.Footnote 20 The counter model to this Lockean state is the ‘Hobbesian’ state, which is characterised by the primacy of the state. The Hobbesian state generally has an explicit doctrine of national interest and relies on a powerful administration to regulate economy and society. In contrast, the Lockean state generally relies much on free markets that are largely seen as ‘self-regulating’. The mode of expansion of the Lockean state is transnational, whereas that of Hobbesian states is international. One of the primary purposes of the Lockean state is to foster free (capitalist) enterprise that ‘civil society’ (primarily the financial and business elites) pursues at home and abroad. The predominance of the Lockean heartland over the international political economy has been challenged by other states that rose to power. Such ‘Hobbesian contender states’ included Imperial Japan, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union. China could become the next contender in a few decades;Footnote 21 as a Hobbesian state it seeks to steer and regulate its economy tightly – particularly its financial markets. In addition to Anglosphere and Lockean heartland, there is also the term Anglo-America. Andrew Gamble argues that Anglo-America is an ‘imagined community’, one that is ‘encompassing both ideals and interests, which is constructed and sustained through various narratives and embodied in particular institutions’.Footnote 22 Furthermore, Anglo-America has not one distinct centre, but consists of different states and nations, such as Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the US. He argues that ‘Anglo-America is a political space constituted by wider economic, political, ideological and cultural relationships, and is as a consequence many-sided’.Footnote 23 Similarly, Peter Katzenstein argues that Anglo-America is ‘fluid, not fixed’.Footnote 24 According to Gamble, the hegemony of Anglo-America has four main dimensions. The first is military and has arguably been the most apparent dimension during the last century. The second and third dimensions are political, respectively cultural in nature: the political model advocated by Anglo-America is based on the idea of self-government, and the importance of (transnational) civil society; Anglo-American culture, shaped by Protestantism and individualism, manifests today primarily as consumerism. Finally, the fourth dimension has been **the dominant Anglo-American model of capitalism – which is characterised by the primacy of markets, short-term goals, and the confinement of the state to enabling free enterprise rather than actively steering economic development** –, and particularly the dissemination of this liberal economic order around the world. **Gamble summarises the position of Anglo-America**:Footnote 25 Global hegemony is how Anglo-America appears to those outside it, as a hegemonic order fashioned over two hundred years, in which the differences between its various states are less important than what they have in common. Empirical evidence for the existence of an Anglo-American model of capitalism has been found by a number of scholars. Peter Hall and David Soskice as well as Bruno Amable argue that the Anglophone economies constitute a distinct socioeconomic model – ‘liberal market economies’ or ‘market-based economies’;Footnote 26 whereas countries pursuing an opposing model, such as China, have been dubbed ‘state-permeated market economies’.Footnote 27 Schwartz uses the term ‘Americanised Rich’ to characterise the group of Anglophone countries (plus the Netherlands, Sweden, and tentatively Switzerland). He finds that the group of the Americanised Rich has similar housing markets and corporate finance systems to those of the US.Footnote 28 In addition, these countries exhibit an overseas investment pattern comparable to the US, and their inward and outward direct investment from/to America is disproportionately high compared to other countries, such as the ‘Repressed Rich’ (Germany, France, Japan, and others). The exceptionally close transnational ties between the Anglo-American countries are reflected in various statistics pertaining to global finance. For example, the UK is by far the largest source of direct investment into the US when measured by country of ultimate beneficial owner.Footnote 29 The bilateral private portfolio investment relation between the US and the UK is the largest one in the world by far with almost US $2 trillion. Banking claims by foreign investors on the US, and vice versa US banking claims on foreigners, are dominated by the Anglosphere – over 60 per cent in each category.Footnote 30 Furthermore, investment banking, hedge funds, private equity, and burgeoning passive asset management (for example, BlackRock) are quintessentially Anglo-American financial industries, based around New York and London – and virtually nowhere else. The same is true for the top global law firms. Dariusz Wójcik uses the apt term ‘NY-LON’ to capture the joint global dominance of both intertwined financial centres.Footnote 31 Jeremy Green argues that there has been a close interaction between the Federal Reserve-Treasury-Wall Street nexus in the US and the City-Bank-Treasury nexus in the UK.Footnote 32 Moreover, a ‘transatlantic regulatory feedback loop’ between the US and the UK fostered international financial liberalisation and deregulation, making Anglo-America fundamental to the process of financial globalisation.Footnote 33 The dominance of Anglo-America in finance is underpinned by common law, which provides extensive freedom of contract. The legal systems of all Anglophone countries and territories are based on common law, in which law evolves in a bottom-up fashion from individual case decisions, thus significantly facilitating (transnational) finance. Under civil law (Germany, France, Japan, etc.) the state creates law in a top-down manner, which is rather hampering finance – this contrast between common and civil law reflects the Lockean/Hobbesian dichotomy by van der Pijl.

### 2NC---UQ---China Conflict

#### The Ukraine War has made it clear that competition between US and China for global hegemony is high now – Taiwan is still the most likely flash point

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The war in Ukraine is part of the struggle for a new world order. Russia and China are openly challenging the Pax Americana. But the question how the next world order will look like remains open. In Moscow and Beijing, but also in Washington, the model of a multipolar concert of the great powers, with exclusive zones of influence, is finding support. Despite a growing unwillingness to play the role of ‘the world's policeman’, however, the majority of Americans have not yet abandoned the unipolar, American, liberal world order. And not only in China, there is still support for the Westphalian model with its emphasis on nation state sovereignty and its condemnation of post-colonial meddling in internal affairs. These three models envision very different ground rules. Who is authorised to use force – all states, only the strongest, or only the hegemonic power? Does the law of the strongest apply, or the strength of the law? Is there a historical ideal (e.g. liberal democracy and market economy) towards which all states will (or should) develop, or are there multiple modernities with competing political systems and cultural civilisations that can coexist more or less peacefully? Will there be a global showdown between an alliance of democracies and the ‘axis of autocrats’? Or is the price of peace giving up on implementing universal human rights? Which of these models will prevail – or from what precise mixture of old and new elements the new world order will emerge – will determine not only war and peace, but also what the global energy, production, distribution, and financial systems of the future will look like. The global energy system In the German debate, under the immediate impact of the war, the focus is mostly on how to deny Russia the revenue from its oil and gas exports without asking too much of consumers who are dependent on Russian energy supplies. In the long term, this dependence is to be reduced by accelerating the energy transition away from fossil fuels. Less attention is being paid to the efforts of China and India to avail themselves of the cheapest possible supplies on the Russian energy market without being hit by Western sanctions. And far too little attention is being paid to the efforts of important suppliers and their customers to ‘de-dollarise’ the international energy trade. It takes little imagination to foresee the biggest shake-up in global energy trading since the oil price shocks of the 1970s. What is less clear, however, is the direction in which the global energy system will move. Given the ongoing geopolitical confrontation, the imperatives of climate protection and energy security are now pointing in the same direction. On the one hand, this is likely to further accelerate the exodus of global capital from fossil industries. On the other hand, the industrialised countries are technologically still not in a position to free themselves from their addiction to fossil fuels. And it is precisely the bridging technology of natural gas that has now hit a geopolitical dead end. In the short term, Germany will hardly be able to close the looming supply gap without committing climate policy sins involving coal and nuclear power. In the long term, alongside renewable energies, the international supply chains for hydrogen need to be developed at pace. The US is trying to slow down the economic rise of its rival China. In the medium term, however, this means having to satisfy the demand for gas by diversifying suppliers. Surprising shifts of alliances, involving both old enemies (e.g. the US and Venezuela) and old friends (e.g. the West and the Arab monarchies; Russia and Kazakhstan), cannot be ruled out. How quickly, in this competitive world, the need to secure national energy supplies can collide with the principles of value-based foreign policy was something the new German government had to discover in its very first days in office. The global division of labour (production and supply chains) Since the 2008 financial crisis, global trade and cross-border investments have not really picked up again. The Covid-19 crisis has made people more aware of the vulnerability of global supply chains. The failure of China’s Zero Covid strategy and the drastic lockdowns in Shenzhen and Shanghai indicate that, two years now after the outbreak of the pandemic, the risk of disruptions to global supply chains has still not been eliminated. If parts from the Far East are missing, the assembly lines in Europe, too, come to a standstill. The paradigm shift away from efficiency (‘Just in Time’) to greater resilience (‘Just in Case’) is accelerating the hidden trend towards deglobalisation that has been under way for some time. But geo-economic as well as geopolitical motives also favour the shortening and unbundling of supply chains, and are now driving the separation and isolation of markets. The US is trying to slow down the economic rise of its rival China. Behind the scenes, pressure from both is mounting on their allies and on third countries to choose sides. Europeans and Asians are still resisting being drawn into this new Cold War. But the disputes over gas pipelines, chip manufacturers, and the 5G communications infrastructure show how quickly companies and entire states can get caught between opposing fronts. The ultimate outcome of this development could quite possibly be rival blocs that make it difficult or impossible for unwanted competitors to access their markets. Hardly have they escaped Trump-America’s sanctions, German companies are now facing headwinds on the Chinese market. Nevertheless, the majority is resisting the pressure to decouple from China, while some double down on the Chinese market despite ever worsening conditions. Given the importance of the Chinese market, the call in the Federal Government's Indo-Pacific strategy paper to reduce one-sided dependencies through diversification therefore often goes unheard. But the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine might now alter this calculus. Hardly anyone would have thought it possible that the West would react so quickly, so strongly, and with such unity to Russian aggression. Russia’s expulsion from the SWIFT system, the sanctions against the Russian central bank, but also the voluntary withdrawal of Western companies from the Russian market, all this has made its mark – not least in China. Even some in Germany were surprised at how quickly even supposedly sacred cows like the Nordstream 2 gas pipeline were slaughtered. This experience of enormous public and political pressure is likely to lead many German companies to reassess their strategies towards other ‘problematic markets’. Should the sales opportunities for German business in global markets be closed off in the medium-term future, Germany will have to rethink what it is willing to do to lead the vital European home market out of its protracted crisis. Less well known is the geostrategic motivation behind the Belt and Road Initiative. The realignment of the global economy according to geopolitical interests is putting key industries such as the German car industry under pressure. If the engine of growth falters, distribution conflicts within and between societies intensify. Fear of social decline is increasing even among the middle classes. This fear of decline is the sounding board that populists use for their agitation against the preconditions for the success of the export model, the free flow of goods, capital, people, and ideas. The global trend towards protectionism is thus driven not only by external factors but also by internal pressure. In such a world, there can no longer be any world champions in exporting. Germany above all will therefore have to rethink its export-oriented economic model. Infrastructure When Western critics discuss the Chinese Silk Road project, their focus is usually on debt traps or on the creation of political dependencies. There is a justified suspicion that the mammoth project represents a Chinese push to become a dominant power in Asia and in the world. Less well known, however, is the geostrategic motivation behind the Belt and Road Initiative. Since the end of World War II, the United States has established bases on a chain of islands running from Japan in the north to Indonesia in the south. And since the Obama administration announced its ‘Pivot to Asia’, the US has been concentrating its forces here. Between the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz (the Americans call these straits ‘choke points’), the United States and its allies can block Chinese trade and supply routes at any time. China feels encircled and reacts in an aggressively defensive manner. The aim of its arms build-up in the East and South China Seas is to break through the ‘First Island Chain’, and to drive the US out of Chinese coastal waters. Chinese hawks go one step further and want to force the reunification of the ‘unsinkable American aircraft carrier’ Taiwan with the motherland. As Chinese bombers fly over Taipei, Chinese propaganda accuses the US of challenging the status quo by questioning the One China policy, and thus provoking a conflict. This is a highly dangerous poker game, not only because Taiwan produces indispensable semiconductor chips, but also because from the perspective of the Americans, traumatised by Pearl Harbor, the defence of their homeland begins at the First Island Chain. So in the Taiwan Strait lies a fuse that could set off World War III. By means of the Silk Road project, China is therefore trying to break out of the American stranglehold towards the West. The immediate goal of the numerous ports, corridors, and railway lines is to prevent the disruption of Chinese supply routes. The initial enthusiasm of the landlocked states of Central Asia shows the high hopes held by the BRI partners that the strategy for connectivity along the ancient Silk Road will lead to prosperity gains for all. The real prize, however, lies at the other end of Eurasia: the European market, which is supposed to guarantee sales opportunities for Chinese products in the long run. If Beijing succeeds in tying Europe closer, China and Russia will have taken a big step towards their goal of neutralising US influence in Eurasia. Chinese hawks now see in the sanctions against Russia an opportunity to attack the supremacy of the US dollar. With the start of a new Cold War, however, a new Iron Curtain now threatens to cut through the Chinese Silk Road. From China’s point of view, that would be a geostrategic catastrophe. This is one reason why China, despite the only recently proclaimed ‘limitless friendship’, does not really provide substantive assistance to its junior partner Russia (the second reason is the Russian recognition of two breakaway provinces of a sovereign state; looking at Taiwan, a Chinese horror scenario). Beijing thus has a vested interest in a quick end to the Ukraine war (but is reluctant to take on the responsibility of a mediator). If this does not happen, China is likely to push forward with the expansion of the maritime Silk Roads. Money and financial markets From the point of view of Chinese strategists, following the decline of American industry, the remaining foundation – and thus the Achilles’ heel – of US hegemony is the role of the dollar as the reserve currency on the international goods and financial markets. China has therefore been tinkering for some time on an alternative to the SWIFT system (‘CIPS’) and on a digital currency (Digital Yuan, e-CNY). However, neither of these instruments is yet ready to pose a real threat to the greenback. Chinese hawks now see in the sanctions against Russia an opportunity to attack the supremacy of the US dollar. The freezing of Russian central bank reserves has put all the world’s central banks on high alert. In order not to be blackmailed themselves, they are now likely to shift reserves on a grand scale. If this is at the expense of US investments, it could destabilise the dollar’s position as the global reserve currency. The role of the US dollar as a transaction currency is also a source of frustration. After all, the inflationary pressure emanating from the American Federal Reserve is passed on around the globe by all those actors who rely on the US dollar for conducting their cross-border trades. Russia, China, India, and Iran have therefore been trying for some time to ‘de-dollarise’ their economies by using a broader basket of currencies for their foreign trade. It is therefore hardly surprising that Russia now wants to settle its oil and gas transactions only in roubles. China’s attempts to de-dollarise its own foreign trade also aligns with Beijing’s strategic goal of upgrading the global status of its own currency. But if a US ally like Saudi Arabia is now seriously negotiating to settle its oil deals with China in yuan, this shows how widespread is the resentment of the hegemon. This is not risk-free, because after the abandonment of the gold standard the US dollar was tied to the central commodity of fossil industrial capitalism by the clearing and settlement processes for the global oil trade. If other OPEC countries were to abandon the petrodollar, the returning greenbacks would probably further increase inflationary pressures in the US in the short term. In the long term, both the Chinese RMB and blockchain-based cryptocurrencies could mature into stable transaction currencies. US-sceptical strategists believe that if the US dollar’s functions as a reserve, investment, and transaction currency do indeed continue to erode, then the position of the US currency as the global reserve currency could actually begin to totter. American hawks want to ‘bleed the Russians to send a signal to the Chinese to keep their hands off Taiwan’. However, even after a decade and a half, efforts aiming at ‘de-dollarisation’ have not seriously jeopardised the position of the US dollar as the global reserve currency. As recently as last year, 90 per cent of all foreign exchange transactions continued to be settled in US dollars, and 60 per cent of all central bank reserves are invested in dollars. The blockchain cryptocurrencies in particular are a long way from being able to replace the dollar.And whether a Chinese (digital) currency without open Chinese financial markets can actually take over the functions of a reserve currency is doubtful. American experts therefore believe that the dollar’s position is even more entrenched today because foreign central banks know that in an emergency the American Fed will do everything to shore up the dollar-denominated part of the financial system. What the coming world order will look like will be decided by global power relations. Russia has overestimated its own strength. Even if Moscow still succeeds in winning the war in Ukraine militarily, in geopolitical terms it will fall back into the second tier as China’s junior partner. However, the new instability on the European continent is likely to dampen the economic outlook for Western Europe as well. Following the Ukrainian reality check, geopolitical dreams of an independent European power pole will therefore certainly be re-evaluated by EU member states. This leaves only China and the United States as powers capable of setting and maintaining order. This explains why Washington and Beijing do not wish to be drawn into this ‘European conflict’: the two superpowers read the conflict above all through the lens of their competition over global hegemony. Accordingly, American hawks want to ‘bleed the Russians to send a signal to the Chinese to keep their hands off Taiwan’. Although this is not uncontroversial in Washington, a bipartisan coalition for a Cold War against the ‘alliance of autocracies’ has already been in place for some time. In Beijing, on the other hand, there is still disagreement as to whether it is really in China’s interests to disappear behind a new Iron Curtain alongside a weakening Russian pariah, or whether China would not benefit much more in the long run from an open world order. Geopolitically, it would therefore be a fatal mistake to over-hastily lump the Chinese and the Russians together in an ‘axis of autocracies’. It would be better instead to examine together what a rules-based, multilateral order might look like, one that provided a framework within which the core interests and security concerns of all the powers could be peaceably negotiated and reconciled. Those who think this is unrealistic should remember the last Cold War: then, too, cooperation between systemic rivals within the framework of agreed ground rules was successful.

### 2NC---UQ---China Perceptions

#### Perceptions of backsliding US power are leading Beijing to pursue a policy of stable “strategic competition” now – but they want assurance that the US won’t try to suppress China

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Much has already been said about the recent heightening of U.S.-China tensions and its potential fallout. What gets less attention is how the U.S. and China themselves perceive the status of their relationship, and how that affects their plans for the future. An analysis of prevailing elite opinion in the U.S. and China—starting with reactions to the Nov. 16 virtual summit between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping—can shed light on how each side understands the **root causes of the current competition**, and why they believe they can overcome them. For the United States, the rivalry is driven by China’s challenge to U.S. power and leadership, as well as its belief that Beijing is trying to alter the international order for its own benefit. For Beijing, it is driven by the United States’ continued **“hegemonic” pretensions** amid what Chinese elites see as its **inevitable decline**. While both Washington and Beijing believe that their relationship will be primarily defined by competition rather than cooperation for the foreseeable future, there are nonetheless indications that both states are hoping to protect themselves by establishing new “guardrails” to provide **strategic stability**, even as they continue to **compete with one another**. But doing so will be difficult. A Study in Contrasts Both the U.S. and China framed the Biden-Xi virtual summit of Nov. 16 as a “polite” but “straightforward” exchange on major areas of contention. Yet a comparison of the two sides’ readouts of the discussion also demonstrates that each country has a fundamentally different understanding of their positioning relative to one another, in addition to their divergent objectives. The White House statement is brief, comprising a mere four paragraphs. It begins by noting that Biden and Xi acknowledged the “importance of managing competition responsibly,” framed by an understanding of where their “interests align,” and where their “interests, values, and perspectives diverge.” According to the White House, the U.S. and China align on climate change; on regional security challenges such as those posed by Afghanistan and North Korea; and on “managing strategic risks” in the bilateral relationship. In particular, Biden emphasized the need for “common-sense guardrails to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict and to keep lines of communication open.” From there, the Biden team devoted far more attention to the divergences, naming specific topics like Taiwanese sovereignty, ongoing trade disputes and human rights violations in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. The memo is prefaced with the statement that the U.S. would “continue to stand up for its interests and values and, together with our allies and partners, ensure the rules of the road for the 21st century advance an international system that is free, open, and fair.” For the United States, then, the defense of its “interests and values” is inextricably bound to the future of a “free, open and fair” international order. Biden’s team sees stabilizing the U.S.-China relationship as a significant part of its broader efforts to restore U.S. global leadership and revitalize U.S. power after the chaos of former President Donald Trump’s term. More importantly, the readout underscores the fact that Biden sees China as an obstacle to achieving those goals. Beijing’s readout, which is much longer, also notes areas of shared interest like climate change and expresses a desire to establish “guardrails.” While “it is only natural that China and the United States have differences,” the statement says, both share an interest in “constructively” managing relations to “avoid expansion and intensification” of disagreements. But the Chinese readout also bears stark contrasts to that of the Biden administration, particularly when it comes to three issues: its view on China’s current global status, its conceptions of international order and its assessment of U.S. intentions. First, Beijing repeatedly emphasizes a fundamental equality of status and role between the U.S. and China. The opening paragraph claims that “as the world’s top two economies and permanent members of the U.N. Security Council,” Beijing and Washington “should strengthen communication and cooperation,” not only for the benefit of their own citizens, but to “also shoulder our due international responsibilities.” According to Beijing, then, both countries already share global leadership. Second, Beijing disputes the implication that China is trying to spread its authoritarian system of government to other countries, thereby posing a challenge U.S. values and interests, as well as the broader international order. It asserts that while China’s development and modernization is an “inevitable historical trend,” China “has no intention of selling its own path to the world.” Instead, Beijing says it would encourage other countries “to find a path of development that suits their national conditions.” Rather than an international order defined by “interfering in the internal affairs of other countries through human rights issues,” as the Chinese readout puts it, China’s preference, according to Xi, is for both China and the U.S. to “safeguard … an international order based on international law and basic norms of international relations” that derive from the “purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter.” This reflects Beijing’s historical emphasis on the U.N. Charter’s guarantees of non-interference and state sovereignty over its guarantees of human rights, the tabling of which it portrays as an instrument by which the U.S. is trying to stifle China’s rise. Third, the Chinese readout quotes Biden as stating: China was already a great power 5,000 years ago. I want to reiterate clearly that the U.S. does not seek to change China’s system of governance, does not seek to counter China through alliances and has no intention to have conflict with China. The U.S. government is devoted to pursuing the long-standing One China policy, does not support Taiwan independence and hopes that the Taiwan Strait will remain peaceful and stable. This quote does not appear in the White House version, and Biden’s team has not confirmed or denied its accuracy. Nonetheless, its inclusion is significant, because it sheds light on what China **would like to hear** from the United States: recognition of China’s great power status; **assurances that the U.S. does not seek to overthrow** the ruling Chinese Communist Party or go to war with China; and assurances that the U.S. still abides by the One China policy, which Beijing frames as supporting Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. A Struggle for Two Orders In light of these differences, how should tensions between the U.S. and China be managed? The views of each country’s foreign policy specialists can provide some clues here. What is striking is that they tend to be mirror images of one another, suggesting that “**strategic competition**” may remain the default posture for the **foreseeable future.**

#### The perception of backsliding US power relaxes Beijing

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The first modern surge of Beijing’s declinist narrative began in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis and was given a scientific sheen by relying on metrics that measured “comprehensive national power.” It was not just a perception that America was sliding toward second-tier status, but an empirical fact. There was yet another uptick in declinism in 2016, after the election of Donald Trump and the rise of anti-globalization populism. Events in the U.S. over the past 12 months have given declinists in China a steroids shot: The U.S. mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic, the resulting economic recession, demonstrations sparked by the killing of George Floyd and the chaos after Trump disputed the outcome of the presidential election have resulted in a **full-blown euphoria**. Two days after pro-Trump rioters stormed the Capitol Building, an article in the People's Liberation Army Daily declared, “The shocking events at [the Capitol Building] highlight a grim reality: Not only has the United States been severely impacted by Covid-19 and an economic recession, but it’s political system and society are also experiencing a deep crises.” Then, of course, came the power crisis in Texas last month, during which the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson took time from a regular briefing to crow that the chaos in Houston “made us believe more strongly that **China is on the right path**.” Writing in the Beijing Daily recently, China University of Political Science and Law professor Qi Kai declared, “Texas is the second most economically powerful state in the U.S., and is a major energy-producing state, [and so] it is amazing that such a serious power outage accident occurred. In my opinion, this reflects American society’s chaotic ecosystem.” **The message from Beijing is simple: America is broken.** “America’s Main Opponent is Itself,” proclaimed the headline in a recent edition of the People’s Daily. The article’s author, a researcher at the China Institute for International Studies, argued, “The United States has arrived at its current situation because the design and operation of its political and economic system has gone awry, the inevitable result of the short-sighted pursuit of profit.” It would be easy — and comforting — to dismiss this as mere propaganda, and of course we don’t know just how deep the declinist consensus is in China, owing to the tight constraints on open discourse and unavailability of robust polling data. But your host believes that we’ve reached a tipping point, with a growing narrative of cautious confidence that’s emboldened by data points of decline in America.

#### Beijing’s view of declining US power is fueling aspirations for a peaceful rise

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In China, meanwhile, foreign policy specialists’ views about engagement with the U.S. have gone through several stages since the 1990s, each of which corresponded to a different view on what U.S. “hegemony” means for China. During the 1990s, the consensus view was that China had to marshal its “comprehensive national power” to resist U.S. pressure during Washington’s “unipolar moment.” In the subsequent decade, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Chinese analysts began to see the key inflection points of the era—the global war on terrorism, the 2003 Iraq War and the 2008 global financial crisis—as opportunities for China to take advantage of Washington’s distraction. Beijing began to embrace a strategy of **“peaceful rise,”** with rhetoric assuaging regional concerns about its intentions. The next shift, toward a more proactive approach, came during Xi Jinping’s first term as China’s president, starting in 2013. Under the overall goal of “national rejuvenation,” Beijing sought to harness Chinese power to build a “community of common destiny,” allowing it to shape the international order. During this time, some Chinese foreign policy specialists claimed not only that the U.S. was in decline, but that so too was “hegemony” as an ordering principle of international relations. This view made it possible to present Xi’s proposed “community of common destiny” concept not as China’s own hegemonic project, but as a vision for a more pluralistic world that would replace U.S. hegemony. Finally, in the past five years, during Xi’s second term, Chinese elites have realized that Washington would not go quietly into the night. Instead, they began to see the U.S. as a “**declining” hegemon** lashing out at its supposed challengers. The “conventional wisdom,” as the influential foreign policy specialist Wang Jisi noted, now holds that the U.S. is “driven by fear and envy to contain China in every possible way,” making it “the greatest external challenge to China’s national security, sovereignty and internal stability.” In this sense, Chinese specialists frame their country as being in a struggle for “two orders”: the domestic order, which would be secured through continued CCP rule, and the international order, where China needs to defend against efforts to limit its influence. This view of U.S. aggression was clearly expressed in Chinese analysts’ assessments of the Biden-Xi summit. Zhao Minghao, for instance, described a U.S. that, “having failed to win the trade war,” is now “maliciously” playing the Taiwan card to “interrupt China’s peaceful rise through a war.” Others, like Wang Honggang, note that while Biden appears more interested in multilateralism than Trump, the “beginning and end of the Biden administration’s strategic thinking is still to preserve American hegemony.” He argues that the Biden administration is seeking to signal that it “has strength” out of fears that the Trump years damaged the United States’ credibility and influence. In fact, he argues, it is a “weak government.” Finally, Huang Renwei of Fudan University has argued that U.S.-China relations are following the three phases of war identified in “On Protracted War,” Mao Zedong’s 1938 treatise: strategic defense, strategic stalemate and the strategic counteroffensive. According to Huang, U.S.-China relations are currently in the phase of “**strategic stalemate**” and may stay there for some time, since the U.S. “does not have the ability and will to devote all its resources to the confrontation with China, thus limiting the scale of the confrontation.” That gives China the upper hand, Huang says, because if the U.S. “continues to intensify its efforts against China over a period of time, its expended resources and costs will overwhelm the U.S. itself, at which point the strategic stalemate will shift in China's favor.”

# Links

### 2NC---L---China War

#### And - China will rise peacefully now but the plan’s perceived containment triggers lash out and US-China War.

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There is an entire swath of literature, known as “power transition theory,” which holds that **great-power war** typically occurs at the intersection of one hegemon’s rise and another’s decline. This is the body of work underpinning the Thucydides Trap, and there is, admittedly, an elemental truth to the idea. The rise of new powers is invariably destabilizing. In the runup to the Peloponnesian War in the 5th century B.C., Athens would not have seemed so menacing to Sparta had it not built a vast empire and become a naval superpower. Washington and Beijing would not be locked in rivalry if China was still poor and weak. Rising powers do expand their influence in ways that threaten reigning powers. But the calculus that produces war—particularly the calculus that pushes revisionist powers, countries seeking to shake up the existing system, to lash out violently—is **more complex**. A country whose relative wealth and power are growing will surely become more assertive and ambitious. All things equal, it will seek greater global influence and prestige. But if its position is steadily improving, it should **postpone** a deadly showdown with the reigning hegemon until it has become even stronger. Such a country should follow the dictum former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping laid down for a rising China after the Cold War: It should hide its capabilities and **bide its time**. Now imagine a different scenario. A dissatisfied state has been building its power and expanding its geopolitical horizons. But then the country peaks, perhaps because its economy slows, perhaps because its own assertiveness provokes a coalition of determined rivals, or perhaps because both of these things happen at once. The future starts to look quite forbidding; a sense of **imminent danger** starts to replace a feeling of limitless possibility. In these circumstances, a revisionist power may act boldly, even aggressively, to grab what it can before it is too late. The most dangerous trajectory in world politics is a long rise followed by the prospect of a sharp decline. As we show in our forthcoming book, Danger Zone: The Coming Conflict with **China**, this scenario is more common than you might think. Historian Donald Kagan showed, for instance, that Athens started acting more belligerently in the years before the Peloponnesian War because it feared adverse shifts in the balance of naval power—in other words, because it was on the **verge of losing influence** vis-à-vis Sparta. We see the same thing in more recent cases as well. Over the past 150 years, peaking powers—great powers that had been growing dramatically faster than the world average and then suffered a severe, prolonged slowdown—usually **don’t fade away quietly**. Rather, they become **brash and aggressive**. They suppress dissent at home and try to regain economic momentum by creating exclusive spheres of influence abroad. They pour money into their militaries and use force to expand their influence. This behavior commonly provokes great-power tensions. In some cases, it touches disastrous wars. This shouldn’t be surprising. Eras of rapid growth supercharge a country’s ambitions, raise its people’s expectations, and make its rivals nervous. During a sustained economic boom, businesses enjoy rising profits and citizens get used to living large. The country becomes a bigger player on the global stage. Then stagnation strikes. Slowing growth makes it harder for leaders to keep the public happy. Economic underperformance weakens the country against its rivals. Fearing upheaval, leaders crack down on dissent. They maneuver desperately to keep geopolitical enemies at bay. **Expansion seems like a solution**—a way of grabbing economic resources and markets, making nationalism a crutch for a wounded regime, and beating back foreign threats. Many countries have followed this path. When the United States’ long post-Civil War economic surge ended, Washington violently suppressed strikes and unrest at home, built a powerful blue-water Navy, and engaged in a fit of belligerence and imperial expansion during the 1890s. After a fast-rising imperial Russia fell into a deep slump at the turn of the 20th century, the tsarist government cracked down hard while also enlarging its military, seeking colonial gains in East Asia and sending around 170,000 soldiers to occupy Manchuria. These moves backfired spectacularly: They antagonized Japan, which beat Russia in the first great-power war of the 20th century. A century later, Russia became aggressive under similar circumstances. Facing a severe, post-2008 economic slowdown, Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded two neighboring countries, sought to create a new Eurasian economic bloc, staked Moscow’s claim to a resource-rich Arctic, and steered Russia deeper into dictatorship. Even democratic France engaged in anxious aggrandizement after the end of its postwar economic expansion in the 1970s. It tried to rebuild its old sphere of influence in Africa, deploying 14,000 troops to its former colonies and undertaking a dozen military interventions over the next two decades. All of these cases were complicated, yet the pattern is clear. If a rapid rise gives countries the means to act boldly, the **fear of decline** serves up a powerful motive for rasher, more urgent expansion. The same thing often happens when fast-rising powers cause their own containment by a hostile coalition. In fact, some of history’s most gruesome wars have come when **revisionist powers concluded their path to glory was about to be blocked.** Imperial Germany and Japan are textbook examples. Germany’s rivalry with Britain in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is often considered an analogue to U.S.-China competition: In both cases, an autocratic challenger threatened a liberal hegemon. But the more sobering parallel is this: War came when a cornered Germany grasped it would not zip past its rivals without a fight. For decades after unification in 1871, Germany soared. Its factories spewed out iron and steel, erasing Britain’s economic lead. Berlin built Europe’s finest army and battleships that threatened British supremacy at sea. By the early 1900s, Germany was a European heavyweight seeking an enormous sphere of influence—a Mitteleuropa, or Middle Europe­—on the continent. It was also pursuing, under then-Kaiser Wilhelm II, a “world policy” aimed at securing colonies and global power. But during the prelude to war, the kaiser and his aides didn’t feel confident. Germany’s brash behavior caused its encirclement by hostile powers. London, Paris, and St. Petersburg, Russia, formed a “Triple Entente” to block German expansion. By 1914, time was running short. Germany was losing ground economically to a fast-growing Russia; London and France were pursuing economic containment by blocking its access to oil and iron ore. Berlin’s key ally, Austria-Hungary, was being torn apart by ethnic tensions. At home, Germany’s autocratic political system was in trouble. Most ominous, the military balance was shifting. France was enlarging its army; Russia was adding 470,000 men to its military and slashing the time it needed to mobilize for war. Britain announced it would build two battleships for every one built by Berlin. Germany was, for the moment, Europe’s foremost military power. But by 1916 and 1917, it would be hopelessly overmatched. The result was a now-or-never mentality: Germany should “defeat the enemy while we still stand a chance of victory,” declared Chief of Staff Helmuth von Moltke, even if that meant “provoking a war in the near future.” This is what happened after Serbian nationalists assassinated Austria’s crown prince in June 1914. The kaiser’s government urged Austria-Hungary to crush Serbia, even though that meant war with Russia and France. It then invaded neutral Belgium—the key to its Schlieffen Plan for a two-front war—despite the likelihood of provoking Britain. “This war will turn into a world war in which England will also intervene,” Moltke acknowledged. Germany’s rise had given it the power to gamble for greatness. Its impending decline drove the decisions that plunged the world into war. Imperial Japan followed a similar trajectory. For a half-century after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan was rising steadily. The building of a modern economy and a fierce military allowed Tokyo to win two major wars and accumulate colonial privileges in China, Taiwan, and the Korean Peninsula. Yet Japan was not a hyper-belligerent predator: Through the 1920s, it cooperated with the United States, Britain, and other countries to create a cooperative security framework in the Asia-Pacific. During that decade, however, things fell apart. Growth dropped from 6.1 percent annually between 1904 and 1919 to 1.8 percent annually in the 1920s; the Great Depression then shut Japan’s overseas markets. Unemployment soared, and bankrupt farmers sold their daughters. In China, meanwhile, Japanese influence was being challenged by the Soviet Union and a rising nationalist movement under then-Chinese leader Chiang Kai-Shek. Tokyo’s answer was fascism at home and aggression abroad. From the late 1920s onward, the military conducted a slow-motion coup and harnessed the nation’s resources for “total war.” Japan initiated a massive military buildup and violently established a vast sphere of influence, seizing Manchuria in 1931, invading China in 1937, and laying plans to conquer resource-rich colonies and strategic islands across the Asia-Pacific. The goal was to build an autarkic empire; the result drew a strategic noose around Tokyo’s neck. Japan’s push into China eventually led to a punishing war with the Soviet Union. Japan’s designs on Southeast Asia alarmed Britain. Its drive for regional primacy also made it a foe of the United States—the country from which Tokyo imported nearly all of its oil with an economy vastly larger than Japan’s. Tokyo had antagonized an overwhelming coalition of enemies. It then risked everything rather than accepting humiliation and decline. The precipitating cause, again, was a closing window of opportunity. By 1941, the United States was building an unbeatable military. In July, then-U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt imposed an oil embargo that threatened to stop Japan’s expansion in its tracks. But Japan still had a temporary military edge in the Pacific Ocean, thanks to its early rearmament. So it used that advantage in a lightning attack—seizing the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, and other possessions from Singapore to Wake Island as well as bombing the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor—which guaranteed its own destruction. Japan’s prospects for victory were dim, acknowledged then-Japanese Gen. Hideki Tojo, yet there was no choice but to “close one’s eyes and jump.” A revisionist Japan became most violent when it saw that time was running out. This is the **real trap** the United States should worry about regarding **China** today—the trap in which an aspiring superpower peaks and then **refuses to bear** the painful consequences of descent. China’s rise is no mirage: Decades of growth have given Beijing the economic sinews of global power. Major investments in key technologies and communications infrastructure have yielded a strong position in the struggle for geoeconomic influence; China is using a multi-continent Belt and Road Initiative to bring other states into its orbit. Most alarming, think tank assessments and U.S. Defense Department reports show China’s increasingly formidable military now stands a real chance of **winning a war** against the United States in the Western Pacific.

#### The threat of China is made up in pursuit of US heg.

Swaine 20, director of the East Asia program at the Quincy Institute, 3-31-2020, (Michael, "China Doesn’t Pose an Existential Threat for America," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/21/china-existential-threat-america/>, kav)

It has become a cottage industry in Washington and in parts of Europe these days to highlight all the many ways in which China threatens U.S., Western, and Asian interests. Politicians, military officers, and pundits take turns describing the dangers posed by Beijing’s “expansionist” and “aggressive” military, “implacably hostile” ideology, “predatory” economic and tech policies, and “insidious” overseas influence operations.

Despite shunning the Trump administration’s habitual use of most of these inflammatory adjectives, U.S. President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken nonetheless depict Beijing as challenging the entire “rules-based order that maintains global stability” and as the major focal point of a global struggle between democracy and authoritarianism, which is now, according to Biden, at an “inflection point.”

Such language echoes the premise of various strategy documents of the Trump administration and the speeches of former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo: that the United States is now locked in a strategic, great-power rivalry with China that overshadows any other foreign (or even domestic) threats or concerns facing the country.

There is no doubt that Beijing’s behavior in many areas challenges existing U.S. and allied interests and democratic values. Particularly under Xi Jinping, China has used its greater economic and military power to intimidate rival claimants in territorial disputes and punish nations that make statements or take what Beijing views as threatening or insulting actions. It has engaged in extensive commercial hacking and theft of technologies and favors military intimidation over dialogue in dealing with Taiwan. And it has employed draconian, repressive policies in Tibet and Xinjiang and suppressed democratic freedoms in Hong Kong.

This deeply troubling behavior certainly requires a strong, concerted response from the United States and other nations. But to be effective, such a response also requires an accurate assessment of China’s future impact on the United States and the world.

And in this regard, it is extremely counterproductive to U.S. interests to assert or even imply, as many now do, that the above Chinese actions constitute an all-of-society, existential threat to the United States, the West, and ultimately the entire world, thereby justifying a Cold War-style, zero-sum containment stance toward Beijing. Such an extreme stance stifles debate and the search for more positive-sum policy outcomes while leading to the usual calls for major increases in defense spending.

In fact, there isn’t much actual evidence to support the notion of China as an existential threat. That does not mean that China is not a threat in some areas, but Washington needs to approach this issue based on the facts, not dangerous rhetoric. Unfortunately, right-sizing the challenges that China poses seems to be an impossible task for Washington.

In the most basic, literal sense, an existential threat means a threat to the physical existence of the nation through the possession of an ability and intent to exterminate the U.S. population, presumably via the use of highly lethal nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. A less conventional understanding of the term posits the radical erosion or ending of U.S. prosperity and freedoms through economic, political, ideational, and military pressure, thereby in essence destroying the basis for the American way of life. Any threats that fall below these two definitions do not convey what is meant by the word “existential.”

As a military power, China has no ability to destroy the United States without destroying itself. China’s nuclear capabilities are far below those of the United States, and its conventional military, while regionally potentially powerful, has a fraction of the budget of that of the United States.

Some argue that China could militarily push the United States out of Asia and dominate that region, denying the country air and naval access and hence support for critical allies. This would presumably have an existential impact by virtue of the supposedly critical importance of that region to the stability and prosperity of the United States. Yet there are no signs that Washington is losing either the will or the capacity to remain a major military actor in the region and one closely connected to major Asian allies, which are themselves opposed to China dominating the region. In reality, the greater danger in Asia is that Washington could so militarize its response to China that its actions and policies become repugnant even to U.S. allies.

This leaves the unconventional threats. Here they are presumably twofold: economic and technological, and in the realm of ideas and influence operations within the United States and other Western countries, including the export of China’s so-called “model” of authoritarian rule to the rest of the world.

The former threats would presumably consist of China attaining a level of total superiority over both economic and technological levers of influence globally and with regard to the United States (perhaps combined with a successful military blocking of U.S. sea lines of communication) that would so impoverish the country as to threaten its existence as a stable and prosperous democracy and bring it under Chinese control. Presumably, the specific basis of such leverage would consist of near-absolute global Chinese dominance over both trade and investment relations and supply chains with the United States and other countries and over all the key technologies driving future growth and military capabilities.

It is virtually inconceivable that China could achieve such a level of dominance over the United States. The United States possesses abundant energy, human, technological, and other resources; a huge and dynamic domestic market; enormous levels of accumulated wealth and capital stocks; and the globe’s financial reserve currency.

In contrast, while China boasts a highly entrepreneurial and dynamic workforce, it labors under major structural and political constraints such as insufficient arable land, a rapidly aging society, a heavy reliance on energy imports, and stifling ideological and state-centered controls across society.

Beijing has certainly used its economic leverage (such as market access) to pressure foreign companies and governments to support Chinese policies or stop what it regards as unacceptable behavior, e.g., regarding Taiwan. While such economic coercion is by no means unique to China, it certainly can erode freedom of speech, thus threatening one of democracy’s core principles. But this hardly rises to the level of an existential threat to American values, given both the limited reach of Chinese economic power and the countervailing global economic power and political influence of democratic states.

Some observers claim that Beijing could somehow set standards in critical technology areas and install tech hardware around the world, to the extent that China would be able to relegate the United States to a permanently inferior status in both the commercial and military realms, thus threatening the very existence of the country. This is also highly unlikely.

Chinese companies are certainly participating in standard-setting in key areas, including 5G. But this process is highly competitive globally, and U.S., Asian, and European companies all hold major portions of the standards and the standard-essential patents that undergird the global technology ecosystem. There is little if any chance that Chinese companies could come to dominate this process. Many tech experts state that the most likely worst-case outcome of Chinese gains regarding standards and hardware would be a fragmented technology ecosystem that would impoverish all countries, not give China a level of power that would enable it to vanquish the United States.

More realistically, Beijing might over time exclude high-tech companies in the United States and other countries from its market, which might make it difficult for them to continue to grow and innovate. And Chinese financing power and supply chains could conceivably create a kind of “turnkey” solution in some developing countries that lock them into a Chinese tech ecosystem. But such developments would come nowhere near to constituting an existential threat to the United States, given the global reach of non-Chinese high-tech companies and the overall limited reach of any Chinese high-tech ecosystem in the developing world in the face of such competition.

Finally, the latter set of supposedly existential normative or ideological threats consists of many elements, including Beijing’s possible overturning of the so-called global liberal international order, Chinese influence operations aimed at U.S. society, the export of China’s political values and state-directed economic approach, and its sale of surveillance technologies and other items that facilitate the rise or strengthening of authoritarian states. These threats all seem hair-raising at first glance. But while significant, they are greatly exaggerated and do not rise to the level of constituting an existential threat.

Beijing has little interest in exporting its governance system, and where it does, it is almost entirely directed at developing countries, not industrial democracies such as the United States. In addition, there is no evidence to indicate that the Chinese are actually engaged in compelling or actively persuading countries to follow their experience. Rather, they want developing nations to study from and copy China’s approach because doing so would help to legitimize the Chinese system both internationally and more importantly to Beijing’s domestic audience.

In addition, the notion that Beijing is deliberately attempting to control other countries and make them more authoritarian by entrapping them in debt and selling them “Big Brother” hardware such as surveillance systems is unsupported by the facts. Chinese banks show little desire to extend loans that will fail, and the failures that do occur are mostly due to poor feasibility studies and the incompetence and excessive zeal of lenders and/or borrowers. Moreover, in both loan-giving and surveillance equipment sales, China has shown no specific preference for nondemocratic over democratic states.

Even if Beijing were to attempt to export its development approach to other states, the actual attractiveness of that approach would prove to be highly limited. The features undergirding China’s developmental success are not replicable for most (if any) countries. These include a high savings rate; a highly acquisitive and entrepreneurial cultural environment; a state-owned banking system and nonconvertible currency; many massive state-owned industries that exist to provide employment, facilitate party control over key sectors, and drive huge infrastructure construction; and strong controls over virtually all information flows. Moreover, such a model (if you can call it that) is almost certainly not sustainable in its present form, given China’s aging population, extensive corruption, very large levels of income inequality, inadequate social safety net, and the fact that free information flows are required to drive global innovation.

Although China’s combination of economic reform policies and authoritarian political system has been around since the early 1980s, not a single nation has adopted that system either willingly or under Chinese compulsion. There are certainly many authoritarian states and fragile democracies on China’s periphery, but none of them were made that way by China.

China’s challenge to the so-called global liberal international order is also exaggerated. In the first place, it is highly debatable whether in fact a single coherent global order even exists. What observers usually refer to as the “liberal international order” (a relatively recent term) actually consists of an amalgam of disparate regimes with different origins, including international human rights pacts, multilateral economic arrangements, and an international court.

The United States certainly plays an important or leading role in many of these regimes. But it did not create and does not drive all global regimes—and in fact does not support some of them, such as the International Court of Justice, and has not ratified some critical pacts such as the United National Convention on the Law of the Sea. And many very important global regimes (e.g., regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, trade and investment, climate change, and pandemics) have no deep connection to liberal democratic values per se and are supported by Beijing, albeit sometimes more in letter than in spirit.

The challenge for the United States is not how to fend off the imagined existential threats posed by China. Rather, it lies in developing a much clearer and factually based overall understanding of the limited challenges, threats, and indeed opportunities China poses to the United States and the policies needed to address them. Rejecting the specious notion that China is threatening to destroy an entire way of life will make this task much easier.

#### US Hegemony guarantees war with China --- only retrenchment avoids great power war

**Keay 18 –** is a graduate in Modern History from Oxford University and a current MA applicant in International Relations, 2/22/18 (Leo, “Sleepwalking into Thucydides's Trap: The Perils of US Hegemony “, The International Spectator, https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/sleepwalking-thucydidess-trap-perils-us-hegemony) //jd

Rigid alliance structures also magnify the risks of great power conflict. On the eve of the First World War, Europe was divided between the “Dual Alliance” of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and the “Triple Entente” of France, Russia and Great Britain. It was the unshakeable nature of each bloc’s security commitments that transformed Austria-Hungary’s invasion of Serbia into a global military conflict. The only way to avoid future conflagrations is to adopt an attitude of radical humility. America’s leaders must accept that the tectonic shifts of geopolitical power cannot be reversed, only managed so as to minimise friction. This is more profound than the distinction between vital and vested interests suggested by Allison. It requires the ruling power to fundamentally scale down its ambitions to those of a great power. The US must cease to aspire to global hegemony, and instead aim for limited dominance. President Obama had the foresight to appreciate this. As he explained in his 2015 NSS: “America leads from a position of strength. But, this does not mean we can or should attempt to dictate the trajectory of all unfolding events around the world […] our resources and influence are not infinite”.[13] One possible solution could be to return to the fundamentals of nineteenth-century US grand strategy, the Monroe Doctrine. Washington’s priority should be to preserve its strategic autonomy in the Western hemisphere. Consequently, it must continue to safeguard its security in the Pacific by maintaining its military bases and honouring its alliance commitments there.

#### China doesn’t pose a threat – any other ev is constructing its threats.

Walt 17, columnist at Foreign Policy, the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international relations at Harvard University, 6-30-2017, (Stephen, "Everyone Misunderstands the Reason for the U.S.-China Cold War," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/30/china-united-states-new-cold-war-foreign-policy/>, kav)

The United States is pretty polarized these days, but nearly everyone seems to agree that China is a big problem. The Trump administration has been at odds with China on trade issues since day one, and its 2017 National Security Strategy labeled China a “revisionist power” and major strategic rival. (President Donald Trump himself seems to have been willing to give Beijing a free pass if it would help him get reelected, but that’s just a sign of his own venality and inconsistent with the administration’s other policies.) Presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden may have started his campaign in 2019 downplaying fears that China was going to “eat our lunch,” but his campaign has grown increasingly hawkish over time.

Not surprisingly, hard-line Republican members of Congress like Josh Hawley and Matt Gaetz have been sounding the alarm as well, while progressives and moderates warn of a “new cold war” and call for renewed dialogue to manage the relationship. Despite their differing prescriptions, all of these groups see the state of Sino-American relations as of vital importance.

Unfortunately, discussion of the Sino-American rivalry is also succumbing to a familiar tendency to attribute conflict to our opponents’ internal characteristics: their ruling ideology, domestic institutions, or the personalities of particular leaders. This tendency has a long history in the United States: The country entered World War I in order to defeat German militarism and make the world safe for democracy, and later it fought World War II to defeat fascism. At the dawn of the Cold War, George Kennan’s infamous “X” article (“The Sources of Soviet Conduct”) argued that Moscow had a relentless and internally motivated urge to expand, driven by the need for foreign enemies to justify the Communist Party’s authoritarian rule. Appeasement would not work, he argued, and the only choice was to contain the Soviet Union until its internal system “mellowed.” More recently, U.S. leaders blamed America’s problems with Iraq on Saddam Hussein’s recklessly evil ambitions and portrayed Iran’s leaders as irrational religious fanatics whose foreign-policy behavior is driven solely by ideological beliefs.

In all of these conflicts, trouble arose from the basic nature of these adversaries, not from the circumstances they found themselves in or the inherently competitive nature of international politics itself.

And so it is with China today. Former National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster maintains that China is a threat “because its leaders are promoting a closed, authoritarian model as an alternative to democratic governance and free-market economics.” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo agrees: In his view, relations have deteriorated because “it’s a different Chinese Communist Party today than it was 10 years ago. … This is a Chinese Communist Party that has come to view itself as intent upon the destruction of Western ideas, Western democracies, Western values.” According to Sen. Marco Rubio: “Chinese Communist Party power serves no purpose but to strengthen the party’s rule and to spread its influence around the world. … China is an untrustworthy partner in any endeavor whether it’s a nation-state project, an industrial capacity, or financial integration.” The only way to avoid a conflict, Vice President Mike Pence said, is for China’s rulers to “change course and return to the spirit of ‘reform and opening’ and greater freedom.”

Even far more sophisticated China watchers, such as former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, attribute much of China’s increasingly assertive stance to President Xi Jinping’s centralization of power, and Rudd sees this behavior as “an expression of Xi Jinping’s personal leadership temperament, which is impatient with the incremental bureaucratism endemic to the Chinese system, and with which the international community had become relaxed, comfortable, and thoroughly accustomed.” The implication is that a different Chinese leader would be a much less serious problem. Similarly, Timothy Garton Ash believes that the “primary cause of this new cold war is the turn taken by the Chinese communist party leadership under Xi Jinping since 2012: more oppressive at home, more aggressive abroad.” Other observers point to rising nationalism (whether spontaneous or government-sponsored) as another key factor in China’s greater foreign-policy assertiveness.

Relying on categories originally conceived by the late Kenneth Waltz, international relations scholars variously refer to such accounts as “unit-level,” “reductionist,” or “second-image” explanations. The many variations within this broad family of theories all view a country’s foreign-policy behavior as primarily the result of its internal characteristics. Thus, U.S. foreign policy is sometimes attributed to its democratic system, liberal values, or capitalist economic order, just as the behavior of other states is said to derive from the nature of their domestic regime, ruling ideology, “strategic culture,” or leaders’ personalities.

Explanations based on domestic characteristics are appealing in part because they seem so simple and straightforward: Peace-loving democracies act that way because they are (supposedly) based on norms of tolerance; by contrast, aggressors act aggressively because they are based on domination or coercion or because there are fewer constraints on what leaders can do.

Focusing on the internal characteristics of other states is also tempting because it absolves us of responsibility for conflict and allows us to pin the blame on others. If we are on the side of the angels and our own political system is based on sound and just principles, then when trouble arises, it must be because Bad States or Bad Leaders are out there doing Bad Things. This perspective also provides a ready solution: Get rid of those Bad States or those Bad Leaders! Demonizing one’s opponents is also a time-honored way of rallying public support in the face of an international challenge, and that requires highlighting the negative qualities that are supposedly making one’s rivals act as they are.

Unfortunately, pinning most of the blame for conflict on an opponent’s domestic characteristics is also dangerous. For starters, if conflict is due primarily to the nature of the opposing regime(s), then the only long-term solution is to overthrow them. Accommodation, mutual coexistence, or even extensive cooperation on matters of mutual interest are for the most part ruled out, with potentially catastrophic consequences. When rivals see the nature of the other side as a threat in itself, a struggle to the death becomes the only alternative.

### 2NC---L---Russia War

#### US hegemony causes Russia war---domestic turmoil and lack of adherence to democratic principles has weakened international perspective to the point of no return

Hirsh 5/11/22 [Hirsh, Michael, Michael Hirsh is a senior correspondent at Foreign Policy. Previously, he was the national editor for Politico magazine. He has also served as foreign editor, chief diplomatic correspondent, and national economic correspondent for Newsweek. Education: Tufts University, B.A. (philosophy; magna cum laude), 1979; Columbia University, graduate degree (international and public affairs)., “Why Biden’s Anti-Putin Democracy Crusade Is Failing”, Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/11/us-russia-war-ukraine-democracy-autocracy/]//AA

In the beginning, Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine appeared to be an ideal rationale for U.S. President Joe Biden’s global democracy campaign. What better endorsement could there be than the spectacle of a brave, doughty democracy fighting off a brutal autocrat? As Biden put it in a major speech in Poland in March, Ukraine was now “on the front lines” in “the perennial struggle for democracy and freedom.” But despite Ukraine’s success on the ground against Putin’s military, the White House’s efforts in the months since to frame the conflict as a titanic worldwide battle between democracy and autocracy don’t appear to be working very well. Outside of Western European allies and longtime U.S. partners such as Japan, much of the rest of the world simply isn’t signing on. Problem one: Most of these countries either aren’t democracies or are so deeply flawed as democracies that they’re less than inspired by the rhetoric. Problem two: In the eyes of much of the world, the country that’s doing the preaching—the United States—is a badly broken democracy that ought to heal itself first. These problems were evident at the White House this week, when Biden welcomed leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), most of whom are autocrats or represent one-party states that show no signs of going democratic. Among them: Cambodia’s longtime strongman Hun Sen; Thai Prime Minister Pravuth Chan-ocha, a former general who seized power in a 2014 coup; and the authoritarian leaders of Vietnam, Laos, and Brunei. To Biden’s relief, the head of Myanmar’s junta, Min Aung Hlaing, another ASEAN member, was not among them. On Wednesday, Kurt Campbell, Biden’s lead White House advisor on East Asia, acknowledged that the talks would be “maybe a little bit uncomfortable at times” but did not directly address the issue of flagging democracy in the region. “I do think we will have a full exchange and we acknowledge that there are differences of view,” he said at a forum at the United States Institute of Peace. Most of these countries have indicated they are nonaligned in the struggle between Russia and the West; Indonesia, another leading ASEAN member and a democracy, has even invited Putin to the G-20 summit it is hosting in November. The ASEAN countries are joined by nations across the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America, and Africa—countries that include a number of democracies but also a quasi-rogue gallery of autocrats and dubious democrats who represent the majority of the world’s population. And they are not persuaded that Russia, a major source of oil and gas supplies, needs to be cut off from the global system. “Their attitude is, ‘Who are you to be telling us what to do or telling us what our rights are? People in your country who win the popular vote don’t even get elected president. So don’t preach to us!’” said Michael Coppedge, an expert in democratization at the University of Notre Dame who is one of the managers of an exhaustive international study by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, released last month. According to a report by Freedom House, “Reversing the Decline of Democracy in the United States,” “[A]mid a 16-year decline in global freedom, democracy in the United States has suffered serious erosion.” The report found that the United States had dropped to level of flawed democracies like Panama, Romania, and South Korea and concluded, “The weakening of American democracy did not start with [former U.S.] President [Donald] Trump’s direct pressure on democratic institutions and rights, and his departure from the White House has not ended the crisis.” Critics say that while the Biden administration’s framing of the conflict is working well within NATO and the West—joined by firm U.S. allies such as Japan and South Korea—the U.S. president needs to rethink his approach if he wants to corral more allies in his efforts to isolate and weaken Russia. The real issue being tested, they say, is not democracy per se but rather an issue that most countries can identify with more readily: the sanctity of their borders under post-World War II norms upheld by United Nations-sanctioned international law. “This is about territorial integrity and non-use of force to change borders, along with international norms. Those are the core issues,” said Bruce Jentleson, a political scientist at Duke University and a former senior foreign-policy advisor to former U.S. Vice President Al Gore and the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff. “In that respect, it’s akin to Kuwait 1990,” when then-U.S. President George H.W. Bush won a broad international consensus against then-Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. In an email, Jentleson added that while he has “great admiration” for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s wartime leadership, Ukraine itself has long been known to be a “questionable democracy” and one of the world’s most corrupt countries. Chas Freeman Jr., a former senior U.S. diplomat who helped to frame George H.W. Bush’s “new world order” concept during the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf crisis, agreed with this assessment. And Biden has indeed condemned Russia’s invasion as ​“a flagrant violation of international law.” But Freeman said the United States would have to work hard to restore its credibility on that front in the wake of its own more recent violations of international norms, including the use of torture and the invasion of Iraq. “We need to return to the basic principles of international law that we foolishly set aside, but that’s going to be a problem,” Freeman told Foreign Policy. “The United States sponsored, created, and enforced what is now called the liberal international order after World War II. So you have the U.N. Charter, which lays out the basic principles of international law. You can’t go to war without a justification from the U.N. Security Council, which we had [in 1990-91]. But that was the last time we observed those norms. After that, every principle of international law that we pioneered, we violated.” Returning to those basic principles, with appropriate mea culpas, may be the only course forward if the United States is to win over much of the world, Freeman said. What won’t work, he added, is evangelizing about the glories of democracy—an old American habit, and one that he believes the Biden team is resorting to for largely domestic political benefit. “I’ve thought from the beginning that frankly this is a load of crap,” Freeman said. “It’s a very American conceit. And it’s particularly ironic that it should come to the fore during a period when our own democracy is manifestly in deep trouble and we’re not even sure we’re going to have a peaceful transition in 2024.” Biden’s credibility problem extends to other major nations that have not gone along with Biden’s campaign—and which continue to temporize over the Russian invasion. For India, the issue has little to do with democracy and everything to do with border security, said Rani Mullen, a scholar at the College of William & Mary. Its increasingly autocratic leader, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a populist fanning sectarian hatred between Hindus and Muslims while on the international stage, he pursues relations with both Moscow and Washington. Since the beginning of the year, India has dramatically stepped up its purchases of discounted Russian oil—which Modi desperately needs to shore up India’s weakening economy. Modi’s stance is entirely about realpolitik, said Mullen, an expert in South and Central Asia. And that means maintaining workable relations with Russia so as not to encourage a deeper partnership between Moscow and China, the Indians’ most feared potential aggressor along with Pakistan, which has a cozy relationship with Beijing. For New Delhi, the most paramount issue is border integrity under the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement (which the Chinese call the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”) between India and China. “Ultimately, India’s stance is driven by thinking that alienating Russia will undermine its security,” Mullen said. “Democracy? What does it care? That’s the reality of it. It’s all about China. So framing Russian actions in a way that would guarantee mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity—that would strike a different chord.” More broadly, the stark fact Biden must confront is that democracy has been in retreat since the Cold War. “The level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2021 is down to 1989 levels. The last 30 years of democratic advances are now eradicated,” a report by the V-Dem Institute said. “Dictatorships are on the rise and harbor 70% of the world population—5.4 billion people.” The study found that liberal democracies can now be found in only 34 nations, down from its peak of 42 in 2012, which are home to only 13 percent of the world’s population. A key fence-sitter in this global struggle over international norms is authoritarian China, which has sought to find a middle ground between Russia and the West. Chinese President Xi Jinping is sticking by his partnership with Putin, yet Beijing has mostly observed economic sanctions against Russia. Chinese officials say their country is loath to choose sides, but Washington has made that difficult by portraying the conflict as one that is primarily about Western-style democracy rather than global norms. As Robert Manning, a former U.S. intelligence official and senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, wrote in Foreign Policy this week: “The logic of ‘democracies only’ could lead to a bifurcated or maybe trifurcated world.” China covets Taiwan much as Russia does Ukraine, but even Washington still officially embraces its long-time “one China” policy, acknowledging that Taiwan is part of a single China. Beijing is angry that this diplomatic mainstay is also fraying, with Biden’s State Department removing such language from its official guidance website, which no longer states that Washington “does not support Taiwan independence.” Nor has the Biden administration offered up any new initiatives to wean Beijing away from Moscow. Other major nations, even those that are democratic, also are making calculations based on factors that have little to do with the threat to democracy. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro recently said he would continue to support Russia’s participation at international forums, such as the G-20, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Some experts say the inconsistencies in Biden’s approach to democracy have hurt him as well. The president’s virtual democracy summit at the end of last year was widely criticized for the seemingly arbitrary way some countries were invited while others were snubbed. The Philippines’ anti-U.S. president, Rodrigo Duterte, was welcomed for example despite his violent campaign of extrajudicial executions, whereas Washington-aligned Singapore, which was rated “partly free” in Freedom House’s annual study of rights and liberties worldwide, was excluded. Singapore’s Freedom House ranking was also higher than some other invitees, such as Angola, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Lebanon. In the Philippines, Duterte will soon be replaced by Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son and namesake of the country’s long-time dictator, who has said he wants to draw closer to Beijing. “Countries that are not democratic are being treated as democratic. It’s completely a fool’s errand,” said Raffaello Pantucci, a visiting senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. “It alienates people on the ground.” Yet for all that, Ukraine is also not Kuwait circa 1990-1991: a state ruled by monarchs. It is genuinely a democracy in peril. And Biden appears unready to compromise on an agenda that he has embraced since the beginning of his presidency, when he declared in his first State of the Union address that “In the battle between democracy and autocracy, democracies are rising to the moment, and the world is clearly choosing the side of peace and security.” Biden administration officials like to point to the economic weight of the United States and its Western allies, which make up “50 percent-plus of global GDP” while “China and Russia are less than 20 percent,” as U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in February.

#### American attempts to expand hegemony through Ukraine prompts Russian retaliation – that exacerbates conflicts and leads to nuclear war

**Mearsheimer 22** - is the R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, 3/19/22 (John, “John Mearsheimer on why the West is principally responsible for the Ukrainian crisis”, The Economist, <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2022/03/11/john-mearsheimer-on-why-the-west-is-principally-responsible-for-the-ukrainian-crisis>, Accessed 6-18-22)//jd

THE WAR in Ukraine is the most dangerous international conflict since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Understanding its root causes is essential if we are to prevent it from getting worse and, instead, to find a way to bring it to a close. There is no question that Vladimir Putin started the war and is responsible for how it is being waged. But why he did so is another matter. The mainstream view in the West is that he is an irrational, out-of-touch aggressor bent on creating a greater Russia in the mould of the former Soviet Union. Thus, he alone bears full responsibility for the Ukraine crisis. But that story is wrong. The West, and especially America, is principally responsible for the crisis which began in February 2014. It has now turned into a war that not only threatens to destroy Ukraine, but also has the potential to escalate into a nuclear war between Russia and NATO. The trouble over Ukraine actually started at NATO’s Bucharest summit in April 2008, when George W. Bush’s administration pushed the alliance to announce that Ukraine and Georgia “will become members”. Russian leaders responded immediately with outrage, characterising this decision as an existential threat to Russia and vowing to thwart it. According to a respected Russian journalist, Mr Putin “flew into a rage” and warned that “if Ukraine joins NATO, it will do so without Crimea and the eastern regions. It will simply fall apart.” America ignored Moscow’s red line, however, and pushed forward to make Ukraine a Western bulwark on Russia’s border. That strategy included two other elements: bringing Ukraine closer to the eu and making it a pro-American democracy. These efforts eventually sparked hostilities in February 2014, after an uprising (which was supported by America) caused Ukraine’s pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovych, to flee the country. In response, Russia took Crimea from Ukraine and helped fuel a civil war that broke out in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. The next major confrontation came in December 2021 and led directly to the current war. The main cause was that Ukraine was becoming a de facto member of NATO. The process started in December 2017, when the Trump administration decided to sell Kyiv “defensive weapons”. What counts as “defensive” is hardly clear-cut, however, and these weapons certainly looked offensive to Moscow and its allies in the Donbas region. Other NATO countries got in on the act, shipping weapons to Ukraine, training its armed forces and allowing it to participate in joint air and naval exercises. In July 2021, Ukraine and America co-hosted a major naval exercise in the Black Sea region involving navies from 32 countries. Operation Sea Breeze almost provoked Russia to fire at a British naval destroyer that deliberately entered what Russia considers its territorial waters. The links between Ukraine and America continued growing under the Biden administration. This commitment is reflected throughout an important document—the “us-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership”—that was signed in November by Antony Blinken, America’s secretary of state, and Dmytro Kuleba, his Ukrainian counterpart. The aim was to “underscore … a commitment to Ukraine’s implementation of the deep and comprehensive reforms necessary for full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.” The document explicitly builds on “the commitments made to strengthen the Ukraine-u.s. strategic partnership by Presidents Zelensky and Biden,” and also emphasises that the two countries will be guided by the “2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration.” Unsurprisingly, Moscow found this evolving situation intolerable and began mobilising its army on Ukraine’s border last spring to signal its resolve to Washington. But it had no effect, as the Biden administration continued to move closer to Ukraine. This led Russia to precipitate a full-blown diplomatic stand-off in December. As Sergey Lavrov, Russia’s foreign minister, put it: “We reached our boiling point.” Russia demanded a written guarantee that Ukraine would never become a part of NATO and that the alliance remove the military assets it had deployed in eastern Europe since 1997. The subsequent negotiations failed, as Mr Blinken made clear: “There is no change. There will be no change.” A month later Mr Putin launched an invasion of Ukraine to eliminate the threat he saw from NATO. This interpretation of events is at odds with the prevailing mantra in the West, which portrays NATO expansion as irrelevant to the Ukraine crisis, blaming instead Mr Putin’s expansionist goals. According to a recent NATO document sent to Russian leaders, “NATO is a defensive Alliance and poses no threat to Russia.” The available evidence contradicts these claims. For starters, the issue at hand is not what Western leaders say NATO’s purpose or intentions are; it is how Moscow sees NATO’s actions. Mr Putin surely knows that the costs of conquering and occupying large amounts of territory in eastern Europe would be prohibitive for Russia. As he once put it, “Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart. Whoever wants it back has no brain.” His beliefs about the tight bonds between Russia and Ukraine notwithstanding, trying to take back all of Ukraine would be like trying to swallow a porcupine. Furthermore, Russian policymakers—including Mr Putin—have said hardly anything about conquering new territory to recreate the Soviet Union or build a greater Russia. Rather, since the 2008 Bucharest summit Russian leaders have repeatedly said that they view Ukraine joining NATO as an existential threat that must be prevented. As Mr Lavrov noted in January, “the key to everything is the guarantee that NATO will not expand eastward.” Tellingly, Western leaders rarely described Russia as a military threat to Europe before 2014. As America’s former ambassador to Moscow Michael McFaul notes, Mr Putin’s seizure of Crimea was not planned for long; it was an impulsive move in response to the coup that overthrew Ukraine’s pro-Russian leader. In fact, until then, NATO expansion was aimed at turning all of Europe into a giant zone of peace, not containing a dangerous Russia. Once the crisis started, however, American and European policymakers could not admit they had provoked it by trying to integrate Ukraine into the West. They declared the real source of the problem was Russia’s revanchism and its desire to dominate if not conquer Ukraine. My story about the conflict’s causes should not be controversial, given that many prominent American foreign-policy experts have warned against NATO expansion since the late 1990s. America’s secretary of defence at the time of the Bucharest summit, Robert Gates, recognised that “trying to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was truly overreaching”. Indeed, at that summit, both the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, were opposed to moving forward on NATO membership for Ukraine because they feared it would infuriate Russia. The upshot of my interpretation is that we are in an extremely dangerous situation, and Western policy is exacerbating these risks. For Russia’s leaders, what happens in Ukraine has little to do with their imperial ambitions being thwarted; it is about dealing with what they regard as a direct threat to Russia’s future. Mr Putin may have misjudged Russia’s military capabilities, the effectiveness of the Ukrainian resistance and the scope and speed of the Western response, but one should never underestimate how ruthless great powers can be when they believe they are in dire straits. America and its allies, however, are doubling down, hoping to inflict a humiliating defeat on Mr Putin and to maybe even trigger his removal. They are increasing aid to Ukraine while using economic sanctions to inflict massive punishment on Russia, a step that Putin now sees as “akin to a declaration of war”. America and its allies may be able to prevent a Russian victory in Ukraine, but the country will be gravely damaged, if not dismembered. Moreover, there is a serious threat of escalation beyond Ukraine, not to mention the danger of nuclear war. If the West not only thwarts Moscow on Ukraine’s battlefields, but also does serious, lasting damage to Russia’s economy, it is in effect pushing a great power to the brink. Mr Putin might then turn to nuclear weapons. At this point it is impossible to know the terms on which this conflict will be settled. But, if we do not understand its deep cause, we will be unable to end it before Ukraine is wrecked and NATO ends up in a war with Russia.

### 2NC---L---Iran War

#### Only retrenchment can avoid war with Iran and promote diplomacy

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Pax Americana vs. inclusive security While Washington warms to the idea of an inclusive security dialogue, circumstances in the region remain problematic. Though the conditions and norms necessary to make a security arrangement successful and durable are largely missing, most of these cannot be expected to exist prior to constructing this architecture. Instead, they will come into existence through the deliberations that establish the new security arrangement. For instance, norms such as noninterference in other states’ internal affairs, or a taboo against the pursuit of regime-change in neighboring countries, are notoriously weak in the Middle East. Similarly, virtually all major powers in the region engage in funding and supporting armed nonstate actors in other countries, though few as extensively and successfully as Iran. The strengthening of norms of noninterference cannot constitute preconditions for the pursuit of a new security architecture. Instead, the adoption and strengthening of these norms should be on the agenda, together with mechanisms to regulate and limit military buildups and expenditures, as the security arrangement is negotiated. Such an arms control component of the agreement would have to address ballistic missile programs as well as the use of paramilitary groups. Other necessary changes in the conduct of Persian Gulf states do not pertain to particular activities but rather to the very conception of security and the principles for ordering the region. A common perspective in Riyadh and the United Arab Emirates is to divide the region between Arab and non–Arab states. Statements critical of Iran and Turkey often focus on their alleged interference in Arab affairs. “The Turkish interference in the internal affairs of Arab countries is a clear example of negative interference in the region,” the UAE’s foreign minister, Anwar Gargash, recently charged.[17] The Saudi foreign minister, Ibrahim al–Assaf, and other Saudi officials regularly make similar charges about Iran. “One of the most dangerous forms of terrorism and extremism is what Iran practices through its blatant interference in Arab affairs,” al–Assaf told the Arab League in 2019.[18] The emphasis on Arab affairs may appear benign but has profound implications. It suggests that Saudi Arabia — which kidnapped, Saad al–Hariri, the Lebanese prime minister, in 2017, has contributed in Yemen to what the United Nations considers the world’s worst humanitarian disaster, intervened militarily in Bahrain to crack down on dissidents, and was on the verge of invading Qatar to overthrow its government — can engage in these activities legitimately by virtue of its ethnic Arab makeup.[19] At the same time, Turkey and Iran are, by definition, rendered illegitimate actors by virtue of their non–Arab composition. (Going forward, Riyadh may have to make an exception for Israel, which otherwise would fall into the same category as Turkey and Iran.) Under this mindset, a shared history, cultural ties, borders, and trade do not provide avenues for influence (positive or negative) — only the ethnic identity of the state does. While such a racist division of the region may serve Saudi Arabia’s bid for regional leadership by disqualifying its non–Arab rivals by default, the refusal to recognize the legitimacy of other states based on ethnicity is not conducive to the creation of an inclusive security arrangement. Iran’s refusal to recognize Israel presents a similar dilemma. These conceptions add to a reluctance among some Persian Gulf states to support an inclusive security architecture for the region. For many of these states, the continuation of Pax Americana offers a far more attractive option: The United States tips the regional balance in their favor, affords them a security umbrella, contains and weakens their regional rivals, obviates any need for compromise with their regional foes — and, all the while, hands the bill to the American taxpayer. In the words of Robert Gates, the former U.S. defense secretary, the Saudis want to “fight the Iranians to the last American.”[20] Binding the United States to their own security and political ambitions has, as a result, been imperative. These states watch with trepidation the shifting of political winds in Washington away from the United States acting as a world policeman and sustaining an infrastructure of more than 800 military bases and facilities worldwide. “Bringing the troops home” is equivalent to a call to abandon America’s Persian Gulf security partners, in their view. Their harsh reactions to any sign or measure that could conceivably weaken Washington’s commitment to their security and ambitions are revealing. Saudi Arabia and the UAE (along with Israel) viewed the 2015 Iran nuclear accord, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, less as an arms control agreement and more as a measure that would allow the United States to pivot to Asia and cease its three-decades-old role as a counterbalance to Iranian power. American officials were baffled to hear some Arab officials view the agreement as a first step toward abandoning the Sunni states of the Persian Gulf in favor of a renewed U.S.–Iran alliance, akin to what existed during the time of the shah. After all, the agreement would end Iran’s political and economic isolation and terminate Washington’s policy of containing Iran, all the while facilitating an American military withdrawal from the Persian Gulf. The details of the nuclear agreement were not their primary concern. In the words of Michael Morell, acting director of the Central Intelligence Agency under President Obama: “If I was going to put my finger on the single most important factor that explains the largest number of actions that are taking place in the region today, it is the widespread perception of American withdrawal.”[21] These Saudi, Emirati, and Israeli fears have not been limited to the presidency of Barack Obama, under whose watch the JCPOA was negotiated and concluded. President Trump, who took American deference toward these autocratic regimes to new levels, further intensified nervousness in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi about America’s commitment to their security. Two events in the summer and fall of 2019 confirmed their fears. Recognizing that the U.S. military was no longer at their disposal, Saudi Arabia and the UAE began exercising diplomatic options they had earlier shunned. After a tense summer with mysterious attacks against oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, most likely at the hand of Iran, Tehran shot down an American spy plane it claimed had entered its airspace. At first, Trump approved retaliatory strikes against targets in Iran, but he reversed his order at the last moment and instead directed a cyberattack against Iran. The reversal stunned the world as well as America’s security partners in the region. John Bolton, the hawkish U.S. national security advisor and ardent supporter of war with Iran, was devastated by Trump’s decision.[22] Three months later, a spectacular drone attack against Saudi refineries in Abqaiq and Khurais, in the eastern part of the country, disrupted more than half of Saudi Arabia’s oil production for several weeks. Though a U.N. investigation could not confirm Iran’s involvement in the attack, Saudi officials had no doubt about the culprit’s identity. They expected the United States to come to their defense.[23] Once again, Trump showed little interest in starting a war with Iran on behalf of the Saudis, causing Middle East officials and much of the Washington foreign policy establishment alike to accuse him of having abandoned the Carter Doctrine.[24] Rather than the Middle East descending into chaos, as proponents of Pax Americana had predicted, Persian Gulf states began exploring regional diplomacy.[25] Recognizing that the U.S. military was no longer at their disposal, Saudi Arabia and the UAE began exercising diplomatic options they had earlier shunned. Saudi officials quietly reached out to Iran via intermediaries seeking ways to ease tensions. Tehran, in turn, floated a peace plan based on a mutual Iranian–Saudi pledge of nonaggression. Riyadh also stepped up direct talks with Houthi rebels in Yemen to ease tensions with their backer, Iran.[26] Abu Dhabi went even further. The UAE started withdrawing troops from Yemen and opened direct talks with Tehran over maritime security. It even released $700 million in funds to Iran in contradiction to the Trump administration’s maximum pressure strategy.[27] While the calculation behind these measures might have been tactical, it is nevertheless noteworthy that as the United States showed military restraint, its erstwhile allies tilted toward diplomacy. The Saudis and Emiratis simply had no choice but to reverse their rejection of diplomacy because they could no longer presume they operated under the protection of the United States. With the assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in January 2020, however, the pendulum once again swung in the direction of confrontation and away from diplomacy, courtesy of American military intervention. These developments suggest that Saudi and Emirati opposition to an inclusive regional dialogue can be allayed. As long as the United States remains committed to intervening in the region militarily, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi tend to prefer an aggressive posture intended to direct U.S. power toward weakening and defeating Iran. Once Washington convincingly demonstrates its disinclination to get involved in an armed confrontation with Tehran, the Saudis and Emiratis adjust accordingly and begin exploring diplomacy to secure their interests through more peaceful coexistence with their northern rival. Consequently, openness to and readiness for an inclusive security architecture is likely to emerge only when the United States clearly has abandoned all ambitions to dominate the Persian Gulf. Sullivan and Benaim recognize this as well and view it as an opportunity. The realization that the Americans are “not going to be our saviors” is compelling Saudi Arabia and the UAE to take regional diplomacy much more seriously and “to take matters into their own hands to a more significant degree,” according to Sullivan.[28] As long as the United States remains committed to intervening in the region militarily, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi tend to prefer an aggressive posture intended to direct U.S. power toward weakening and defeating Iran. The recent normalization agreement between Israel and the UAE is best understood in this context — as a counter to this trend. It is not so much a peace deal as it is an arms deal — and an implicit defense pact. The UAE gets access to the United States’ most advanced fighter jet, the F–35, in return for normalizing relations with Israel while further binding the United States to Abu Dhabi’s security. Arab states in the Gulf Cooperation Council have long treated American weaponry purchases as informal defense arrangements that oblige the United States to protect them militarily. Of course, positioning the Emirati–Israeli accord as an anti–Iran move also reinforces America’s status-quo military commitment to the Middle East. The notion that the threat from Iran is so overwhelming that it compelled the UAE to strike a deal with Israel is belied by the fact that Abu Dhabi is far more embroiled in countering Ankara’s regional ambitions and Turkish support for the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Emiratis define as their primary political enemy.[29] Iran, in turn, poses a different set of challenges. Its official rhetoric calls for the United States to exit the region altogether. A security architecture should be created and sustained by the Persian Gulf alone, Tehran maintains. To the other states in the Persian Gulf, this is a nonstarter for the same reason Tehran finds it preferable: With the United States removed from the Persian Gulf, the path will open for Iran to become the dominant power in these waters (as it was during the time of the shah). However, given the Persian Gulf’s importance in the global economy, Tehran has little choice but to accept a role for outside powers in any inclusive security architecture. Getting to this point may prove less arduous than Iran’s official statements suggest. Senior Iranian officials privately concede that the architecture will have dim chances of success without the support and approval of the United States and possibly other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. However, the proposition has not been tested, since a serious effort at creating an inclusive security arrangement has yet to be undertaken. A truly inclusive security architecture Given the will to move forward, the vital issues that Persian Gulf states would initially need to agree on are whether to build on existing organizations and structures or set up an entirely new institution. They would also have to determine the organization’s scope, ambition, and, finally, its membership. Starting with humble ambitions limited to kickstarting diplomacy without any formal structures, as Sullivan and Benaim suggest, may be wise in the interim. But in the longer term, diplomatic activity needs to be institutionalized. The diplomacy deficit in the Persian Gulf region is notorious. Except for the Gulf Cooperation Council, there are no multinational security organizations. But building upon the GCC may be unwise, if this is even possible, as it suffers from numerous flaws. It was conceived as a defense pact against Iraq and Iran rather than an inclusive organization with a cooperation-oriented mission and purpose. Its raison d’être has been premised primarily on the existence of an external threat that member states unite against. Moreover, it is paralyzed by internal conflicts, mainly the standoff between Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and their partners on the one hand, and Qatar on the other. Though the blockade against Qatar imposed in mid–2017 has been lifted, the underlying causes of their dispute remain unresolved. A new security architecture has a better chance of succeeding if it instead is inspired by successful, security-enhancing institutions in other regions, such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Though these are vastly different organizations, they are inclusive and cooperation-oriented rather than premised on the need to balance a common threat. Moreover, by sidestepping the GCC, the new initiative will also evade much of its divisive baggage. In terms of scope and purpose, ASEAN’s more soft-security focus — disaster-relief cooperation and humanitarian assistance — might be an easier lift initially for the Persian Gulf states but is likely to prove insufficient in the long run. Equally, the OSCE’s all-encompassing approach — from confidence-building measures to human rights promotion to hard security issues — may be too ambitious at first. Still, it should be the organization’s long-term objective to promote cooperation on all such issues. Combating drug trafficking and pandemics, environmental issues, maritime security, and pilgrimage-security agreements are all challenges on which collaboration may be relatively forthcoming. Eventually, however, the region’s hard security challenges must be addressed: defense expenditures, weapons acquisition, foreign bases, limits on ballistic missiles, and the use and arming of militias, to name a few such questions. The composition of the new security organization is another crucial issue. For the Persian Gulf states to have a sense of ownership, which is essential to the success of any such endeavor, they have to lead it themselves rather than rely on the United States or other major powers to drive it. However, curtailing Washington’s instinct to always lead and control diplomatic mechanisms will be challenging. Simultaneously, without buy-in and support from major powers, regional powers will likely prove unable to negotiate the new security architecture successfully. Including the United States risks pushing Iran to opt out; not including the United States will compel most GCC monarchies to disengage. This new approach would not mean disengaging from the Persian Gulf but would instead prioritize diplomatic and economic involvement over military hegemony, military interventions, and arms sales. The solution may lie in expanding external involvement beyond the United States. One option would be to provide observer status to all permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, the P5. This approach would anchor the security architecture in the international system’s existing structures and likely reduce objections and hesitation from all sides. Sullivan and Benaim have signaled openness to this idea.[30] Another option would be to anchor it in a combination of the P5, some EU member states in the form of “lead groups,” and the Asian powers with the most significant stake in Persian Gulf security due to their dependence on its energy supplies. On the one hand, coordination on the Iran nuclear file between the EU’s foreign policy institutions (e.g., the European External Action Service) and the so-called E3 — France, Germany, and the United Kingdom — could represent a form of European involvement in and contribution to the new security organization. On the other hand, India, Japan, and South Korea (in addition to China) are the most significant importers of Persian Gulf gas and oil. Their own tensions and rivalries risk turning the Persian Gulf into an arena for their geopolitical competition in coming decades. Including them in the security architecture can help strengthen the arrangement and dilute the influence of the U.S. and China while protecting the region from inter–Asian geopolitical rivalries in the future.

#### Hegemonic pressure makes conflict with Iran more likley – economy and prolif

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“Everybody who has touched the Middle East has gotten bogged down.” Candidate Donald Trump rightly pointed this out in October 2015 as he laid out his vision for a foreign policy that would end America’s forever wars and extract America from its Mideast quagmires. Trump not only tapped into public anger toward Washington’s indifference to the American people’s pain and suffering, but he also pointed to America’s indisputable interest in ending misguided foreign adventures and refocus on domestic needs. President Trump, however, speaks of leaving the region while doing precious little about it. Nowhere has his policy contradicted his promise to get out of the Middle East more than his maximum pressure strategy on Iran. “Our brave troops have now been fighting in the Middle East for almost 19 years,” Trump complained in his State of the Union address in February 2019. "In Afghanistan and Iraq, nearly 7,000 American heroes have given their lives. More than 52,000 Americans have been badly wounded. We have spent more than $7 trillion in the Middle East... As a candidate for President, I pledged a new approach. Great nations do not fight endless wars." On this, Trump is right. The United States has spent trillions of dollars maintaining military dominance in the Middle East while often fighting other countries’ wars for them. It has done so in the name of establishing stability in the region and security for America. Neither of those objectives has been achieved. U.S. interventions in the Middle East have destabilized the region while incentivizing U.S. allies to forego regional diplomacy and instead spend lobbying dollars in Washington to convince the United States to fight their wars for them. In the meantime, the trillions of dollars spent on weapons systems have left the American people naked and vulnerable to far more likely non-military threats such as COVID-19. Mindful of the dwindling importance of Middle East oil to the U.S. and the U.S.’s lack of resources and expertise to “fix” dysfunctional states in that region, the cost-benefit analysis of retaining military hegemony in the Middle East no longer makes sense. As Trump correctly quipped last year, “Let someone else fight over this long-bloodstained sand.” As a Presidential candidate, Trump often pointed to the alternative cost of America’s Middle East wars. "We've spent $4 trillion trying to topple various people that, frankly, if they were there and if we could have spent that $4 trillion in the United States to fix our roads, our bridges, and all of the other problems — our airports and all the other problems we have — we would have been a lot better off,” Trump argued back in 2015. The American public - and Trump’s base in particular - continue to share these views. A survey of Trump voter attitudes by The Tarrance Group last month revealed that 86% of his base support pulling out of Syria while 58% want troops to leave Iraq as well. An overwhelming majority (66%) prefer diplomacy with Iran, and only 25% favor war with the country. This is why Trump's policy on Iran is so baffling. True, Trump has not ended any of the endless wars thus far. His agreement with the Taliban will likely only bring down U.S. troop levels to Trump’s own pre-surge levels. In Iraq, the government asked the U.S. to leave, and instead of treating it as an opportunity to bring the troops home, Trump rejected the request and even threatened to sanction Iraq. On Iran, however, Trump has not only failed to end confrontational policies - he has actively pursued a path that has put the U.S. on the verge of a new war in the Middle East. The policy of maximum pressure has inflicted massive pain on the Iranian economy - its GDP had contracted more than 15% even before the COVID pandemic. Yet, three years after reimposing sanctions, Trump has not only failed to achieve a single one of his objectives, in most cases, Tehran has intensified the very policies Washington has sought to change. Maximum pressure has not compelled Iran to end uranium enrichment. Instead, Iran has expanded its nuclear activities. It has not ended its ballistic missile program, rather, Tehran has continued and intensified its ballistic missile testing as well as its support for allied groups in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen. Nor did the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, arguably Iran’s most important military commander, “deter Iran from conducting or supporting further attacks against United States forces and interests.” In the past few weeks, we have seen more attacks against U.S. troops in Iraq, including several deaths, prompting Trump to issue a threat of war over Twitter on April 1, 2020. Not surprising, the logical conclusion of economic warfare is military warfare. Rather than securing Iran’s capitulation, maximum pressure has drawn the U.S. closer to yet another war in a region Trump had promised to leave. None of this is to deny that Iran positions itself as an enemy of the United States, that it has targetted U.S. troops, or that it is entangled in a rivalry with the United States for influence in the Middle East. But so are the Taliban. And for the sake of the higher goal of extracting the U.S. from Mideast quagmires, Trump rightfully moved to bury the hatchet with the Taliban in order to bring U.S. servicemen and women home. On Iran, Trump has done the opposite even though discarding the reckless rivalry with Tehran is a critical step towards withdrawing from the Middle East. Indeed, why engage in a rivalry for the control of a region you don’t want to control - particularly when the accusations of Iran seeking hegemony in the Middle East are questionable at best and advanced by the very same U.S. “allies” who have their own beef with Tehran and need the U.S. to be entrapped in the region so that it will be forced to fight the Iranians. As former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates said, the Saudis want to fight the Iranians till the last American. Reality is that all of Trump’s promises to free America from its Mideast misadventures will come to naught if he continues his economic warfare against Iran. He can either leave the region or have war with Iran. He can’t have both.

### 2NC---L---Econ

#### Hegemonic commitments cause economic decline

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**The negative economic consequences of America’s ambitious foreign policy objectives were echoed by prominent voices** (Calleo, 1982; Kennedy, 1987). **Providing a stable and secure environment was seen as** especially **damaging to the hegemonic power because it allowed others to divert resources to economically profitable activities.** The financial implications of security commitments formed the backbone of Kennedy’s “military overstretch” hypothesis (Kennedy, 1987). **Kennedy posited negative feedback between hegemonic commitments and the economy**. Specifically, he argued that the military spending required to finance security guarantees drains the economy and reduces the resource base to fund overseas engagements in a downward spiral, putting hegemony at risk. Security scholars started worrying about the “Lippmann gap”—the political stalemate resulting from the difference between America’s increasingly broad commitments and its means to fulfill those commitments (Lippmann, 1943). Perspectives on whether U.S. security undertakings entail economic burdens that undermine long-term economic prospects, and eventually U.S. hegemony, figure prominently in the debate. In discussions of U.S. grand strategy, authors argue that the military spending needed to finance America’s security engagements is economically debilitating, thus driving debt and decline (Drezner, 2013; Gholz, Press, & Sapolsky, 1997; Layne, 1997, 2002; MacDonald & Parent, 2011; Pape, 2009; Posen, 2007; Posen & Ross, 1996; Schweller, 2014; Walt, 2005, 2011; Williams, 2016). This near consensus view has produced massive support for a diminished U.S. role, with a minority questioning the theory and evidence informing a reorientation of U.S. hegemony (Brooks, Ikenberry, & Wohlforth, 2013; Brooks & Wohlforth, 2016; Norrlof & Wohlforth, 2016; Nye, 1995).

#### Focusing on hegemony diverts attention away from the economy

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For one thing, I think the popular impression of America as the world’s economic hegemon is overstated. Yes, the United States has many economic advantages. Its domestic market is still the destination of choice for manufacturing exports. It has the world’s reserve currency (which means it enjoys the “exorbitant privilege” of running crazy deficits). It has veto rights at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (which it shouldn’t have, but that’s a separate argument). And it has unique control over the “pipes” of the international financial system.

But in Asia — the world’s wealthiest and most populous region — China established economic centrality years ago. America’s economic throw-weight in Asia is far less than China’s, in part because of trade volume, but also because America’s large investments in Asia are not state-backed or centrally coordinated, which makes them somewhat un-leverageable. And US exclusion from Asia’s dense financial architecture makes it likely that things will continue trending in that direction. That means what’s going on is the economic equivalent of “uni-multipolarity” or “multi-multipolarity” — system level hegemony, perhaps, but regional level contested hierarchy for sure.

Nevertheless, pointing out that the United States isn’t as dominant as we think doesn’t answer the why-no-strategy question. It might be that the United States has a habit of **overemphasizing the military as a tool of policy**, which has **diminished policymakers’ ability to think seriously** **about** connections between security and **political economy**. As somebody who was a maker of strategy in the Obama era, I think there’s something to this.

#### Ending US led hegemony would benefit the world’s economy-Alternative currencies like China’s foster prosperity

**Moak** **19** {Ken Moak, taught economic theory, public policy and globalization at the university level for 33 years. He co-authored a book titled "China's Economic Rise and Its Global Impact". “Why ending U.S. dollar hegemony would benefit the world” <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-07-28/Why-ending-U-S-dollar-hegemony-would-benefit-the-world-IGUyfAyFDq/index.html>, 1LEE & //KS}

Since World War II, the U.S. dollar has become the world's unchallenged reserve currency. The monetary functions literally affords the U.S. the ability to print and spend as much money as it wants without repercussions. If a state wants to "cash in" its U.S. dollar dominated financial assets (i.e. the U.S. Treasury), all America has to do is print the Treasury's face value. In short, U.S. dollar hegemony is the source of American hegemony, because money is power, affording America the ability to build as many weapons as it wants and buy influence around the world. With an "endless" supply of money, the U.S. could likewise enjoy "unlimited" power over other countries.

However, the U.S. has been misusing, if not abusing the privilege, using it to build a formidable military force in enforcing in maintaining American supremacy. Any nation – Iran, the DPRK, China and Russia, etc. – seen as a threat to its global hegemony would be threatened with military force or sanctions.

Taking away the source power would erode America's ability to interfere in other countries' internal affairs and benefit the world.

Why ending U.S. dollar dominance would benefit the world

First, not relying on the U.S. dollar could promote global economic growth in that international trade and investment will likely increase. Not having to exchange local currencies for the greenback would reduce transactional costs and exchange rate risks, necessary conditions for promoting trade and investment. Should a country wishing to trade with China, for example, it could set up a currency swap of using each other's currency to settle the transactions.

Since 2009, China has reached currency swap agreements with many countries, including U.S. allies such as South Korea, Canada, the UK, etc. The latest is with Japan, with both countries agreeing to a nearly 30 billion U.S. dollars swap presumably for the purpose of increasing trade between the two countries. The number would likely increase because of China's fast-expanding trade relationship with countries participating in its Belt and Road Initiative.

Nations that are threatened by U.S. sanctions should particularly be pleased with the erosion in the importance of the greenback. Iran, for example, could see its oil export rise by reaching an agreement with buyers using each other's currency or some other mutually acceptable medium of exchange.

Second, declining importance of the U.S. dollar would expand and strengthen the multinational financial system. At present, the vast majority of foreign loans are made by the U.S.-controlled IMF and WB. The U.S. has imposed harsh loan conditions on countries borrowing from the two multinational financial institutions.

Perhaps the harshest condition is loans must be repaid before the borrowing nations can spend the funds on economic and social development, the very reason why developing nations need to borrow in the first place. Since most, if not all, of the developing nations do not have the means to boost economic growth and revenue, the condition keeps borrowing nations underdeveloped, and increases their debt burden, forcing the borrowing nations to ask for another loan just to repay the previous one like in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and other countries.

In many ways, harsh U.S. loan conditions, in part, have forced increasing number of developing countries to look to China and its backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for loans, thereby increasing the utilization of the yuan and less use of the greenback. One reason would be that neither imposes preconditions, perhaps with the exception of financial viability or ability of borrowers' ability to service the debt.

The growing importance of China and the AIIB as alternative sources of funding might be a reason why the U.S.-controlled institutions are working closely with the AIIB in funding infrastructure projects. The cooperative stance could lead to the expanding and strengthening of the world financial system

### 2NC---L---Conflict

#### **U.S. heg fuels unnecessary conflict by creating tensions with and intimidating other nations**

Kelly 19 [6 Aug 2019, Kelly, Robert E., Robert E Kelly is a professor of international relations in the Department of Political Science and Diplomacy at Pusan National University., “US foreign policy: restraint without retrenchment”, The Interpreter, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/us-foreign-policy-restraint-without-retrenchment]//AA

US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has come under growing criticism for its expansive, even aggressive, character. Despite its name, “liberal hegemony” often seems illiberal, belligerent, even militaristic. The US has used force regularly over the last 30 years, often with dubious results. Iraq 2003 is the most obvious example, but Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and (through its Saudi proxy) Yemen also spring to mind. The current US President Donald Trump has also threatened force against North Korea, Venezuela, and Iran. In response to these excesses, a clutch of realist critics have argued variously for restraint or retrenchment – Barry Posen, Daniel Larison, and Stephen Walt immediately spring to mind. I found this H-Diplo review of Walt’s recent book nicely summarises the issues at hand. The primary argument is that the United States does far too much overseas, especially when it does not need to. The US faces no existential threats. Its geography – its distance from the contentious theatres of Eurasia – is generous. It is the wealthiest country in the world, with an unmatched military. Before the First World War, it restricted itself mostly to the Western hemisphere. Its expansion in the 20th century was driven by threats emanating from Eurasia, first fascism, then communism. Yet since the “end of history” and the dissipation of those threats in 1989, there has been no pull-back. Instead, the US has been ever more sucked into places around the world. This expansion produces unnecessary tension with China, Russia, and the Islamic world. Worse, the US now fights more often than it did during the Cold War. These interventions often take far longer than the public is led to expect. They kill far more people and cost far more money than admitted. At home, a massive national security state has emerged, confirming President Dwight Eisenhower’s famous warning of the “military-industrial complex”. US military interventions have often taken far longer than the public is led to expect (Photo: US Central Command/Flickr) The policy response to this sprawl is some mix of retrenchment and restraint. A US grand strategy of “offshore balancing” would husband American resources at home. Intervention would only occur when facing a genuine hegemonic challenger – most obviously China. But the “small wars” which have characterised US intervention in recent decades would stop, for we now know that they do not stay small. Diplomacy would be properly funded; US foreign policy would be de-militarised. Multilateralism and international organisations would be given a chance where the US today disdains them. From an American point of view, it is hard to argue with a lot of this. The country is pretty clearly exhausted with “forever wars” such as Afghanistan or Iraq. Trump openly ran against “dumb wars” in America’s traditionally hawkish party and still won easily. That is a powerful signal for change from the public. It is also hard to see wars with Iran, Venezeula, or North Korea staying “regional contingencies”, because as with other US ground conflicts, they would almost certainly explode in size and duration. Similarly, it is hard to argue against US allies doing more. US presidents have complained for decades about allied free-, or more accurately cheap-, riding. Trump has unfortunately tarnished this concern with his otherwise reprehensible conduct, but the notion of a more balanced, less hegemonic American alliance network is rather appealing. So restraint – fewer wars, less “omni-directional belligerence”, more diplomacy – is not too controversial. I imagine most US allies would actually like this, too. Many US partners were dismayed at getting chain-ganged into the Iraq war, for example, agreeing to it only to retain US friendship. Similarly, Trump was nearly alone in pushing for war with North Korea in 2017. Donald Trump openly ran against “dumb wars” (Photo: US Central Command/Flickr) It is important to distinguish this restraint from retrenchment though, which I do not think this literature does well. Restraint ultimately means better US judgment – less paranoia, less worst-case-scenario thinking, less willingness to describe every unfriendly government or far-off region as “strategic” to the US, less activism and jumpiness. No one disagrees with greater US perspicacity, except perhaps America’s most irresponsible partners such as the Saudi royals or Israel’s Likud party. Give a child a hammer, and everything is an upraised nail – give a superpower a massive military and global basing, and threats become an easy recourse. Retrenchment is more than this though. It is actual withdrawal of US forces back to the Western hemisphere from forward bases in Eurasia, specifically from Europe, the Persian Gulf, and East Asia. Given China’s rise however, retrenchment would like fall on Europe and the Middle East first. Europe, most observers would agree, has the wealth and state strength to do far more for its own security, while US policing of the Middle East is simply beyond even its superpower reach. Restrainers’ argument for retrenchment is temptation. It is formally possible, as I am arguing, that US forces could stay forward – that is, in Eurasia – without fighting more unnecessary wars. But as long as they are there, as long as there are US forces near countries such as Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela, it will be hugely tempting for US policy-makers to militarily threaten those states. This is akin to the “law of the hammer” – give a child a hammer, and everything is an upraised nail. Give a superpower a massive military and global basing, and threats become an easy recourse. A full-blooded restraint argument would claim greater US foreign policy discipline is possible only when the US is physically out of the way. Ideally though, the US could stay where it was wanted – eastern Europe, Australia, South Korea, Japan – without actually leaping therefrom into wars. The advantages of staying forward are clear. US presence bolsters alliances. It helps solidify liberal democracy in places which might otherwise backslide. It builds democratic solidarity around the world among otherwise disparate states to push back concertedly on authoritarians such as Russia or China. It builds interoperability with local partners should future military needs arise and gives the US a location from which to operate should local geopolitics worsen. Even a small US presence can reinforce positive trends, such as democratisation or the deterrence of Sino-Russian meddling, without, hopefully, being large enough to invoke the law of the hammer. And the financial assistance from allies could offset the cost of US forward stationing. In South Korea and Japan, the US, Japanese, and South Korean governments frequently repeat that is actually cheaper to keep US forces there than bring them home. Allied support, plus the costs to the US to build new facilities back in the US, offsets the expense – although hard data to substantiate these claims is not forthcoming. Eastern Europe is an obvious example. US retrenchment from Europe would almost certainly encourage more Russian meddling from Vladimir Putin and worsen democratic backsliding in those new democracies. Those would be moral and strategic costs to the United States. In response, could the US keep a small local presence that both provides the “reinforcement effects” described above without so much combat power as to encourage unnecessary war-making? Can we have restraint without full-blown retrenchment? Or would even small US presences encourage so much allied free-riding or intervention temptation that they are not worth it? “Places not bases”, in which the US retains “lily pads” for possible operations in the future without large contingents of men and material, are one possibility to square this circle.

#### Only hegemonic restraint can prevent conflict – its key to alliances

**Mallet 21** – is a PhD Candidate at the University of Surrey’s politics department, 2/15/21 (Ellis, “Not Your Grandparents’ Grand Strategy: Rethinking Liberal Hegemony”, *U.S. Studies Online*, <https://usso.uk/not-your-grandparents-grand-strategy-rethinking-liberal-hegemony/>, accessed 6/26/22)//jd

Liberal internationalism as a grand strategic paradigm has created a resistance to— or perhaps more bluntly, a rejection of—a realist balance of power thinking. As such, the advancement of a liberal international order has led to discrepancies between American power and the resources available to it. The ‘shining city upon a hill’ finds itself increasingly overstretched through its involvement in endless Middle Eastern wars, its self-proclaimed duty to promote democracy abroad, the reality of a resurgent Russia and China, and global democratic relapsing, all in the face of domestic turmoil at home. A strategy of liberal internationalism has resulted in a costly foreign policy approach in which freedom and liberty have become the linchpin of American creed. Rallying against this conventional wisdom, Trump’s ‘America First’ strategy aimed to repudiate some of the core tenets of liberal internationalism and implicitly rejected the United States’ role as ‘world policeman’. His administration confronted American allies as ‘free-riders’, entered negotiations with adversaries without preconditions and showed hostility towards free trade and international cooperation. This is not to say Trump had a coherent or effective foreign policy, or that he completely abandoned the use of military force and steered away from a goal of regime change—quite the opposite—but his condemnation of the narrow Washington consensus provided a unique opportunity for American policy elites to question the underlying logic of its traditional trajectory. Nevertheless, President Joe Biden has committed not only to rebuilding America, but also to “building back better”. While the new administration is likely to pursue a rigorous restoration of American exceptionalism and liberal internationalism, a return to the pre-Trump status quo ante is not likely to improve US foreign policy in a way that is able to effectively address the contemporary challenges it faces today. The prevailing path-dependencies that exist around the forward leaning military posture in which the United States must attempt to tackle tyranny all over the world is one of the biggest problems in American foreign policy. The alliance structures and force postures of the bygone Cold War era are incompatible with emerging shifts in the global balance of power. The Biden administration must steer away from the inclination to conflate global leadership with military force and it must refrain from intervening in the internal affairs of others to its own detriment. America no longer enjoys unfettered unipolar primacy and can therefore no longer rely on business-as-usual policies that are ill-suited to the complexities of the 21st century. It is precisely the preponderant power of the United States that has accelerated the process of its own relative decline whereby excessive military adventurism has resulted in an inability to distinguish between vital national security interests and those things that America can live without. By seeking to restore American primacy, President Biden is likely to miss the opportunity to build a more constructive, less militarised foreign policy that is better suited to the world America finds itself in today. Where America must go from here After four years of Trumpism, if the Biden administration wants to successfully begin the task of self-restoration at home, it should practice restraint abroad. The United States is not in danger of conquest; thus, US territorial integrity is secure. As such, a grand strategy of restraint would force policy elites to rethink its assessment of the national interest based on the reality that presents itself as opposed to being founded upon idealistic ambition. Broadly, restraint seeks to revise existing alliance structures and to encourage responsibility among them in order to shift regional defence burdens away from the United States. It emphasizes the danger of threat inflation, reduces existing US defence commitments and minimizes the forward-deployment of troops along with the frequent use of force. In particular, it would see a reduction of investment in the Middle East and a careful withdrawal of troops; a shifting of defence burdens to allies in Europe as a result of reduced US commitments in the region and an end to NATO expansion; and the maintenance of a stable balance of power in Asia, namely achieved through alliance commitments. Restraint drives home the point that the United States is not here to come to the rescue as has often been assumed—it must rely on regional actors to maintain regional balances of power and intervene only when American national interest is at stake, using military force as a very last resort. The results of such a grand strategy would see global tensions eased, direct threats to American personnel reduced, the burden on US forces in regions of peripheral interest lessened, progress on areas of mutual concern come to fruition, and, perhaps most importantly, it will allow the new administration to more effectively combat the coronavirus pandemic and allow for a degree of economic recovery. Supporters of liberal hegemony wrongly conflate a grand strategy of restraint with isolationist tendencies which is, in part, why it has existed on the margins of an acceptable elite opinion. But restraint in no way advocates that the United States should retrench entirely from the global stage—military power still remains central to US national security—it merely suggests that America has the ability and opportunity to preserve its security at a lesser cost than that of liberal internationalism. Restoring the foreign policy toolkit to focus on creative diplomacy, international institutions and cooperative engagement to deal with collective threats should be coupled with a demilitarisation of US foreign policy. Such a strategy requires a self-control that recognises not everything and anything is in the interest of the United States. Overall, a grand strategy of restraint would reject the need for global hegemony and refute the idea that a safe world is only one that is remade in America’s image

#### Hegemony threatens US problem solving policy

**Ward and Wertheim 20** Alex is a reporter covering the White House, with a focus on foreign policy and national security, PhD, MPhil, MA; History; Columbia University, senior fellow in the American Statecraft Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Alex Ward Interviewing Stephen Wertheim,”How military superiority made America less safe”, Vox, <https://www.vox.com/22176111/usa-military-power-tomorrow-the-world-stephen-wertheim> //KS)

Far from contributing to American security, the plan of global military superiority has made America — and Americans — less safe.

I have a great deal of sympathy for the architects of US military dominance. I think they faced difficult circumstances. How could I not sympathize with wanting to rid the Axis powers from the Earth and make sure nothing like that happened again? I have complete sympathy with that goal.

But since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the reason that brought forth US global supremacy has ceased to exist. There was an original argument for the United States shouldering the immense burdens of global military dominance: Without it, totalitarian powers would conquer much of the Earth. That would be terrible for the world, the thinking went, and it could be bad for the United States.

The problem, though, is the pursuit of military dominance since then has created a lot of enemies of the US that didn’t need to be enemies of the US. We’ve engaged in bad behavior ourselves and stimulated it in others.

I worry that — in a world where the foremost threats to the American people are pandemic disease and climate change — America will continue to define its biggest threats in military terms, even if they aren’t.

### 2NC---L---Iran Prolif

#### Iran won’t cooperate on proliferation until US heg decreases.

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DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran’s new president slammed U.S. sanctions imposed on his nation as a mechanism of war, using his first U.N address since his swearing-in to forcefully call out Washington’s policies in the region and the growing political schism within America.

President Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday delivered a far more critical and blunt take on American foreign policy than his moderate predecessor, Hassan Rouhani, had done in previous speeches to the U.N. General Assembly. Raisi, who was sworn in last month after an election, is a conservative cleric and former judiciary chief seen as close to Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

His speech espoused Iran’s Islamic political identity and where the Shiite-led nation sees its place in the world, despite crushing U.S. sanctions that have hurt its economy and ordinary Iranians.

“Sanctions are the U.S.’ new way of war with the nations of the world,” Raisi said, adding that such economic punishment during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic amounts to “crimes against humanity.”

U.S. sanctions, while allowing for humanitarian aid, have made international purchases of medicine and equipment much more difficult. Iran has endured multiple waves of the coronavirus, with nearly 118,000 deaths recorded — the highest in the region.

In taking aim at the United States, Raisi also referenced the shocking Jan. 6th insurrection on Capitol Hill by supporters of then-President Donald Trump, and the horrific scenes at Kabul airport last month as desperate Afghans plunged to their deaths after clinging to a U.S. aircraft evacuating people.

“From the Capitol to Kabul, one clear message was sent to the world: the U.S.’ hegemonic system has no credibility, whether inside or outside the country,” Raisi said.

The Iranian president said “the project of imposing Westernized identity” had failed, and added erroneously that “today, the U.S. does not get to exit Iraq and Afghanistan but is expelled.”

The U.S. military withdrew from Afghanistan amid a hasty and chaotic airlift of more than 100,000 Afghans and foreigners, and has largely withdrawn from Iraq. Iran shares long borders with Afghanistan to its east and Iraq to its west, where Shiite militias are powerful.

The perseverance of nations, he said, is stronger than the power of superpowers. In a dig at the political slogans used by Trump and his successor President Joe Biden, Raisi said: “Today, the world doesn’t care about “America First” or “America is Back.”

Speaking remotely via video from Tehran, Raisi wore a black turban on his head that identifies him in the Shiite tradition as a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. He praised Iran’s Islamic Revolution of 1979 as the fulfilment of “religious democracy” and linked the growth of “indigenous terrorism in the West” to a decline in spirituality.

Despite the criticism aimed at Washington, Raisi appeared not to rule out a return to the negotiating table for the nuclear accord, saying Iran considers talks useful if their ultimate outcome is the lifting of all sanctions. Still, he stated: “We don’t trust the promises made by the U.S. government.”

A senior U.S. State Department official said Washington had taken note of Raisi’s speech but was looking to Iran for actions, rather than rhetoric.

In that context, the official said the U.S. also noted an Iranian foreign ministry statement earlier Tuesday that said Iran is willing to return to the indirect nuclear talks in Vienna in the coming weeks.

“We continue to believe that we need to re-engage in the Vienna context as soon as possible,” said the official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the matter and spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity.

Tensions peaked last year between the U.S. and Iran after the Trump administration’s assassination of powerful field commander, Qassim Soleimani, and a top Iraqi Shiite militia leader by a U.S. drone strike in Iraq. Raisi mentioned the men in his speech, saying they helped fight Sunni extremists of the Islamic State Group from “becoming neighbors of Europe”.

Biden has made clear he wants to salvage the nuclear deal with Iran that Trump withdrew the U.S. from, but indirect talks between Washington and Tehran in Vienna have stalled as tensions in the Persian Gulf persist. The Biden administration and allies like Israel and Gulf Arab states also want to see Iran’s missile development and support for regional militias addressed.

“The United States remains committed to preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon,” Biden said in his own U.N. speech, delivered in person earlier Tuesday.

When asked about Iran, White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters aboard Air Force One that “the door remains open to diplomacy” and that U.S. negotiators believe the best path forward is to pursue talks, but she had no update on when the parties might meet again.

Raisi insisted that atomic weapons have no place in Iran’s defense doctrine and deterrence policy.

# **2NC---LIO**

## 2NC---Uniqueness---LIO Unsustainable

### 2NC---Generic

#### Political intervention, nationalism, and hyperglobalization make LIO doomed to fail.

**Mearsheimer , PhD, 19**

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The early successes of the United States and its allies in building a liberal international order notwithstanding, the order contained the seeds of its own ruin. Even if Western policymakers had been wiser stewards of that order, they could not have extended its longevity in any meaningful way. It was doomed to fail because it contained three fatal flaws. First, **intervening in the politics of countries to turn them into liberal democracies is extremely difficult**, **and** attempting such ambitious social engineering on a global scale **is virtually guaranteed to backfire and undermine the legitimacy of the enterprise itself**. Nationalism is almost certain to cause significant resistance inside the countries targeted for regime change. Balance of power politics will also help impede the enterprise in particular cases. **States that fear** regime change—or other **forms of U.S. interference**—**will band togethe**r for mutual support and seek **ways to thwart the United States’ liberal agenda**. Thus, Syria and Iran aided the Iraqi insurgency after the 2003 U.S. invasion, and Russia and China have backed each other economically, militarily, and within international forums such as the UN Security Council. Second, the liberal international order ultimately creates conditions that lead to serious political problems regarding sovereignty and national identity within the liberal democracies themselves, and all the more so when efforts at regime change fail and produce large-scale refugee flows into liberal countries. Again, the principal cause of the problem is nationalism, which is far from dead even in avowedly liberal societies. Third**, hyperglobalization has produced significant economic costs** for large numbers of people inside the liberal democracies, including the sole pole. Those costs, **including lost jobs, declining** or stagnant **wages, and** marked **income inequality, have** serious **domestic political consequences, which** further **undermine the l**iberal **i**nternational **o**rder. Moreover, the open international economy helped fuel the rise of China, which, along with Russia’s revival, eventually undermined unipolarity, an essential condition for creating a liberal international order.

#### The LIO is doomed to fail – forced revisionism, political disagreements, and hyperglobalization ensures it

**Mearsheimer , PhD, 19**

([John](https://www.belfercenter.org/person/john-j-mearsheimer), Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, where he has taught since 1982. He received his PhD in political science at Cornell University in 1975. He spent the 1979-1980 as a research fellow at the Brookings Institution, and was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs from 1980 to 1982. Between 1998-1999 he was the Whitney H. Shepardson Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Professor Mearsheimer has written extensively about security issues and international politics more generally and has published six books, written 4/1/2019, accessed 7/1/2022, “Bound to Fail The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order” https://mitp.silverchair-cdn.com/mitp/content\_public/journal/isec/43/4/10.1162\_isec\_a\_00342/5/isec\_a\_00342.pdf?Expires=1659722161&Signature=BBJ9TgEDByNGuRLQngMWu4iJwPlnZmIKEJRVokeo67Ys~XFw1~v0zJN2tCrQSKoRF8fKL0j3BuISb2BLVAM15GFeoVzrsZ0gvUS7mQyFss4WF8hQmplRzZKACs7rTFrLA-i-EoqD3r1aKXxdOOwIbDukhqY8b-ObC2jrbnmynXkfRBhsiVehD~8zewRppqKI-qpeuO3ZT-pfwTKz~n2ue~ufdbIi3oieZxQ~K3A-xTAj5KzfbwKsy6Spr8OZIpxBwoVvYmRhog~cr5m7vMz8lK1k8W-uS-mh4uPgLfEF8kExFRUyYs4HEK4orHdziXf0YCDcozvHOra-V-DMMakrsQ\_\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAIE5G5CRDK6RD3PGA)//lexmw

The attempt by the United States and its allies to create a liberal international order faced three main problems. First, it required the **liberal states** in the system, especially the United States, to **pursue** a highly **revisionist** and wildly ambitious **policy** of regime **change** **that was** almost **certain to fail in an era** **in which nationalism**, with its emphasis on sovereignty and selfdetermination, **remains a** remarkably **powerful force**. The policy was also stymied by balance of power politics at both the global and regional levels. Second, by pushing for the free movement of people across borders and the delegation of substantial decisionmaking authority to international institutions, the expanding liberal order caused significant political problems inside the liberal states themselves. The results often clashed with beliefs about national identity and sovereignty, which matter greatly to most citizens in modern nation-states. Third, although some people and countries benefited from **hyperglobalization**, it ultimately caused major economic and political problems inside the liberal democracies, which **eventually led to a serious erosion of support for the liberal international order.** At the same time, the economic dynamism that comes with hyperglobalization helped China rapidly turn itself into a great power at roughly the same time Russia was reestablishing itself as a great power. That shift in the global balance of power put an end to unipolarity, which is a prerequisite for a liberal world order. In the emerging multipolar world, there is likely to be a realist international order that will be concerned with managing the world economy and also fostering and maintaining arms control agreements. The emphasis in that order will be on facilitating interstate cooperation. In addition, there are likely to be Chinese-led and U.S.-led bounded orders that will help prosecute the security competition that is almost certain to arise between China and its allies, on the one hand, and the United States and its allies, on the other. That rivalry will have both economic and military dimensions.

### 2NC---Democratic Deficit

#### The democratic deficit and “mission creep” guarantee LIO collapse

Ignatieff, PhD, ’21 ( Michael, he received his doctorate in history from Harvard University, was the Edward R. Murrow Chair of Press, Politics, and Public Policy at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government and is currently a professor of history at Central European university Vienna, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and Leader of the Official Opposition from 2008 until 2011, published 12/6/21, access 7/5/22, “The Collapse of Liberal Internationalism”, https://www.persuasion.community/p/the-collapse-of-liberal-internationalism)//lexmw

**Liberal internationalism** promised to promote democracy and strengthen a “rules based international order” with other countries. Rather than turning inwards, it **envisioned** an active role for **the West, as a champion of human rights abroad**. But its signature projects, military intervention and nation-building, have failed in Afghanistan, just as they did in Syria and Libya. As a painful demonstration of the limits of American military might, liberal internationalism’s collapse has accelerated the decline of Washington’s global power too. What went wrong? At its heart, **liberal internationalism suffered from a democratic deficit**. It was a product of what the political scientist Stephen Walt has called “the blob”, the bipartisan foreign policy elite that dominated policymaking during the Cold War and beyond. But “the blob” forgot that power-projection overseas depended ultimately on the willingness of Americans to fight and pay for it. **American domestic support**, never robust anyway, **drained away** as body counts mounted in Afghanistan and the “forever war” blundered on without end. When divorced from the pursuit of vital American security interests, which might have carried the backing of the electorate, **liberal internationalism degenerated** into boutique virtue signaling, social work in places we understood poorly and had no essential reason to be in, anyway. Alongside its lack of domestic support, li**beral internationalism suffered from** a fatal case of “mission creep”—**the tendency to expand objectives beyond their initial parameters**. If the U.S. had limited its aims in Afghanistan to countering the terrorist threat and had withdrawn when the threat had been contained, military operations there would have served American vital interests and maintained sufficient domestic support. Instead, the U.S. and its allies let themselves be drawn into an objective—a stable and democratic Afghanistan—which was never realizable. Both **the U.S. military** and the international civil society that flooded in to “rebuild” Afghanistan failed to grasp the political canniness of their Taliban foe or confront the inveterate corruption of their Afghan political friends. American aid **agencies and NGOs raised the hopes of their Afghan partners**, and **then**, once the game was up, the **United States abandoned them all.** In the bleak clarity of hindsight, nation building in Afghanistan was worse than a mistake. It was a side-show. The main strategic challenge was China. Instead of developing a long-term strategy to deal with its first serious competitor since the end of the Cold War, America wasted time, money and lives on a peripheral enterprise that could only end in failure.

### 2NC---New Powers

#### Liberalism unsustainable – emergence of new powers

**Mearsheimer , PhD, 19**

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Agnostic orders also tend to have substantial staying power, because the unipole accepts the heterogeneity that is inherent in political and social life and does not try to micromanage the politics of nearly every country on the planet. That kind of pragmatic behavior helps preserve, if not augment, the hegemon’s power. An agnostic order is likely to meet its end when unipolarity gives way to either bipolarity or multipolarity, making the order realist; or if the sole pole experiences a revolution at home and adopts a universalistic ideology, which would surely lead it to forge an ideological order. By contrast, any ideological international order based on a universalistic ideology, such as **liberalism** or communism, **is destined to have a short life span**, mainly because of the domestic and global difficulties that arise **when the unipole seeks to remake the world in its own image**. Nationalism and balance of power politics work to undermine the requisite social engineering in countries targeted for regime change, while nationalism also creates significant problems on the home front for the sole pole and its ideological allies. **When** such **problems emerge, the unipole is likely to give up trying to remake the world in its own image, in effect abandoning its efforts to export its ideology abroad**. It might **even** **forsake that ideology altogether.** When that happens, the order stops being ideological and becomes agnostic. An ideological order can also come to an end in a second way. **New great powers could emerge, which would undermine unipolarity** and lead to either a bipolar or a multipolar system. In that event, the ideological order would be replaced by bounded and international realist orders.

### 2NC---Authoritarian Countries

#### Backlash from authoritarian countries decks LIO stability

**Mearsheimer , PhD, 19**

(John, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, where he has taught since 1982. He received his PhD in political science at Cornell University in 1975. He spent the 1979-1980 as a research fellow at the Brookings Institution, and was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs from 1980 to 1982. Between 1998-1999 he was the Whitney H. Shepardson Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Professor Mearsheimer has written extensively about security issues and international politics more generally and has published six books, written 4/1/2019, accessed 7/1/2022, “Bound to Fail The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order” https://mitp.silverchair-cdn.com/mitp/content\_public/journal/isec/43/4/10.1162\_isec\_a\_00342/5/isec\_a\_00342.pdf?Expires=1659722161&Signature=BBJ9TgEDByNGuRLQngMWu4iJwPlnZmIKEJRVokeo67Ys~XFw1~v0zJN2tCrQSKoRF8fKL0j3BuISb2BLVAM15GFeoVzrsZ0gvUS7mQyFss4WF8hQmplRzZKACs7rTFrLA-i-EoqD3r1aKXxdOOwIbDukhqY8b-ObC2jrbnmynXkfRBhsiVehD~8zewRppqKI-qpeuO3ZT-pfwTKz~n2ue~ufdbIi3oieZxQ~K3A-xTAj5KzfbwKsy6Spr8OZIpxBwoVvYmRhog~cr5m7vMz8lK1k8W-uS-mh4uPgLfEF8kExFRUyYs4HEK4orHdziXf0YCDcozvHOra-V-DMMakrsQ\_\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAIE5G5CRDK6RD3PGA)//lexmw

The most important requirement for building a liberal international order is to spread liberal democracy far and wide, which was initially seen to be an eminently feasible task. It was widely believed in the West that politics had evolved to the point where there was no sensible alternative to liberal democracy. If so, then it would be relatively easy to create a liberal international order, because spreading liberal democracy around the world would meet little resistance. Indeed, most people would welcome the idea of living in a Western-style democracy, as appeared to be the case in Eastern Europe after the collapse of communism. This endeavor, however, was doomed from the start. To begin, **there** never has been and **never will be universal agreement on** what constitutes **the ideal political system**. One can argue that liberal democracy is the best form of government (I would), but others will invariably favor a different governing system. It is worth remembering that during the 1930s, many people in Europe preferred communism or fascism to liberal democracy. One might then point out that liberal democracy ultimately triumphed over those two “isms.” Although that is true, the history of the 1930s is a reminder that liberal democracy is not the preordained order of things, and it is not unusual for elites and their publics to opt for alternative political systems. Thus, it should not be surprising that illiberal democracies are appearing in Eastern Europe, while China and Russia have embraced authoritarian rule, North Korea is a dictatorship, Iran is an Islamic republic, and Israel increasingly privileges its Jewish identity over its democratic character.51 Nor should it be surprising that there has never been a time when more than 50 percent of the countries in the world were liberal democracies.52 This diversity of opinion about what constitutes the best governing system combines with nationalism to make the process of spreading liberal democracy around the world extremely difficult. Nationalism, after all, is a remarkably powerful political force that places great emphasis on self-determination and sovereignty. **Nation-states**, in other words, do not want other nation-states telling them how they should order their political system. Thus, **trying to impose liberal democracy** on a state that prefers an alternative form of government **is almost certain to provoke fierce resistance**.

### 2NC---US Wrecks LIO

#### The US’s dissatisfaction with international action means continuous LIO power decline

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In recent years, however, the **liberal order has** **begun** **to** weaken and **fracture at the core**. As a result of many related factors—difficult economic conditions, the recrudescence of nationalism and tribalism, weak and uncertain political leadership and unresponsive mainstream political parties, a new era of communications that seems to strengthen rather than weaken tribalism—there has emerged a crisis of confidence in what might be called the liberal enlightenment project. That project tended to elevate universal principles of individual rights and common humanity over ethnic, racial, religious, national, or tribal differences. It looked to a growing economic interdependence to create common interests across boundaries and the establishment of international institutions to smooth differences and facilitate cooperation among nations. Instead, the past decade has seen the rise of tribalism and nationalism; an increasing focus on the “other” in all societies; and a loss of confidence in government, in the capitalist system, and in democracy. We have been witnessing something like the opposite of the “end of history” but have returned to history with a vengeance, rediscovering all the darker aspects of the human soul. That includes, for many, the perennial human yearning for a strong leader to provide firm guidance in a time of seeming breakdown and incoherence. **This crisis of the enlightenment project may have been inevitable**. It may indeed have been cyclical, due to inherent flaws in both capitalism and democracy, which periodically have been exposed and have raised doubts about both—as happened, for instance, throughout the West in the 1930s. Now, as then, moreover, this crisis of confidence in liberalism coincides with a breakdown of the strategic order. In this case, however, the key variable has not been the United States as the outside power and its willingness, or not, to step in and save or remake an order lost by other powers. Rather it is **the U**nited **S**tate**s’** own **willingness to continue upholding the order that it created** and which depends entirely on American power. That willingness has been **in doubt for some time.** Increasingly in the quarter-century after the end of the Cold War, **Americans have been wondering why they bear such an unusual and outsized responsibility for preserving global order when their own interests are not always apparently served and** when, indeed, **the U**nited **S**tates **seems to be making sacrifices while others benefit**. The reasons why the United States took on this abnormal role after the calamitous two world wars of the 20th century have been largely forgotten. As a consequence, the **American public’s patience with the difficulties and costs inherent in playing such a role has worn thin**. Thus, whereas previous unsuccessful wars, in Korea in 1950 and Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, and previous economic downturns, such as in the mid- to late 1970s, did not have the effect of turning Americans against global involvement, the unsuccessful wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the financial crisis of 2007–09 have had that effect. President Obama pursued an ambivalent approach to global involvement, but the main thrust of his approach was retrenchment. His actions and statements were a critique of previous American strategy and reinforced a national mood favoring a much less active role in the world and much narrower definition of American interests. With the election of Donald Trump, a majority **of Americans have signaled their unwillingness to** continue **uphold**ing **the world order**. Trump was not the only candidate in 2016 to run on a platform suggesting a much narrower definition of American interests and a lessening of the burdens of American global leadership. “America First” is not just an empty phrase but a fairly coherent philosophy with a long lineage and many adherents in the American academy. It calls for viewing American interests through a narrow lens. It suggests no longer supporting an international alliance structure, no longer seeking to deny great powers their spheres of influence and regional hegemony, no longer attempting to uphold liberal norms in the international system, and no longer sacrificing short-term interests—in trade for instance—in the longer-term interest of preserving an open economic order.

## 2NC---Links---LIO

### 2NC---L---LIO Democracy

#### LIO failures make countries turn to authoritarianism

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The 2007–08 global financial crisis not only did enormous damage to many peoples’ lives, but it also called into question the competence of the elites who manage the liberal international order.47 In addition to the deterioration in relations between Russia and the West, there are worrying signs of potential conflict with China, which is determined to change the status quo regarding the East China Sea, the South China Sea, Taiwan, and the China-India border. Unsurprisingly, the United States is now more interested in containing rather than engaging China. In fact, the Trump administration recently said that admitting China into the WTO was a mistake, as Beijing’s protectionist policies clearly show that it is unwilling to play by that institution’s rules.48 Finally, the number of liberal democracies has been declining since 2006, reversing a trend that once looked unstoppable.49 **Relatedly, soft authoritarianism appears to have become an attractive alternative to liberal democracy,** a development that was almost unthinkable in the early 1990s. And some leaders extol the virtues of illiberal democracy, while others govern countries that are committed to political systems based on deeply held religious beliefs. Of course, **liberal democracy has lost some of its appeal in recent years**, especially **because the United States’ political system often looks dysfunctional**. Even serious scholars worry about the future of American democracy.50 In sum, **the l**iberal **i**nternational **o**rder **is crumbling**.

### 2NC---L---LIO Russia-War

#### LIO’s push to spread democracy incentivizes Moscow to push back to weaken the US and NATO

**Mearsheimer , PhD, 19**

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Finally, **the crusader mentality** that underpins the attempts to build a liberal international order **leads to the poisoning of relations** between the unipole and any major power in the system that is not a liberal democracy. Although the dominant state will be strongly inclined to make war on minor powers to promote liberal democracy, it will rarely ever attack major powers for that purpose, especially if they possess nuclear weapons.56 The costs would be too great, and the likelihood of success would be especially low. Hence, U.S. policymakers in the post–Cold War period have never seriously considered invading China or Russia, even though the United States is far more powerful than either of those countries. Nevertheless, th**e United States has been committed to turning China and Russia into liberal democracies and absorbing them into the U.S.-dominated liberal world order.** U.S. leaders have not only made their intentions clear, but they have also relied on nongovernmental organizations and various subtle strategies to push Beijing and Moscow toward embracing liberal democracy. In effect, the aim is peaceful regime change. Predictably, **China and Russia have resisted** the unipole’s **efforts** for the same reason that minor powers have contested U.S. efforts to shape their domestic politics, and indeed for the same reason that Americans now recoil at the idea of Russia interfering in their country’s politics. In a world in which nationalism is the most powerful political ideology, self-determination and sovereignty matter hugely for all countries. China and Russia have also resisted the spread of the liberal order for realist reasons, **because it would allow the United States to dominate the international system economically, militarily, and politically**. Neither Beijing nor Moscow, for example, wants U.S. military forces in its neighborhood, much less on its borders. Thus, it is hardly surprising that China talks about pushing the U.S. military out of the Western Pacific and that Russia has long been deeply opposed to EU and NATO expansion into Eastern Europe. Indeed, moving those institutions toward Russia eventually led to the Ukraine crisis in 2014. That **ongoing conflict has not only poisoned relations between Russia and the West, but** it has **incentivized Moscow to find ways to weaken** both **the EU and NATO**. In short, both nationalist and realist calculations caused the two major powers in unipolarity to contest the unipole’s efforts to build a robust liberal international order.

# **AT: Hegemony Good**

## AT: Transition

### AT: Collapse = War

**US heg collapse doesn’t cause war** – power disparities and a shared contentment regarding status quo contentment between the US and other major powers such as China prove

**Paudel 20** [September 3, 2020, Paudel, Sirish, Sirish Paudel is currently studying B. Sc. CSIT (Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Technology) at New Summit College., “Decline in US Hegemony: Will this Result in Hegemonic War or not?”, Modern Diplomacy, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/09/03/decline-in-us-hegemony-will-this-result-in-hegemonic-war-or-not/>]//AA

One of the contemporary issues in international relations is that the current hegemon, the United States, has undergone a relative decline. It is argued that American hegemony that emerged aftermath the Second World War is undergoing a decline and with the rise of a potential challenger in China looming, one major issue concerning IR scholars is whether or not the relative decline of US hegemony will result in a hegemonic war. Hegemonic wars occur when a rising challenger – revisionist power – isn’t content with the current international order and wants to change it so as to become a preponderant force and dictate terms of a new world order. This article assumes that although the US is in a relative decline it is still a dominant power and the rising power is content with the current status quo so no war occurs between the dominant and the rising power. In order to support the argument that a hegemonic war does not occur, this article provides explanation using several theoretical perspectives. Structural Realism and Balance of Power To begin with, prominent neorealist Kenneth Waltz contends that the end of the Cold War has changed the structure of international politics from bipolar to unipolar with the US being the dominant power. According to Waltz, days of US being unipolar force in world politics is numbered and slowly the world is moving towards bipolarity or multipolarity because changes in the structure of international system brings about changes in state behavior. It does not matter how much self-restraint and self-control a preponderant power is in its conduct of international relations; states are always wary and fear the dominant power and thus he maintains that balancing is universal. [1] In order to explain why, he has resorted to the Balance of Power (theory). In most basic sense, international politics is a state of anarchy where there is no central government and states rely on themselves to protect their autonomy and perpetuate their survival. Balance of Power contends that states involve in a balancing act to check the powers of preponderant force so that no any single state has enough power to become a global hegemon. [2] With the relative decline of US, China and America can enter into bipolar relationship much like the US and the USSR during the Cold War. Since Waltz himself posits bipolarity as the most stable of international configurations, it can be argued that act of balancing between the US and China brings the international distribution of power into an equilibrium and averts the risk of war. Socialization of Hegemonic Power Most scholars posit that hegemons use threats and rewards to get compliance from secondary states. Contrary to popular wisdom, scholars Ikenberry and Kupchan have contended that in addition to material power, hegemons also have the power of socialization to achieve compliance from secondary states. They call this the socialization process which involves ‘altering of the belief systems’ of elites. Basically, hegemons project their vision of international order through normative principles (norms and values) and not by material incentives; elites in secondary states internalize them, and devise policies that are compatible to the hegemon’s ideal of the international order. The authors contend that the world order thus created can sustain even when hegemon undergoes a decline because the world order created is relatively inexpensive to maintain in the sense that altering of states preferences are by virtue of ideals rather than use of coercion. Thus, by virtue of socialization of hegemonic power, relative changes in hegemon’s distribution of material power (military and economy) does not put strain on the international system. So, on viewing the world from the lens of socialization, it can be argued that the expansion of US normative principles on liberal economic norm to its former allies and enemies aftermath the second world war that led to the formation of the current liberal economic world order provides an explanation as to why in spite of US’ relative decline there is continuity for America’s liberal economic order. [3] The rising challenger China can be considered to have been socialized – it has accepted US led international norms, and participates in various International Organizations. Thus, it makes less sense for China to wage war against the hegemon whose ideals it has internalized. Hegemonic Stability Theory According to this theory, a hegemon creates a stable international economic order characterized by market openness but its decline results in global instability. This hegemonic effect of open trade benefits all participants, especially, weaker states that do not have any burden of public goods. In this sense, global economic stability is born out of hegemony and provides provision of collective public goods and in doing so facilitates a stable international system. The motivation to create an economic openness lie in the interest of the hegemon – it has the largest economy and so benefits most from open markets. In addition, only hegemons have the material capability (political and military) to provide public goods and induce other states to embrace open trade. [4] By virtue of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the hegemon is an important element in creation and maintenance of the international system. As stated earlier, open trade benefits all participants, even the rising challengers that are accommodated in the system. In contemporary world politics, China is the fastest rising power and it is also reaping the benefits of the open economic order created by the US. By participating in the globalized economy, China has earned a comparative advantage in labor-market and its economy has been growing. On top of that China is an export-based economy and thus, it has very little incentive to jeopardize this benefit by engaging with the hegemon and thereby disrupting the order. In his article, Artur Stein has argued that decline in hegemony does not bring about a complete collapse of the trade regime as long as hegemonic power is committed to economic openness. Taking these two points in consideration, it can be argued that it is not in the interest of China to challenge US hegemony. On account, likelihood of war is averted. [5] Robert Keohane and Institutionalist Approach In After Hegemony, Robert Keohane uses an institutional approach to explain inter-state cooperation. He posits that states have common interest and in order to realize it requires achieving mutually beneficial agreements which is where international regimes come in. These regimes foster cooperation by making it easier to reach mutually beneficial inter-state agreements. They help overcome the problem of lack of qualitative and asymmetrical information, through institutional embeddedness reduces transaction costs, legal costs reduce incentive to cheat thereby reducing uncertainty and building confidence among states. Since hegemonic leadership is required to create regimes in the first place, even after the erosion of hegemony, they have high stakes and play important role in fostering cooperation (US role in the IMF and WTO). Because cooperation fosters absolute gain, all participants are benefitted. [6] By this approach, states see cooperation more beneficial than conflict. Thus, it can be argued from institutionalist approach that international regimes foster cooperation thereby reducing likelihood of conflict in the event of hegemonic decline. Conclusion The article provided four distinct perspectives with regards to declining US hegemony and potential of a hegemonic war. Using these approaches the article concludes that in spite of decline in American hegemony there will not be a significant change in the current structure of the international system mainly due to power differentials between the US and its nearest challenger China. The US is undergoing a relative decline but still, it is the largest economy boasts strongest military and has highest political leverage. In sum, prospect of a hegemonic war in contemporary world politics is only a far-fetched dream.

### AT: Transition Wars

**Transition wars are peaceful**

**White 08** [2008, White, Lynn T., Lynn T. White III is Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton, and in 2007-08 he was the Acting Director at Princeton of the China and the World Program., “Steve Chan, China, the U.S., and the Power- Transition Theory: A Critique”, China Perspectives, <https://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/4789>]//AA

1Is a future Sino-American war probable or not? If it began, would it likely be started by China as a rising power, or by America as a declining hegemon? 2Many theorists of power transitions have seen the twentieth century’s world wars as conflicts started by Germany seeking to replace Britain as a world hegemon. Contemporary application of that paradigm suggests that America, while still strong, might muster resources to resist China’s rising power. Steve Chan argues, however, that this version of power-transition theory is inaccurate as a description of the past and self-fulfilling as a prophesy of war. He likens **the future Sino-American power shift to smoother transitions, such as that from Britain to the US.** 3Although “officials and scholars construct realities (...) the U.K. chose to appease the U.S. and oppose Germany.” Chan suggests Britain’s motives were not cultural: “The argument for [Anglo-American] affinity will hardly suffice to explain London’s decision to recruit Japan as a junior partner in the Asia Pacific during the late 1800s (...)” (p. 4). He claims that Germany’s main fears in the 1910s and 1930s were of a rising Russia, and that Berlin’s efforts to keep London (and then Washington) neutral failed when smaller allies’ interests in war trumped the interests of larger powers in peace. Tails wag dogs before major conflicts. 4Chan suggests that **rising states are rational enough not to go to war merely because of past humiliations or current regime-type differences.** Instead, they become violent when they expect the result of war may be a net gain for them. “Wars happen because there are discrepancies between states’ power shares and their benefit shares” among either newcomers or hegemons. Danger arises when national leaders believe they do not receive a “‘fair’ share of benefits in proportion to their power” (p. 75). For example, if a dissatisfied state has prospered from exports (as China has, at least until 2009), a keen sense of past insults may shape rhetoric without creating violence. 5Chan predicts that a Sino-American power transition “is unlikely to materialize in the next three or so decades at the earliest, if at all” (p. 9). Taiwan, if it declared independence, could threaten this peace. But Chan expects (and joins this reviewer in hoping) that American policy can avoid a war by continuing to assure both Beijing and Taipei that the US will not defend such a declaration. 6To make his critique, Chan parses both logical categories and empirical evidence. While commending Chan’s variety of styles of argumentation, this reviewer prefers the specific histories to the incorporeal logics. It is possible to object to some of the ways the book mixes them. For example, Chan notes that most power-transition theorists in Germany before either world war saw the US as a non-central contender in world politics because of Berlin’s overly exclusive attention to the European continent. But it might be simpler to say that Berlin underestimated the reactions of both London and Washington and overestimated Germany’s power. Greater immunity to the lure of the abstract could lead a writer to express more direct hope that Beijing does not act externally until its power is enough for peaceful Chinese success. 7To take another example, it is hard to estimate the truth of a sentence such as “A severe sense of insecurity, rather than overconfidence, was the impetus behind Japan’s military planning [before Pearl Harbor]” (p. 56). Insecurity and overconfidence are both documentable as factors in this mistake. Social scientists, including many whom Chan rightly criticises, tend to like the kind of monocausal explanation that could have been avoided here. 8Chan organises a convincingly full panoply of historical similes and theorised causations (including several versions of realism, institutionalism, and constructivism). To make a long story short, he concludes as an optimist. Big wars can occur when rising powers underestimate extended deterrence by hegemons that do not make their interests clear. But Chan does not think this will happen any time soon in the Sino-American case, where both major powers are nuclear, and where the most relevant deterrence is of an attack on Taiwan, presuming the island does not legally renounce its option to be part of China. 9The danger of Sino-American war would come from US indecision over whether to deter a conflict if it could, or to make concessions if it could not. Chan says the PRC’s neighbours, including Taiwan, are more likely to engage China’s prosperity than resist it. He argues that if China receives adequate net benefits from its overall relations with America, **there will be peace.** He guesses that “current trends favour an eventual settlement of Taiwan’s status” (p. 119). Severe economic depression, more nationalist definitions of “benefit” among Beijing leaders, and/or a resurgence of Taiwanese nationalism might suggest less optimism—but Chan suggests that politicians can continue to avert a war. 10This reviewer guesses Chan is right, even though some of his interpretations are expressed in unnecessarily complex forms. He claims, “For a policy of pivotal deterrence to be credible, Taipei must be made to believe that Washington does not really intend to abandon it should it declare formal independence” (p. 101). This sentence depends on an involuted discussion of differences between “pivotal” and “extended” deterrence, but that framework omits consideration of factors such as American naval capabilities or internal politics in Taiwan or the PRC—and after Chan introduces such factors, the discourse becomes convincing. Some theory is always needed before empirical data are gathered, but Chan is all too faithful to contemporary political science on the unusual occasions when he puts deduction prior to induction without noting the iterative feedback between them. 11Important prospective readers of this book are in China. Some, apparently including the Peking University Dean Wang Jisi, would believe Chan’s opinion that no power transition may take place soon. Their foreign policy is thus careful. But the most important readers of the book are American, if they see Chan’s evidence that declining hegemons (often spurred to war by much smaller allies) have made crucial decisions that led to world wars. 12A power transition point is evidenced if one nation’s power surpasses that of another. Yet there are big problems with criteria such as a “composite index of national capability,” which has been used by researchers in the Correlates of War Project, and also with criteria developed by the CIA and others. Chinese social scientists such as Tsinghua Professor Yan Xuetong have been avid surveyors of national power, and Yan includes a subjective factor: the degree of will to use objective capabilities. “Soft” cultural power has also been subject to surveys: numbers of tourists or foreign students or movies. Dangers of unnecessary tragic war lurk in the wide grey-area ranges (not points) in which asymmetric conflict is possible and the crossover of effective power is uncertain. 13A problem of power-transition theory, which Chan mentions but does not stress, is that power is meaningless when separated from the goals for which it is exerted. The current global “superpower” has not been all that super in places such as Somalia, or in serving its own interests in the Middle East. Chan’s criticisms of power transition are cogent, and he might have extended them by stressing that it is hard to interpret measures of power abstracted from its purposes.

## AT: China War

### AT: Yes China Heg

#### Chinese hegemony is impossible – no one else wants it

**Ikenberry 18** – is the Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University, 3/9/18 (John, "Why the Liberal World Order Will Survive", *Ethics & International Affairs*, Volume 32.1, accessed 6/22/22)//jd

Competitive Order Building Even if we were to assume that China, as the leading non-Western state, wanted to undermine and replace the existing liberal international order, the constraints on doing so are overwhelming. Presumably, an alternative order would be less open and less rule-based. Historically, such orders have been organized into various illiberal political formations: regional groupings, imperial zones, spheres of influence, and closed autarkic blocs. How might China and other rising states build a comprehensive alternative to the existing order? As a start, China would need to be able to come forward with some alternative set of rules and institutions, presumably reflecting an alternative model of political and economic organization. This might be a so-called “Beijing Consensus,” an international order that accommodated (and even promoted) illiberal and authoritarian polities and statist economic relations. China does have its own statist approach, but it is not clear how this approach might work as a wider model of global order. First, China’s mercantilist strategy seems to work best when the rest of the world is relatively open and liberal in orientation. A closed world in which great powers carve out spheres of influence cuts off China from markets and investment opportunities. If all the countries of the world adopted the Chinese model, this would restrict China’s market space and leadership opportunities. Second, a Chinese-led illiberal international order would require some buy-in by other states, and this is also problematic. China is the largest and leading non-Western developing country, but it is the only rising state that is genuinely illiberal and authoritarian. It is not clear that Brazil, India, South Africa, or even Turkey is eager to embrace and operate within a Beijing consensus. If China were to try to promulgate a Sino-centered order—a hegemonic/imperial order that did not immediately rest on the consent and cooperation of other states—it would face very steep costs. If these potential partner states did not experience substantial material benefits from participating in the Chinese-led order, China would need to spend resources to entice and bully these states into cooperation. This would be a very huge task for a developing country with mid-range per capita income. Over the longer term, the success of a Chinese-centered order would depend on its ability to “outcompete” liberal internationalism. But the less the rival order is open and negotiated, and the less that China—as a rival hegemon —is willing to exercise restraint and provide public goods, the greater the difficulty it will have in establishing a viable and legitimate alternative.

#### China won’t overthrow the US.

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A Kindleberger Trap as a Strategic Challenge?

As China’s power grows, many observers worry the United States and China are destined for war, but few consider an opposite disruptive danger in hegemonic transitions. Rather than acting like a revolutionary power in the international order, China might decide to be a free rider like the United States was in the 1930s. I have called this a “Kindleberger Trap” after the renowned MIT economist who attributed the depths of the Great Depression and the instability of that decade to a rising America’s failure to contribute to global public goods at time when Great Britain could no longer do so alone.25 In this version of the failure of hegemonic power transition, China may act too weakly rather than too strongly and refuse to contribute to an international order that it did not create. Some Sinologists say that this fear overstates the “not invented here” problem and that China knows it benefited from the overall post-1945 international order. As Iain Johnston has shown, one can distinguish at least eight different orders related to eight areas of interdependence, and China’s support for the orders is medium to high in most.26

A Kindleberger Trap is a free rider, or failure by a rising power to contribute to global public goods.

To date, China has been quite active in supporting institutions that facilitate world order and interdependence. In the UN Security Council, China is one of five countries with a veto. China is now the second largest funder of UN peacekeeping forces, participating in UN programs related to Ebola and climate change. China has also benefited greatly from economic institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). On the other hand, China has started its own Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and a “Belt and Road” initiative (BRI) of international infrastructure projects that some see as an economic offensive against the existing order. China has not practiced full reciprocity as a market economy, and its rejection of a 2016 Hague tribunal ruling regarding the South China Sea raised questions about whether China would treat its legal obligations a la carte (as the United States has sometimes done). US and allied navies’ freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea remain essential to maintain this point. (It would also help if the US Senate would ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty.)

Thus far, China has not tried to overthrow the world order from which it benefits—rather, it has tried to increase its influence from within—but this could change as Chinese power grows. The Trump administration labeled China a revisionist power, but so far it is moderate revisionism, unlike extreme revisionist powers such as Hitler’s Germany. China is interested not in kicking over the card table but in tilting the table so it can claim a larger share of the winnings. At the same time, China’s growing economic power and its tilt will create problems for the United States and the international order. In other words, it may act as a free rider as the United States did in the 1930s.

As Chinese power grows, the American “liberal international order” will have to change. It was never all liberal, orderly, or global, and China has little interest in liberalism or American domination. Therefore, Americans would be wise to discard the terms “liberal” and “American” and think in terms of an “open and rules-based” world order to manage the various types of interdependence. This would mean framing an open international order in terms of institutional cooperation. Ideological differences will persist, and there will be sharp differences over values like human rights, but this does not prevent negotiations and institutions to manage interdependence.27 The US approach to an open international economy will need to be adjusted for greater oversight of Chinese trade and investments that threaten our technological and national security objectives, but there is still a basis for fruitful interdependence and negotiation of rules of the road to govern it.

#### **US and China decouple now, but China won’t catch up for decades.**

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Managing Interdependence

Some degree of decoupling is bound to increase, particularly in areas related to technology that directly affect national security. Both sides will wish to limit vulnerabilities that endanger critical infrastructure or have important implications for military postures. Some measures will be unilateral, such as those Beijing has been undertaking for more than a decade. As for US measures to restrict sensitive technology transfer via trade, investment, and scientific exchanges, “developing a control regime that reduces risk without imposing undue costs will not be easy.”28

Intricate supply chains are not easily undone. But bilateral and multilateral negotiations can help to prevent partial technological disengagement from degenerating into a stampede toward full protectionism. One example is provided by a group of American and Chinese economists who have suggested a framework for trade policy between divergent nations that distinguishes the areas subject to bilateral negotiations from those where countries are allowed to undertake well-calibrated domestic policy adjustments that minimize harm to its domestic economy or security. Other policies that involve damage spilling over to third countries could be handled by multilateral arrangements.29

Negotiations can help prevent partial technological disengagement from degenerating into a stampede.

As China, India, and other economies grow, the US share of the world economy will be less than it was at the beginning of this century, and the rise of other countries will make it more difficult to organize collective action to promote global public goods. But no other country—including China—is about to replace the United States in terms of overall power resources in the next few decades. The United States will continue to lead in production of global public goods, but it will need to increasingly share that role with China. Since the Nixon administration, China and the United States have cooperated despite ideological differences. Various forms of interdependence have grown, and efforts toward total decoupling would involve enormous costs. While interdependence has created new strategic vulnerabilities, it has also produced strategic opportunities.

Rapid Asian economic growth has encouraged a power shift to the region, but Asia has its own internal balance of power. Chinese power is balanced by Japan, India, and Australia, among others. None want to be dominated by China, though none wants to see a Cold War-style containment strategy that would force them into an economic divorce from China, either. The United States will remain crucial to that Asian balance of power. If the United States maintains those alliances, the prospects are slight that China can drive the United States from the Western Pacific, much less dominate the world. The United States has high cards for managing the traditional competitive parts of our cooperative rivalry with China and does not need to seek to sever the relationship entirely by completely decoupling in a fit of panic.

The more difficult question for an effective strategy will be whether the United States and China can develop attitudes that allow them to cooperate in producing global public goods and managing interdependence while competing in other areas. Worst case analyses may make such a balanced policy impossible. The US-China relationship is a cooperative rivalry where a successful strategy of “smart competition,” as advocated by Orville Schell and Susan Shirk, will require equal attention to both aspects of that description.30 But such a future will require good contextual intelligence and careful management of all dimensions of our interdependence, both negative and positive. Exaggerated fears will make such a balanced policy difficult, and hasty efforts to decouple will lead to a failed strategy that reduces US power.

### AT: China Heg Bad

#### Chinese regional hegemony compatible with American interests.

Haynes, PhD, 17

(Kyle, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Purdue University, Would China Be a Benign Hegemon?

https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/would-china-be-a-benign-hegemon/)

The 1901 Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, in which Britain abjectly caved to American demands to build and fortify the canal, facilitated a “great rapprochement” between the two Anglo-Saxon powers and laid the groundwork for a the “special relationship” that continues today. But this happy precedent offers little solace to contemporary observers of U.S.-China relations. China’s militarized island-building campaign in the South China Sea and aggressive pursuit of territorial claims elsewhere in the region have convinced many that China’s intentions are fundamentally incompatible with America’s interests in East Asia. In response, they claim, the United States should implement a more confrontational strategy to counter China’s efforts and sustain America’s regionally hegemonic position. I argue that these **conclusions are premature**. China’s grand strategy is clearly aimed at supplanting the United States as the dominant military power in East Asia. But this alone **does not mean** that **Chinese and American interests are incompatible**. The real question is what China plans to do with its emerging regional preponderance. Would China use its hegemony to maintain an **economically open, institutionalized,** and **rule-based regional order**, even if one that is tilted in its own favor? Or would it seek to fundamentally overthrow these decades-old rules and norms in ways that effectively exclude outside economic engagement and threaten the territorial integrity of America’s regional allies? If the latter, then the costs and risks of a more confrontational policy of “containing” China’s rise may be justified. If the former, then Chinese regional hegemony is **perfectly compa**tible with America’s **substantive interests**, and may even help r**educe** the **burden** **of** the **U**nited **S**tates’ expansive global commitments. To date, there are surprisingly **few** **indications** that a Chinese-led regional order would be antithetical to core American interests in the region. Why Hegemony? Greater levels of military power allow states to secure their borders and impose favorable political or economic outcomes in their own backyard. But critically, power is still a means to an end. Power itself is of little use except as a means of attaining substantive strategic goals. Given the uncertainty inherent in international politics, states understandably covet the capacity to look after their own interests. Dependence on others inherently entails vulnerability. But this capacity is only valuable insofar as it enables a state to achieve outcomes of more substantive value. The United States has occupied a hegemonic position in East Asia since the end of World War II. This preponderance has allowed the United States to guarantee vital regional interests through its own efforts for over 70 years. It is thus understandably jarring for many Americans to imagine a world where core national security interests in East Asia are dependent upon a foreign power’s acquiescence. But maintaining military preponderance should not be considered a core American interest in East Asia. To reiterate, hegemony is only valuable if it helps a state achieve more substantive interests. It would be foolish to incur the massive costs and risks of containing China in order to maintain U.S. regional hegemony if Washington were confident that a Chinese-dominated regional order would uphold core American interests. As such, American policy toward China should be guided by signals of what exactly Chinese leaders would seek to do with their emerging regional hegemony, not the fact that they’re pursuing this hegemony in the first place. Assertive or Incompatible? Charting a course for U.S. grand strategy in East Asia requires asking three key questions. First, what are the United States’ vital substantive interests in the region? Second, how costly will it be for the United States to maintain its longstanding regional dominance in the face of China’s rise? And third, how likely are its interests to be maintained within a regional order dominated by China? First, with respect to core regional interests, the United States fundamentally seeks to maintain an open, liberal economic order and to maintain the territorial and political security of its regional allies. This would necessitate upholding the freedom of navigation throughout the region’s international waters, including the South and East China Seas. Second, given China’s enormous population, geographic location, and economic dynamism, it will be impossibly costly for the United States to sustain its regionally dominant position over the coming years. With declining economic clout and a military dispersed across the globe, U.S. containment of Chinese influence in East Asia is futile. So, if containing China would be immensely costly and probably futile, how badly are America’s core regional interests likely to suffer under a Chinese-led regional order? Pessimistic observers point to the recent “assertive shift” in China’s foreign policy, along with the expansion of China’s military capabilities, as indications that leaders in Beijing harbor deeply revisionist ambitions in the region. After all, why would China be seeking to deny the U.S. military access inside the first island chain if it didn’t anticipate taking actions directly contrary to vital American interests there? This interpretation overlooks the simple fact that great powers do not tolerate competitors possessing the military capacity dominate their home region. As a rising great power, China would seek to **control its immediate periphery** irrespective of any revisionist intentions. During the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, the USS Nimitz battle group sailed through the Taiwan Strait, effectively intimidating Beijing into deescalating the crisis. Imagine the American response if a Chinese aircraft carrier sailed between Cuba and Florida during a Sino-American crisis. Even satisfied great powers will not allow foreign competitors to militarily control their near-abroad. That China would seek to deny the United States this capacity is entirely predictable, and not necessarily an indication of revisionist intentions. Implications of Assertiveness China’s assertive shift has challenged the territorial claims of key American allies, but there is **little indication** that Chinese leaders harbor territorial ambitions beyond what was claimed in the immediate post-World War II period (including the nine-dash line, which dates back to 1947). The more aggressive pursuit of longstanding claims does not necessarily portend new, more expansive claims down the road. Furthermore, China’s recent push to supplant the United States has revolved around a series of alternative institutions to guide regional economic integration. These institutions will surely tilt toward Beijing, but they also bind China into a rules-based order that will constrain its ability to bully and coerce its neighbors. In short, a China-led regional order may entail some Chinese expansionism, but there is little indication that it would threaten the **core territorial security of American allies.** Furthermore, China’s vision for the regional economic order seems to be premised on an alternative set of institutions geared toward maximizing Beijing’s economic returns. This may undercut some American economic interests in the region. But it will broadly retain an institutionalized framework built on the rules and norms established under U.S. hegemony after World War II.

#### China’s economic hegemony will sustain developing countries.

NguyenHuua & Örsal, 19

(Tam & Deniz, Tam and Deniz are researchers at Leuphana University Lüneburg, A new and benign hegemon on the horizon? The Chinese century and growth in the global South

https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/206617/1/1681792362.pdf)

Our article quantifies the impacts of exports to and imports from China on GDP in major developing economies. We find the positive contributions of imports from China to GDP, although such positive contributions are still lower than that of EDE and AdE. However, impacts of China on growth becomes much more significant since the financial crisis while EDE and AdE show decreasing or almost unchanged role in pushing growth in the global South. These findings seem to confirm the arguments of international studies scholars on **China as a new and benign hegemon** on the horizon. The **developing world’s growth** is increasingly **dependent on Chinese goods**. Strengthening trade with China might be indispensable for the global South to **sustain growt**h in the future. This puts more serious pressure on policy makers in, on the one hand, achieving short-run growth goals through **promoting** imports from **China** and, on another hand, ensuring the competitiveness of the domestic production in longer-run. Our analysis shows the insignificant contributions of the exports to China on growth in its developing partners. Most of the exports to China from the developing world are raw materials or low-technological products, which contribute marginally to growth. Moreover, the rise of China might not create opportunities for developing countries to upgrade considerably its production. However, with the coming transformation of the Chinese economy from export led to consumption‐led growth, EDE might see a more significant role of China as a major importer for goods and services in the near future. Lee et al. (2017) show that economies that have a small share of consumption goods in their exports to China might suffer a significant decrease in their exports to China. At the same time, China’s transformation also creates valuable opportunities for countries that satisfy growing consumption demands of the Chinese population. Similarly, Park and Shin (2011: 160) indicate that China becomes “more of consumer and less of an assembler”, which heralds the potential of higher exports to China, as a new source of growth, in the coming time for the developing world. In addition, China is becoming a more important producer of sophisticated goods with higher labor costs and an aging labor force, leaving some opportunities for other developing economies to materialize their potentials, either by replacing China or being a part of the production chain led by China.

### AT: Thucydides Trap

#### The U.S. and China won’t fall into the Thucydides trap and will find a way to peacefully coexist

Jayathilaka 4/11/22 [11 Apr 2022, Jayathilaka, Aruna, Department of Social Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Lecturer in Political Science, “Are China and the USA Heading for a War ? (Can they Avoid the ''Thucydides Trap''?)”, SSRN, <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4075526>, AA]

Thucydides (460- 404 BC), finest of historical Greek historians and writer of the History of the Peloponnesian War, which recounts the war among Athens and Sparta within side the fifth century B.C. He was also named as the father of the school of political realism', which views the political behavior of people and the resulting effects of relations between states as ultimately mediated and based on "fear and self-interests'. As he explained, "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable." (Allison, 2015). Thucydides recognized key drivers of this dynamic: the growing power's developing entitlement, experience of its importance, and call for more say and sway, on the only hand, and the fear, insecurity, and resolution to protect the popularity quo this engenders within side the mounted power, at the other (Allison, 2017). 3.1 Graham Allison on the Thucydides’ Trap Graham Tillett **Allison**, an American political scientist and the Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, **recognized Thucydides Trap as the best framework to understand why there is potential for conflict between the United States and China.** (Allison, The Thucydides Trap, 2017) The Harvard Thucydides' Trap Project has identified **sixteen cases over the last 500 years in which a major rising power threatened to dethrone a major ruling power.**( Figure 01) Figure 01 : Thucydides’ Trap in the history Power struggle between China and USA Source : (Allison, 2015) Source: ( Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2021) **Twelve** of these sixteen contenders **resulted in warfare.** Allison uses the cases to demonstrate how the tension between rising and ruling powers frequently leads to war and how the war was avoided in the four rivalries that did not result in violence. Allison views that China's attempt to challenge the US hegemony will create an avenue for a war. According to Allison, the Chinese government's action plan for achieving this goal includes: revitalizing the Party, restoring its sense of mission, and reestablishing its authority in the eyes of the Chinese people; reviving Chinese nationalism and patriotism to inculcate pride in being Chinese; engineering a third economic revolution, and reorganizing and rebuilding China's military so that it can 'fight and win.' (Allison, Avoiding the Thucydides Trap, 2018) In addition, Allison revives Samuel Huntington's classic thesis about the clash of civilizations. He argues that China's pursuit of its goals resulted from 'deep cultural' differences. (Table:01) Table 01 : 'Deep Cultural' differences between USA and China Source: (Allison, The Thucydides Trap, 2017) 04. Reponses on the ‘Thucydides Trap’ The concept of the "Thucydides Trap" and the debates around it have influenced academics, international media, including Chinese official media, and American and Chinese politicians. 4.1 Scholars views on ‘Thucydides Trap’ In comparison, international scholars are more diversified in the concept. There are generally three views; Pessimistic Views, optimistic, and Realistic Views. 4.1.1 Pessimistic Views The first view, mainly from Western and American scholars, is quite pessimistic. They believe that U.S.-China relations have fallen into or are about to enter the “Thucydides’ Trap.” For instance, in May 2015, American scholar David Lampton, who used to express much hope for a sound and lasting U.S.-China relationship, delivered a speech at the World Forum on China Studies, stating that “tipping point in U.S.-China relations is upon us. and that we are witnessing the erosion of some critical underlying supports for predominantly positive U.S.-China ties” (Lampton, 2015). Analysts and officials in Washington are fretting over “worsening tensions between the United States and China and the risks to the world of two superpowers once again clashing rather than cooperating”. (Michael Beckley and Hal Brands 2021). According to these analysis, a cold war with Beijing is already under way. Hence, it is not surprising that the Chinese continue to see the USA’s ‘hegemony,’ military presence, and alliances with others as major stumbling blocks for China’s attempts to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity (To, 2003) 4.1.2 Optimistic Views However, most Chinese analysts believe that **the "Thucydides' Trap" cannot adequately characterize Sino-US ties.** They have explored strategies for both countries to escape the trap by deconstructing the notion's flaws. Professor Qin Yaqing, for example, discovers that the Chinese philosophical paradigm of "Yin and Yang Dialectics" differs markedly from Western concepts of "conflict and confrontation." As a result, rather than viewing China's ascent as a zero-sum game, it should be seen holistically and historically. Professor Qian Shengdan stated unequivocally that the "Thucydides' Trap" was incompatible with historical events and may not apply to Sino-US relations. Several Western academics share this viewpoint. For example, Henry Kissinger claims no "Thucydides' Trap" between China and the US until individuals make it a "self-fulfilled prophecy" (Coker, 2015). In his essay "Beware the Thucydides Trap's Trap," James Holmes argues that the Sino-US relationship is fundamentally different from the Athenian-Spartan relationship and the Anglo-German alliance before World War I. Richard Lebow similarly disputes the inevitability of conflict between Athens and Sparta, arguing that the Peloponnesian War might have been averted if both sides had shown greater empathy and therefore taken a more moderate posture (Lebow, 2021). 4.1.3 Realistic Views Rather than agreeing or disagreeing with the concept, the third point of view is concerned with finding a replacement parallel to represent Sino-American ties. For example, Professor Yan Xuetong suggests that the battle between China and the United States is "more like a football game than a boxing fight," implying that it is not always a zero-sum game that ends in a knockout. Indeed, the term "new type of major-country relations" has become more widely used in recent years; **despite their current trade disputes and increasingly intense competition, both China and the United States are aiming for a reciprocal relationship of "no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation."** (Bondaz, 2015) 4.2 Responses of the Leaders As the "Thucydides' Trap" concept grows in popularity, it is frequently discussed by prominent Chinese and American leaders and officials. Both Chinese and American leaders are hopeful about their countries' ability to avoid the "Thucydides' Trap." China's President Xi Jinping declared in 2014 that "we all need to work together to avoid the 'Thucydides' Trap." In his address in Seattle on September 24, 2015, he said unequivocally that "[t]here is no such thing in the world as the so- called Thucydides' trap." However, if powerful countries repeatedly commit strategic miscalculation errors, they may build such traps for themselves." (Ling Shengli and Lv Huiyi, 2018) In response, then-US President Barack Obama stated in 2015 that he did not agree with the concept of "Thucydides' Trap" and its significance to US-China ties. Although President Trump has not said firmly if there is a "Thucydides' Trap" between China and the United States, he has often stated that both nations should preserve cooperation while managing their disagreements. President Trump stated at his meeting with President Xi at Mar-a-Lago in April 2017 that the US "is eager to further deepen cooperation with China in business, military issues, and people-to- people exchanges... ". He also stated, "[i]n the next months and years, I look forward to developing an even stronger partnership between our two nations, China and the United States of America, as well as even deeper friendships and interactions amongst our people. Clearly, neither the Chinese nor the American leaders believe their country will fall into the "Thucydides' Trap" (Ling Shengli and Lv Huiyi, 2018). Even though Chinses and American leaders have been shown an optimistic viewpoint on the Thucydides' Trap, some world leaders have shown a pessimistic view on it. President Lee Kuan Yew is a case in point. As he stated, “Unlike other emergent countries, China wants to be China and accepted as such, not as an honorary member of the West. The Chinese will want to share this century as co-equals with the United States.” ( Allison, Lee Kuan Yew: The Sage of Asia, 2015). Further he views that China “is the biggest player in the history of the world,” and the United States and others will have to adjust to this reality. But this adjustment may not be peaceful. (Richard N. Rosecrance and Steven E. Miller, 2014) 05. Pushing and Pulling Factors of the Thucydides Trap Analysts have warned that the South China Sea could be the tipping point for a military conflict between the two. As always, the USA is seeking military dominance and superiority in Asia- Pacific and elsewhere. Notably, while supporting the US-led war on terror for its reasons, China still criticized the USA for increasing its military presence across the world after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 (Straits Times, 2002). It appears that the Trump administration is conscious of the unfavorable aspects of its foreign policy ("interventionism" and "unilateralism" in international politics), notably in the Middle East. However, the United States cannot alter the global system as China seeks to grow its strength and influence globally and reform the old liberal international order (Yahuda, 2019). Some analysists view that the military tension between US and China was declining under the Joe Biden administration. These analyses show that, after former President Donald Trump launched his trade war with China, indications are that President Joe Biden’s administration is continuing his confrontational approach to the bilateral relationship while rallying Western and regional allies around calling out Beijing for its flouting of international norms (Yang X. , 2021). Nevertheless, agreements as, AUKUS will enhance the war tension between US and China while providing a fertile ground for a ‘Thucydides Trap’. On September 15, 2021, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States signed AUKUS, a trilateral security treaty for the Indo-Pacific region. According to the deal's provisions, the United States and the United Kingdom will assist Australia in deploying nuclear-powered submarines (Biscop, 2021). Cooperation in "cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and more subsea capabilities" is also included in the pact. Australia's air force, navy, and army would all gain enhanced long-range attack capabilities as part of the arrangement. Instead of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing cooperation, which includes New Zealand and Canada, the alliance will focus on military capability (Oxford Analytica, 2021). China has criticized the new agreement as "extremely irresponsible." Zhao Lijian, a foreign ministry spokesman, stated that this agreement "seriously undermines regional peace and stability and intensifies the arms race." In Washington, the Chinese embassy accused the countries entering this agreement of having a "Cold War mentality and ideological prejudice" (BBC, 2021). Nevertheless, some analysts argue that **neither China nor the United States intends to reorder the world by winning a decisive war.** Because they both know that a confrontation of this magnitude might be disastrous, they are attempting to win without fighting, relying on international laws and rule-making to confine their opponents and mold the world in their favor. Unlike previous great power competitions, the United States and China are competing over the content of international laws. As a result, both camps will rely on "new global norms and agreements” (Scott, 2021) 5.1 Is the Thucydides Trap a replacement of Churchill Trap? Winston Churchill made his now famous "Iron Curtain" speech at Westminster College, Fulton, March 5, 1946, an event that many have seen as the symbolic inauguration of the Cold War. (Kluge, 2003). The term “iron curtain” had been employed as a metaphor since the 19th century, but Churchill used it to refer specifically to the political, military, and ideological barrier created by the U.S.S.R. following World War II to prevent open contact between itself and its dependent eastern and central European allies on the one hand and the West and other noncommunist regions on the other (Trust, 2021). US diplomat George Kennan came to a similar conclusion and became the architect of the “containment” policy. He argued that the Soviet Union was determined to spread of communism throughout the world and was fundamentally opposed to coexistence with the West. Kennan doubted the potential effectiveness of attempts to reconcile and pacify the Soviet Union, but Kennan was confident that the Soviet Union would understand the logic of military power and temper its ambitions in the face of strong Western opposition (George Frost Kennan and John Lukacs, 1997). According to some experts, **the' Thucydides trap exaggerates the possibility of war between emerging and dominant powers in the modern era.** The most significant difficulty for China and the United States, according to this viewpoint, is to avoid falling into the 'Churchill trap.' By repeating the follies of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union, both camps will be involved in a long-term struggle. The 'old' history of the ancient East Asian bipolar system, as well as modern Sino-US interactions in East Asia, suggest that, in addition to hegemonic war and the cold war, the two poles have a 'third type of great power relationship.' This third kind is known as 'co-ruling .' The two superpowers jointly lead most small and medium-sized states rather than being geographically divided according to their separate domains of influence. (Yang Y. , 2018). 06. Is there a Way Out? According to Graham Allison, there are some possible avenues for both the China and USA to avoid possible war-tension. Firstly both the camps should realize that the 'War between nuclear superpowers is madness'. Both China and the USA own robust nuclear arsenal; hence leaders must recognize that war would be suicidal. The second lesson for both parties is to 'Leaders must be prepared to risk a war they cannot win'. It is clear that if war occurs, both nations lose, and millions die — an option no rational leader could choose. (Allison, The Thucydides Trap, 2017). Nevertheless, if a nation is unwilling to risk war, its opponent can win any objective by forcing the more reliable power to yield. Consequently, leaders must be willing to select paths that threaten destruction. The third lesson defines the new "precarious rules of the status quo." These rules include arms- control treaties and precise road conventions for air and sea. The fourth lesson is that parties should understand that 'Domestic performance is decisive.' Domestic issues of a country will have an impact upon international matters. (Allison, The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?, 2015). **By establishing compromises on problematic areas, the US and China might clear the way for cooperation on challenges like global terrorism and climate change, where the two countries' shared national interests outnumber their differences.** Overall, leaders must recognize that their existence is contingent on prudence, communication, limitations, compromise, and cooperation. As Allison points out, dwindling civic involvement, institutionalized corruption, and a general lack of faith in politics are all concerning indicators of the American democracy. Both countries' leaders would do well to emphasize their domestic issues by improving residents' quality of life. Finally, parties need to understand that hope is not a strategy. Allison views that if the USA hopes to avoid catastrophic war with China while protecting and advancing American national interests, lessons of the Cold War should be well studied. Both the camps need to be aligned with strategic thinking rather than relying on hope. (Allison, Avoiding the Thucydides Trap, 2018) Most of the scholars view that, a new structure for the bilateral relationship is required, taking into account key areas of rivalry and collaboration. Harvard Professor Joe Nye expressed hope that the United States will have enough time to handle China's ascent without falling into the second element of the trap: overreaching out of fear (Coker, 2015). According to Allison, **the US and China have significant national interests in preserving the survival of their respective countries and must work together to resolve concerns that have clouded the economic relationship.** This means coming up with new laws to account for China's unparalleled economic growth and global power status. In addition, policymakers should consider the appeal for a world that is "safe for variety" followed by the ' Cuban Missile Crisis '. This development would allow countries with diverse political systems, economic development methods, and philosophies to peacefully coexist (Allison, Avoiding the Thucydides Trap, 2018). 07. Summarizing the Findings The first research question of the paper was: 'is the 'Thucydides Trap' a correct metaphor to examine the present global power structure?' The study finds diverse viewpoints on the validity of the 'Thucydides Trap' for a proper analysis of the US-China relationship. The 'Pessimistic' scholars recognize Thucydides Trap as an accurate metaphor for analyzing the present tension between USA and China. Nevertheless, 'Pessimistic' and 'realistic' **scholars have not identified 'Thucydides Trap' as an ideal metaphor to examine the current development between USA and China.** According to some analysts, other metaphors are more suitable to elaborate US-China relations than the 'Thucydides trap.' For an intense some analysts' view that the 'Churchill trap' is a more present risk to China and the US than the 'Thucydides trap,' and consequently one to which both should pay due to heed and take precautions to avoid (Yang Y. , 2018). Nevertheless, Graham Alison provides a strong argument for using the 'Thucydides Trap' to explain several scholars later admitted US-China relations and this notion. Consequently, the paper finds that the Thucydides trap provides an avenue to examine the current development between the USA and China with data analysis. The second research question was: 'Can China and USA escape the Thucydides Trap?’. Avoiding the trap might be difficult indeed, yet not impossible. As being describe by Graham Alison, 'Thucydides Trap' can be avoided with huge and painful adjustments by the super powers. Hence, 'pessimistic' and 'realistic' scholars have shown some of the avenue for avoiding the trap. Further, as being states by the 'Thucydides Trap', when Sparta attacked Athens, it forced the other Greek city-states to pick a side, and a massive Greek war ensued that lasted for decades. Great power dynamics may undoubtedly cause tensions, but the judgment is still on whether a 'conflict in Asia is unavoidable'. Smaller states play disproportionate roles at times, but not always. For example, during the conflict, Athens subdued Melos, a city-state that had wanted to remain neutral in the Peloponnesian War. Based on these findings, it is clear that the 'Thucydides Trap' is not an ‘unavoidable' circumstance. Graham Allison suggests that the main five lessons that both superpowers should learn to avoid the trap are: 'realizing the destructiveness of nuclear superpower war', 'preparing to risk a war they cannot win', defining the new "precarious rules of the status quo", realizing that 'domestic performance is decisive', and understanding that hope is not a strategy. Most other scholars also suggest that drastic changes should be made by both the camp to escape from the trap. Hence, 'the USA and China need to make serious adjustments to avoid the trap'. 08. Conclusion **War**, as Thucydides explains, **is preventable.** Since individuals can do little to address power imbalances, the only obstacle they face is poor decision making. So suppose war can be prevented. In this case, it implies that in making decisions, individuals, leaders, and people avoid interpersonal interactions creating the "real trap" that the ancient thinker warned us. As for the future of Sino- American relations, no one knows precisely. However, we can predict the future based on the current development of the two great powers. The United States has used hard power in several world crises. However, China has only used soft power at the most critical moments. This trend reduces the risk of war between the two countries. To deal with China's ascent, it appears the United States will employ a mix of commitment and containment. Similarly, a military clash with the United States will negatively impact China's economic progress. But, on the other hand, limitations and flaws in China's regional accent, notably its rising reliance on Middle Eastern oil, will push Beijing to stick to its "peaceful development" approach. All in all, **in a bipolar system, the United States and China will find a way to coexist, thus avoiding the 'Thucydides trap.'**

## AT: Retrenchment Bad

### AT: Europe Rentrenchment

#### Europe’s NATO military can handle Russia alone – it’s more efficient and money-wise than the US.

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The main security problem for Europe is Russia. We should be curious as to how Europe’s situation could be so bad, given that Europe’s main military inputs – people and money – exceed Russia’s. Including Turkey and Canada, and excluding the US, NATO has nearly 1.9 million military personnel. Excluding Turkey and Canada, NATO has nearly 1.4m military personnel.7 Russia has about 900,000 troops in the active forces, and another 500,000 in paramilitary units, the main purpose of which is internal security, for a total of 1.4m.8 The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute assesses that Russia spent perhaps $65 billion on defence in 2019, measured at market exchange rates.9 The non-US NATO members spent roughly $300bn on defence that year, about $280bn without Turkey and Canada. Indeed, combined German and French defence spending alone is $100bn, which exceeds that of Russia. In crude terms, then, the Europeans out-resource Russia in military inputs. Furthermore, Europe draws its inputs from a much larger and more diverse base. The pre-Brexit GDP of the EU (which excludes NATO members Canada, Norway and Turkey, and includes neutrals such as Finland and Sweden) was about $16 trillion, compared with Russia’s $1.7trn. The pre-Brexit population of the EU was 513m, while Russia’s is about 145m. Overall, then, any inability on the part of European members of NATO to muster the military wherewithal to oppose Russian aggression involves more than a mere incapacity to allocate sufficient national resources to the challenge. It would be a defence-management failure of truly heroic proportions.

Two reasons are generally offered to explain why Europe would logically get less for its total defence spending than would a single country. Firstly, whether counting NATO members or EU members, every European state has its own defence ministry and its own array of military headquarters, schools, depots and bases. Given that some of these countries are quite small, considerable duplication of effort is plausible. The superficial evidence does not support the argument that superfluous European civilian employees are the problem, however. The ratio of civilians employed by EU ministries of defence to the number of troops under arms is considerably lower than that of the United States. The US has 758,000 direct-hire civilians, 1,363,000 active troops and 804,000 reservists. Even if all reservists are included, the ratio of civilians to military personnel is 0.35. Europe employs 372,000 civilians to manage 1,400,000 troops, for a ratio of 0.25. Thus, by the numbers, Europe appears to be more efficient at management and support than the US.10 This may seem off base intuitively, but the similarity in the ratio of civilians to uniformed personnel is suggestive.

Secondly, European spending might yield suboptimal results due to a lack of standardisation in the acquisition of weaponry and the consequent loss of scale economies of production. This too seems plausible. A frequently cited, though methodologically opaque, study by the European Parliament suggested that in the early part of the last decade, eliminating such inefficiencies would save $26bn a year.11 Nevertheless, there is reason to question the extent of Europe’s inefficiency. European sources are fond of claiming that the Europeans collectively field 17 different types of main battle tank to the United States’ one.12 This is a false comparison, as it arrays many different types of European armoured vehicle against only one US type, the M1 Abrams main battle ank. More tightly comparing like to like, European militaries field five types of modern tank, almost half of them the excellent German-designed and -manufactured Leopard II tanks.13 Many former members of the Warsaw Pact, now in NATO, still field some of the Soviet-designed T72s, which are still widely in service in Russia.14 The same kind of argument is often advanced with respect to combat aircraft. Europe is credited with 20 types and the US with six, which again exaggerates the disparity: most EU combat aircraft are US-designed F16s and European Tornados, Typhoons and Rafales. And only the latter two were acquired since the end of the Cold War. Tornados and Typhoons were produced by European consortia in reasonably long production runs. European military procurement may be less efficient than the United States’ because higher US spending enables longer production runs. But how much less efficient is unclear. All modern fighter aircraft are wildly expensive, no matter where they are produced. European militaries would doubtless profit from greater standardisation from the standpoint of both efficient acquisition and ease of maintenance and supply on the battlefield. However, these shortfalls seem insufficient to explain the general pessimism about Europe’s autonomous military capabilities.

#### Europe can handle Russia without the US – their ev doesn’t account for Europe’s vast types of units.

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If the IISS front-wide 1.5–2:1 force-ratio heuristic is valid, NATO European forces seem competitive. NATO’s publicly announced rapid-reinforcement objective for ground forces is 30 mechanised battalions in 30 days.38 In Western militaries, this would typically imply ten brigades. If ten brigades is NATO’s official solution to the Russia problem, and if the IISS heuristic roughly captures the thinking of NATO planners, then NATO is unlikely to have assessed the plausible Russian force in theatre as larger than 15 brigades.

Changing the mission from offence to defence, however, also permits NATO Europe to take advantage of the large number of ‘light’ infantry units in Western armies (see Table 3). These units typically have no tanks, and though they can have light armoured vehicles, these are not well suited to offensive operations. Some are airborne units, which in most Western armies are considered elite troops. While these units are often among the readiest in any army, ‘Defending Europe’ rightly does not count them as useful for the counter-attack scenario. Most NATO European armies maintain one or more additional infantry brigades. Some of these specialise in mountainous terrain and are considered elite. There are also many infantry brigades that travel by truck or light armoured vehicle, and fight on foot. For defensive operations, especially where urban or forested areas are available for cover and concealment, these units can be effective, even against mechanised forces. Indeed, they are sometime preferable.39 Such brigades are not the equal of armoured brigades in open country, but assigning them half the combat power of their heavier brethren when fighting defensively on ground of their choosing seems fair. France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK collectively have at least another dozen of these types of brigades.40 If half are assumed ready, then six more brigades are available to fight, and even if their combat power is discounted by another 50%, three brigade equivalents can be added to the NATO total, bringing the Russia–NATO force ratio down to 14:14, or one to one.

Airpower and air defence

Whether NATO’s objective is to recapture territory taken by Russia, or to defend Poland, airpower will be a critical element of the campaign. This has been true of modern ground-force operations since the advent of combat aircraft early in the First World War. Airpower is particularly important in mechanised warfare, in which the responsiveness of airpower can be a useful counter to the sudden changes on the battlefield that armoured and mechanised clashes often produce. This dynamic could prove particularly salient in any campaign in Eastern Europe under present conditions, because, in contrast to the Second World War and the Cold War, the ratio of ground units to space is low, producing a greater possibility of fast-moving battles of manoeuvre.

‘Defending Europe’ uses the same front-wide force-ratio heuristic to assess European airpower as it does to assess land power. ‘All other things being near equal’, say the authors, ‘platform numbers around parity favour the defender strongly. A force structure 50% larger than that assessed to be currently deployable would offer an uncertain outcome, while a deployed force double the size of the current estimate would provide a generally favourable outcome.’41 They cite no source for this statement and I could find none myself. After counting available Russian and European aircraft, they conclude that NATO needs an additional 264 top-quality tactical fighters in combat units to achieve a 2:1 superiority and thus be able to take the offensive with hope of success.42 The study offers a narrative about the kind of air operations that would attend a NATO counter-offensive. Quite rightly, it notes that they would be complex and demanding, as modern Russian surface-to-air missile systems are quite good, and Russian forces would be fighting on their own ground, with hardened and redundant communications systems and an integrated air-defence system. These assets would need to be suppressed in order to operate aircraft against ground targets while avoiding potential losses that could be high enough to scuttle the operation. If we apply the IISS heuristic that the attacking air force should outnumber that of the defender by 2:1, NATO would experience no shortage of aircraft for a major defensive operation in Poland. ‘Defending Europe’ credits Russia with roughly 296 combat aircraft, and NATO with 400, a ratio of 1.35:1 in NATO’s favour, which would be defending.43 By the very criteria of the IISS analysis, Russian air forces are plainly inadequate to support a ground offensive deep into Poland. This is not to say that Russia could not attempt such a ground offensive. Russia has many assets to put in play, including cruise missiles and tactical ballistic missiles.44 And Russian ground forces typically drag along with them mobile air-defence assets that would give NATO’s supporting aircraft a tough time. Nevertheless, establishing a NATO defensive umbrella over Poland, and employing tactical aircraft to directly support NATO’s ground forces in that country, are much easier tasks than trying to crack open prepared Russian air and ground defences in Belarus, Kaliningrad and Lithuania.45 Indeed, NATO’s air forces should, in some measure, be able to compensate for the mobile surface-to-air missile systems largely missing from NATO’s ground forces.46

### AT: Generic Retrenchment

#### Only retrenchment can solve inter-state conflict in the Middle East – proven by partial withdrawal under Trump

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As the scholars Hal Brands, Steven Cook, and Kenneth Pollack wrote endorsing the Carter Doctrine and its continuation, “the United States established and upheld the basic rules of conduct in the region: the United States would meet efforts to interfere with the free flow of oil by force; uphold freedom of navigation; demand that regional powers give up their irredentist claims on other states or face grave consequences; and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.” This account is accurate enough (although the last rule on the list always exempted Israel), but the story glosses over how the policy also gave cover to U.S. allies for some fairly destabilizing behaviors of their own. That’s an omission Brands makes in a Bloomberg article, too, where he points to Saudi Arabia’s slaughter of the Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi to argue that a “post-American Middle East will not be stable and peaceful. It will be even nastier and more turbulent than it is today.” And in the words of U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham in 2018, “If it weren’t for the United States, they’d be speaking Farsi in about a week in Saudi Arabia.” All this without a nod to the fact that, if anything, the United States’ protection of the Saudi regime has enabled its promotion of terrorism and its destabilizing activities in the region, which have, in turn, prompted further Iranian response. Assertions about the United States’ pivotal role in the Middle East, no matter how often repeated, have not been proved true. Iran, ravaged by sanctions, corruption, and economic mismanagement, is nowhere near establishing hegemony in the region. Saudi Arabia spends more than five times as much on its military than does Iran; the entire Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, and the UAE—outspends Iran by a factor of eight. Meanwhile, whereas Iran has no nuclear weapons yet undergoes more inspections than any other country, Israel has a nuclear weapons program with no international transparency whatsoever. Iran may have been adept at taking advantage of U.S. overextension and missteps in the last few decades, but establishing hegemony is a different matter altogether. Further, the region did not fall into deeper chaos as a result of Trump’s earlier refusal to get into a shooting war with Iran after attacks by Iranian proxies against Saudi oil installations in September 2019. Critics lamented the president’s decision as an abandonment of the Carter Doctrine, calling it a disaster for the GCC and warning that it may even prompt Saudi Arabia to seek nuclear weapons. Recognizing that the U.S. military was no longer at their disposal, Saudi Arabia and the UAE began exercising the diplomatic options that had always been available to them. Instead, recognizing that the U.S. military was no longer at their disposal, Saudi Arabia and the UAE began exercising the diplomatic options that had always been available to them. For its part, Saudi Arabia stepped up direct talks with Houthi rebels in Yemen as a way to ease tensions with their backer, Iran. The level of violence on both sides declined as a result, and more than 100 prisoners of war were released. In November, the United Nations’ Yemen envoy, Martin Griffiths, reported an 80 percent reduction in Saudi-led airstrikes, and there were no Yemeni deaths in the previous two weeks. Recognizing that the U.S. military was no longer at their disposal, Saudi Arabia and the UAE began exercising the diplomatic options that had always been available to them. Riyadh also opted to reduce tensions with Qatar, a former ally that had become a nemesis. The Saudi government seemingly ordered its notorious Twitter army to tone down the insults against Qatar and its emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and some sporting events between the two countries resumed, according to the New York Times. Saudi officials also claimed that they had quietly reached out to Iran via intermediaries seeking ways to ease tensions. Tehran, in turn, welcomed the prospective Saudi-Qatari thaw and, according to the New York Times, floated a peace plan based on a mutual Iranian-Saudi pledge of nonaggression. An even stronger change of heart occurred in Abu Dhabi. In July, the UAE started withdrawing troops from Yemen. The same month, it participated in direct talks with Tehran to discuss maritime security. It even released $700 million in funds to Iran in contradiction to the Trump administration’s maximum pressure strategy. Some of these measures may have been more tactical than strategic. Saudi Arabia may have reduced tensions with Qatar and the Houthis in order to better situate itself for a confrontation with Tehran down the road or to offset international condemnation of its killing of Khashoggi, human rights abuses at home, and brutal tactics in Yemen. The UAE, too, may have felt that a tactical reduction of tensions was warranted. Nevertheless, as the United States appeared poised to back out of the region, its erstwhile allies’ calculations tilted toward diplomacy. The Saudis and Emiratis simply had no choice but to cease some of their recklessness because they could no longer operate under the protection of the United States. If stability in the Middle East is the United States’ main goal, Washington should have celebrated rather than bemoaned these developments. In the wake of the U.S. assassination of Suleimani—which some former U.S. officials have called an act of war—the calculations may change once more. According to Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi, Suleimani was in Iraq to bring him Tehran’s response to a message from Riyadh on how to defuse regional tensions, presumably as part of the House of Saud’s renewed interest in diplomacy. The Iraqis, according to him, were mediating between the two rivals, an initiative that has now been thrown into question. Iran may very well conclude, rightly or wrongly, that Saudi Arabia and the UAE conspired with Washington to assassinate Suleimani and as a result not only end the recent diplomacy but also target Riyadh and Abu Dhabi as part of the revenge for Suleimani’s death. This is yet one more instance, it seems, in which U.S. activities in the region have brought more turmoil than stability. To be sure, there is no guarantee that recent diplomatic efforts would have been successful. A more responsible Riyadh might not have begotten a more responsible Tehran. But it is noteworthy that diplomacy did not even begin in earnest until Washington clearly demonstrated its unwillingness to entangle itself in a war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. And by returning to the region in a show of military force, Trump may once again disincentivize the United States’ allies from taking diplomacy seriously. They may even interpret Suleimani’s killing as a license to resume their recklessness—activities like Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s purported kidnapping of the Lebanese prime minister and ordering of the dismemberment of Khashoggi; Saudi Arabia and the UAE’s imposition of a blockade on Qatar; and the two countries’ further destabilization of Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen. As in the past, in other words, it seems as if the Middle East’s descent into chaos is more likely with the United States than without it.

#### Only retrenchment can avoid the worst effects of US hegemonic collapse

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The backdrop to American power is now this re-emerging world island. And in a time when the US is largely seen to be ‘in decline’, even by the American public (a March 2019 Pew Survey said that 60 per cent of Americans think the US’ stature in the world will shrink over the next 30 years), what matters, as much for America as for the world, is the choices Washington makes in the near future. In Twilight of the Titans: Great Power Decline and Retrenchment (2018), Paul K MacDonald and Joseph M Parent, analysing the cases of Britain, France and Russia, contend that ‘declining states perform comparatively well in militarized disputes’. But their most significant find is that, when in decline, ‘states that retrench recover their prior rank with some regularity, but those that fail to retrench never do’. This can be explained by understanding the truism that what matters is not a state’s own trajectory but ‘how the trajectory changes its position relative to others’. Retrenchment is the commonest response to decline and it reduces costs. A retrenching great power switches to a foreign policy ‘less active, less ambitious, and less burdensome’. In this line of argument, challenging theories of grand strategy and war, the ‘biggest danger may not be the impending Sino-American transition itself, but the widespread belief that it makes war more likely’. So, how does Donald Trump’s withdrawal from Syria square with the assassination of Qassem Soleimani or the Middle East peace plan? To understand US foreign policy in the Trump era, a medium-term background is necessary. The most significant breakthrough for Cold War US foreign policy was under the arch-realist Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor-cum-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger when the détente with China was established. Ronald Reagan, not a realist in the Nixon mould, reacting to Jimmy Carter’s shock at the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the bungling of the Iranian hostage crisis, abandoned the Nixon-era caution and got away with it. But two things still took America by surprise: the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. That surprise, however, soon led to elation and the brief return to realism evidenced in the George HW Bush presidency (who built a coalition of 39 states to eject Iraq from Kuwait and limited the war’s objectives) was replaced by the pursuit of what has been called ‘liberal hegemony’. Building on the Cold War’s culture war, combining hard and soft power through institutions and individuals, this was American foreign policy at its most ambitious and arrogant and it made the three presidencies of Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama a continuum, notwithstanding the divergences in detail. Under Clinton, the US sought to remake post-Soviet Russia in America’s image—economically, culturally and politically. The failure was epic. In a March 2018 essay in American Affairs, former State Department Russia advisor James Carden wrote: ‘The failure of this project has contributed to the present animus towards Russia and continues to hinder more reasonable diplomatic relations.’ This was a long way from George F Kennan’s 1947 article in Foreign Affairs with which America’s Cold War foreign policy had begun, an article that had called for a firm containment of the Soviet Union, not motivated ideologically but strategically. Managing the post-Cold War was America’s second failure on the world stage (bigger than the hot war in Vietnam). In 1992, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney had stopped a military modernisation plan, the need for which was felt soon after. Nevertheless, America did not retrench after the Soviet collapse. In The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities (2018), political scientist John J Mearsheimer battles for a new realism because ‘[l]iberal states have a crusader mentality hardwired into them that is hard to maintain’. But while he proposes a policy of restraint, Mearsheimer is an ‘offensive realist’ as opposed to ‘defensive realists’ who want to have nothing to do with hegemony. MacDonald and Parent might counter the assumption of defensive realism that a hegemonic power would sooner or later be reduced by a coalition of its rivals, because what matters is the relative trajectory of the declining state. But to extend the idea, even if it somewhat contradicts their thesis on retrenchment, it could also be argued that a reduction in the defence budget and curtailing alliance engagements would not reduce the risks for America. Mearsheimer’s belief that ‘a foreign policy based on realism is likely to be less warlike than one based on liberalism’ was nearly proved by Nixon but while the offensive realist finds the defensive realist proposal of mere ‘offshore balancing’ inadequate and dangerous, there is agreement that the US needs to abandon the crusading liberal hegemony in place since the Clinton years.

## AT: LIO

### AT: LIO =/= Heg

#### The LIO maintains the hegemon

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According to LIO theorists, the order is characterized by hierarchy, not anarchy—that is, the lack of an international institution or state that can prevent the use of military force and enforce international agreements. In the international relations theory literature, hierarchy has a variety of meanings and logics. The **LIO is grounded in** a narrow conception of the term: **hierarchy** is manifest in legitimate political authority between superordinate and subordinate states.[23](javascript:;) John Ikenberry explains that in hierarchical systems, “order is established or imposed by a leading state wielding concentrated power and authority … hierarchical orders can vary widely in terms of the degree to which superordinate and subordinate roles are established and maintained by such factors as coercive power, legitimate authority, institutionalized relations, and a division of labor.”[24](javascript:;) In a liberal hegemonic order, legitimate authority plays a large role, whereas coercion plays a limited role. The legitimacy of the most powerful state reflects its willingness to rely on bargaining to achieve consensus.[25](javascript:;) **The LIO is built on negotiated rule**s that all states, including the most powerful state, accept. Consequently, **the weaker states consider the most powerful state's overwhelming influence** in establishing the terms of the consensus **to be legitimate**.[26](javascript:;) Accordingly, **the weaker states are less likely** to **try to overturn the agreement or regime**, which increases the most powerful state's prospects for maintaining its position over the long run. Nevertheless, **the structural relationship between the states is hierarchical,** **because the most powerful state disproportionately influences the terms** of the agreement. David Lake offers a different understanding of hierarchy, based on a concept of “relational authority.” He states that “in a relational approach, authority is understood to rest on an exchange relationship between dominant and subordinate states, in which the former provides a social order in return for compliance and legitimacy from the latter.”[27](javascript:;) Legitimacy conferred by the subordinate (weaker) power to the superordinate (stronger) power distinguishes the product of relational authority from standard bargained agreements. Central to Lake's understanding of legitimacy is duty: “It is the duty to comply with the ruler's commands—or alternatively the legitimacy of those commands—that renders authority and coercion conceptually distinct.”[28](javascript:;)

### AT: LIO Solves War

#### The LIO can’t prevent Russia and China from acting like rogue states – the rise of authoritarianism makes “liberal activism” non-responsive

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Though Afghanistan sounded the death knell of liberal internationalism, the bells had been tolling for some time. The rise ofauthoritarianism, the failure of concerted action on climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic presented challenges that liberal internationalism lacked the tools to deal with. **Liberal activism’s characteristic response**—human rights “naming and shaming”—**became irrelevant as authoritarians grew shameless**, consolidating their grip within global powers like Russia and China, as well as smaller players like Turkey and Venezuela. The prime objective of a liberal internationalist foreign policy—the strengthening of a “rules-based international order”—foundered against this new reality. **Great powers began acting like rogue states**. **China** [**took hostages**](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/29/meng-wanzhou-michael-kovrig-michael-spavor-china-analysis) to force the release of one of its nationals; it **lied about the pandemic**, **stole intellectual property from** its **competitors**, **extinguished freedom in Hong Kong** and threatened Taiwan with invasion. **In Russia**, **Putin**’s regime poisoned adversaries in foreign countries, **used cyberwarfare to spread disinformation i**n American domestic elections **and gave rebels in Ukraine the weaponry to** [**shoot down**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28357880) **a commercial airliner**, sending hundreds of people to their deaths. Nor was “our” side immune to the temptations of rogue behavior. The U.S. and its Israeli ally used targeted assassination against scientists and military commanders in Iraq and Iran. If we add all these pieces together, they tell us **the** **world** long ago **left “the rules based international order” behind**.

## Offshore Balancing

### 2NC---Generic---Ext: Offshore Balancing Good

#### Offshore balancing is empirically proven to be successful – past instances of onshoring have only ended in failure

Walt ’20 – Professor of International Affairs [Stephen; STEPHEN M. WALT is Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School; 5-5-20; " The United States Forgot Its Strategy for Winning Cold Wars?”; https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/05/offshore-balancing-cold-war-china-us-grand-strategy/; Foreign Affairs; accessed 7-7-2022; AH]

Gady’s article is an interesting historical narrative, and it reminds us that U.S. strategy in the early Cold War was not preordained. But like other contemporary critics of offshore balancing, Gady does not fully grasp the underlying logic behind this strategy. As a result, he mistakenly believes that Cold War containment was at odds with offshore balancing. This is wrong: Containment during the Cold War was a clear application of **offshore balancing’s** central principles. Gady’s account portrays offshore balancing as something of a halfway house between true isolationism—the position long identified with Taft that he had abandoned by the early 1950s—and the policy of containment that the United States pursued throughout the Cold War. This view is clearly reflected in his claim that “[a]t the core, an offshore balancing strategy for the United States means maintaining regional hegemony in the Western hemisphere while maintaining a balance of power in Asia and Europe, chiefly through allied nations buoyed by U.S. military aid, thus preventing any other great power from dominating these geo-strategically important regions” (my emphasis). This description might sound correct at first glance, but Gady misses an essential feature of the strategy: Whether the United States can safely remain offshore depends on the configuration of power in the “geo-strategically important region” in question. Although the United States may be able to rely on “allied nations buoyed by U.S. military aid” in some circumstances, this policy is not possible if the states in the relevant region are too weak to balance a potential hegemon on their own. Under these conditions, an offshore balancer must commit its own power—including its own military forces—in that key region to ensure that no single power is able to **dominate and control it.** This principle explains why Britain—the original offshore balancer—sent its own troops onto the European continent against Napoleonic France, Wilhelmine Germany and its allies, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union. The United States acted similarly in the **two world wars** and in the **Cold War** too. This prescription follows directly from offshore balancing’s core logic. It is a realist strategy, which views a favorable distribution of hard power (economic capacity, scientific prowess, military strength, etc.) as the primary source of U.S. national security. Spreading democracy, building institutions, expanding trade, etc., may be worthy goals in their own right and can sometimes help at the margin, but at the end of the day U.S. security is determined largely by the balance of power in areas of **critical strategic importance.** This belief was the basis for Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine, policies that eventually established the United States as the only great power in the Western Hemisphere. By expanding across North America and driving the European powers out, the United States was able to keep dangerous adversaries at a distance, thereby maximizing its own security and freedom of action. Every other major power has either been invaded or suffered sustained attacks at home on one or more occasions during the past 200 years—but not the United States. Being the world’s only regional hegemon has not only made Americans safer. It eventually made it possible for them to intervene abroad without having to worry much about defending their own soil. Since becoming a great power, the United States has also sought to prevent any other great power from singlehandedly dominating Europe, East Asia, or the Persian Gulf. These regions are important because Europe and East Asia are the key centers of industrial power, while the Gulf is the source of much of the oil and gas that fuels the world economy. Were any single country able to dominate Europe or East Asia, it might eventually control greater economic resources than the United States and be able to outpace it in an arms race. That superpower might form alliances with other countries in the Western Hemisphere and bring its own power to bear close to the U.S. homeland. Similarly, a hostile hegemon in the Persian Gulf (or an outside great power that moved into and dominated that region) might be able to manipulate oil supplies in ways that could damage the U.S. economy. Preventing a hegemon from emerging in these key regions provides an additional benefit: It ensures that the major powers in Eurasia will tend to worry more about each other than about the United States. As a result, some of these states are usually eager for U.S. support and thus more willing to do Washington’s bidding. For all of these reasons, it makes good sense for the United States to maintain a dominant position in the Western Hemisphere and help prevent another great power from establishing a similar position in its own neighborhood. Several implications follow directly from this logic. First, the proper role and size of the U.S. national security establishment depend on the distribution of power in the key regions. If there is no potential hegemon in sight, there is **little reason to deploy U.S. ground or air forces** in distant areas and less need for a military establishment that far outstrips those of the other great powers. The United States should still maintain a first-class military and keep a watchful eye on developments around the world, but it **does not need to garrison much of the planet** or use force to spread liberal principles far and wide If a potential hegemon does appear, the United States should rely on local forces in the threatened region as the first line of defense, calibrating its support for these local actors with the level of the challenge and their own capabilities. If these regional states cannot contain a potential hegemon on their own, then the United States must commit its own military power to the region to make sure the potential hegemon cannot overawe and dominate its neighbors while at the same time making sure that its local partners bear a fair share of the costs of containment. During the Cold War, the essential features of **containment followed this basic logic perfectly**. U.S. leaders did not believe that the local powers in Europe or East Asia could stand up to the Soviet challenge on their own, which is why Washington deployed substantial U.S. forces to these critical regions in peacetime. Of course, it might have been preferable in the abstract for the United States to pass the buck to others, but the distribution of power in Europe and Asia at the time made buck-passing infeasible. There was no potential hegemon in the Persian Gulf, however, and the Soviet Union did not seriously threaten to invade that region during the Cold War. Nevertheless, to maintain the local balance of power and limit Soviet influence, the **United States relied on Britain** (until the mid-1960s) and on local clients such as Iran. After the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979 and Iran became an adversary, Washington created the Rapid Deployment Force. But it kept this force offshore and over the horizon and did not send significant forces into the region until Iraq seized Kuwait in 1990. This clear and obvious threat to the regional balance of power led the United States to organize a large coalition—in which its own forces played the predominant role—to expel Iraq from Kuwait. This operation was fully consistent with offshore balancing: The first Gulf War was an occasion when it made sense for the United States to go “onshore.” Most importantly, whenever the United States has abandoned offshore balancing and pursued a different strategy, the results have invariably been **disastrous**. The Vietnam War was not consistent with offshore balancing, for example, because, as realist critics such as Walter Lippmann, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz emphasized, Indochina was not a vital strategic region and its fate could not alter the global balance of power in any meaningful way. The Clinton administration’s adoption of “dual containment” in the Gulf and the recent U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya were also misguided departures from offshore balancing, as they had little to do with maintaining a favorable balance of power. Indeed, in the case of Iraq, it shattered the local balance in the Persian Gulf to the benefit of Iran.

#### Switching to offshore balancing is the best way to remedy current foreign policy issues and prevent war

Ashford ‘21 [Emma; EMMA ASHFORD is a Senior Fellow at the New American Engagement Initiative at the Atlantic Council’s Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security.; 8-24-21; " Strategies of Restraint”; https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-08-24/strategies-restraint; Foreign Affairs; accessed 7-7-2022; AH]

Both approaches to the world are still problematic. A rebooted liberal internationalism may succeed at rehabilitating the United States’ image, but it is unlikely to advance democracy or build a unified liberal order through nonmilitary means when military ones have failed. And as the global balance of power shifts, liberal internationalism simultaneously overestimates the contributions that U.S. allies can make to collective defense and underestimates the differences they have with Washington. The “America first” approach, for its part, may yield short-term dividends—Trump, after all, was able to force U.S. allies to abide by sanctions on Iran and renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement—but it has diminishing returns. The more the United States uses coercive tools against other countries, the more they will look for ways to blunt those tools. And both approaches lean heavily on a forward U.S. military presence in ways that could all too easily **trigger** an unplanned **conflict**, particularly in Asia. The remaining alternative, **restraint**, comes from outside the Washington policymaking world and is largely focused on these **flaws**. It is far more ideologically diverse than the other two, but most restrainers agree on several core principles. They share a conviction that the United States is a remarkably secure nation, that unlike many great powers in history, it faces no real threat of invasion, thanks to geography and nuclear weapons. They argue that U.S. foreign policy has been characterized in recent years by overreach and hubris, with predictably abysmal results. And they think U.S. foreign policy is overmilitarized, with policymakers spending too much on defense and too quickly resorting to force. Most important, advocates of restraint strike directly at the notion of the United States as the indispensable nation, considering it instead as but one among many global powers. RESTRAINT’S MOMENT The most common slap at restrainers is that they focus too much on criticism without offering plausible policy alternatives. That is not an entirely accurate evaluation; individual proponents of restraint have offered detailed prescriptions for everything from the war in Afghanistan to U.S.-Russian relations. But it is true that restrainers have often focused on what draws them together—namely, their shared criticisms of the status quo—rather than what would pull them apart: the question of which specific policies to implement instead. As restraint enters the mainstream conversation, the distinctions within this group are coming to the surface. Restraint contains several different overlapping ideas. The first (and best defined) of these is an academic theory of grand strategy formulated by the political scientist Barry Posen in his 2014 book, Restraint. His version of restraint envisages a much smaller military based primarily within the United States. Other restrainers—such as the international relations theorists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt—advocate a grand strategy of **offshore balancing**, a distinct but related approach that also calls for downsizing the United States’ global military role. (The distinction between the two is one of degree: Posen backs an entirely offshore military presence, whereas Mearsheimer and Walt admit that the United States may occasionally need to intervene to keep a hostile state from dominating a key region.) As grand strategies, both leave many granular policy details unstated, but they present **internally coherent** and **fully formulated** approaches to the world. There is also a looser definition of “restraint.” Increasingly, the term is Washington shorthand for any proposal for a less militarized and activist foreign policy. That includes those put forth not just by academic realists but also by progressive Democrats and conservative Republicans in Congress, as well as various antiwar groups (such as Code Pink and the Friends Committee on National Legislation) and newer entrants into the antiwar space (such as the veterans’ group Common Defense). Thus, the term “restraint” is now used as often to signify this broader political movement as it is to describe a grand strategy. Any movement that includes Mearsheimer and Code Pink is by necessity a big tent, and indeed, there are many motivations for restraint. For some, it might be a moral consideration: many libertarians believe that war grows the state, and anti-imperialists want to rein in what they see as an overbearing military-industrial complex. For others, the motivation is financial: although conservative deficit hawks are far less vocal on defense than on other issues, they exist, and many progressives and even some mainstream Democrats view cuts to military spending as an easy way to **free up resources** for infrastructure or social programs. For others in the restraint community, it is personal: some of the recent activism around ending the **war on terrorism** has been driven by veterans who are concerned about what the conflict has done to their fellow soldiers and to American society writ large. Then there are the strategists, for whom the pursuit of restraint is largely about **avoiding the failures** and risks of the current approach. There are even those who might be called “restraint-curious,” people who are open to a more restrained foreign policy on specific issues but reject the broader notion.

### 2NC---China---Offshore Balancing Good

#### Offshore balancing checks Chinese revisionism – it helps redirect resources to enable effective US containment

Walt ’20 – Professor of International Affairs [Stephen; STEPHEN M. WALT is Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School; 5-5-20; " The United States Forgot Its Strategy for Winning Cold Wars?”; https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/05/offshore-balancing-cold-war-china-us-grand-strategy/; Foreign Affairs; accessed 7-7-2022; AH]

The situation in Asia is dramatically different. China is a potential hegemon in Asia, and it will remain one long after the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us. Although Asia contains a number of capable medium-sized powers, such as Japan, South Korea, and India, it will not be easy for them to form an effective balancing coalition. In this case, the United States needs to coordinate this effort and commit its own forces. Buck-passing will not work. Although U.S. military forces will have to be onshore in a number of places in Asia, this policy is still **fully consistent with the grand strategy of offshore balancing.** To be sure, preventing China from establishing regional hegemony in Asia cannot stop Beijing from trying to build influence through its Belt and Road Initiative or stop it from engaging in other efforts to expand its diplomatic reach. But it would help limit Chinese influence by maintaining an active U.S. presence in Asia and forcing China to focus most of its attention closer to home. By reducing the U.S. commitment to Europe and ending its costly military involvements in the Middle East, **offshore balancing would also free up resources** that will be needed to meet a future Chinese challenge, a problem that may be increasingly acute in the post-coronavirus fiscal environment. Why is it a problem when people misrepresent offshore balancing? Because we are finally having a serious and long overdue debate about the proper grand strategy for the United States. The **stakes are high**, as the many failures that flowed from liberal hegemony—the flawed grand strategy that U.S. leaders pursued during the unipolar moment—make clear. Protagonists often try to win policy debates by distorting their opponents’ views, by falsely associating their own recommendations with past successes, and by denying any responsibility for repeated failures. Deciding which strategic options should guide U.S. policy in the future depends first and foremost on a proper understanding of the different alternatives. An accurate understanding of **offshore balancing** will reveal that it provided the foundation most of America’s foreign-**policy successes**, while departures from that strategy lie at the root of some of the **country’s biggest missteps.**

## Multipolarity

### Multipolarity is Peaceful

#### Multipolarity is the only way to ensure world peace. Pursuing hegemony is detrimental, emboldening aggression and chaos.

Köchler, PhD, 17

(Hans, professor of philosophy at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, Peace in a multipolar world, April 20,

http://hanskoechler.com/Koechler-Peace-Multipolar-World-Current\_Concerns\_2017-25-07.pdf)

Multipolarity: **power parallelogram of peace**? Perhaps we should pause here briefly and make sure we understand the nature of order in relations between states. In the era of globalization, it is an ever more complex system of interaction and dependence on different levels. As a multidimensional framework of interaction, including the economic, political, socio-cultural and military dimensions, it is dynamic from the outset. It exists in no other than the dynamic form. In this sense, the stability of world order is always to be understood as relative. Stability sensu stricto is an unattainable ideal. The respective world order is a parallelogram of forces that results from the complex interaction of the interests of state actors and – in our increasingly globalized world – non-state actors alike. This necessarily implies a perpetual struggle for influence, in fact a struggle for power that results from the collective will of the citizens of all states. As I have indicated earlier, this collective will is not per se ethically motivated – oriented, for example, at the principle of mutuality, or mutual respect. Rather, it is guided by the natural pursuit of advantage, aimed towards the benefits the respective governments promise their citizens in order to legitimize their rule. Whether we like it or not, the reality of international relations is such that normative considerations are of secondary importance. Only when more and more people become aware that the **reckless pursuit of interests** by each state, acting in isolation, is ultimately **detrimental** to all, will normative ideas gain traction. Acknowledging the constraints of realpolitik, but without giving up on the ideal, one thus might be resigned to the wisdom of “better late than never.” The aspect of **mutuality is essential** for international law as well. Mutuality is, above all, the normative foundation of the **sovereign equality** of states. Philosophically speaking, the principle of sovereign equality can, in theory, also be derived from the **universal validity of human rights.** In actual fact, however, the continually changing world order, centered on the state as sovereign agent, is the result of the articulation and assertion of interests by a multitude of actors and on multiple levels. It is not a deliberately created system of inter-state relations based on rules on the normative validity of which all would agree. If this were the case, the history of conflicts would have come to an end with the entry into force of the United Nations Charter in 1945. Since its very foundation, the ultimate goal of the world organisation has been the safeguarding of world peace. According to the binding norms and strict procedural rules of the Charter, especially the provisions of collective security under Chapter VII, a state of peace should thus have prevailed from this point onwards. It is also an undeniable fact that world order is often the result of a war which reconfigures, or redefines, global power relations, at least for a certain time. The creation of the League of Nations after the First and the United Nations Organization after the Second World War are testimony of this. Both organizations came into existence as result of global armed conflict, and their statutes reflected – resp. reflect – the power constellation after the preceding war. With regard to the UN, this notably applies to the veto privilege of the five states that were the victorious powers of World War II. Writing that privilege into the organisation’s Charter (Article 27),6 they aimed to eternalise the position of power they enjoyed at the time, trying, as it were, “to stop time.” (The Charter cannot be amended without the consent of those states.) However, the actors, as ambitious as they may be, here too have come to the bitter realization – I say this not without irony – that time cannot be brought to a halt. Today’s power constellation is no longer that of 1945. The community of states has entered a phase of radical change, indeed global interregnum. The transition from a unipolar to a multipolar order has become more and more obvious – as “unintended consequence” of an unrestrained, often militarily enforced, assertion of power. Collective security in a multipolar world In these times of global change, the United Nations Charter might gain new relevance nevertheless: namely as normative framework, or body of rules, for the emerging multipolar balance of power. The UN system of collective security could well serve as a **blueprint of a future order of peace**. However, progress in that direction will only be possible if the structure of the Security Council is adapted to the new realities. Vested with almost unlimited powers, the supreme executive organ of the UN – of which Hans Morgenthau spoke as the “Holy Alliance” of our time – is indeed construed along the lines of a multipolar balance of power. The five veto-wielding permanent members were meant to hold each other in check in all decisions on the maintenance or restoration of peace. The Charter of the United Nations does not provide a framework for unipolar rule, but embodies the multipolar constellation of 1945, with the five great powers of the time as permanent members (United States, France, Great Britain, China [initially: Republic of China], Soviet Union [now: Russia]). Because of the veto, the Council is only able to act on the basis of consensus among those states between which there should ideally exist a balance of power. This was the expectation of the founders of the organization in the final phase of the Second World War. In the course of the Cold War, however, the multipolar architecture of the Charter became outdated rather quickly. The development of military technology led to an arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. This resulted in a bipolar balance of power between these two antagonists, which, in turn, meant the marginalisation of the role of the other permanent members and, ultimately, a paralysis of the Security Council due to the mutual blockage of these two veto-wielding states. What was conceived in 1945, albeit with different intention (for the sake of perpetuating the power constellation of the moment), is, nonetheless, still relevant today. ” Peace between a multitude of sovereign actors, i.e. in a multipolar framework, can **only be secured cooperatively** and **not through** an unrestrained **competition for power** and privilege. This is, I believe, the essence of the system of collective security according to Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Decisions on the maintenance of peace, i.e. the enforcement of the prohibition of the threat or use of force between states, must be reached by way of unanimity between the permanent members. The real meaning of the “veto” – a word nowhere to be found in the Charter – is consensus among the most powerful states who bear special responsibility because they possess the means of enforcement. 7 In statutory terms, the veto is certainly not about bolstering an agenda of power politics in the interest of each of the permanent members. In order not to create false hopes, one must emphasize here that the rule that prescribes unanimity among the permanent members in matters of collective security only makes sense if a party to a dispute is obliged to abstain from voting. This is not the case under the present statute. (Most observers of international affairs are not in any way aware of it.) According to the Charter, a permanent member that launches aggression against another country can prevent a decision of the Council in this matter by simply vetoing it. Would the basic legal principle of bias be ignored in such a way at the domestic level, any person having committed a violation of the law could be judge in his own cause. Whichever way you look at it, this is actually the case under the decision-making rules of the UN, according to the wording of Article 27 of the Charter.8 The idealists who expect nothing but good of the UN easily tend to overlook the so-called fine print in the text of the Charter. After all, the UN is not as perfect as one would wish it to be – and it never will be, even if the provisions of the Charter were implemented up to the last comma. Because of the dictates of power politics, the text contains serious normative contradictions that undermine the very system that the UN is supposed to promote.9 In view of this systemic inconsistency it is of particular importance that the Charter – reflecting the power balance between the victors of World War II – should be adapted to the newly emerging multipolar constellation. The development towards multipolarity has become more and more apparent in the wake of the regional crises we mentioned earlier; for the time being at least, it is not a result of World War III. One can only hope that this will remain so in the future. The adaptation of the Charter would mean that decisions of the Security Council on the maintenance or restoration of peace are reached on the basis of consensus among the global regions. In a multipolar world it will no longer be possible to **exclude entire continents** – Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia – from the decision-making processes. Should this continue to be the case, systemic instability in the emerging multipolar framework will further increase and the United Nations Organization will, so to speak, abolish itself, i.e. make itself obsolete. Accordingly, the United Nations Organization must undertake a process of reform that will give regional intergovernmental organizations the status of permanent members in the Security Council. Possible candidates would be the African Union or the European Union (the latter replacing France and the United Kingdom as state members). If one were to keep the veto rule, decisions on war and peace, i.e. coercive measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, including the use of armed force, would have to be taken by way of consensus among the global regions. Such a procedure might also better protect the interests of a weaker state party, being part of a larger regional grouping, in a bilateral confrontation with another state, whether within or outside that grouping. Whatever the system of intergovernmental rules or procedures may be, one has to admit that genuine peace cannot be established by **executive fiat**. In conformity with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter, orientation towards the **consensus principle is decisive**. It is also more realistic in a multipolar framework than in a unipolar one where stability is achieved by pressure and coercion.

#### Multipolar cooperation promotes democracy and solves foreign aggression.

Patriota, 17

(Antonio de Aguiar, Brazilian ambassador to Italy, Malta and San Marino and permanent representative of Brazil to the United Nations from, Cooperative Multipolarity: Is the World Ready?  
https://risingpowersproject.com/world-ready-cooperative-multipolarity/)

Cooperative Multipolarity is **Achievable** Former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski has spoken of the current geopolitical configuration as one without historic precedent, with none of the three top military powers in a position to assume a hegemonic role. In this respect Simon Reich and Richard Ned Lebow (2014, 183) correctly point out that “ultimately, **hegemony** is **difficult to reconcile with democracy**”. It is undeniable that in the emerging multipolar configuration of power divergent agendas and world views will continue to collide and could well lead to open hostility and destructive competition. But it is also true that cooperative, and increasingly inclusive forms of interaction are happening every day on important, unifying issues, through multilateral arrangements which – although described as “American led” by some – in reality reflect an evolutionary path paved with the **engaged** **participation** of many nations large and small. Cooperative multipolarity is therefore achievable and can be seen as the next, **more** **democratic** and just stage in the evolutionary path of the international system. Important achievements, brought about through the active leadership of the victors of World War II, provide a **firm foundation** for our future efforts. These include the ruling out of the use of military force, except in situations of self-defense or in accordance with specific multilateral authorization, respect for the universality of human rights, as well as compliance with a vast body of international law establishing rights and obligations in a wide range of topics – from trade, finance and social justice, to health, education and culture. Of the three “pillars” that compose the triad of the UN’s field of activity – namely, development, human rights, peace and security – it is possible to affirm that a process of modernization and adaptation to new contemporary realities has been successfully advancing with respect to the first two. Such is the meaning of the universally applicable 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015; such is the sense of the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council created ten years ago. In the peace and security realm, however, there is considerable room for improvement. But the situation is not hopeless. The militarism of the first years of the 21st century has come to illustrate the limitations of the use of force to confront new challenges posed by violent extremism conducive to terrorism, opening opportunities for cooperation on prevention. An effective combination of multilateral and bilateral diplomacy has produced **constructive outcomes** in dealing with **thorny issues** such as the **Iranian nuclear file.**

#### History proves that multipolarity is peaceful.

Patriota, 17

(Antonio de Aguiar, Brazilian ambassador to Italy, Malta and San Marino and permanent representative of Brazil to the United Nations from, Cooperative Multipolarity: Is the World Ready?, May, https://risingpowersproject.com/world-ready-cooperative-multipolarity/)

Historically, several situations provide **useful lessons** or insights for a world in transition such as ours. Two centuries ago a unipolar period came to an end and gave rise to a multipolarity of sorts, after the defeat of the Napoleonic army by the combined strength of Russia, Great Britain, Austria and Prussia. At the Vienna Congress of 1815 a diplomatic effort aimed at reorganizing the European geopolitical landscape can be said to have brought about **several decades of relative stability** based on **new forms of cooperation**. The Concert of Europe was the **precursor** of the high-level conferences to which world leaders and diplomats have become accustomed. The Holy Alliance – though conservative in its objectives and repressive in its methods – could be considered a **pioneer exercise in preserving peace**. Equally noteworthy was the fact that France, although defeated in the battlefield, was not subjected to humiliating treatment by the victors.

## Author Prodicts

### Prodict---Layne

#### Layne was right—US primacy failing new strategy is necessary

**Nye 12** [Joseph S., "Twenty-First Century Will Not Be a “Post-American” World", OUP Academic, https://academic.oup.com/isq/article/56/1/215/1940537?login=true// KS]

Where I suspect that Layne and I might agree is on the need for a new American strategy in a world marked by “the rise of the rest.” We should learn from the prudence of Dwight Eisenhower. The number-one power does not have to man every boundary and be strong everywhere. The attempt to do so would violate Ike's prudence in resisting direct intervention on the side of the French in Vietnam in 1954. Also relevant today is Ike's conviction that it is essential to preserve the strength of the American economy to undergird our military strength. Applied to today's world, an Ike-like strategy would avoid involvement of ground forces in major wars on the Asian continent, even if there was not a fiscal deficit. Counterinsurgency is attractive as a military doctrine in the way that it pays careful attention to the tactical balancing of hard and soft power, but in a strategic sense, it should not lead us into imperial occupation of weak states and “nation building” in places that are beyond our limits. The maxim of avoiding major land wars in Asia or other poor countries does not mean withdrawing a forward military presence from places like Japan and Korea, or ending military assistance of various types to countries like Pakistan or Egypt. Some analysts call this a strategy of “off-shore balancing,” but that term must mean more than just naval and air force activity. An American land presence that is welcome and supported by allies should not be ruled out by a slogan. Eisenhower also understood the limits of what is possible in terms of American domestic institutions and public attitudes. The British historian Niall Ferguson, an enthusiast for empire, lamented at the time of the Iraq War that the United States lacked the capacity for empire because of three domestic deficits: manpower (not enough boots on the ground); attention (not enough public support for long-term occupation); and financial (not enough savings and not enough taxation relative to public expenditure). He was correct. A stomach for empire or colonial occupation is one of the important ways in which American political culture differs from that of imperial Britain. Whether worthy of applause or lament, such are our domestic limits. At the same time, universalistic values are also in the nature of our political culture, but we often promote these values best by being what Ronald Reagan called “a shining city on a hill.” The global information age of the twenty-first century will be different from the past century and will require a better strategy than America used in the past decade, but it will not be a “post-American world.”

## Author Indicts

### Kagan

#### Robert Kagan is a warmonger and wrong about Ukraine

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In the pages of Foreign Affairs, the indefatigable Robert Kagan recently weighed in with yet another fervent appeal on behalf of empire. Ever the true-blue American, Kagan avoids using the offensive E-word, of course. He favors the term hegemony, which, he explains, is benign, involving neither domination nor exploitation but willing submission—“more a condition than a purpose.” Scratch the surface, however, and “The Price of Hegemony” offers a variation on Kagan’s standard theme: the imperative of militarized U.S. global primacy, whatever the price and with little regard for who pays. Few would charge Kagan with being a deep or original thinker. As a writer, he is less philosophe than pamphleteer, albeit one possessing a genuine gift for packaging. Recall, for example, his famous assertion that “Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus.” Once deemed to express a truth of Lippmannesque profundity, this warriors vs. wimps formulation has since lost much of its persuasive appeal, not least because the warriors, a.k.a. “the troops,” have not fared especially well when dispatched to liberate, pacify, or depose. So rather than being enshrined alongside Walter Lippmann, Kagan will likely share the fate of Scotty Reston or Joe Alsop, once prominent Washington-based columnists who are now totally forgotten. Of course, much the same fate awaits the entire gaggle of commentators (this writer included) who pontificate on America’s role in the world under the mistaken impression that senior officials in the White House, Foggy Bottom, or the Pentagon seek their counsel. Rarely do they do so. That said, Kagan stands out from the rest of the pack in one respect: His knack for combining consistency with flexibility is matchless. He is nothing if not nimble. Whatever may occur in the real world, he is ready with an explanation for how events affirm the indispensability of assertive American leadership. In Washington (and in the pages of Foreign Affairs), this is always a welcome conclusion. This nimbleness is vividly on display in his most recent essay, its subtitle posing this question: “Can America Learn to Use Its Power?” Kagan arrives at his own answer—the United States not only can learn but must—even as he ignores altogether what the vigorous expenditure of American power over the past two decades has achieved, and at what cost. So his essay contains various dark references to Russian misbehavior, along with a handful to objectionable actions by China. Perhaps inevitably, Kagan also throws in a few ominous allusions to Germany and Japan in the run up to World War II, in Washington circles the go-to source of authoritative historical instruction. As to post-9/11 U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, however, he is silent. They qualify for not a single mention—none, zero, null, nada. According to Kagan, the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War occurred at least in part due to American passivity. Successive post-Cold War U.S. administrations fell down on the job. Put simply, they did not exert themselves to keep Russia in check. While it would be “obscene to blame the United States for Putin’s inhumane attack on Ukraine,” Kagan writes, to “insist that the invasion was entirely unprovoked is misleading.” The United States had “played a strong hand poorly.” In doing so, it gave Vladimir Putin cause to think that he could get away with aggression. Thus did Washington—as if sitting on its hands during the first two decades of the present century—provoke Moscow. By “wielding U.S. influence more consistently and effectively,” presidents beginning with the elder Bush could have prevented the devastation that Ukrainians have suffered. From Kagan’s point of view, the United States has been too passive. Today, he writes, “the question is whether the United States will continue to make its own mistakes”—mistakes of inaction, in his view—“or whether Americans will learn, once again, that it is better to contain aggressive autocracies early, before they have built up a head of steam.” The reference to containing aggressive autocracies early requires decoding. Kagan is dissimulating. What he is actually proposing is further experiments with preventive war, which in the wake of 9/11 became the centerpiece of U.S. national security policy. Kagan, of course, supported the Bush Doctrine of preventive war. He was all in on invading Iraq. Implemented in 2003 in the form of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Bush Doctrine produced disastrous results. Now, even two decades later, Kagan cannot bring himself to acknowledge the grotesque immensity of that mistake, nor its side effects, to include the rise of Trumpism and all of its ancillary evils. “Can America Learn to Use Its Power?” That this rates as an urgent question is certainly the case. Yet to fancy that Robert Kagan possesses the qualifications to offer an intelligible answer is a delusion.

### Brooks and Mejier

#### Brooks and Mejier underestimate Europe.

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Brooks and Meijer: alliance management and C4ISR

It is not news that military coalitions face management problems. Stephen Brooks and Hugo Meijer believe that a European alliance unaided by the US would face insurmountable difficulties, and Heisbourg seems to agree. Military coalitions work for four main reasons: shared interest, discussed above; a unified command structure; the experience and habits of cooperation; and the sufficiency of a command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) infrastructure for the type of war that the coalition plans to fight. Although shortfalls and obstacles surely exist in these areas, the European alliance would be well placed to address them.

Both the IISS team’s scenario and my own posit that the European alliance would inherit NATO’s existing command structure, though without American officers or US military equipment.5 Brooks and Meijer seem to assume that a US departure would produce the dissolution of the entire extant command structure, and that the Europeans would have to start from scratch. Why they assume this is unstated. In any case, their fight, as they admit, is with the IISS team as much as it is with me, as our analyses share this assumption, though the defensive scenario I advance is likely less demanding on the C4ISR front than the rapid counter-offensive that the IISS team deems essential.

Europeans have also been working together as allies for 70 years. The habits of cooperation, knowledge of one another’s strengths and weaknesses, skills needed to surmount language barriers, and deeper knowledge of one another’s military commanders have been laboriously developed. And there has been a sustained, if constantly challenging, effort to produce common doctrine and standard procedures.6

In addition, Brooks and Meijer intimate that the Europeans lack the autonomous C4ISR capability to run a war. The ‘military satellite’ ledger they offer is somehow meant to convey the parlous state of Europe relative to Russia. But it tells us nothing especially useful, because what we would like to know is what each side needs to address its particular military problems. Overall, Russia has much more challenging C4ISR problems than Europe, partly because its nuclear deterrent, especially its land-based intercontinental-ballistic-missile force, lives in the gunsights of the US military, which is postured to try to eliminate them in the event of a nuclear war. The Russian military also has to cover a vast landmass. In any case, the IISS’s Military Balance 2020, and Brooks and Meijer’s own source, the Union of Concerned Scientists, tell a more nuanced story than the summary table. Europeans have invested in autonomous capability. According to the IISS, the European states deploy nearly as many intelligence-gathering satellites as Russia.7 Furthermore, the authors include in the Russian count the GLONASS navigation satellites but oddly exclude from the European count the Galileo constellation of two dozen navigation satellites in commission.8 Russia does have many more military-communications satellites than Europe, but one suspects that its very different strategic situation is the explanation.

### Heisbourg

#### Heisbourg uses bad methods with inferior inputs, and he critiques the wrong part of Posen’s idea.

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Heisbourg: relative inputs and nuclear deterrence

It is hard to know what to make of Heisbourg’s ironically mistitled contribution, ‘Europe Can Afford the Cost of Autonomy’. After his confirmatory review of the usual factors that make Europe particularly inefficient, one wonders what resources Europe would need to muster to defend itself. Europe already outmatches Russia in key military inputs, including spending and personnel. Sceptics about Europe’s potential for military autonomy obscure or explain away these facts. In addition to the standard arguments, Heisbourg embraces the newly popular admonition that we must compare defence inputs on the basis of purchasing power parity, not exchange rates, bringing European NATO’s favourable spending advantage down from roughly 4:1 to 1.7:1, or $266 billion for Europe to $160bn for Russia.9 Even if we accept this adjustment, a major gap favouring Europe remains. Europe would need to be wildly inefficient to turn this into a net deficiency so grave that it would, in the apparent view of the IISS team and Brooks and Meijer, take 20 years of significantly increased military spending to rectify. Heisbourg concludes that ‘Europe’s starting point is arguably somewhat weaker’ than I suggest, and on account of this he shares the ‘general pessimism’ that I observe in the other commentators. He may be as pessimistic as he wishes, but not on the basis of inferior inputs.

Insofar as my article is titled ‘Europe Can Defend Itself’, Heisbourg is free to introduce the subject of nuclear deterrence. At the same time, I stated clearly that I would not discuss the issue even though it does indeed require serious discussion. My only reference to nuclear weapons was the comment that France and Britain are both nuclear-weapons states, and that Russia would need to take this into account in a decision to launch a war, and in its strategy for the conduct of war. Does ‘existential extended deterrence’ exist in an alliance that includes nuclear and non-nuclear states? What would it deter? Would the members of such a coalition need to take any special steps to make extended deterrence more credible? These are all questions of judgement, which can be informed by theory and experience, but there are no clear and comfortable answers. The extended-nuclear-deterrence relationship between the US and Europe has itself always been a fraught proposition.

Looking beyond my original article, I venture two observations. Firstly, Europeans would be unwise to attempt to revive the original US–NATO strategy of substituting the threat of nuclear escalation for resilient conventional forces. Under US pressure, the Alliance gradually abandoned this strategy between 1960 and 1975, and built up its power of conventional resistance. Once the Soviet Union developed the credible ability to strike the US mainland under most conditions, nuclear first use began to look less attractive to the United States. When the guarantor is vulnerable, it is difficult to make believable the commitment to fire first on another’s behalf.

Furthermore, as Heisbourg correctly argues, Europeans have to consider how they can make extended deterrence credible. This has a diplomatic component and a military one. Europeans should stress that nuclear attacks by aggressor states deserve nuclear responses. If the United Kingdom and France remain the sole nuclear-weapons states in the European alliance, their nuclear diplomacy must regularly communicate why such a response, however risky, could still be in their interests. Observable military measures may also be necessary. Heisbourg offers several creative ideas. The most obvious measures are those employed today involving NATO’s ‘tactical nuclear weapons’, which are owned by the US but often slung under European aircraft. A turn of the US ‘key’ turns the ally into a new nuclear power, and Russia can never know the conditions under which this would occur, which adds considerable uncertainty to any decision for war. France, the UK or both could consider using similar ‘dual key’ arrangements with some of their European partners.10

### Ikenberry

#### Ikenberry and liberal primacists are wrong about global leadership and China – the policy they promote is what drives China escalation in the first place

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Deudney and Ikenberry greatly stress liberal primacy to achieve global economic equity and avert environmental catastrophe. However, under liberal primacy’s long innings in Washington, these challenges have only multiplied at home and abroad. The United States, under the major influence of primacists of all shades, did not by itself create all these problems. But its disproportionate power and wealth means that it is more responsible than any other single actor. Moreover, when liberal and other primacists make extraordinary claims of global leadership and explicitly seek to preserve unipolarity, they should also accept a corresponding level of responsibility for all that has gone wrong under their watch. Liberalism is also by no means necessarily tied to U.S. primacy. The work of scholars such as Stephen Wertheim (a co-founder of the Quincy Institute) and Michael Kazin has cogently highlighted a very different American internationalism in the pre-WW II era that opposed primacy in the long national tradition (notwithstanding a few exceptions) of staying away from foreign wars and advocating diplomacy to resolve disputes in extra-hemispheric conflicts. Nowhere do Deudney and Ikenberry seriously engage the core argument of restrainers of armed dominance detracting from domestic priorities and raising risks of regional and global conflict. Liberal primacists have belatedly come around to reducing (though not eliminating) the U.S. military footprint in the Middle East. But, as Quincy Institute president Andrew Bacevich has laid out, few lessons appear to have been learned from the Iraq war, which was not so much a “blunder” as a flagrant violation of international law and American values. Nearly two decades after that fateful step, primacists (liberal and otherwise) show little desire for accountability from actors who supported and executed this war ridden with illegal actions, a reluctance that severely undermines their justifications for prosecuting violations of other states. It is on China, however, that liberal primacists flirt with the greatest danger to the international order. A rising China is framed as a threat, predominantly due to its authoritarian system as also its recent actions in the region. Domestic and foreign policies of most states are indeed linked, but they may manifest in apparently inconsistent ways. For example, powerful, authoritarian states may not necessarily seek global conquest or even dominance (for example, China in the 15th century) just as major democratic states may disavow global hegemony (the United States itself from the late 19th century until World War II). Democratic powers may also empower tyranny, as was seen with Israel’s export of the cyber-weapon Pegasus to several authoritarian governments recently. Liberal primacy has a deterministic, inflated view of Chinese power and threat and little space for the major uncertainty in Chinese capabilities and intentions two or three decades in the future. Whereas Washington is stepping up on framing China in stark cold war-type language, much of the world, including many U.S. partners, has a much more nuanced viewpoint of the competition. The reluctance of Southeast Asia or treaty ally South Korea to join the U.S.-led Quad and the general lack of support across much of the world for the monochromatic view of China’s Belt and Road Initiative as an exploitative debt trap are two examples. Prominent Southeast Asian voices in particular are increasingly worried at the turn liberal primacists’ China strategy is taking. Whittling away at the time-tested One-China policy, over-militarization of relations with the Quad states, and aggressive, publicly announced military FONOPs close to the Chinese coast are only some of the ways in which liberal and other primacists are helping raise risks of great power conflict. China is not an existential threat to the United States. This is not to say that China’s excessive claims in the South China Sea, coercive pressure on U.S. partners including Taiwan and India, exploitative deep-sea fishing, cyber-attacks on the homeland, and certain trade practices should not be of major concern. But it takes two hands to clap. When it comes to China, liberal primacy’s reign in Washington feels as escalatory as the Trump era.

### IISS

#### Throw out any evidence by the IISS -International Institute for Strategic Studies, it makes too many baseless assumptions.

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The IISS approach

‘Defending Europe’ assesses NATO’s military power absent the US. To test NATO Europe’s capability versus Russia, it selects a demanding scenario. Lithuania and Poland get themselves into a war with Russia that starts with little warning, and ends with Russia’s conquest of Lithuania and parts of northwest Poland. NATO Europe is compelled to reconquer this lost territory. The IISS analysts infer this requirement to liberate from NATO’s Article V commitment to its members and the assumption that if NATO could not liberate these territories, other member states would lose confidence in the Alliance, whereupon it would dissolve. Presumably, the possession of such a counter-offensive capability is taken to be essential to deter Russian attack.

The scenario is demanding for two reasons. Firstly, the Baltics are inherently hard to defend. They became members of NATO and the EU prior to the resurgence of geostrategic competition. Little thought was given to the grave difficulty of successful defence against an even moderately well-resourced Russian effort to retake them. These states constitute a long, narrow finger of land, with the northernmost states bordering Russia and access to Lithuania constricted to a narrow land corridor – the Suwalki Gap – between Kaliningrad, a heavily armed Russian exclave, and Belarus, which is often regarded as a Russian satellite. Secondly, the Baltic states have small populations relative to Russia, and could put up only limited resistance on their own.

Although the Estonian border provides some natural defences in the form of lakes, ponds and swamps, the Baltic states simply cannot hope to defend themselves successfully. And unlike Finland, which has the strategic depth to support a strategy of delay and extended attrition, Baltic military forces have no space to which they could withdraw so as to regroup and continue the fight. Because of the geography, NATO would have to station very large forces in the Baltics along a 700–800-kilometre border to have a hope of defending them.17 But given the area’s geography and topography, even large NATO forces would be highly vulnerable to catastrophic failure because a single Russian success could cut them off from assistance. The maritime approaches to the Baltic states do not solve the problem because Russian bases are so close to them. Forces in Russia proper and in Kaliningrad could exploit the full panoply of the country’s coastal-defence weapons, including modern naval mines, anti-ship missiles and land-based air-defence missiles, to make naval operations along the coast quite costly.18 The authors of the IISS study seem to accept that the Baltics are indefensible, but then assess NATO Europe’s capabilities against a mission almost as hard as defending them: retaking the lost territory.19 Furthermore, Russia is credited with completing its conquest and occupation of Lithuania, settling militarily into conquered terrain in Poland and building out a powerful military occupation of Belarus. NATO is then tested against the requirement to counter-attack these positions 90 days later. In this case, it is reasonable to attribute, as the authors do, a significant advantage to the defender, in this case Russia.

Russia is also assumed to have a significant advantage in military forces available for this contingency. Half of all the ground forces of the Russian army are committed to the theatre, which comes to 75 ‘battalion tactical groups’ (BTGs).20 Russia withholds a third of these units for a variety of security missions, and, at the time the scenario unfolds, 51 BTGs are in Belarus, Kaliningrad and Lithuania. These forces, equivalent to 18 NATO brigades, are assumed to be well armed, well trained and in a high state of readiness (see Table 2).21 The scenario invokes a series of special measures that Russia undertakes, including drawing personnel from across Russia to fully man combat units and airlifting an entire airborne division into Kaliningrad.22 These activities are either unnoticed or ignored by NATO, which does not increase the readiness of its own forces. Russia does have the initiative in this scenario, and has worked for several years to improve the readiness of its forces. And the Russian army has done well recently in small, carefully controlled fights against markedly inferior forces in Donbas and Syria, as well as in the slow-motion, largely unopposed seizure of Crimea. But it has not geared up for even a minor operation against serious resistance since its unimpressive performance in Georgia in 2008. In this light, the IISS’s assumptions seem very favourable to Russian forces.

Overall, NATO’s available forces are assumed to be limited. The study does make one assumption that some would consider advantageous to NATO Europe, however. Although the US has exited the Alliance in this scenario, the NATO command structure – staffs, communications hardware and plans – has passed intact to the Alliance (less the US complement) and is available to coordinate the operation. The authors rightly observe that without this assumption, the Europeans would have a difficult time managing a large operation, as the ‘shadow’ structures maintained by the EU probably are not sufficiently developed to run a large operation. With regard to available European forces, however, the IISS study is very pessimistic. While it attributes to NATO’s European members nearly 100 armoured and mechanised brigades, it asserts that about 75% of them could not contribute to the operation because they are equipped with ‘obsolescent tank, infantry-fighting-vehicle, or armoured-personnel-carrier designs’.23 Of the 22 remaining adequately equipped mechanised brigades, the IISS observes that under normal conditions, European units are not particularly ‘ready’, and therefore assumes that only 50%, or 11 brigades, could deploy to Poland and be ready to fight within 90 days.24

Thus, the study casts Russia as working hard, creatively and effectively to ready its forces for combat in short order, and Europe as far less determined.25 One-third of all Russian ground combat units, indeed the best third, are assumed to be on the front line, whereas perhaps 10% of European units are judged available for the campaign. No wonder things look bleak.

Simulating combat is not a simple matter. The IISS adopted some rules of thumb to assess the adequacy of NATO Europe’s forces to the task of liberating Lithuanian and Polish territories conquered by Russia. ‘Defending Europe’ posits that offensive success becomes plausible when the attacker enjoys a material superiority in the theatre of 1.5:1, and more certain at 2:1.26 The authors apply this ratio to major ground-force elements and to tactical air forces. No source is provided for the origin of these rules of thumb, but one can find such ratios cited frequently in Cold War-era assessments for ground forces.27 The 1.5:1 theatre-wide force ratio emerged from many different analyses of the same problem: what it would take to break through on a front that was thickly defended, a problem that first emerged during the First World War on the Western Front. A possible criticism of the use of that ratio in this hypothetical theatre is that neither Russia nor NATO has sufficient brigades to thickly defend the entire front. Thus, it is quite possible that the scope for manoeuvre is greater than assumed, in which case the requirements for offence and defence might be better assessed through a series of war games.28

The IISS analysts calculate the forces required for NATO Europe by multiplying the Russian force by 1.5 and 2. They then subtract their estimate of available European forces to come up with NATO Europe’s force deficit. To meet the 1.5:1 criterion, Europe would need 27 mechanised brigades, and for the 2:1 criterion 36 brigades.29 Given that Europe only has 11 ready mechanised brigades, the shortfall is between 17 and 26 brigades. (Strikingly, the entire active US Army could now provide only another 10–14 armoured or mechanised brigades.30 So the IISS analysis implicitly holds that NATO’s ground forces would be inadequate even with active US participation.) Based on their pessimistic view of the general level of readiness (50%) achievable in European military units, the authors have to double the brigade shortfalls to generate their hypothetical overall shortfall and the budget necessary to remedy it. Europe needs to either stand up, or thoroughly re-equip, between 34 and 52 brigades, at an initial capital cost of $150–200bn.31 Finally, the analysis rightly calls attention to often overlooked combat-support assets that European countries effectively liquidated from their armies after the Cold War. The most notable of these are short-, medium- and long-range surface-to-air missile batteries to defend against combat aircraft, drones, cruise missiles and tactical ballistic missiles.32 European ground forces have none of these assets, and would certainly require some to mount a counter-offensive.

#### Ext: IISS doesn’t make any sense; they assume bandwagoning – an unlikely and empirically disproven theory.

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The IISS team: bandwagoning versus balancing

The IISS team says that, should the European alliance lose control of one or more states in the east and not be able promptly to restore the situation, the alliance would collapse. Thus, a massive infusion of offensive armoured striking power into the present order of battle is required – at least 32 additional armoured brigades, or roughly the equivalent to the late Cold War German Army but fully modernised.3 The picture the IISS analysts paint is both dark and strange. If one or more Baltic states were to fall to Russian aggression, other Eastern European countries whose citizens know what it is like to live under the Russian boot, and who clamoured for NATO and European Union membership, would quickly abandon their sole protector. The larger European states such as Germany, which in particular benefits greatly from not having Russian troops on its immediate border, would instead stand down, allowing Russia to dominate Eastern Europe again. Other European states further afield would simply shrug, ignoring the stark evidence of Russia’s aggressive intent.

Students of international politics have a term for this feared cascade of falling political dominoes: bandwagoning with the aggressor. The phenomenon is not unknown, but it is uncommon. If bandwagoning were the rule, Europeans would all speak French or German or Russian, as at least one of these aspiring European hegemons would have succeeded in its day. Far more common is balancing against the aggressor – that is, joining with other threatened states to build a coalition of resistance against aspiring hegemons.4 States value their sovereignty and those that can will often fight for it. Even small and isolated states often balance if they think there is a chance of success. Europeans today do prefer passing the buck to the US to get their protection on the cheap. But absent that option, balancing is likely. The existence of an up-and-running European military coalition makes balancing a reasonable option. One cannot rule out the possible political collapse on which the IISS team built its military scenario and force requirements. But, if this is their considered and expert assessment of the actual commitment of Europeans to defend their independence and liberties, US supporters of the transatlantic relationship should sombrely take note. In the eyes of the IISS team, the European allies are, per Thomas Paine, summer soldiers and sunshine patriots.

### Beckley

#### Michael Beckley provides an inaccurate picture of US-China relations

Shifrinson 13 [Winter 2012/13, Shifrinson, Joshua R. Itzkowitz, Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson’s teaching and research interests focus on the intersection of international security and diplomatic history, particularly the rise and fall of great powers and the origins of grand strategy. He has special expertise in great power politics since 1945 and U.S. engagement in Europe and Asia., “Debating China's Rise and U.S. Decline”, The MIT Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41804177?seq=3>]//AA

Michael Beckley’s article deserves attention for challenging the view that the United States is declining because China is rising.' Its ambiguous definition of decline, how- ever, sends the wrong impression about the distribution of economic and military power between the United States and China. Without being explicit, Beckley implies that the United States is not declining because the absolute difference of economic, mili- tary, and technological capabilities between the United States and China is growing. In contrast, both theory and history suggest that it is more important that the relative dis- tribution of economic and military capabilities between the United States and China is falling: as I propose below, decline is best defined as a decrease in the ratio of economic and military capabilities between two great powers. As a result, even if the United States maintains a large advantage in absolute capabilities, the fact that U.S. capabilities are decreasing relative to China’s means that (1) China will find it easier to advance its interests where U.S. and Chinese goals diverge, while (2) the United States’ ability to pursue its own interests in world affairs will be increasingly constrained by Chinese power. The remainder of this letter proceeds in four sections. First, I challenge Beckley’s definition of decline and emphasize the need to analyze the relative distribution of ca- pabilities when assessing the decline phenomenon. Using historical examples, I next demonstrate that the relative distribution of power better captures the ability of states to compete with one another. Subsequently, I show that the United States is declining relative to China across several measures of economic and military power. Finally, I propose that the United States’ relative decline suggests a different response to China’s rise, namely, U.S. retrenchment. DEFINING DECLINE AND MEASURING POWER In his article, Beckley does not define what he means by “decline.” He implies, how- ever, that decline occurs when the absolute difference in capabilities between two states falls (pp. 44-55). For example, Beckley states that it is “significant that the average Chi- nese citizen is more than $17,000 poorer relative to the average American than he was in 1991” (p. 59). Particularly important for Beckley is the difference in per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and measures of technological sophistication: larger absolute differences between the United States and China in these indicators mean an economi- cally and militarily stronger United States (pp. 58—59, 63—65). This definition, however, sets an artificially high bar by which to assess decline, one that mischaracterizes the debate over American decline and makes limited theoretical sense. Instead, decline is better defined in terms of the relative distribution of economic and military capabili- ties between two great powers: decline occurs when one state’s economic and military capabilities increase at a faster rate than the other’s, such that the ratio of capabilities between the two falls. As such, it is more important for assessing the current distribu- tion of power that the ratio of American per capita GDP to Chinese per capita GDP fell from 67:1 in 1991 to 9:1 in 2011, than it is that the difference in per capita GDP rose from $37,300 in 1991 to $41,600 in 2011 (in constant 2010 dollars).° Few participants in the decline debate argue that China is likely to overtake the United States across all measures of economic and military power.3 More representative of mainstream views in the debate is the National Intelligence Council’s Global 2025 re- port, which argues, “Although the United States is likely to remain the single most powerful actor, the United States’ relative strength [...] will decline and US leverage will become more constrained. 4 In other words, the policy discussion centers on whether China’s growth is making it relatively harder for the United States to pursue its interests without other states opposing its actions—not whether the United States is losing out to China in absolute terms. Furthermore, for purposes of international relations theory, scholars usually distin- guish between decline as an absolute loss of power and decline as a relative loss of ca- pabilities.5 Many also assume that there is a threshold above which a state is a great power, defined as an actor with sufficient aggregate economic, military, technological, and geographic resources to influence others’ behavior on an international scale. De- cline occurs when a state above this threshold increases its capabilities at a faster rate than another state, such that the ratio of capabilities between the two shrinks. This change matters in two ways. First, the relative loss of capabilities between states A and B requires A to struggle to maintain its international position by improving economic performance or building military forces. Second, B’s improved capabilities make it more difficult for state A to challenge state B’s interests than had previously been the case-A is constrained by B’s growing power—while B can more readily compete with A if their interests conflict.

### Mearsheimer

#### Mearsheimer is an anti-Semite

**Goldberg 2011**(Jeffrey Goldberg is the editor in chief of The Atlantic and a recipient of the National Magazine Award for Reporting. He is the author of Prisoners: A Story of Friendship and Terror. “John Mearsheimer Endorses a Hitler Apologist and Holocaust Revisionist”, <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/09/john-mearsheimer-endorses-a-hitler-apologist-and-holocaust-revisionist/245518/> //KS)

Rather unbelievably (or believably, depending on where you sit) Mearsheimer has written an endorsement of Atzmon's new book, "The Wandering Who?" Here is what Mearsheimer says about Atzmon: Gilad Atzmon has written a fascinating and provocative book on Jewish identity in the modern world. He shows how assimilation and liberalism are making it incredibly difficult for Jews in the Diaspora to maintain a powerful sense of their 'Jewishness.' Panicked Jewish leaders, he argues, have turned to Zionism (blind loyalty to Israel) and scaremongering (the threat of another Holocaust) to keep the tribe united and distinct from the surrounding goyim. As Atzmon's own case demonstrates, this strategy is not working and is causing many Jews great anguish. The Wandering Who? Should be widely read by Jews and non-Jews alike.' In this new book, Atzmon suggests, among other things, that scholars should reopen the question of medieval blood libels leveled against Jews-- accusations that Jews used the blood of Christian children to make matzo, and which provoked countless massacres of Jews in many different countries. If you recall from the fight over "The Israel Lobby," which Mearsheimer wrote with Stephen Walt, of Harvard, the authors claimed that they were simply writing a critique of American foreign policy, and of certain American citizens who, they said, "distorted" foreign policy. Many of us disagreed. Here is a bit of what David Rothkopf wrote about Mearsheimer and Walt: "W)hatever the pale intellectual merits of his hackneyed argument may be (the authors) know full well that their prominence on this issue has come not because they have had a single new insight but rather because they were willing and one can only believe inclined to play to a crowd whose 'views' were fueled by prejudice and worse. They may not be anti-Semites themselves but they made a cynical decision to cash in on anti-Semitism by offering to dress up old hatreds in the dowdy Brooks Brothers suits of the Kennedy School and the University of Chicago." Now, Mearsheimer is endorsing the writing of a man who espouses neo-Nazi views. In other words, he's not even bothering to make believe anymore -- he's moved from a self-described critic of Israel to a corrosive critic of Jewry itself. The blogger Adam Holland, like yours truly, didn't quite believe that Mearsheimer would endorse such a crude anti-Semite, so he asked him to confirm: I had trouble believing that a distinguished professor at one of the world's greatest universities would link himself to a hatemonger like Atzmon. So I sent Professor Mearsheimer an email quoting the blurb and asking him to verify it's accuracy. I also gave him an opportunity to amend it or add to it. Here's what he wrote back: "The blurb below is the one I wrote for "The Wandering Who" and I have no reason to amend it or embellish it, as it accurately reflects my view of the book." Gliad Atzmon, by the way, is also on record saying this: "I believe that from certain ideological perspective, **Israel is actually far worse than Nazi Germany**." Perhaps Mearsheimer has found a new co-author.

### Brands and Feaver

#### Brands is wrong and ignores historical examples that support offshore balancing – offshore balancing is the best way to ensure US interests

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MEARSHEIMER AND WALT REPLY In “The Case for Offshore Balancing,” we argue that if a potential hegemon emerges in Europe, Northeast Asia, or the Persian Gulf, Washington should commit resources to preserve a favorable balance of power and, if necessary, fight to defend it. If no potential hegemon is present, however, the United States should remain offshore and let regional powers uphold the balance. Hal Brands and Peter Feaver reject this recommendation and contend that the United States should continue its **failed pursuit** of its existing grand strategy, liberal hegemony. But they repeatedly **misrepresent** our argument and offer a **dubious account** of the relevant history—unwittingly underscoring the superiority of offshore balancing. Brands and Feaver begin by claiming that we want the United States to remain offshore in Europe, Asia, and the Gulf, intervening in those regions only after war has broken out and a hegemon is about to win. This assertion allows them to accuse us of wanting to roll back current U.S. alliances in all three areas and to suggest that had U.S. policymakers adopted our approach in the late 1940s, there would have been no NATO, no strategy of containment, and no Cold War victory. This predictable attempt to make us sound like isolationists is wrong. In our article, we make it clear that the United States should deploy forces onshore before war breaks out if the regional powers cannot check a rising hegemon, and we describe the United States’ Cold War alliances as a clear-cut example of this policy. Moreover, we recommend the continued deployment of U.S. forces in Asia to counter any future Chinese attempt to dominate that region. Contrary to what Brands and Feaver say, Washington’s alliances and force postures during the Cold War and in Asia today are **wholly consistent** with offshore balancing. In effect, **Brands** and Feaver **portray U.S. policy** in much of the first half of the twentieth century as textbook offshore balancing but claim that Cold War containment represented the “reverse” of that policy. **Not so**: the United States followed the core logic of offshore balancing from 1900 to 1990 and embraced liberal hegemony only after the Soviet Union collapsed. Under offshore balancing, the United States exploits its **favorable location** and **calibrates** its overseas commitments according to what is happening in key regions. Under liberal hegemony, by contrast, those factors hardly matter. The United States is supposed to deploy forces around the globe under any and all circumstances, whether it faces a single peer competitor, a complex multipolar world of contending great powers, or no serious enemies at all. No matter what the world looks like, the recommendation is always the same: the United States should try to run it. But as the past 25 years have shown again and again, this approach leads to **costly quagmires** and repeated foreign policy failures. Indeed, it is telling that **Brands** and Feaver **never say what U.S. interests are** or attempt to specify priorities among them. Instead, they justify the deployment of U.S. forces almost everywhere by assuming that doing so guarantees peace. Again, **Brands and Feaver are mistaken**. They suggest that the United States could have prevented World War II had it committed troops to Europe before the conflict started. But Europe was a simmering cauldron of great-power rivalry in the interwar period, and in all likelihood, even an enormous **U.S.** military presence there would not have calmed the continent. It’s hard to believe that U.S. troops would have proved sufficient to deter Hitler or put an end to the suspicions between Berlin and Moscow. Moreover, committing a large army to Europe would have ensured that the United States was involved in the **bloodbath** of World War II from the beginning. From an American perspective, it was better to enter that conflict as late as possible and let others bear the brunt of the fighting. Events since 1945 provide abundant evidence that a large U.S. military presence does not always ensure peace. Such a presence in East Asia failed to keep the United States out of two bloody wars there during the Cold War (Korea and Vietnam), and despite the tens of thousands of troops in the region today, few would deny that there is a serious possibility of military clashes between China and the United States over the East China and South China Seas, Taiwan, or the Korean Peninsula. Nor did a major U.S. military presence in Europe prevent the Balkan wars in the 1990s or the current war in Ukraine, which could escalate into a broader conflict involving the United States. And in the Middle East, repeated U.S. military engagement since the end of the Cold War has not kept the region from becoming engulfed in wars—and in fact caused many of those wars. This is no accident, because pursuing liberal hegemony, as Brands and Feaver advocate, not only fails to guarantee peace around the world; it also leads to **foolish wars**. The belief that the United States should be committed all over the world produced the Vietnam War, a clear departure from offshore balancing. That same thinking lay behind the disastrous 2003 invasion of Iraq—which Feaver supported and we opposed—as well as the failed U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Libya. The United States has also interfered in Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, among other places, with little to show for it. **Brands and Feaver trivialize** these **costly failures** as “a few undeniable setbacks,” but they were in fact an inevitable consequence of the misguided attempt to garrison the world and spread democracy by force. Brands and Feaver also reject offshore balancing by saying that “although the right moment for intervening can sometimes be seen in hindsight, identifying it in real time, amid enormous uncertainty, is far harder.” But deciding whether and when to intervene is much easier under our strategy, since offshore balancers, unlike liberal hegemonists such as Brands and Feaver, provide clear criteria to inform that decision. But if the United States has vital interests everywhere and U.S. intervention guarantees peace, as they maintain, then it should have intervened to prevent every Arab-Israeli war, all three Indo-Pakistani wars, the Iran-Iraq War, the First and Second Congo Wars, and so on. By their logic, Washington should keep expanding its overseas military presence until the entire world is at peace. Lastly, Brands and Feaver write that offshore balancing makes the United States “more dependent on morally bankrupt regimes,” insisting further that “Americans expect their allies to abide by minimum humanitarian standards.” **History shows otherwise**. The United States allied with Joseph Stalin in World War II and tacitly with Mao Zedong in the 1970s—both of whom murdered millions of their own citizens. Washington has also propped up numerous Latin American dictators, today backs a military regime in Egypt and a harsh theocracy in Saudi Arabia, and continues to turn a blind eye to, if not support, Israel’s brutal treatment of the Palestinians. International politics is a dangerous business, and moral tradeoffs are sometimes necessary. By committing U.S. power more selectively, however, offshore balancing requires such compromises only when the United States faces imminent threats to its vital interests. By encouraging the U.S. military to get involved everywhere, Brands and Feaver’s approach often forces Washington to rely on dubious allies in far-flung regions. Once committed to defending them, of course, it has little leverage over their behavior. Given liberal hegemony’s many flaws, it is no wonder U.S. foreign policy has failed so often in recent years. One does wonder, however, **why Brands and Feaver continue to defend it.**

# Other

### Modeling

**The U.S.’s declining heg allows other nations to model more prosporous democracies which revitalizes the global economy and checks environmental harm**

**Meisenhelder 20** [10-11-2020, Meisenhelder, Thomas, Thomas Meisenhelder is a retired Professor of Sociology from California State University, San Bernardino., “Declining American Hegemony Could Be A Good Thing”, Common Dreams, <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2020/10/11/declining-american-hegemony-could-be-good-thing>]//AA

'**The declining global hegemony of the United States will be an opportunity to build better lives everywhere**'Recently, some of the “talking heads” on the news have been worrying about the demise of US global hegemony. We are told that the “American empire” is in decline and our influence and status around the world are falling. We are told that this bodes poorly for both the people of the United States and the rest of the world. That is not how I see it. While I tend to agree that the United States is losing its hegemony, I believe that **all of us** (in the USA and elsewhere) **will be better off if the United States is no longer the “leader” of the world.** Our decline has been going on since the time of Richard Nixon, through Carter, the Bushes, Clinton, Obama, and has accelerated under Trump. The President’s favoritism for the white and the rich, his erratic destruction of the administrative and diplomatic state, his complete inability to address COVID-19, his rejection of reason, science and expertise, his cultural ignorance, his meanness and cruelty, his selfish disregard for others (nations and peoples) all have underscored and advanced our national decline. We have been taught to think that our country’s position in the world stems in part from our status as the world’s one true democracy, but it is now very clear that is not the case. Especially since Citizens United, **political power in this country has prioritized wealth and those who have it.** The United States is now a county “of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich.” We have tax laws that favor capital over income; we have civil and criminal justice systems that protect property more than people; our public institutions routinely criminalize immigrants, the poor, and people of color. If the new global “role models” are places like Denmark, Norway, or Costa Rica, surely the world would be headed towards fewer threats to peace, less military spending, fewer attacks on local democracies, more concern for human rights, less environmental destruction, more environmental protection, and more democracy. Our national elections are not decided by the popular vote, but instead by an archaic process based an unrepresentative group called the “electoral college.” Our laws and policies reflect the interest of the wealthy as communicated to wealthy legislators by the lobbyists of big business. We have voting laws that make it a burden to vote for many. As a result, too often public policy does not reflect the opinions or interests of the majority. If it did, we would be like other developed countries and adopt national health care, paid parental leave, stronger controls on guns and weapons, free higher education, reproductive rights, and a higher minimum wage. If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that **there are many more democratic nations in the world today. Their influence inevitably rises as ours falls and this is a good thing for everyone.** Much of the U. S. hegemony has stemmed from the fact that the United States is surely the most heavily armed and most militarily active country in the world. The national myth is that we use military force reluctantly and only when it is necessary to insure human rights, peace, and security. But let’s look at the record: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Cuba, Grenada, Dominican Republic, Chile, Central America, Libya, Congo, Iran, Iraq, Panama, Afghanistan. Are any of these places were made better as a consequences of our covert and overt actions? We spend more on weapons of war than any other country in the world. Researchers at Brown University have found that since the horror of 9/11, the so-called “war on terrorism” has killed 800,000, displaced 37,000,000, and cost taxpayers $6.4 trillion. We are told that the United States is the greatest, most productive and fairest economy in the world. It isn’t. Over the last several years, **our share of world production has declined significantly. Increasingly our economy is characterized by wide inequalities, environmental destruction, and decreasing life chances for the many.** The earnings ratio between CEOs and their employees has widened dramatically. Bosses now earn as much as 400 times the incomes of their employees. Ordinary Americans no longer believe that future generations will have more comfortable lives than current ones. People of color in the United States face significant economic damage just because of their heritage and ethnicity. President Trump did not create this situation, but he is making it worse. His administration’s mishandling of COVID has driven down the lives of ordinary Americans. Unemployment is up; incomes are down; mass evictions are looming; GDP has collapsed; and all this is doubly true for persons of color. The only folks doing well are a few tech bosses and those who live off the stock market. In addition, **the American economy is not sustainable environmentally.** Since we no longer can claim any kind of real commitment to environmental protection, we can not even pretend to be an international leader in this area. Out tax system is notoriously unfair and confusing. It favors the wealthy over the middle and working classes; it favors growth over maintenance and endurance; it favors corporations over families. We rescue banks from their unwise and sometimes criminal investments while allowing health care expenses to bankrupt ordinary people, who already live without paid medical or parental leave, decent vacations, or old age pensions (all commonplaces in developed and developing nations around the world). Americans live shorter and less healthy lives than people do in most developed nations. Our schools are nowhere near the best in the world, and many schools in poor and working class areas are so underfunded and under-resourced that they look more like tenements than campuses. They test and segregate more than they build and educate. Classes are large, standardized testing proliferates, teachers are underpaid, armed cops patrol the halls, and facilities are crumbling. Simply put, **we have nothing to teach the rest of the world about how to build an economy that serves the people.** Many nations already know how to do it and hopefully, as we decline, they will become ready international examples of “best practices.” We have long believed we are the proverbial “city on the hill,” a place that is home to a life so rewarding that it is a model for all. That emperor, too, has no clothes. A supposed “nation of immigrants,” we do not welcome newcomers. Instead, we attempt to deter migrants through practices of harassment, detention, and family separation. The Coronavirus and the continuing trauma of police brutality have revealed that our society and its communities are unhealthy. Too often, residents have no trust in their government and see the police and other agencies as the agents of an occupying power. And people around the world recognize that we are a violent nation. Gun violence rages and mass shootings in schools, churches, nightclubs, and movie theaters have become distressingly common. Deadly police repression and practices of mass incarceration impact our communities, particularly neighborhoods of color. Guns and violence even characterize our entertainment media, which we export around the globe. “Hollywood” gets rich by displaying false and elaborately decorated images of fear, violence and anger. What does such an unreflectively violent place have to teach the rest of the world? The cultural spread of a violent breed of radical individualism and the acceptance of deep inequalities are destroying the foundations of our society. ¨Looking out for number one” cannot form the basis of a livable, functioning community. Norms of reciprocity and equity suffer when people must struggle against each other to fulfill even the most basic needs such as food, clothing, housing and medical care. While many countries define the collective provision of basic needs as the necessary social infrastructure of a good society, we worry about something called the “nanny state.” The few such programs we do have are inefficient and inadequate by design, rife with unnecessary administrative costs, bureaucratic means testing, and minimal resources. In many, if not most, developed nations ordinary people earn better wages, have better schools, live healthier lives, and are more secure and comfortable in communities where they feel respected, valued, and cared for. So, it is very likely that the declining global hegemony of the United States will be an opportunity to build better lives everywhere. If the new global “role models” are places like Denmark, Norway, or Costa Rica, surely the world would be headed towards fewer threats to peace, less military spending, fewer attacks on local democracies, more concern for human rights, less environmental destruction, more environmental protection, and more democracy. And, if America uses this opportunity to change what we spend on and how we care for each other, life will be better here at home too.

### Threat Inflation

#### American hegemony leads to threat inflation

**Fuller 21 –** is a former CIA agent and was the vice-chairman of the National Intelligence Council and he is an adjunct history professor at Simon Fraser University, 2/7/21 (Graham, “US primacy is a self-fulfilling threat generator”, Responsible Statecraft, <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2021/02/07/us-primacy-is-a-self-fulfilling-threat-generator/>, accessed 6/26/21)//jd

It seems to run in the American DNA. For as long as I’ve been involved in U.S. foreign policy — as a CIA operations officer and a long-term CIA forecaster, and later at a prominent think tank — I perceive remarkably little change in that one deep-seated, almost unconscious presumption of basic American innocence, that the U.S. mission in the world is fundamentally benign. It pervades all our public utterances. It is dangerous. I have no wish to launch into a litany of American sins, failures, or mistakes by omission, or more often commission, that have by almost any measure been disastrous for so many foreign countries “visited” by U.S. military operations. The list is long and well known — Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, indirectly in Yemen in most recent times. Acts of omission include neglect of the half-century running sore of Israel’s occupation of Palestine and friendship with unsavory dictators because they “serve the U.S. national interest,” while publicly stressing America’s (cherry-picked) commitment to democracy overseas. China oppresses Uighurs, bad. India oppresses Muslims in Kashmir, no comment. Hypocrisy abounds. But I’m writing about something even simpler. I am baffled by the kind of American mindset that, seemingly without guile, simultaneously maintains two quite incompatible views of the U.S. role in the world. Premise One: With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Washington boastfully proclaimed itself the “world’s sole superpower.” The United States at once gained the ability — even the right — to exercise unrestricted intervention, and with military force, anywhere in the world. No region is ever deemed too insignificant, too distant, too small not to fall at some point within the framework of a “major U.S. national security interest.” Unsurprisingly, it is probably this self-arrogated license, this global sheriff’s badge, that marks the beginning of the disastrous decline of U.S. foreign policy ever since. But it’s the second accompanying belief or premise that is the stunner: The United States, so goes the self-narrative, has simply been working steadfastly to maintain global stability and a global “order” — an order that is supposed to represent a global good for all. While engaged in this selfless task, crocodiles have been nipping at our legs wherever we go. Consequently, as we engage in this self-appointed task, we find ourselves constantly being “challenged,” or “threatened” by other states or groups that do not seem to recognize or acquiesce in the universal goodness of Pax Americana. So, think about it: how can the United States exercise supreme and unchallengeable power around the world on the one hand, and yet simultaneously not provoke negative reactions from others? You can’t be the most powerful player on the block — or what the U.S. military often tellingly calls its global footprint” — and yet not expect strong reactions from those affected by it. Again, I’m not even trying to assess how good or bad, how generous or harsh, how wise or foolish U.S. actions have been. It’s simply the perception in our eyes that we are nearly always the aggrieved party facing negative or ungrateful reactions. So, we read again and again about the endless array of challenges we face: our media talks non-stop about how Washington must meet the “Russian challenge,” “the Iranian threat,” “the Chinese threat,” “the Islamic extremist challenge,” etc. But how often do we ask the question, why do they present a threat? Some political scientists might simply suggest that any two major powers are destined to clash. Yet any such clash still represents a choice by their national leaderships. Why were Britain and France sworn enemies for centuries until one day they weren’t? Why were France and Germany seen as “natural enemies” for over a century and then suddenly decide after World War II they didn’t have to be? Some might respond that the game changed because new “enemies” cropped up to replace old ones. Maybe so. But we must acknowledge that we are always making conscious choices and decisions about who we select as the enemy du jour based on our assessment of what serves our “national interest,” a phrase routinely invoked by foreign policy specialists and politicians. But “national interest” tends to be a highly subjective affair that is eminently debatable. In fact, determining just what are our true national interests is what foreign policy debate is all about. And the answer depends on your worldview, your ideology. One problem with being the “world’s sole superpower” is that any challenge to one’s hegemony from any quarter identifies the challenger as an enemy, or potential enemy. Hegemony finds any challenge insufferable. It has been an integral part of Washington’s worldview for many decades now. Any government that resists U.S. hegemony should ideally be intimidated, overthrown or eliminated. Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, Syria, Egypt in the day, China, Russia, Venezuela — it’s hard to get off that enemy list when you actively assert your independence from Washington. For these reasons, then, I find myself deeply disturbed when, within President Biden’s brand-new foreign policy team, we find officials still darkly invoking the “threats” posed by other countries. Mere invocation of the word “threat” is all it takes. The charge eventually becomes axiomatic. China? Sure, obvious threat, no need to think about it. Everybody knows Russia is a black hat. Everybody knows that Iran is a “malign” actor. But we seem unwilling to consider for a moment just how we arrived at these assessments, however accurate or inaccurate. As the world’s greatest military power, should we even wonder whether U.S. policies towards Russia since the Soviet collapse had anything to do with Moscow’s policies and views of the United States? This question seems out of bounds in the mainstream media. And, in our tensions with China, is it worth considering what a timeline of relations might show about a possible two-way street of provocation? Is Iran inherently anti-American, a stereotype that has been perpetuated over decades? Was there no earlier formative background worth considering? This is why our diplomats, armchair strategists and pundits should at least be reading the “enemy press” for a more nuanced view of how we appear to others. (Or do we instinctively know it’s all propaganda or “fake news?”) Might not our nation be served by periodically reprinting editorials from the Russian, Chinese, or Iranian media — just out of curiosity as to how they see things? Or do we fear contamination of our supposed purity of vision and beneficence? Strikingly, Washington’s latest favorite interpretation of why relations with China are poor is because we were somehow guilty of an “overgenerous assumption” that, if we were nice to Beijing, then they would become just like us. We deceived ourselves; we were naïve. It’s a fairly self-serving argument: if we bear any blame for bad relations with Beijing, it is because we were too nice. Well, no more Mr. Nice Guy. I’m not suggesting that the answer to all these questions invariably comes down to “blame America.” I’m just suggesting that maybe we should be a little less utterly self-absorbed, self-righteous and self-referential to consider that maybe it takes two to tango, or not tango. Sadly, sole superpowers are never going to welcome the rise of any competitor in any arena; it nearly automatically becomes an official “threat.” There seems to be no other way to look at the world except through this lens of American exceptionalism and the divine right of American leadership. Not to mention the massive military-industrial complex and the Beltway security bureaucracy that have a vested interests in sustaining this worldview. How do we ever wriggle out of these deeply ingrained habits of sole superpowerdom? Frankly, I’m not sure it can be done, short of a massive shock to the system that compels a rearrangement of our perceptions and priorities, including budgets. I’m not holding my breath.