## Hegemony is good!

### General

#### Hegemony is necessary to check China’s existential threat to democracy via mercantilism

Beckley 22 – *Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University* (Michael, March/April 2022, "Enemies of My Enemy," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2021-02-14/china-new-world-order-enemies-my-enemy)//KH

ACTION AND REACTION

As China burns down what remains of the liberal order, it is sparking an international backlash. Negative views of the country have soared around the world to highs not seen since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. A 2021 survey by the Pew Research Center found that roughly 75 percent of people in the United States, Europe, and Asia held unfavorable views of China and had no confidence that President Xi Jinping would behave responsibly in world affairs or respect human rights. Another survey, a 2020 poll by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, revealed that about 75 percent of foreign policy elites in those same places thought that the best way to deal with China was to form coalitions of like-minded countries against it. In the United States, both political parties now support a tough policy toward China. The EU has officially declared China to be a “systemic rival.” In Asia, Beijing faces openly hostile governments in every direction, from Japan to Australia to Vietnam to India. Even people in countries that trade heavily with China are souring on it. Surveys show that South Koreans, for example, now dislike China more than they dislike Japan, their former colonial overlord.

Anti-Chinese sentiment is starting to congeal into concrete pushback. The resistance remains embryonic and patchy, mainly because so many countries are still hooked on Chinese trade. But the overall trend is clear: disparate actors are starting to join forces to roll back Beijing’s power. In the process, they are reordering the world.

The Chinese threat could usher in the most consequential changes to global governance in a generation.

The emerging anti-Chinese order departs fundamentally from the liberal order, because it is directed at a different threat. In particular, the new order flips the relative emphasis placed on capitalism versus democracy. During the Cold War, the old liberal order promoted capitalism first and democracy a distant second. The United States and its allies pushed free markets as far as their power could reach, but when forced to choose, they almost always supported right-wing autocrats over left-wing democrats. The so-called free world was mainly an economic construct. Even after the Cold War, when democracy promotion became a cottage industry in Western capitals, the United States and its allies often shelved human rights concerns to gain market access, as they did most notably by ushering China into the WTO.

But now economic openness has become a liability for the United States and its allies, because China is ensconced in virtually every aspect of the liberal order. Far from being put out of business by globalization, China’s authoritarian capitalist system seems almost perfectly designed to milk free markets for mercantilist gain. Beijing uses subsidies and espionage to help its firms dominate global markets and protects its domestic market with nontariff barriers. It censors foreign ideas and companies on its own internet and freely accesses the global Internet to steal intellectual property and spread CCP propaganda. It assumes leadership positions in liberal international institutions, such as the UN Human Rights Council, and then bends them in an illiberal direction. It enjoys secure shipping around the globe for its export machine, courtesy of the U.S. Navy, and uses its own military to assert control over large swaths of the East China and South China Seas.

The United States and its allies have awoken to the danger: the liberal order and, in particular, the globalized economy at its heart are empowering a dangerous adversary. In response, they are trying to build a new order that excludes China by making democracy a requirement for full membership. When U.S. President Joe Biden gave his first press conference, in March 2021, and described the U.S.-Chinese rivalry as part of a broader competition between democracy and autocracy, it wasn’t a rhetorical flourish. He was drawing a battle line based on a widely shared belief that authoritarian capitalism poses a **mortal threat** to the democratic world, one that can’t be contained by the liberal order. Instead of reforming existing rules, rich democracies are starting to impose new ones by banding together, adopting progressive standards and practices, and threatening to exclude countries that don’t follow them. Democracies aren’t merely balancing against China—increasing their defense spending and forming military alliances—they are also reordering the world around it.

#### Deterrence and promotion of the US-led LIO is key to contain Chinese expansionism

Beckley 22 – *Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University* (Michael, March/April 2022, "Enemies of My Enemy," Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2021-02-14/china-new-world-order-enemies-my-enemy)//KH>

The second feature of the emerging order is a double military barrier to contain China. The inside layer consists of rivals bordering the East China and South China Seas. Many of them—including Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam—are loading up on mobile missile launchers and mines. The goal is to turn themselves into prickly porcupines capable of denying China sea and air control near their shores. Those efforts are now being bolstered by an outside layer of democratic powers—mainly Australia, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These democracies are providing aid, arms, and intelligence to China’s neighbors; training together so they can conduct long-range missile strikes on Chinese forces and blockade China’s oil imports; and organizing multinational freedom-of-navigation exercises throughout the region, especially near Chinese-held rocks, reefs, and islands in disputed areas.

This security cooperation is becoming stronger and more institutionalized. Witness the reemergence of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad—a coalition made up of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States that had gone dormant shortly after its founding in 2007. Or look at the creation of new pacts, most notably AUKUS, an alliance linking Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The overarching goal of all this activity is to maintain the territorial status quo in East Asia. But a more explicit aim is to save Taiwan, the frontline democracy most at risk of Chinese conquest. Japan and the United States have developed a joint battle plan for defending the island, and in November 2021, Peter Dutton, Australia’s defense minister, said it was “inconceivable” that his country would not also join the fight. The European Parliament, for its part, has adopted a comprehensive plan to boost Taiwan’s economic resilience and international recognition.

Viewed individually, these efforts look haphazard and reactive. Collectively, however, they betray a positive vision for a democratic order, one that differs fundamentally from China’s mercantilist model and also from the old international order, with neoliberal orthodoxy at its core. By infusing labor and human rights standards into economic agreements, the new vision prioritizes people over corporate profits and state power. It also elevates the global environment from a mere commodity to a shared and jointly protected commons. By linking democratic governments together in an exclusive network, the new order attempts to force countries to make a series of value judgments and imposes real penalties for illiberal behavior. Want to make carbon-intensive steel with slave labor? Prepare to be hit with tariffs by the world’s richest countries. Considering annexing international waters? Expect a visit from a multinational armada.

If China continues to scare democracies into collective action, then it could usher in the most consequential changes to global governance in a generation or more. By containing Chinese naval expansion, for example, the maritime security system in East Asia could become a powerful enforcement mechanism for the law of the sea. By inserting carbon tariffs into trade deals to discriminate against China, the United States and its allies could force producers to reduce their emissions, inadvertently creating the basis for a de facto international carbon tax. The Quad’s success in providing one billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Southeast Asia, an effort to win hearts and minds away from Beijing, has provided a blueprint for combating future pandemics. Allied efforts to prevent the spread of digital authoritarianism could inspire new international regulations on digital flows and data privacy, and the imperative of competing with China could fuel an unprecedented surge in R & D and infrastructure spending around the world.

Like the orders of the past, the emerging one is an order of exclusion, sustained by fear and enforced through coercion. Unlike most past orders, however, it is directed toward progressive ends.

#### Democracy promotion and competition with China is the only route to saving the LIO!

Beckley 22 – *Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University* (Michael, March/April 2022, "Enemies of My Enemy," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2021-02-14/china-new-world-order-enemies-my-enemy)//KH

DOUBLING DOWN ON DEMOCRACY

History shows that eras of fluid multipolarity typically end in disaster, regardless of the bright ideas or advanced technologies circulating at the time. The late eighteenth century witnessed the pinnacle of the Enlightenment in Europe, before the continent descended into the hell of the Napoleonic Wars. At the start of the twentieth century, the world’s sharpest minds predicted an end to great-power conflict as railways, telegraph cables, and steamships linked countries closer together. The worst war in history up to that point quickly followed. The sad and paradoxical reality is that international orders are vital to avert chaos, yet they typically emerge only during periods of great-power rivalry. Competing with China will be fraught with risk for the United States and its allies, but it might be the only way to avoid even greater dangers.

To build a better future, the United States and its allies will need to take a more enlightened view of their interests than they did even during the Cold War. Back then, their economic interests dovetailed nicely with their geopolitical interests. Simple greed, if nothing else, could compel capitalist states to band together to protect private property against a communist onslaught. Now, however, the choice is not so simple, because standing up to China will entail significant economic costs, especially in the short term. Those costs might pale in comparison to the long-term costs of business as usual with Beijing—Chinese espionage has been estimated to deprive the United States alone of somewhere between $200 billion and $600 billion annually—to say nothing of the moral quandaries and geopolitical risks of cooperating with a brutal totalitarian regime with revanchist ambitions. Yet the ability to make such an enlightened calculation in favor of confronting China may be beyond the capacities of any nation, especially ones as polarized as the United States and many of its democratic allies.

If there is any hope, it lies in a renewed commitment to democratic values. The United States and its allies share a common aspiration for an international order based on democratic principles and enshrined in international agreements and laws. The core of such an order is being forged in the crucible of competition with China and could be built out into the most enlightened order the world has ever seen—a genuine free world. But to get there, the United States and its allies will have to embrace competition with China and march forward together through another long twilight struggle.

#### Short-term moves to bolster heg are key to check China’s rapid rise

Beckley and Brands – *\*Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University; \*\*resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies*. (\*Michael and \*\*Hal, January 1, 2021, “Into the Danger Zone - Coming Crisis in US-China Relations," American Enterprise Institute, Targeted News Service, ProQuest via UMich Libraries, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27632?seq=1)//KH

A Strategy for Navigating the Danger Zone

The United States obviously needs a long-term strategy to stay ahead of China economically, mili-tarily, and diplomatically over the coming decades. But the more urgent task is to develop a short-term strategy to blunt a potential surge of Chinese aggres-sion and expansion this decade.

A useful parallel is the early Cold War. The logic of the containment strategy Washington adopted in the late 1940s was that the contest with Moscow would last many years, so America must set a course it could patiently follow. Yet winning the Cold War over the long term required not losing it in the short term. The Marshall Plan, unveiled in 1947, was meant to prevent an imminent economic collapse in Western Europe, which might enable Moscow to extend its political hegemony over the entire continent. The creation of NATO and the rearm-ament program undertaken during the Korean War were crisis-driven efforts to forge a military shield that would allow the West to thrive--and containment to work--over time. Strategic urgency was the prelude to strategic patience: America could exploit its lasting economic and political advantages only if it closed off more immediate, and potentially fatal, vulnerabilities./22 Today, the United States will once again need a danger-zone strategy, which should be based on four principles.

America should focus on denying China near-term successes, military or otherwise, that would significantly alter the longer-term balance of power.

First, America should focus on denying China near-term successes, military or otherwise, that would significantly alter the longer-term balance of power. The possibilities of greatest concern are a Chinese conquest of Taiwan, which would fundamentally upend the strategic equilibrium in the western Pacific, and Chinese technological breakthroughs--such as preeminence in 5G telecommunications networks--that would deliver lasting dividends in economic power and geopolitical influence.

This isn't to say that Washington should cede the field in other areas of competition--such as in the struggle for influence in international organizations--but simply to recognize that strict prioritization is vital when dangers are acute and resources are limited. In fact, a danger-zone strategy may involve reacting calmly to, or even encouraging, some Chinese ini-tiatives as a way to channel China's attention and resources in less threatening directions. If Beijing wants to spend lavishly on white elephant projects in Pakistan or other detours along the Belt and Road, or if it invests in global power-projection capabilities that will take decades to have a strategic impact, so much the better.

Second, because a danger-zone strategy is a race against the clock, it rewards good-enough solutions rather than perfect ones. Whether in the military, diplomatic, or economic realm, the United States should make the most of tools, partners, and coalitions it has now, or can quickly summon, rather than assets that would require years or longer to develop.

Third, a danger-zone strategy requires slowing down one's opponent and speeding up one's own efforts. As the Chinese challenge sharpens in the coming years, Washington must selectively degrade Beijing's capabilities and enthusiasm for expansion. This does not mean waging all-out economic or political warfare against an insecure regime. As dis-cussed subsequently, it means identifying discrete areas where applying pressure can throw Beijing off-balance or complicate its geopolitical designs.

Finally, a danger-zone strategy requires risk-taking. The United States must be willing to actively roll back Chinese power and limit its potential for aggression. As Dean Acheson remarked of desperate US efforts to rearm during the Korean War, "The only thing that was more dangerous than undertaking this program was not undertaking it."/23 But US officials should also eschew superfluous provocations, keeping their rhetoric calm and measured, and avoid creating the impression that Washington is bent on all-out confrontation. Navigating a perilous passage will require blending strength, pressure, and reassurance.

### Now key

#### Now is critical for a US heg booster! Post-Ukraine encouraged international collaboration and Western leadership

Daalder and Lindsay 22 - *\*President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and served as U.S. Ambassador to NATO from 2009 to 2013, \*\*Senior Vice President and Director of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.* (\*Ivo H. and \*\*James M., July/August 2022, "Last Best Hope," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2022-06-21/last-best-hope-world-order-west)//KH

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine confirmed what has long been apparent: the rules-based order created after World War II is at risk of collapse. Russia is not content to be a responsible stakeholder in a system set up by others, and neither is China, which has supported Moscow’s aggression. Both countries want to remake the order to serve their autocratic interests. As U.S. President Joe Biden said in Warsaw in March, the West now faces “a battle between democracy and autocracy, between liberty and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force.”

History was not supposed to play out this way. In the heady days after the Cold War, the order appeared both unchallenged and unchallengeable. Washington believed that its unquestioned primacy allowed it to determine the future of other countries as well as its own. U.S. allies believed they had escaped the tragedy of great-power politics and had entered an era of self-enforcing rules. As time went on, however, habits of collaboration eroded, and the sense of common purpose faded. Rather than using the unique moment of U.S. dominance to deepen and strengthen the rules-based order, the West let that system wither.

Washington and its allies now have a chance to correct that mistake. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s historic miscalculation to attack Ukraine has reminded them not just of their shared interests and values but also of the importance of acting collectively. The West responded to the invasion with a show of unity not seen since the height of the Cold War. The United States and its allies have levied unprecedented sanctions, begun weaning themselves off Russian energy, and shipped massive quantities of weapons to Ukraine. But this surprising unity may not last. As the economic pain of sanctions increases and the war settles into the prolonged battle of attrition that intelligence officials forecast, domestic and other concerns may start to sow divisions within the West.

Even as the West works to manage these differences, it should turn its newfound unity into a broader effort to save the rules-based order. The first step should be to create a new group, the G-12, that would bring together the United States and its leading allies in Asia, Europe, and North America. Every member of this group has a vital interest in preserving the order, and none of them can do it on their own. But formalized cooperation alone will not be enough. The United States and its allies will need to take the second step of learning from the mistakes they had made over the last three decades. Washington will need to curtail its penchant for unilateralism, to listen as well as talk, and to give as well as demand. Asian and European allies, for their part, will need to accept more responsibility and overcome their tendency to free-ride.

If the West sticks to its old ways, it will bungle something that is exceedingly rare in international politics: a second chance. Only by seizing the moment, learning from its errors, and acting collectively can the West rebuild an international order that promotes the rule of law rather than the law of the jungle.

#### COVID created a hegemonic reset with a global-power step down – now is a rare gap to positively reconstruct the world order

Zelikow 22 - *Professor of History at the University of Virginia. A former U.S. diplomat and Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, he has worked for five presidential administrations* (Philip, July/August 2022, "The Hollow Order," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2022-06-21/hollow-order-international-system)//KH

There they were, meeting in Beijing on February 4: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Shortly before the start of the 2022 Winter Olympics, the two leaders released a remarkable 5,300-word joint statement about how the partnership between China and Russia would have “no limits.” The document went on at length about the two nations’ commitment to democracy. It called for a universalist and open world order, with the United Nations at the center. It stressed a commitment to international law, inclusiveness, and common values. It did all this even though Russia, as Xi and Putin both knew, was sending tanks and missile launchers to the Ukrainian border.

By comparison, the September 1940 joint statement issued by Germany, Italy, and Japan was a model of candor. The Axis powers were at least truthful when they announced that it was “their prime purpose to establish and maintain a new order of things.” Russia, meanwhile, has described its war against Ukraine as one of liberation. It decided that the country’s Jewish president was a Nazi. It declared that there was really no such thing as “Ukraine.” And it argued that a NATO alliance with a U.S. force commitment in Europe that was only one-seventh as large as it had been at the height of the Cold War was now an existential threat.

In their statement, China and Russia achieved peak hypocrisy. But the existing world order, which aspired to build a global commonwealth, had already been failing. The free world’s leaders had long ago started favoring performative commitments over the real action needed to safeguard the planet from crises. They expanded NATO without meaningfully responding to increasing Russian aggression. Distracted and chastened by misadventures in the Muslim world, Washington in particular disengaged from practical deeds, even as its rhetorical commitment to the international order varied. The United States’ high defense spending had more to do with satisfying domestic constituencies than with supporting any positive strategy. The world’s transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources was based on hollow pledges and private action. As support for globalization waned, the United States and other countries retreated from trade agreements and neglected international institutions for civilian and common economic action. The world’s drive in the early years of this century to improve global health and human development petered out.

The emptiness of the supposed international system was especially obvious at the end of 2019, when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Charged with unprecedented global responsibilities, China and the United States stepped down, not up. Beijing withheld crucial information about the outbreak. Washington withdrew from the World Health Organization just when it most needed U.S. leadership. Wealthy countries began a mad scramble to develop vaccines, but they moved too slowly to create other treatments and hoarded whatever shots and therapeutics pharmaceutical companies could produce, leaving the rest of the world behind. The best estimates suggest that the virus caused about 15 to 20 million deaths and trillions of dollars of economic damage.

The most powerful idealism has usually been the idealism of what works.

By the spring of 2020, “for all practical purposes the G7 ceased to exist,” wrote the foreign policy experts Colin Kahl and Thomas Wright in August 2021. “Pandemic politics,” they continued, “ultimately dealt the final blow to the old international order.”

Six months after they published those words, Russia invaded Ukraine. It was an attack that could truly have buried the old system, as Moscow believed it would. Yet Ukraine’s inspiring fight has helped the G-7 roar back to life. Its members have organized an economic counteroffensive, and they have joined a coalition providing military aid. Amid the wreckage of so many past hopes, it is possible to imagine a reconstructed world order emerging from this crisis.

But for a new system to succeed, its would-be architects must organize actions, not more theatrics. Over the course of world history, the most powerful idealism has usually been the idealism of what works. Today, that means crafting a practical international order focused on a few basic problems that rally broad interest. Many leaders want to stop unprovoked wars of aggression, especially those that might spark **a third world war.** They would welcome a new vision of economic order that does not ignore security but is also not a huckster’s promise that everything can be made at home. They would like to convert jolting energy shocks, such as the one caused by Russia’s invasion, into a managed transition to a more carbon-free future. They want to be better prepared for the next pandemic. And most world leaders, and even many ordinary Americans, still hope that China will choose to be part of these solutions, not one of the wreckers of a new international system.

These aspirations may seem modest. They do not include holding war crimes trials or spreading democracy. But effective common action on just these items will be an enormous task. The world order is deglobalizing and dysfunctional, facing challenges that have never been more planetary in scope. Leaders must craft a system focused on actually addressing these issues rather than on striking the right pose.

### Reps defense

#### Benevolent hegemonic offensive rhetoric is key – otherwise, worse, anti-democratic rhetoric fills in

Green and Brands 22 – *\*senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair at CSIS and chair in modern and contemporary Japanese politics and foreign policy at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University,\*\*Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins SAIS, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and columnist for Bloomberg* (Mike\* interviewing Hal\*\*, February 25, 2022, “Twilight Struggle: Lessons from the Cold War for China Strategy Today,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, https://www.csis.org/analysis/twilight-struggle-lessons-cold-war-china-strategy-today)//KH

Mike Green: So the way you write the book is looking at different themes in Cold War strategic competition and then, at the end of the book, tying together some lessons or implications for us. You don't come out and say, "We need to recreate exactly NSC-68, or we need"... It's not redo what we did but what are the implications for how we prepare for this ourselves? There is a bit of a contradiction in there, which may be something you can resolve for us. But, on the one hand, you want an open educational exchange with China, for all the reasons you just said, but you also quote... And I agree with this, too, by the way. You quote Kennan on the need for offensive, not just defensive, but offensive political warfare, information warfare, so poking at the seams, the inconsistencies, the contradictions in the adversary's way of life.

Mike Green: The contradiction is this. This is the excuse Xi Jinping and other authoritarians used to shut down civil society and free academic learning and discourse, because it's all just part of an American campaign of offensive political warfare. This is a kind of tactical question, really. I don't think we ever figured it out in the Cold War, really. How do you take advantage of our open society, the attraction of our values, even within an authoritarian state, and therefore wanting to preserve an open exchange in academic and intellectual, rich interaction with China while at the same time engaging in political warfare, which we need to do? Do you have any sort of lessons from the Cold War or thoughts on the way forward?

Hal Brands: Well, the framing point here is that when Kennan and others thought about political warfare early in the Cold War, I think they were motivated chiefly by the idea that the Soviet Union certainly isn't going to hold back from trying to divide and weaken our society and pry us apart from our friends and allies, and so if we limit ourselves to purely defensive measures, that's a form of unilateral disarmament in this struggle. Since the struggle is really, hopefully, going to be waged using primarily means short of war, that's a part of the toolkit you just can't leave to the side in a competition like this. I think that's basically right today as well. I think it's fairly well established the Chinese have a pretty well-developed program of political warfare that they pursue vis-a-vis not just the United States but other democratic societies that's meant to make it harder for us to be an effective competitor. So I think we're going to have to do things in the same area.

Hal Brands: The point I would make, though, is that you don't always have to think of political warfare as the really sexy covert action, dangerous type stuff that it sometimes gets described as. So we did a lot of political warfare during the Cold War that frankly wasn't that effective, right? We would parachute Albanian exiles back into Albania to try to link up with the anti-Communist resistance there, and they all got killed because Kim Philby had infiltrated British and American intelligence service. We trained Tibetan guerillas to go fight against the Chinese communists and they pretty much all got killed as well. So those types of things weren't always the most effective forms of political warfare. Some of the most effective forms of political warfare could be things like finding ways of introducing unbiased information into an otherwise closed information ecosystem. We used Radio Free Europe, for instance, to do this during the Cold War. There are parallels today that would come with finding ways of circumventing the Great Firewall and things like that. Political warfare can also be, you know, sort of a synonym for standing up for your own best values abroad.

Hal Brands: I mean, when the United States gets together with other democratic allies to sanction Chinese officials who are involved in doing terrible things to the Uighur population, that's a form of political warfare. It strikes at the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, particularly under Xi Jinping. But it's something that we ought to be doing simply to validate our own values as well, and so I think we need kind of a broad version or a broad vision of political warfare, one that is not entirely constituted by, sort of, sneaky and subversive acts. I think we just have to accept the tension as well. I don't think there's anything the United States can do, by the way, that would convince Xi Jinping that we are not trying to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party. It's not just Xi, by the way. Deng Xiaoping thought that the United States was trying to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party as well back in the 1980s when that was basically the last thing that we had in mind. So there is a degree of ingrained suspicion here that we're not going to be able to overcome.

Mike Green: So the political warfare, the offensive... It's unfortunate the word warfare goes with it, but the offensive tool that works best for us is our openness and just, as you said, getting rid of the firewalls, opening up information. I went to college during the Cold War, so I remember it. I ran our radio station, and we used to get the weekly world news from Radio Moscow, and they'd encourage us to play it. We'd play it with a laugh track. It was so ridiculous. It was propaganda, and we knew, and it was funny. It was like a drinking game.

Mike Green: After college, I took the Trans-Siberian Railroad from China through the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, which made for interesting security clearance interviews a few years later. The most effective piece of American political warfare I saw behind the Iron Curtain was outside the US Embassy in Warsaw, where they had a huge placard with Herblock cartoons making fun of Ronald Reagan and dozens and dozens of Poles just staring at it in amazement. "You mean you're allowed to make fun of your leader?" So I think that's what political warfare meant, probably what Kennan had in mind, too. Don't emulate the other side. Play to your own strengths, which is openness, information, challenging conventional wisdom, and all of that.

### Sustainability

#### The threat of Chinese revisionism has increased US hegemonic sustainability

Beckley 22 – *Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University* (Michael, March/April 2022, "Enemies of My Enemy," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2021-02-14/china-new-world-order-enemies-my-enemy)//KH

The international order is falling apart, and everyone seems to know how to fix it. According to some, the United States just needs to rededicate itself to leading the liberal order it helped found some 75 years ago. Others argue that the world’s great powers should form a concert to guide the international community into a new age of multipolar cooperation. Still others call for a grand bargain that divides the globe into stable spheres of influence. What these and other visions of international order have in common is an assumption that global governance can be designed and imposed from the top down. With wise statesmanship and ample summitry, the international jungle can be tamed and cultivated. Conflicts of interest and historical hatreds can be negotiated away and replaced with win-win cooperation.

The history of international order, however, provides little reason for confidence in top-down, cooperative solutions. The strongest orders in modern history—from Westphalia in the seventeenth century to the liberal international order in the twentieth—were not inclusive organizations working for the greater good of humanity. Rather, they were alliances built by great powers to wage security competition against their main rivals. Fear and loathing of a shared enemy, not enlightened calls to make the world a better place, brought these orders together. Progress on transnational issues, when achieved, emerged largely as a byproduct of hardheaded security cooperation. That cooperation usually lasted only as long as a common threat remained both present and manageable. When that threat dissipated or grew too large, the orders collapsed. Today, the liberal order is fraying for many reasons, but the underlying cause is that the threat it was originally designed to defeat—Soviet communism—disappeared three decades ago. None of the proposed replacements to the current order have stuck because there hasn’t been a threat scary or vivid enough to compel sustained cooperation among the key players.

Until now. Through a surge of repression and aggression, China has frightened countries near and far. It is acting belligerently in East Asia, trying to carve out exclusive economic zones in the global economy, and exporting digital systems that make authoritarianism more effective than ever. For the first time since the Cold War, a critical mass of countries face serious threats to their security, welfare, and ways of life—all emanating from a single source.

This moment of clarity has triggered a flurry of responses. China’s neighbors are arming themselves and aligning with outside powers to secure their territory and sea-lanes. Many of the world’s largest economies are collectively developing new trade, investment, and technology standards that implicitly discriminate against China. Democracies are gathering to devise strategies for combating authoritarianism at home and abroad, and new international organizations are popping up to coordinate the battle. Seen in real time, these efforts look scattershot. Step back from the day-to-day commotion, however, and a fuller picture emerges: for better or worse, competition with China is forging a new international order.

ORDERS OF EXCLUSION

The modern liberal mind associates international order with peace and harmony. Historically, however, international orders have been more about keeping rivals down than bringing everyone together. As the international relations theorist Kyle Lascurettes has argued, the major orders of the past four centuries were “orders of exclusion,” designed by dominant powers to ostracize and outcompete rivals. Order building wasn’t a restraint on geopolitical conflict; it was power politics by other means, a cost-effective way to contain adversaries short of war.

Fear of an enemy, not faith in friends, formed the bedrock of each era’s order, and members developed a common set of norms by defining themselves in opposition to that enemy. In doing so, they tapped into humanity’s most primordial driver of collective action. Sociologists call it “the in-group/out-group dynamic.” Philosophers call it “Sallust’s theorem,” after the ancient historian who argued that fear of Carthage held the Roman Republic together. In political science, the analogous concept is negative partisanship, the tendency for voters to become intensely loyal to one political party mainly because they despise its rival.

For the first time since the Cold War, a critical mass of countries face serious threats to their security, welfare, and ways of life.

This negative dynamic pervades the history of order building. In 1648, the kingdoms that won the Thirty Years’ War enshrined rules of sovereign statehood in the Peace of Westphalia to undermine the authority of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire. Great Britain and its allies designed the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht to contain France by delegitimizing territorial expansion through royal marriages and the assertion of dynastic ties, Louis XIV’s preferred method of amassing power. The Concert of Europe, the post-Napoleonic peace established in Vienna in 1815, was used by conservative monarchies to forestall the rise of liberal revolutionary regimes. The victors of World War I built the interwar order to hold Germany and Bolshevik Russia in check. After World War II, the Allies initially designed a global order, centered on the United Nations, to prevent a return of Nazi-style fascism and mercantilism. When the onset of the Cold War quickly hamstrung that global order, however, the West created a separate order to exclude and outcompete Soviet communism. For the duration of the Cold War, the world was divided into two orders: the dominant one led by Washington, and a poorer one centered on Moscow.

The main features of today’s liberal order are direct descendants of the United States’ Cold War alliance. After the Soviets decided not to join the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (gatt), these institutions were repurposed as agents of capitalist expansion—first, to rebuild capitalist economies and, later, to promote globalization. The Marshall Plan laid the foundation for the European Community by lavishing U.S. aid on governments that agreed to expel communists from their ranks and work toward an economic federation. NATO created a united front against the Red Army. The chain of U.S. alliances ringing East Asia was constructed to contain communist expansion there, especially from China and North Korea. U.S. engagement with China, which lasted from the 1970s to the 2010s, was a gambit to exploit the Sino-Soviet split.

Each of these initiatives was an element of an order designed first and foremost to defeat the Soviet Union. In the absence of the Cold War threat, Japan and West Germany would not have tolerated prolonged U.S. military occupations on their soil. The British, the French, and the Germans would not have pooled their industrial resources. The United States—which had spent the previous two centuries ducking international commitments and shielding its economy with tariffs—would not have thrown its weight behind international institutions. Nor would it have provided security guarantees, massive aid, and easy market access to dozens of countries, including the former Axis powers. Only the threat of a nuclear-armed, communist superpower could compel so many countries to set aside their conflicting interests and long-standing rivalries and build the strongest security community and free-trade regime in history.

#### States’ reaction to multiple spheres of influence proves a regional shift away from Chinese revisionism and towards the USA!

Green and Brands 22 – *\*senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair at CSIS and chair in modern and contemporary Japanese politics and foreign policy at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University,\*\*Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins SAIS, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and columnist for Bloomberg* (Mike\* interviewing Hal\*\*, February 25, 2022, “Twilight Struggle: Lessons from the Cold War for China Strategy Today,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, https://www.csis.org/analysis/twilight-struggle-lessons-cold-war-china-strategy-today)//KH

Mike Green: You have a whole chapter on the contest and the periphery, and there was a great... The Soviets and the Chinese had an advantage because, for example, the fight in the Korean Peninsula or Vietnam was a continental Asian fight. They had interior lines. We had to go across the vast maritime space, and we ended up getting sucked into continental wars. The peripheral problems this time, with a few exceptions, are maritime. That's different, isn't it? It's South China Sea, it's East China Sea. It's increasingly not only the first but the second island chain. It's closer to home, and it's sort of more vital in the sense of American sea lanes and the, if you will, Anglo-American source of hegemony for 400 years. How do we think about these peripheral risks and which ones worry you, like Taiwan?

Mike Green: Riffing off what I just said, to me, it sort of says, "Worry more about the maritime periphery than the continental." But how do we think about these peripheral challenges? We're not looking at a direct US-China fight. It's about the periphery. It's about third states. It's about spheres of influence and all that. How do you think about it? What are the ones that worry you, and what does it mean that it's now increasingly maritime and, therefore, in our face?

Hal Brands: So I think there's maybe at least three ways of thinking about this issue, and so one area that I worry about is the one that you flagged, which is basically the maritime periphery of East Asia, right? You think a lot about East China Sea, South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait as potential US-China flash points. In fact, those areas are so central to the competition that I don't know that we would even describe them as peripheral. I mean, that might be the **core of this competition**.

Hal Brands: East Asia might be the core in another way as well in that it's probably the most economically dynamic region of the world, or at least it has been for a while, and so it's not like fighting in Southeast Asia during the 1960s when that was the Third World, it was economically underdeveloped, and so on and so forth. It's a bit of a different situation. But, nonetheless, I think that's where the potential for direct conflict between the US and China is **most severe** because that's where our security commitments, or our ambiguous security commitments in the case of Taiwan, overlap most directly with things that China is increasingly defining as its own vital interests and indicating that it is very serious about pursuing.

Hal Brands: The second one would be, I think, kind of the Eurasian hinterland of China, and so one thing that we sometimes forget when we think about China is that it's a really big country that reaches really far into Eurasia, in fact, and Xi Jinping doesn't forget this. Remember he debuted the Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia, and so there's certainly a realization, I think, in Chinese policy that China needs to be thinking about its territorial hinterland as potentially an area to expand influence in the context of a US-China competition, maybe just because you want better access to and sort of overland access to resources coming from the Middle East, for instance, so that they're not subject to interdiction if they have to pass through the Strait of Malacca or something like that, but also because the Chinese have been talking more and more about trying to create, sort of, a Eurasian space that is oriented toward China economically and otherwise. So that might actually be a pretty good parallel for kind of the Cold War periphery.

Hal Brands: Then the third area is maybe the developing world or the developing regions writ large. So when we think particularly about technological competition, it seems fairly unlikely... I mean, it seemed more likely about three years ago that China is going to get some sort of technological hammer lock on key American allies in East Asia and Europe. Most of those countries have started throwing up firewalls against Chinese technological influence in one way or another. It's more plausible when you think about developing countries in Africa, in Central Asia, in Latin America, Southeast Asia, places where Chinese technology will be more attractive for price reasons above all else and where some of the security concerns are perhaps less keenly felt. So maybe that's a third area where you see peripheral conflict playing out in a US-China context.

#### China is threatening, but the US is an early stage of competition. Sustainability indicts assume the squo, not the longer-term trends of US strength. No safe alternative to US hegemony.

Green and Brands 22 – *\*senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair at CSIS and chair in modern and contemporary Japanese politics and foreign policy at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University,\*\*Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins SAIS, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and columnist for Bloomberg* (Mike\* interviewing Hal\*\*, February 25, 2022, “Twilight Struggle: Lessons from the Cold War for China Strategy Today,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, https://www.csis.org/analysis/twilight-struggle-lessons-cold-war-china-strategy-today)//KH

Mike Green: My favorite quote of the people you quote in the book is the quote you have of Kennan, who argues that... At the very beginning of thinking about containment, he argues there is no real security in this strategic competition we were starting out with vis-a-vis the Soviets, no real security and no alternative to living dangerously. That really stuck with me because we are, it seems to me, at a cathartic moment in American strategic thought, and, as you know well, by the way, Australia and the Japanese and a lot of other allies, about this problem, and that just was kind of chilling. There is no alternative to living dangerously. That, to me, is the strategic point of discontinuity we've hit in the last few years. We now realize there's no responsible stakeholder. There's no new model of great power relations. There is no alternative to living dangerously. That really stuck with me. But that's a little bit of a depressing note to strike, so how would you characterize... What does it mean, in your words, to be preparing for a long struggle?

Hal Brands: So it's a great question, and I think maybe I'll start by starting in the present and then working my way backwards. You mentioned the transition period in US-China relations that probably began about five years ago with the advent of the Trump presidency when we decided that the responsible stakeholder was more or less dead and we were moving into a period of competition. In a way, I think that realization kind of felt liberating for a lot of American policymakers. I mean, there was less concern about not rocking the boat in the US-China relationship, and there was freedom to do things that the United States might have wanted to do but felt constrained to do in economic competition or technological competition for a while.

Hal Brands: But I think we've reached the point now where it's actually more sobering than anything else. I mean, competition is not free of danger. We've learned that very much over the past year, both in the US-Russia and the US-China relationship, where I think when a lot of people were thinking about competition with China even a couple of years ago, it was sort of in this abstract way and now you realize that, very tangibly, there is a danger of military conflict that attends any geopolitical competition. It could happen in the Taiwan Strait. It could happen in Eastern Europe. It could happen in a number of places.

Hal Brands: So it's important going into the study of great power competition not to have a sanitized view of what it means, and this takes us back to the Cold War, where we look back on the Cold War now and we think of it as the “Long Peace.” The exaggerated version of this is almost that, you know, there was a 45-year principled agreement to compete short of war but not go into war, and that really, obviously, wasn't how it worked. There were pervasive fears of global military conflict during the Cold War. The United States had to think very seriously about how to deter such a conflict or to fight it if it occurred, and so competition was really kind of a terrifying experience, especially given the presence of nuclear weapons in that competition and how new and terrifying they were. So I think Kennan's quote is quite appropriate in the sense that when we talk about competition, we're actually talking about something that can be quite perilous.

Mike Green: Looking at the Cold War precedent, again, this is not the Cold War again, but embarking on a long struggle like this is an experience where you got to look back at the last time you did it, as you argue throughout the book. How prepared do you think the American people are? How much consensus is there behind this competition compared with, say, 1948, '49? The Korean War was cathartic, but before the Korean War, before June 1950, you had the America Firsters, you had isolationists, you had people opposing NATO. It was not as if the entire American population read the “Long Telegram” and got it, right? Where are we today, do you think, compared to the beginning of that struggle?

Hal Brands: In some ways, we're better placed than we were back then for the reason that you allude to, which is it's a mistake to think back that there was this rock solid Cold War consensus that came about in 1946 and lasted through the end of the Cold War. That’s not how it happened. There were left-wing critiques of containment in the late '40s. There were right-wing critiques of containment in the late 1940s. There was not an acceptance, really, until the '50s, maybe even the '60s, that the United States was going to maintain this network of global military and diplomatic commitments that it had kind of been left with after World War II and took up in the course of the Cold War.

Hal Brands: So if you looked at where we are today, you know, the United States actually has a lot of the things that it needs to compete with China and Russia, right? We have a network of alliances that's still probably our foremost tool in competition. We don't have to build that from scratch. We don't have to build an intelligence community from scratch, a national security state from scratch in the way that we did during the Cold War. So I think we're better prepared in those ways. Where we're maybe a little bit worse prepared comes from the fact that I think that the consensus on competition, and let's focus on China here, is probably broader than it is deep right now, and so there is a bipartisan consensus that China is a competitor of the United States, whatever that means. It came from the Trump administration. It's come from the Biden administration. It has bipartisan support in Congress, and the polling on this stuff indicates that the American people are more or less on board with that proposition. But when you start getting into specific issue areas, I think the consensus looks a little bit shallower.

Hal Brands: So when you start asking people, "Should the United States restrict outbound investment into China to prevent Chinese companies from using American money to pursue the goals of the People's Liberation Army” and things like that, you start getting less consensus. When it comes to aspects of technological competition, when it comes to, you know, things that might actually pose some difficult choices for the United States economically or politically, I think there's less consensus. So I think we're still at a fairly early stage of the competition in that respect, and part of the reason is that, and I'd maybe put an asterisk next to this statement, there hasn't been something quite like the Korean War to have the galvanizing factor in American public opinion. COVID maybe comes close. I think COVID had a pretty disastrous effect on China's global image, and it certainly had a liberating effect on China hawks within the United States, but I'm not sure that the effect is as profound as some of the early Cold War stuff was. So, for those reasons, I think we're in a little bit better position but also maybe a little bit more tenuous position than we were in, say, 1951.

Mike Green: And maybe the biggest difference... And, again, you're not saying this is a new Cold War. But in terms of using that experience to understand the dynamics of geopolitical competition and what it means for the American way of government and strategy, probably the biggest difference, you'd agree, I think, is you didn't have such a stake in Soviet economic interests. You didn't have, you know, prominent Wall Street financiers, to this day, calling for basically no decoupling and faith in the marketplace with China. You didn't have soybean farmers in most states of the union getting most of their income from exports to China. You didn't have all of these stakeholders within the US system who had so much to gain from the Chinese economy.

Mike Green: You didn't talk a lot about that in the book, but how would you amend the lessons, given that piece of it? We've surveyed this, you know, at CSIS, and both thought leaders and the American public are quite willing to decouple on high tech and do things like that. But when it comes to stopping agricultural exports or things that benefit us or cheap consumer goods, there's not a lot of support, and that's very different from the Soviet Union. We had no economic relationship, really, that affected average Americans. So what do you do with that one when you're trying to look at the parallels and the lessons?

Hal Brands: Yeah. What's different is that there are very powerful interests in American society that have a very strong stake in a stable US-China relationship and an open US-China relationship, and that's not entirely a bad thing. I mean, I think that the key is to think not so much about broad or complete economic decoupling as to try to figure out what are the areas in which we absolutely cannot be dependent on China for critical goods or critical inputs? What are the areas in which we absolutely cannot be enabling China's development? Presumably, we don't want to make it easier for Huawei to wire the world with 5G telecommunications, things like that. And then what are the larger areas of not particularly sensitive or strategic trade where it's fine if there's a particularly extensive US-China relationship? I don't know that China buying a lot of agricultural products from the United States is necessarily a point of strategic vulnerability for us. I think, if anything, it testifies to a strategic vulnerability of China's, which is that they are highly dependent on imports of food and other goods from abroad.

#### Post-Ukraine, a European economic shift means the US’ position as a global hegemon is secure

Brands 22 – *Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor at the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments* (Hal Brands, May, 21, 2022, "Democracies Can Out-Compete the China-Russia Alliance," https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/3657196/hal-brands/democracies-can-out-compete-china-russia-alliance)//KH

The economic trauma of the Ukraine War is only beginning: Energy shocks, food-supply disruption and commodity shortages will have growing impact as the conflict persists. The war, moreover, is just part of an acceleratng geo-economic realignment.

The golden age of globalization, when countries pursued interdependence with minimal fear of insecurity, is over. The global economy is now being reshaped by competition and conflict. That will create some **opportunities for the US to strengthen its position** — as well as a whole lot of worldwide turmoil.

A remarkable aspect of the post-Cold War era was that calculations of economic efficiency so often trumped calculations of geopolitical risk. An era that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall was dominated by the pursuit of integration across traditional strategic divides.

A web of trade, financial and technological ties developed between China and the world’s democracies. European countries became highly reliant on Russian energy (notably Germany) and investment (the UK). The pursuit of profit was accompanied by a diplomatic rationale — that economic entanglement would create a common interest in global stability, mitigating whatever dangers might otherwise result from trading with a prospective enemy.

That rationale proved faulty. Globalization increased Chinese and Russian capabilities without meaningfully decreasing their ambitions. By the mid-2010s, global tensions were increasing and interdependence came to be seen as a source of vulnerability.

Worried that Beijing might translate technological primacy into geopolitical primacy, President Donald Trump’s administration urged other nations to wall off their 5G telecommunications networks against Chinese influence. It sought to forestall completion of the Nord Stream II pipeline between Russia and Germany, lest Europe become diplomatically paralyzed by dependence on Moscow’s energy.

When Beijing then threatened to withhold critical pharmaceutical components amid the Covid-19 pandemic, it showed how complex supply chains could be wielded as strategic weapons.

In this context, the war in Ukraine has thrown global integration into reverse. Western companies that pushed into Russia after the Cold War are being forced to flee, with McDonald’s Corp. being the latest (and perhaps most symbolic). US export controls have severed Russia’s access to advanced semiconductors; Germany and other European democracies are rapidly undoing decades of economic engagement. This conflict-driven decoupling may simply be a preview of what comes next.

President Xi Jinping’s China was already pursuing what Matthew Pottinger, deputy national security adviser in the Trump administration, calls an “offensive decoupling” strategy — a program meant to insulate the country from Western pressure and give it tremendous coercive power by dominating critical technologies. Xi’s “dual circulation” program is meant to develop China’s internal market and make the country less reliant on external markets that might slam shut in a crisis.

It seems inevitable that this campaign will accelerate. China, whose relations with Washington are in a nosedive, can hardly leave itself susceptible to the sort of punishment the US and its allies have imposed on Moscow.

Similar processes are underway across the democratic world. Europe is moving to wean itself off Russian oil and natural gas. The US is considering sharper curbs on investment in China; Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is pushing “friend-shoring,” or relocating production to countries aligned with Washington.

The administration of President Joe Biden is also working with allies, such as Japan, to create technological supply chains and innovation ecosystems that leave China on the outside.

It has refused, so far, to remove Trump’s tariffs on China, a step that would help ease inflation, for fear of surrendering a diplomatic advantage. This turns the post-Cold War norm on its head: Calculations of geopolitical risk are now trumping calculations of economic efficiency.

To be sure, interdependence is hardly a thing of the past. US trade in goods with China was more than $650 billion last year, and American companies such as Tesla Inc. and Apple Inc. are doing more, not less, business with Beijing.

But the basic trend is toward a more balkanized global economy, in which key rivals aim to seal off dangerous vulnerabilities and manipulate the terms of interdependence to their advantage. And if recent experience is any indication, this process will happen gradually until it happens rapidly — when a grave crisis erupts, as in Ukraine, and sunders ties that had seemed unbreakable not long before.

Structurally speaking, the US is well positioned. America and the other advanced democracies possess a clear majority of global production and wealth. If they, plus key developing states such as India, deepen their integration with each other while limiting it with their rivals, they can create a free-world economy more vibrant than anything China, let alone Russia, can muster.

But the current crisis has also revealed how delinquent the democratic world has been in planning for the dramatic economic interruptions a major geopolitical showdown involving China would cause. And even if the US and its allies get their act together, no one should underestimate the dislocations headed our way.

As Ukraine demonstrates, obtaining greater geo-economic security will require rupturing supply chains, upending trade and investment patterns, and otherwise revisiting the lucrative efficiencies of the post-Cold War era. A world that is more divided geopolitically will be more turbulent economically as well.

#### Alliance post-Trump proves East Asia and Europe will always be dependent on the US – Ukraine marks a shift towards optimism

Kagan and Neil 22 – *Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; adjunct professor at Georgetown* (Andrew Neil interviewing Robert Kagan, 5-10-2022, "Episode 3: Robert Kagan," Tortoise, https://www.tortoisemedia.com/audio/episode-3-robert-kagan/)//KH

Andrew Neil: So, given Europe’s robust response to the invasion of Ukraine so far, are Americans still from Mars and Europeans still from Venus, as you once memorably wrote?

Robert Kagan: I still think it’s the case and, by the way, for entirely understandable reasons that the United States is still more prone to use force in situations than Europeans are. That derives to some extent from European capabilities; Europe doesn’t really have much in the way of force projection capabilities and up until now, I think it has been quite clear that Europeans haven’t wanted it. The discussion has certainly been taking place for decades, right? How many times have we said that the Europeans, that the Europeans have said that they are going to build up their military? They haven’t; they’ve made their choice. Maybe that will change to some extent but I don’t see Europe playing that kind of, becoming its own sort of stand-alone superpower, even though I would be delighted if it did.

So, it is partly capability and capability to some extent drives decision-making but of course, on the other hand – and this is something that I wish Americans were more sensitive to when it comes to countries like Germany – Europe has a past that is fraught with conflict and nationalism and two major bloody conflicts in the 20th century and for Europe to be inclined toward peace is of great benefit to the world and to the United States. I think we should, to some extent, welcome the degree to which Europeans are more peacefully inclined than maybe they have been in previous centuries and I wouldn’t be quick to want to push them in a different direction, quite honestly.

I think it means, and this is where it gets complicated, is it means to some extent Europe is going to continue to depend for its security on the American security umbrella. America should be willing, in fact perfectly willing to provide that security umbrella in the interests of global peace and there is going to be that disparity between the two.

Andrew Neil: Let me move on to some wider considerations of American foreign policy and its place in the world. Is there not less of an appetite for America, at home and abroad, to play its dominant role on the world stage because of the failure of the US interventionism that you’ve espoused?

Robert Kagan: That’s not what it seems to be the case, does it? I mean, it’s interesting to me how frequently since the Iraq war, to take the obvious example, Americans have been very slow to get over the Iraq war and I would agree with you that it has certainly made Americans less inclined to use force in situations where I think in retrospect they ought to have, for instance Syria, to keep Russia out and to deal with the horrific humanitarian disaster visited upon the Syrian people by Assad, but yes, there is no question that Iraq and to some extent Afghanistan, have had that effect.

The effect on the rest of the world I think is much less clear. I don’t notice in Japan any less of a desire to hold on to the US security relationship. In fact, they continue to be demandeurs in that relationship, as are other nations in East Asia and what we saw in the case of Europe was that the United States was not only called upon to play a critical role but that role was welcomed and in fact, the one reaction that I most noted in Europe in recent years was the horror with which Europeans greeted the Trump administration and the whole idea of America First and Trump’s discussion about perhaps getting out of Nato and Trump’s general hostility to the idea that the United States should do anything for Europeans, to provide Europeans with any security. And what was the European reaction to that? It was horror and hopes and prayers that we would get back to an administration like we have now, which is willing to play that role.

Most people and most countries that are made up of people, they have one question on their mind at any given moment, which is are you there for us or not when we need you? That is the question that people ask in East Asia, it is definitely the question that people ask in Eastern Europe and when they ask that question, they don’t talk about Iraq, they talk about the fact that they want the United States there to protect them and to help them protect themselves.

Andrew Neil: But the American people have got a right to ask a question too.

Robert Kagan: And they do and they have.

Andrew Neil: You want us there to help you but what are you doing to help yourself? Look how Germany has allowed its military to be hollowed out and is only now, in the aftermath of Ukraine, doing anything about it.

Robert Kagan: Well, as I say, I’ve never quite understood why Americans should be eager for Germany to become a big military nation again but if that’s what Americans think they want, I understand the impulse, it’s not agreeing with it. But mostly I think you’re right, of course, Americans – and by the way, that’s why I was surprised by the reaction in this case, right. I would have expected, based on what you’re saying and based on what American public opinion have looked like at least for the last decade or so, that there would be less interest in a European crisis of this nature than there has been. But look at what’s happened in the United States, it’s been almost a revolution of American public opinion, which will increase by the way inevitably, but the dissenting views have been few and far between in the United States so what that indicates to me is that there is more in that reservoir than we may have thought in terms of American willingness, the American public’s willingness to play a more active global role.

Of course, we’ve seen reverses like this in the past. You brought up the 1930s, clearly that was a major reversal of American public opinion, driven eventually by Pearl Harbour but not initially by Pearl Harbour. I mean American’s opinion began to shift after Munich, after Kristallnacht, after the invasion of Poland etc, so again you have to go back to this understanding that Americans believe they live in a safe corner of the world, where the rest of the world can’t touch them and it is very easy for them to say ‘Why did we get involved in here and why did we get involved there?’, especially when the wars don’t turn out the way we want them to but does that kill off that sentiment for international involvement of the United States? I would say clearly not.

Andrew Neil: I can see why America, you can argue that America still has an appetite to protect existing democracies and it is democracies, they’re our allies – Japan because of China, European democracies because of Russia and so on, but it doesn’t, I would suggest to you, have an appetite now for your kind of liberal interventionism. I mean, it’s often bloody efforts to spread democracy this century, has rather than succeeding, we’ve had a century of growing authoritarianism and autocracy. So-called liberal interventionism has hardly been deemed a success.

Robert Kagan: Well, first of all, it’s a complete myth that the United States went into Iraq and certainly went into Afghanistan in order to promote democracy. The reasons why the United States went into Iraq – rightly or wrongly – were driven by security interests and fears, especially after 9/11. It was not …

Andrew Neil: There was a whole floor of the State Department devising plans to rebuild an Iraq based on democracy, I saw it myself. It was called Iraq Shack.

Robert Kagan: I understand that but that was the … the purpose of invading Iraq was not to spread democracy. Now, as you know, once the United States invades a country, it invariably decides the best way to leave that country is to leave it a democracy. That was the case in Germany and Japan, it was the case in Central American countries where we were more or less – usually less – successful in accomplishing that goal but the question is, if you want to say an American foreign policy, anyone’s American foreign policy, certainly my foreign policy was aimed at spreading democracy by force: that’s just a myth, okay, that’s a myth that’s been created by people who want to oppose these things for one reason or another, which is fine. There was a perfectly good reason to oppose the war in Iraq but that’s not what that was about.

Now, the fact is however, I am interested to hear you say that the world has just become incredibly authoritarian. Russia and China have been authoritarian all along but it is driven by this single rule by one individual and I do think, by the way, to some extent that is an indication of how the order has weakened in recent decades and I don’t deny that the order, the liberal order, had weakened. So, countries that used to at least feel that they needed, even dictatorships needed to put up the pretence of having elections to legitimise their rule, I think in recent years they have felt less and less the need to do so because the democratic idea has been in retreat, by the way, just the way the democratic idea was in retreat in the 1920s and 30s as well.

But I don’t think that what we have witnessed is the triumph of authoritarianism and I would say it is even harder to say that today where it seems to me if any country in the world, if any regime in the world is in peril right now, it is more likely to be Moscow’s than any democratic countries.

Andrew Neil: Part of your case for liberal interventionism is that there are global responsibilities which only America can bear. Would it not be more honest to say, it’s got global interests that it needs to pursue?

Robert Kagan: You would have to explain to me exactly why the United States has more interest in stopping China’s expansion or Russia’s expansion, for that matter, than any of the dozens of countries that lie around their borders. It seems to me that the United States has less interest and that this is not driven, American policy is not driven exclusively by what Americans perceive as their interests except insofar as Americans perceive their interest as defending the democratic world order, which by the way, most Americans would not say was their goal even though I think it ought to be their goal, okay.

It is simply the case that Americans at a certain point, I would say World War II and aftermath, decided that they didn’t want to live in a world that was dominated by authoritarians in Europe and Asia but the anti-interventionists who argue that America would not have been threatened if Hitler had won in Germany and Japan had won in Asia, I don’t think that we can know for sure that they were wrong about that. So, we have to be careful about saying these are American interests because, in many cases, what Americans have done is they have incorporated the interests of their allies as their own, but if you just look, if you are sitting in Iowa today, what do you care what happens in Ukraine?

Andrew Neil: But as we move now well into the 2020s and the 20th century becomes a bit of a memory, does America, do Americans still have the stomach to be a global player on a major scale in Europe and East Asia?

Robert Kagan: Well, it’s a good question. I don’t think I can say with any certainty that I know what the answer is. They have in the past played simultaneously large roles in both Asia and Europe; they certainly are capable of doing it. I think one of the things that we’ve discovered in this crisis is how sort of healthy and vibrant those relationships really are. You know, I think the most extraordinary part of this whole thing of course was the financial response and the ability to get countries in Asia which are not at all threatened by what is going on in Ukraine, to take part in these sanctions because they want to make sure that when the same thing happens to them, the Europeans will then support them and the United States will support them. To me that’s a sign of real health on the part of the overall structure of the system, which makes it easier for Americans – and that’s why I wanted to make that point.

It makes it easier for Americans to sustain such a role when they feel that the allies are also heavily engaged and is it going to help in American politics if Germany fulfils the recent commitment to increase their defence budget? Yes, it will. It will be an argument for those who want to say these alliances are important and so I do think it is quite possible that they will sustain it but the problem is of course, we don’t know what events are going to happen, we don’t know what disasters will befall us. We don’t know for instance – and I know this is of interest to you – what the political situation in the United States is going to be after 2024 for instance.

Andrew Neil: And I want to come onto that in a minute for our final part but the reason I ask if America still has the stomach, because you will know better than me that the demands of Europe, where the Russian bear is still active, and Asia where you have this enormous rising power in China, they require very different military capabilities. One is land-based, boots on the ground, armour; the other is amphibious and air. That’s a big military build that America would have to pay to do both.

Robert Kagan: Well, I think it ought to have been doing both all along in any case and, you know, as it happens, if the United States had favoured anything in the past ten years, it has favoured preparing for a China contingency, not a Russia contingency and the good news I think on the Russia side of it is, well look, we were able to [33:57] tens of thousands of troops, the troop build-up in Eastern Europe right now is pretty substantial and again, we may have the luxury afforded us of having seen that the Russian military does not have the kind of formidable capabilities that we may have thought.

#### NATO expansion hasn’t caused conflict – US hegemonic promotion is peaceful and sustainable

Brands 22 – *Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor at the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments*. (Hal, 15 March, 2022, "Putin’s Biggest Lie: Blaming NATO for His War," https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/3532081/hal-brands/putin%E2%80%99s-biggest-lie-blaming-nato-his-war)//KH

The great NATO enlargement debate never ends. In the 1990s, US officials and academics argued about whether pushing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into Eastern Europe was likely to sustain the post-Cold War peace or prematurely end it. More recently, critics have charged that Russia’s war in Ukraine is a natural response to the aggressive expansion of America’s most powerful alliance.

Now Russian officials, and even President Vladimir Putin himself, have echoed — and sometimes directly cited — American scholars such as political scientist John Mearsheimer, who argues that the current crisis “is the West’s fault.”

The “blame NATO” argument tells a story of hubris, arrogance and tragedy. It holds that there was a golden chance for lasting peace in Europe, but the US threw it all away. Rather than conciliating a defeated rival, Washington repeatedly humiliated it by expanding a vast military alliance up to Russia’s borders and even into the former Soviet Union. This pursuit of American hegemony in a liberal-democratic guise eventually provoked a violent rebuke.

In this telling, Putin’s wars against Georgia and Ukraine are just the natural response of one great power whose vital interests are being heedlessly threatened by another.

The argument isn’t wholly wrong. Putin’s wars are indeed meant, in part, to push Western influence back from Russia’s frontiers. But the idea that NATO expansion is the root of today’s problems is morally and geopolitically bizarre.

Far from being a historic blunder, NATO expansion was one of the great American successes of the post-Cold War era. Far from being the act of a domineering superpower, it was part of a long tradition of vulnerable states begging to join America’s liberal empire. And far from posing a mortal threat to Moscow, NATO enlargement actually provided Russia with far greater security than it could have provided itself.

NATO was founded in 1949 with 12 members in Western Europe and North America. It gradually added additional states — Turkey, Greece, West Germany, Spain — over the course of the Cold War. But the big bang of enlargement came once the superpower conflict ended. NATO incorporated the former East Germany into the alliance in 1990; it then added three Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic) in 1999; then seven more, including the Baltic states, in 2004.

To understand why NATO grew so rapidly, we have to remember something that nearly everyone has now forgotten: There was no guarantee that Europe would be mostly stable, peaceful and democratic after the Cold War. In fact, many of the analysts who now view NATO expansion as a catastrophe once warned that a post-Cold War Europe could become a violent hellscape.

It wasn’t an outlandish scenario. A reunified Germany might once again try to dominate its neighbors; the old enmity between Moscow and Berlin could reignite. The collapse of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe could liberate those states to pursue long-suppressed territorial claims and nationalist agendas. Ethnic tensions and nuclear proliferation might explode as the Cold War order crumbled.

If the US pulled back once the Soviet threat was gone, there would be no extra-European superpower to put out fires on a continent with lots of geopolitical kindling. “The prospect of major crises, even wars, in Europe is likely to increase dramatically,” Mearsheimer predicted in 1990.

NATO enlargement was the logical answer to these fears. Expansion was a way of binding a reunified Germany to the West and surrounding it with democratic allies. Joining NATO required new members to lay aside any revanchist designs, while allowing them to pursue economic and political reforms rather than investing heavily in military capabilities to defend their newly won autonomy.

NATO’s move to the east also ensured that Poland and other states that easily could have built nuclear weapons didn’t need to, because they had American protection. Most important, enlargement kept the US firmly planted in Europe, by preventing the centerpiece of the transatlantic relationship from becoming obsolete.

No other initiative could have accomplished these objectives. Partnership for Peace — a series of loose security cooperation agreements with former Soviet-bloc states — didn’t offer the ironclad guarantees that came with NATO membership. (If you want to understand the difference between “security partner” and “NATO ally,” just look at what is happening today to Ukraine, one of the former.)

The idea of creating a pan-European security architecture (one that included Russia) had the same defect; plus, it would have given Moscow veto power over the security arrangements of the countries the Soviet Union had so recently dominated.

Only American power and promises could provide stability in Europe, and NATO was the continent’s critical link to the US. Since 1949, Washington had tamped down rivalries between old enemies such as France and Germany, while also protecting them from external threats. After 1991, NATO expansion took this zone of peace, prosperity and cooperation that had emerged in Western Europe and moved it into Eastern Europe as well.

The revolutionary nature of this achievement seemed obvious not so long ago. “Why has Europe been so peaceful since 1989?” Mearsheimer asked in 2010. The answer, he acknowledged, was because “America has continued to serve as Europe’s pacifier,” protecting the continent from dangers within and without.

Today, of course, the critics don’t buy this account. They argue that NATO expansion represented crude power politics, as the US exploited the Soviet collapse to engorge its own empire. What resulted, pundits such as Thomas Friedman contend, was a sort of Weimar Russia — a country whose dignity was affronted, security imperiled and democracy undermined by a harsh, humiliating peace.

There is a kernel of truth here, too. Once Russian democracy began to wobble in 1993-94, officials in the Bill Clinton administration saw NATO expansion — in part — as a way of preventing a potentially resurgent, aggressive Russia from rebuilding the Soviet sphere of influence. Russian leaders of all stripes griped about NATO expansion from the early 1990s onward, warning that it could jeopardize the peace of the continent.

In hindsight, NATO expansion was one of several issues — including disputes over the Balkans and the collapse of the Russian economy in the late 1990s — that gradually soured Russia’s relationship with the West. Yet this story omits three vital facts.

First, all policies have costs. The price of NATO expansion was a certain alienation of Russian elites — although we often forget that Clinton softened the blow by continually courting Russian President Boris Yeltsin, bringing Russia into elite Western institutions such as the Group of Seven, and making Moscow a partner in the intervention in Bosnia in 1995-96. Yet the cost of not expanding NATO might have been forfeiting much of the stability that initiative provided. Trade-offs are inevitable in foreign policy: There was no magic middle path that would have provided all the benefits with none of the costs.

Second, if NATO expansion was a manifestation of American empire, it was a remarkably benign and consensual form of empire. When Clinton decided to pursue enlargement, he did so at the urging of the Poles, Czechs and Hungarians. The Baltic countries and others were soon banging at the door. The states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were desperate to join America’s sphere of influence, because they were desperate to leave Moscow’s.

This, too, was part of an older pattern: The US has often extended its influence by “invitation” rather than imposition. The creation of NATO in 1949 was **mostly a European idea**: Countries that were terrified of Moscow sought protection from Washington. One reason Putin’s wars to keep countries from escaping Moscow’s empire are so abhorrent to Americans is that the US empire has trouble keeping members out.

Putin may not see it that way. All that matters to him is that the mightiest peacetime alliance in history has crept closer to Russian soil. But here a third fact becomes relevant: Russia was one of the biggest beneficiaries of NATO’s move east.

Open terrain has often left Russia vulnerable to invasion and instability emanating from Europe. Napoleonic France, Imperial Germany and Nazi Germany all swept through Eastern Europe to wreak havoc on Russian or Soviet territory. This is one reason why the great strategist George Kennan opposed NATO expansion — because it would surely re-activate this fear of encroachment from the west.

Yet this was a red herring, because NATO posed no military threat. The alliance committed, in 1997, not to permanently station foreign troops in Eastern Europe. After the Cold War, America steadily withdrew most of its troops and all of its heavy armor from the continent. US allies engaged in a veritable race to disarm.

The prospect that NATO could invade Russia, even had it wanted to, was laughable. What the alliance could do was tame the perils that might otherwise have menaced the Russian state.

Germany could hardly threaten Russia: It was nestled snugly into an alliance that also served as a strategic straitjacket. NATO, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had candidly said in 1990, could “play a containing role” vis-à-vis Berlin. Moscow didn’t have to worry about a nuclear Poland — Warsaw didn’t need nukes because it had the protection of the United States. Aside from the Balkan wars of the 1990s, Eastern Europe was comparatively free of the geopolitical intrigues and military quarrels that might have made Russia jumpy.

NATO expansion hadn’t just alleviated Europe’s security problems; it had protected Russia’s vital interests as well. Moscow might have lost an empire, but it had gained remarkable safety from external attack.

Part of the answer is that NATO expansion wasn’t really the problem, in the sense that Russia didn’t need that pretext to seek renewed hegemony in its near-abroad. The Soviet Union, and the Russian empire before it, had traditionally sought to control countries along their frontiers and used brutal means to do it. To say that NATO expansion caused Russian belligerence is thus to make an extremely dubious assertion: that absent NATO expansion, Moscow would have been a satisfied, status quo power.

And this is exactly why a bigger NATO has posed a real problem for Putin. After all, safety from external attack isn’t the only thing that states and rulers want. They want glory, greatness and the privileges of empire. For 20 years, Putin has been publicly lusting after the sphere of influence that the Soviet Union once enjoyed. NATO expansion stood athwart that ambition, by giving Moscow’s former vassals the ability to resist its pressure.

NATO also threatened a certain type of Russian government — an autocracy that was never secure in its own rule. A democratic Russia wouldn’t so much have minded being neighbors with Western-leaning democracies, because political liberty in those countries wouldn’t have threatened to set a subversive example for anti-Putin Russians.

Yet, as Russia became more autocratic in the early 2000s, and as Putin’s popularity declined with the Russian economy after 2008, the imperative of preventing ideological spillover from a US-backed democratic community loomed large.

So Putin began pushing back against NATO’s eastward march. In 2008, he invaded Georgia, a country that was moving — too slowly for its own safety — toward the West. Since 2014, he has been waging war against Ukraine, in hopes of rebuilding the Russian empire and halting Kiev’s westward drift. America’s vision of Europe has now run into Putin’s program of violent coercion.

To be sure, US officials made mistakes along the way. Because Russia was prostrate, militarily and economically, during the 1990s, Washington acquired a bad habit of issuing security guarantees without really considering how it would fulfill them in a crisis. The Pentagon has thus been scrambling, since 2014, to devise a credible defense of NATO’s eastern flank.

As Russia regained its strength, US officials also failed to grasp the danger of provoking Putin without adequately deterring him. When, in 2008, NATO declined to endorse membership for Georgia and Ukraine but issued a vague statement saying that they would someday join the alliance, it created the worst of all worlds — giving Putin both the pretext and the time to pre-empt future expansion by tearing those two countries apart.

Yet there is a curious morality in accounts that blame the West, which sought to protect vulnerable states in Eastern Europe, for the current carnage, rather than blaming Putin, who has worked to dismember and intimidate those countries. It is sloppy thinking to tally up the costs of NATO expansion without considering the historic achievements of a policy that served American, European and even certain Russian interests remarkably well.

And if nothing else, NATO expansion pushed the dividing line between Moscow and the democratic world to the east after one Cold War — a factor of great significance now that a second cold war is underway.

The legacy of NATO expansion isn’t simply a matter of historical interest. Americans’ understanding of the past has always influenced their view of what policies to pursue in the future. During the 1920s and 1930s, the widespread, if inaccurate, belief that America had entered World War I to serve the interests of banks and arms manufacturers had a paralyzing effect on US policy amid the totalitarian aggression that set off World War II.

Today, the US faces a long, nasty struggle to contain Putin’s imperial project and protect an endangered world order. Introspection is an admirable quality, but the last thing America needs is another bout of self-flagellation rooted in another misapprehension of the past.

#### US hegemony is inevitable and stable, but renewed efforts are necessary to check transition wars and dismantle US psychological hegemonic denialism

Kagan 21 – *Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; adjunct professor at Georgetown* (Robert Kagan, March/April 2021, "A Superpower, Like It or Not," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-02-16/superpower-it-or-not)//KH

All great powers have a deeply ingrained self-perception shaped by historical experience, geography, culture, beliefs, and myths. Many Chinese today yearn to recover the greatness of a time when they ruled unchallenged at the pinnacle of their civilization, before “the century of humiliation.” Russians are nostalgic for Soviet days, when they were the other superpower and ruled from Poland to Vladivostok. Henry Kissinger once observed that Iranian leaders had to choose whether they wanted to be “a nation or a cause,” but great powers and aspiring great powers often see themselves as both. Their self-perception shapes their definition of the national interest, of what constitutes genuine security and the actions and resources necessary to achieve it. Often, it is these self-perceptions that drive nations, empires, and city-states forward. And sometimes to their ruin. Much of the drama of the past century resulted from great powers whose aspirations exceeded their capacity.

Americans have the opposite problem. Their capacity for global power exceeds their perception of their proper place and role in the world. Even as they have met the challenges of Nazism and Japanese imperialism, Soviet communism, and radical Islamist terrorism, they have never regarded this global activism as normal. Even in the era of the Internet, long-range missiles, and an interdependent global economy, many Americans retain the psychology of a people living apart on a vast continent, untouched by the world’s turmoil. Americans have never been isolationists. In times of emergency, they can be persuaded to support extraordinary exertions in far-off places. But they regard these as exceptional responses to exceptional circumstances. They do not see themselves as the primary defender of a certain kind of world order; they have never embraced that “indispensable” role.

As a result, Americans have often played it poorly. Their continental view of the world has produced a century of wild oscillations—indifference followed by panic, mobilization and intervention followed by retreat and retrenchment. That Americans refer to the relatively low-cost military involvements in Afghanistan and Iraq as “forever wars” is just the latest example of their intolerance for the messy and unending business of preserving a general peace and acting to forestall threats. In both cases, Americans had one foot out the door the moment they entered, which hampered their ability to gain control of difficult situations.

This on-again, off-again approach has confused and misled allies and adversaries, often to the point of **spurring conflicts** that could have been avoided by a clear and steady application of American power and influence in the service of a peaceful, stable, and liberal world order. The twentieth century was littered with the carcasses of foreign leaders and governments that misjudged the United States, from Germany (twice) and Japan to the Soviet Union to Serbia to Iraq. If the twenty-first century is not to follow the same pattern—most dangerously, in the competition with China—then Americans will need to stop looking for the exits and accept the role that fate and their own power have thrust upon them. Perhaps after four years of President Donald Trump, Americans are ready for some straight talk.

OF TWO MINDS

Americans’ preference for a limited international role is a product of their history and experience and of the **myths** they tell themselves. Other great powers aspire to recapture past glories. Americans have always yearned to recapture what they imagine as the innocence and limited ambition of their nation’s youth. For the first decades of the new republic’s existence, Americans struggled merely to survive as a weak republic in a world of superpower monarchies. They spent the nineteenth century in selfishness and self-absorption, conquering the continent and struggling over slavery. By the early twentieth century, the United States had become the richest and potentially most powerful country in the world, but one without commitments or responsibilities. It rose under the canopy of a benevolent world order it had no part in upholding. “Safe from attack, safe even from menace,” the British historian James Bryce wrote of the United States in 1888, “she hears from afar the warring cries of European races and faiths, as the gods of Epicurus listened to the murmurs of the unhappy earth spread out beneath their golden dwellings.” For the moment, Bryce wrote, “she sails upon a summer sea.”

But then the world shifted, and Americans suddenly found themselves at the center of it. The old order upheld by the United Kingdom and made possible by a tenuous peace in Europe collapsed with the arrival of new powers. The rise of Germany destroyed the precarious equilibrium in Europe, and the Europeans proved unable to restore it. The concurrent rise of Japan and the United States put an end to more than a century of British naval hegemony. A global geopolitics replaced what had been a European-dominated order, and in this very different configuration of power, the United States was thrust into a new position. Only it could be both a Pacific and an Atlantic power. Only it, with weak neighbors to the north and south and vast oceans to the east and west, could send the bulk of its forces to fight in distant theaters for prolonged periods while its homeland remained unthreatened. Only it could afford to finance not only its own war efforts but also those of its allies, mustering the industrial capacity to produce ships, planes, tanks, and other materiel to arm itself while also serving as the arsenal for everyone else. Only it could do all of this without bankrupting itself but instead growing richer and more dominant with each major war. The United States, the British statesman Arthur Balfour observed, had become the “pivot” on which the rest of the world turned or, in President Theodore Roosevelt’s words, “the balance of power of the whole world.”

The world had never known such a power—there was not the language to describe it or a theory to explain it. It was sui generis. The emergence of this unusual great power led to confusion and misjudgment. Nations that had spent centuries calculating the power relationships in their own regions were slow to appreciate the impact of this distant deus ex machina, which, after long periods of indifference and aloofness, could suddenly swoop in and transform the balance of power. Americans, too, had a hard time adjusting. The wealth and relative invulnerability that made them uniquely capable of fighting major wars and enforcing peace in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East simultaneously also made them question the necessity, desirability, and even morality of doing so. With the United States fundamentally secure and self-sufficient, why did it need to get involved in conflicts thousands of miles from its shores? And what right did it have?

The case for a policy aimed at creating and preserving a liberal world order was first made by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson during World War I. With the United Kingdom and the other European powers no longer able to preserve order, they argued, and as the war demonstrated, it had fallen to the United States to create and defend a new liberal world order. This was the purpose of the “World League for the Peace of Righteousness,” proposed by Roosevelt at the beginning of the war, and of the League of Nations, which Wilson eventually championed after it: to create a new peaceful order with American power at its center. Wilson believed it was the only feasible alternative to a resumption of the conflict and chaos that had devastated Europe. If Americans instead turned back to their “narrow, selfish, provincial purposes,” he warned, the peace would collapse, Europe would again divide into “hostile camps,” the world would again descend into “utter blackness,” and the United States would again be dragged into war. The United States had an interest in a peaceful and predominantly liberal Europe, a peaceful Asia, and open and safe oceans on which Americans and their goods could travel safely. But such a world could not be built except around American power. Thus the United States had an interest in world order.

Americans’ capacity for global power exceeds their perception of their proper place and role in the world.

Such arguments met powerful opposition. The Republican senator Henry Cabot Lodge and other critics condemned Wilson’s league as both unnecessary and a betrayal of the founders’ vision. For the United States to concern itself with world order was to violate the basic principles that made it an exceptional, peace-loving nation in a world at war. Two decades later, as Americans debated whether to enter another world war, another Republican senator, Robert Taft, ridiculed the idea that the United States, which was perfectly safe from attack, should “range over the world, like a knight-errant, protecting democracy and ideals of good faith, and tilting, like Don Quixote, against the windmills of Fascism.” President Franklin Roosevelt argued that even if the United States was not directly threatened by Nazi Germany or imperial Japan, a world in which those powerful dictatorships dominated their regions would be a “shabby and dangerous place to live in.” It was only a matter of time before the dictatorships would gather themselves for a final assault on the remaining citadel of democracy, Roosevelt believed, but even before that moment came, the United States might become “a lone island” of democracy in a world of dictators, and democracy itself might simply perish. But the opponents of American intervention in World War II worried as much about the consequences of winning as about the costs of intervening. They did not want their country to subordinate itself to the interests of European empires, but neither did they want it to replace those empires as the dominant world power. Citing Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, they warned that in becoming the “dictatress of the world,” the United States would lose its soul.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor cut short the debate but left it unsettled. Roosevelt fought the war with his eye on the postwar order he hoped to create, but most Americans saw the war as an act of self-defense, perfectly consistent with a continental perspective. When it was over, they expected to come home.

When the United States did end up dominating the world after World War II, therefore, Americans suffered from a kind of cognitive dissonance. During the Cold War, they took on unheard-of global responsibilities, deploying troops in distant theaters by the hundreds of thousands and fighting two wars, in Korea and in Vietnam, that were 15 times as costly in terms of combat deaths as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq would be. They promoted an international free-trade regime that sometimes enriched others more than themselves. They intervened economically, politically, diplomatically, and militarily in every corner of the world. And whether or not they were conscious of it, they did create a liberal world order, a relatively peaceful international environment that in turn made possible an explosion of global prosperity and a historically unprecedented spread of democratic government.

That was the conscious aim of Roosevelt during World War II and of his successors in the Truman administration. They believed that a world order based on liberal political and economic principles was the only antidote to the anarchy of the 1930s. For such an order to exist, the United States could not “sit in the parlor with a shotgun, waiting,” argued Dean Acheson, President Harry Truman’s secretary of state. It had to be out in the world actively shaping it, deterring some powers and bolstering others. It had to create “situations of strength” at critical nodes, spreading stability, prosperity, and democracy, especially in the world’s core industrial regions of Europe and Asia. The United States had to be “the locomotive at the head of mankind,” Acheson said, pulling the world along with it.

AMERICA ADRIFT

Yet even as they created this order, few Americans ever understood world order as the goal. For most, it was the threat of communism that justified these extraordinary exertions, that justified the establishment of NATO and the defense of Japan, Korea, and, ultimately, Vietnam. Resisting communism became synonymous with the national interest, for communism was perceived as a threat to the American way of life. When Americans balked at supporting Greece and Turkey in 1947, the Republican senator Arthur Vandenberg told Truman administration officials to “scare hell out of the American people,” and Acheson saw the expediency of making things, as he admitted in his memoirs, “clearer than truth.” With communism as the sole enemy, everything mattered. Every act was as an act of defense.

When the Cold War ended, therefore, the disjunction between Americans’ actual role and Americans’ self-perception became untenable. Without the global threat of communism, Americans wondered what the purpose of their foreign policy should be. What was the point of having a globe-girdling security system, a hegemonic navy, far-flung alliances with dozens of nations, and an international free-trade regime?

The rebellion began immediately. When the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, President George H. W. Bush initially made the case for driving him out on world-order grounds. “A world in which brutality and lawlessness are allowed to go unchecked isn’t the kind of world we’re going to want to live in,” Bush said in a televised address from the Oval Office, quoting the general who was commanding the U.S. marines fighting Saddam’s forces. But when realists and conservatives criticized Bush’s vision of a “new world order” as overly ambitious and idealistic, the administration fell back on the kind of narrow, continental rationale Americans could supposedly better understand—“jobs, jobs, jobs,” was how Secretary of State James Baker explained what the Gulf War was about. When President Bill Clinton intervened twice in the Balkans and then expanded NATO, it was in defense of world order, both to stamp out ethnic cleansing in Europe and to prove the United States’ continuing commitment to what Bush had called “a Europe whole and free.” Clinton, too, was attacked by realists—for engaging in “international social work.”

Then came President George W. Bush. The second war with Iraq was also aimed primarily at preserving world order—to rid the Middle East and the Persian Gulf of a serial aggressor who fancied himself the new Saladin. But the 9/11 attacks had caused world-order objectives to again become confused with continental defense, even for the war’s advocates. When the intelligence on Saddam’s weapons programs proved mistaken, many Americans felt that they had been lied to about the direct threat Iraq posed to the United States. President Barack Obama rode to power in part on the angry disillusionment that still shapes American attitudes today. Ironically, in accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Obama observed that American willingness to “underwrite global security” had brought stability to the postwar world and that this was in the United States’ “enlightened self-interest.” Yet it quickly became clear that Americans were more interested in nation building at home. In the end, Obama’s realism, like Taft’s, consisted of accepting “the world as it is,” not as advocates of world order might wish it to be.

In 1990, the former U.S. ambassador to the UN Jeane Kirkpatrick argued that the United States should return to being a “normal” nation with normal interests, give up the “dubious benefits of superpower status,” end the “unnatural focus” on foreign policy, and pursue its national interests as “conventionally conceived.” That meant protecting its citizens, its territory, its wealth, and its access to “necessary” goods. It did not mean preserving the balance of power in Europe or Asia, promoting democracy, or taking responsibility for problems in the world that did not touch Americans directly. This is the continental perspective that still reigns today. It does not deny that the United States has interests, but it proposes that they are merely the interests that all nations have.

The problem is that the United States has not been a normal nation for over a century, nor has it had normal interests. Its unique power gives it a unique role. Bangladeshis and Bolivians also have an interest in global stability, after all, and they might suffer if another Germany came to dominate Europe or if another Japan came to dominate Asia. But no one would suggest that it was in their national interest to prevent that from happening, because they lack the capacity to do so, just as the United States lacked the capacity in 1798, when it was most threatened by the prospect of a European hegemon. World order became the United States’ concern when the old world order collapsed in the early twentieth century and the country became the only power capable of establishing a new one in which its interests could be protected.

That is still the case today, and yet, even more than in Kirkpatrick’s time, continentalism remains the dominant perspective. **It informs the language Americans use** to talk about foreign policy and **the theoretical paradigms by which they understand** such concepts as national interest and **security**. It also remains suffused with moralism. Calls for “restraint” still recite the founders’ wisdom and declaim its betrayal as acts of hubris, messianism, and imperialism. Many internationalists still believe that what they regard as the unwarranted exercise of American power is the greatest obstacle to a better and more just world. The mixed results of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are not merely errors of judgment and execution but black marks on the American soul.

Americans still yearn to escape to a more innocent and simpler past. To a degree they probably don’t recognize, they yearn to have less power. Realists have long understood that as long as the United States is so powerful, it will be hard to avoid what the political scientists Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson once called “the imperial temptation.” That is one reason why realists have always insisted that American power is in decline or simply not up to the task. The columnist Walter Lippmann and the diplomat George Kennan made that argument in the late 1940s, as did Kissinger in the late 1960s and the historian Paul Kennedy in the 1980s, and many realists still make it today. Realists treat every unsuccessful war, from Vietnam to Iraq, as if it were the equivalent of the Sicilian expedition, the final act of folly that led to Athens’s defeat in the war against Sparta in the fifth century BC. An entire generation of Americans has grown up believing that the lack of clear-cut victories in Afghanistan and Iraq proves that their country can no longer accomplish anything with power. The rise of China, the United States’ declining share of the global economy, the advance of new military technologies, and a general diffusion of power around the world—all have signaled the twilight, once again, of the American order.

Americans still yearn to escape to a more innocent and simpler past.

Yet if the United States were as weak as so many people claim, it wouldn’t have to practice restraint. It is precisely because the country is still capable of pursuing a world-order strategy that critics need to explain why it should not. The fact is that the basic configuration of international power has not changed as much as many imagine. The earth is still round; the United States still sits on its vast, isolated continent, surrounded by oceans and weaker powers; the other great powers still live in regions crowded with other great powers; and when one power in those regions grows too strong for the others to balance against, the would-be victims still look to the distant United States for help.

Although Russia possesses a huge nuclear arsenal, it is even more an “Upper Volta with rockets” today than when that wisecrack was coined, in the early Cold War. The Soviets at least controlled half of Europe. China has taken the place of Japan, stronger in terms of wealth and population but with **unproven military capabilities** and a much **less favorable strategic position.** When imperial Japan expanded in the 1930s, it faced no formidable regional competitors, and the Western powers were preoccupied with the German threat. Today, Asia is crowded with other great powers, including three whose militaries are among the top ten in the world—India, Japan, and South Korea—all of which are either allies or partners of the United States. Should Beijing, believing in Washington’s weakness, use its own growing power to try to alter the East Asian strategic situation, it might have to cope not only with the United States but also with a global coalition of advanced industrial nations, much as the Soviets discovered.

The Trump years were a stress test for the American world order, and **the order,** remarkably, **passed**. Confronted by the nightmare of a rogue superpower tearing up trade and other agreements, U.S. allies appeased and cajoled, bringing offerings to the angry volcano and waiting hopefully for better times. Adversaries also trod carefully. When Trump ordered the killing of the Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani, it was reasonable to expect Iran to retaliate, and it may still, but not with Trump as president. The Chinese suffered through a long tariff war that hurt them more than it hurt the United States, but they tried to avoid a complete breakdown of the economic relationship on which they depend. Obama worried that providing offensive weapons to Ukraine could lead to war with Russia, but when the Trump administration went ahead with the weapons deliveries, Moscow acquiesced with barely a murmur. Many of Trump’s policies were erratic and ill conceived, but they did show how much excess, unused power the United States has, if a president chooses to deploy it. In the Obama years, officials measured 50 times before deciding not to cut, ever fearful that other powers would escalate a confrontation. In the Trump years, it was other countries that worried about where a confrontation with the United States might lead.

GREAT POWER, GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

The United States is “lazily playing with a fraction of her immeasurable strength”—so the British historian Arnold Toynbee commented somewhat ruefully in the early 1930s. At the time, U.S. defense spending was between two and three percent of GDP. Today, it is a little over three percent. In the 1950s, during the Eisenhower administration—often seen as a time of admirable restraint in U.S. foreign policy—the United States had almost one million troops deployed overseas, out of a total American population of 170 million. Today, in an era when the United States is said to be dangerously overextended, there are roughly 200,000 U.S. troops deployed overseas, out of a population of 330 million. Setting aside whether this constitutes “lazily playing with a fraction” of American strength, it is important to recognize that the United States is now in peace mode. Were Americans to shift to a war footing, or even a Cold War–type footing, in response to some Chinese action—for instance, an attack on Taiwan—the United States would look like a **very different animal.**

At the height of the late Cold War, under President Ronald Reagan, the United States spent six percent of GDP on defense, and its arms industry produced weapons in such quantity and of such quality that the Soviets simply could not keep up. The Chinese could find themselves in a similar predicament. They might “run wild for the first six months or a year,” as Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the commander of the Japanese fleet during World War II, predicted about his own forces. But in the long run, as he also warned, against a provoked America and its allies, they might well meet the same fate as other U.S. rivals.

The question is not whether the United States is still capable of prevailing in a global confrontation, either hot or cold, with China or any other **revisionist** power**. It is.** The real question is whether the worst kinds of hostilities can be avoided, whether China and other powers can be encouraged to pursue their aims peacefully, to confine the global competition to the economic and political realms and thus spare themselves and the world from the horrors of the next great war or even the still frightening confrontations of another cold war.

The United States cannot avoid such crises by continuing to adhere to a nineteenth-century view of its national interest. Doing that would produce what it produced in the past: periods of indifference and retrenchment followed by panic, fear, and sudden mobilization. Already, Americans are torn between these two impulses. On the one hand, China now occupies that place in the American mind that Germany and the Soviet Union once held: an ideological opponent that has the ability to strike at American society directly and that has power and ambitions that threaten the United States’ position in a key region and perhaps everywhere else, too. On the other hand, many Americans believe that the United States is in decline and that China will inevitably come to dominate Asia. Indeed, the self-perceptions of the Americans and the Chinese are perfectly symmetrical. The Chinese think that the United States’ role in their region for the past 75 years has been unnatural and is therefore transient, and so do the Americans. The Chinese believe that the United States is in decline, and so do many Americans. The danger is that as Beijing ramps up efforts to fulfill what it has taken to calling “the Chinese dream,” Americans will start to panic. It is in times like this that miscalculations are made.

Perhaps the Chinese, careful students of history that they are, will not make the mistake that others have made in misjudging the United States. Whether Americans have learned the lessons of their own history, however, remains to be seen. A century-long pattern of oscillation will be difficult to change. It will be especially so when foreign policy experts of all stripes regard support for a liberal world order as impossible and immoral. Among other problems, their prescriptions suffer from an unwarranted optimism about the likely alternatives to a U.S.-led order. Realists, liberal internationalists, conservative nationalists, and progressives all seem to imagine that without Washington playing the role it has played these past 75 years, the world will be just fine, and U.S. interests will be just as well protected. But neither recent history nor present circumstances justify such idealism. The alternative to the American world order is not a Swedish world order. It will not be a world of law and international institutions or the triumph of Enlightenment ideals or the end of history. It will be a world of **power vacuums, chaos, conflict, and miscalculation**—a shabby place indeed.

The messy truth is that in the real world, the only hope for preserving liberalism at home and abroad is the maintenance of a world order conducive to liberalism, and **the only power capable of upholding such an order is the United States**. This is not an expression of hubris but a reality rooted in international circumstances. And it is certainly a mixed blessing. In trying to preserve this order, the United States has wielded and will wield power, sometimes unwisely and ineffectively, with unpredictable costs and morally ambiguous consequences. That is what wielding power means. Americans have naturally sought to escape this burden. They have sought to divest themselves of responsibility, hiding sometimes behind dreamy internationalism, sometimes behind a determined resignation to accept the world “as it is,” and always with the view that absent a clear and present danger, they can hang back in their imaginary fortress.

The time has come to tell Americans that there is no escape from global responsibility, that they have to think beyond the protection of the homeland. They need to understand that the purpose of NATO and other alliances is to defend not against direct threats to U.S. interests but against a breakdown of the order that best serves those interests. They need to be told honestly that the task of maintaining a world order is unending and fraught with costs but preferable to the alternative. A failure to be square with the American people has led the country to its current predicament, with a confused and angry public convinced that its leaders are betraying American interests for their own nefarious, “globalist” purposes. The antidote to this is not scaring the hell out of them about China and other threats but trying to explain, again, why the world order they created still matters. This is a job for Joe Biden and his new administration.

#### Ukraine proves US hegemony is inevitable and drawback causes conflict – only increased intervention solves

Kagan 22 – *Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; adjunct professor at Georgetown* (Robert, May/June 2022, "The Price of Hegemony," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-04-06/russia-ukraine-war-price-hegemony)//KH

For years, analysts have debated whether the United States incited Russian President Vladimir Putin’s interventions in Ukraine and other neighboring countries or whether Moscow’s actions were simply unprovoked aggressions. That conversation has been temporarily muted by the horrors of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. A wave of popular outrage has drowned out those who have long argued that the United States has no vital interests at stake in Ukraine, that it is in Russia’s sphere of interest, and that U.S. policies created the feelings of insecurity that have driven Putin to extreme measures. Just as the attack on Pearl Harbor silenced the anti-interventionists and shut down the debate over whether the United States should have entered World War II, Putin’s invasion has suspended the 2022 version of Americans’ endless argument over their purpose in the world.

That is unfortunate. Although it is obscene to blame the United States for Putin’s inhumane attack on Ukraine, to insist that the invasion was entirely unprovoked is misleading. Just as Pearl Harbor was the consequence of U.S. efforts to blunt Japanese expansion on the Asian mainland, and just as the 9/11 attacks were partly a response to the United States’ dominant presence in the Middle East after the first Gulf War, so Russian decisions have been a response to the expanding post–Cold War hegemony of the United States and its allies in Europe. Putin alone is to blame for his actions, but the invasion of Ukraine is taking place in a historical and geopolitical context in which the United States has played and still plays the principal role, and Americans must grapple with this fact.

For critics of American power, the best way for the United States to cope is for it to retrench its position in the world, divest itself of overseas obligations that others ought to handle, and serve, at most, as a distant offshore balancer. These critics would grant China and Russia their own regional spheres of interest in East Asia and Europe and focus the United States’ attention on defending its borders and improving the well-being of Americans. But there is a core of unrealism to this “realist” prescription: it doesn’t reflect the true nature of global power and influence that has characterized most of the post–Cold War era and that still governs the world today. The United States was already the only true global superpower during the Cold War, with its unparalleled wealth and might and its extensive international alliances. The collapse of the Soviet Union only enhanced U.S. global hegemony—and not because Washington eagerly stepped in to fill the vacuum left by Moscow’s weakness. Instead, the collapse expanded U.S. influence because the United States’ combination of power and democratic beliefs made the country attractive to those seeking security, prosperity, freedom, and autonomy. The United States is therefore an imposing obstacle to a Russia seeking to regain its lost influence.

What has happened in eastern Europe over the past three decades is a testament to this reality. Washington did not actively aspire to be the region’s dominant power. But in the years after the Cold War, eastern Europe’s newly liberated countries, including Ukraine, turned to the United States and its European allies because they believed that joining the transatlantic community was the key to independence, democracy, and affluence. Eastern Europeans were looking to escape decades—or, in some cases, centuries—of Russian and Soviet imperialism, and allying with Washington at a moment of Russian weakness afforded them a precious chance to succeed. Even if the United States had rejected their pleas to join NATO and other Western institutions, as critics insist it should have, the former Soviet satellites would have continued to resist Moscow’s attempts to corral them back into its sphere of interest, seeking whatever help from the West they could get. And Putin would still have regarded the United States as the main cause of this anti-Russian behavior, simply because the country was strong enough to attract eastern Europeans.

To insist that Putin’s invasion was entirely unprovoked is misleading.

Throughout their history, Americans have tended to be unconscious of the daily impact that U.S. power has on the rest of the world, friends and foes alike. They are generally surprised to find themselves the target of resentment and of the kinds of challenges posed by Putin’s Russia and by President Xi Jinping’s China. Americans could reduce the severity of these challenges by wielding U.S. influence more consistently and effectively. They failed to do this in the 1920s and 1930s, allowing aggression by Germany, Italy, and Japan to go unchecked until it resulted in a massively destructive world war. They failed to do so in recent years, allowing Putin to seize more and more land until he invaded all of Ukraine. After Putin’s latest move, Americans may learn the right lesson. But they will still struggle to understand how Washington should act in the world if they don’t examine what happened with Russia, and that requires continuing the debate over the impact of U.S. power.

BY POPULAR DEMAND

So in what way might the United States have provoked Putin? One thing needs to be clear: it was not by threatening the security of Russia. Since the end of the Cold War, the Russians have objectively enjoyed greater security than at any time in recent memory. Russia was invaded three times over the past two centuries, once by France and twice by Germany. During the Cold War, Soviet forces were perpetually ready to battle U.S. and NATO forces in Europe. Yet since the end of the Cold War, Russia has enjoyed unprecedented security on its western flanks, even as NATO has taken in new members to its east. Moscow even welcomed what was in many ways the most significant addition to the alliance: a reunified Germany. When Germany was reunifying at the end of the Cold War, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev favored anchoring it in NATO. As he told U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, he believed that the best guarantee of Soviet and Russian security was a Germany “contained within European structures.”

Late Soviet and early Russian leaders certainly did not act as if they feared an attack from the West. Soviet and Russian defense spending declined sharply in the late 1980s and through the late 1990s, including by 90 percent between 1992 and 1996. The once formidable Red Army was cut nearly in half, leaving it weaker in relative terms than it had been for almost 400 years. Gorbachev even ordered the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Poland and other Warsaw Pact states, chiefly as a cost-saving measure. It was all part of a larger strategy to ease Cold War tensions so that Moscow might concentrate on economic reform at home. But even Gorbachev would not have sought this holiday from geopolitics had he believed that the United States and the West would take advantage of it.

His judgment was sensible. The United States and its allies had no interest in the independence of the Soviet republics, as U.S. President George H. W. Bush made clear in his 1991 speech in Kyiv, in which he denounced the “suicidal nationalism” of independence-minded Ukrainians (who would declare independence three weeks later). Indeed, for several years after 1989, U.S. policies aimed first to rescue Gorbachev, then to rescue the Soviet Union, and then to rescue Russian President Boris Yeltsin. During the period of transition from Gorbachev’s Soviet Union to Yeltsin’s Russia—the time of greatest Russian weakness—the Bush administration and then the Clinton administration were reluctant to expand NATO, despite the increasingly urgent appeals of the former Warsaw Pact states. The Clinton administration created the Partnership for Peace, whose vague assurances of solidarity fell well short of a security guarantee for former Warsaw Pact members.

It is easy to see why Washington felt no great compulsion to drive NATO eastward. Few Americans at that time saw the organization as a bulwark against Russian expansion, much less as a means of bringing Russia down. From the U.S. perspective, Russia was already a shell of its former self. The question was whether NATO had any mission at all now that the great adversary against which it was aimed had collapsed—and given just how hopeful the 1990s felt to most Americans and western Europeans. It was thought to be a time of convergence, when both China and Russia were moving ineluctably toward liberalism. Geoeconomics had replaced geopolitics, the nation-state was passing away, the world was “flat,” the twenty-first century would be run by the European Union, and Enlightenment ideals were spreading across the planet. For NATO, “out of area or out of business” was the mantra of the day.

But as the West enjoyed its fantasies and Russia struggled to adapt to a new world, the nervous populations lying to the east of Germany—the Balts, the Poles, the Romanians, and the Ukrainians—viewed the end of the Cold War as merely the latest phase in their centuries-old struggle. For them, NATO was not obsolete. They saw what the United States and western Europe took for granted—the Article 5 collective security guarantee—as the key to escaping a long, bloody, and oppressive past. Much like the French after World War I, who feared the day when a revived Germany would again threaten them, eastern Europeans believed that Russia would eventually resume its centuries-long habit of imperialism and seek to reclaim its traditional influence over their neighborhood. These states wanted to integrate into the free-market capitalism of their richer, Western neighbors, and membership in NATO and the European Union was to them the only path out of a dismal past and into a safer, more democratic, and more prosperous future. It was hardly surprising, then, that when Gorbachev and then Yeltsin loosened the reins in the early 1990s, practically every current, and soon former, Warsaw Pact member and Soviet republic seized the chance to break from the past and shift their allegiance from Moscow to the transatlantic West.

But although this massive change had little to do with U.S. policies, it had much to do with the reality of the United States’ post–Cold War hegemony. Many Americans tend to equate hegemony with imperialism, but the two are different. Imperialism is an active effort by one state to force others into its sphere, whereas hegemony is more a condition than a purpose. A militarily, economically, and culturally powerful country exerts influence on other states by its mere presence, the way a larger body in space affects the behavior of smaller bodies through its gravitational pull. Even if the United States was not aggressively expanding its influence in Europe, and certainly not through its military, the collapse of Soviet power enhanced the attractive pull of the United States and its democratic allies. Their prosperity, their freedom, and, yes, their power to protect former Soviet satellites, when combined with the inability of Moscow to provide any of these, dramatically shifted the balance in Europe in favor of Western liberalism to the detriment of Russian autocracy. The growth of U.S. influence and the spread of liberalism were less a policy objective of the United States than the natural consequence of that shift.

Russian leaders could have accommodated themselves to this new reality. Other great powers had adjusted to similar changes. The British had once been lords of the seas, the possessors of a vast global empire, and the center of the financial world. Then they lost it all. But although some were humiliated at being supplanted by the United States, Britons rather quickly adjusted to their new place in the firmament. The French, too, lost a great empire, and Germany and Japan, defeated in war, lost everything except their talent for producing wealth. But they all made the adjustment and were arguably better for it.

There were certainly Russians in the 1990s—Yeltsin’s foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, for one—who thought that Russia should make a similar decision. They wished to integrate Russia into the liberal West even at the expense of traditional geopolitical ambitions. But that was not the view that ultimately prevailed in Russia. Unlike the United Kingdom, France, and to some extent Japan, Russia did not have a long history of friendly relations and strategic cooperation with the United States—quite the contrary. Unlike Germany and Japan, Russia was not militarily defeated, occupied, and reformed in the process. And unlike Germany, which always knew that its economic power was irrepressible and that in the post–World War II order it could at least grow prosperous, Russia never really believed it could become a successful economic powerhouse. Its elites thought that the likeliest consequence of integration would be Russia’s demotion to, at best, a second-rank power. Russia would be at peace, and it would still have a chance to prosper. But it would not determine the fate of Europe and the world.

WAR OR PEACE

In the fall of 1940, Japan’s foreign minister, Yosuke Matsuoka, posed his country’s predicament starkly in a meeting with other senior officials. Japan could seek a return to cooperative relations with the United States and the United Kingdom, he noted, but only on those countries’ terms. This meant returning to “little Japan,” as the minister of war (and future prime minister), General Hideki Tojo, put it. To Japanese leaders at the time, that seemed intolerable, so much so that they risked a war that most of them believed they were likely to lose. The coming years would prove not only that going to war was a mistake but also that the Japanese would indeed have served their interests better by simply integrating themselves into the liberal order from the beginning, as they did quite successfully after the war.

Putin’s Russia has made much the same choice as did imperial Japan, Kaiser Wilhelm II’s Germany, and many other dissatisfied powers throughout history, and likely with the same end—eventual defeat. But Putin’s choice should hardly have come as a surprise. Washington’s protestations of goodwill, the billions of dollars it poured into the Russian economy, the care it took in the early post–Cold War years to avoid dancing on the Soviet Union’s grave—all this had no effect, because what Putin wanted could not be granted by the United States. He sought to reverse a defeat that could not be reversed without violent force, but he lacked the wherewithal to wage a successful war. He wanted to restore a Russian sphere of interest in central and eastern Europe that Moscow had lost the power to sustain.

The problem for Putin—and for those in the West who want to cede to both China and Russia their traditional spheres of interest—is that such spheres are not granted to one great power by other great powers; they are not inherited, nor are they created by geography or history or “tradition.” They are acquired by economic, political, and military power. They come and go as the distribution of power in the international system fluctuates. The United Kingdom’s sphere of interest once covered much of the globe, and France once enjoyed spheres of interest in Southeast Asia and much of Africa and the Middle East. Both lost them, partly due to an unfavorable shift of power at the beginning of the twentieth century, partly because their imperial subjects rebelled, and partly because they willingly traded in their spheres of interest for a stable and prosperous U.S.-dominated peace. Germany’s sphere of interest once extended far to the east. Before World War I, some Germans envisioned a vast economic Mitteleuropa, where the people of central and eastern Europe would provide the labor, resources, and markets for German industry. But this German sphere of interest overlapped with Russia’s sphere of interest in southeastern Europe, where Slavic populations looked to Moscow for protection against Teutonic expansion. These **contested spheres helped produce both world wars**, just as the contested spheres in East Asia had helped bring Japan and Russia to blows in 1904.

Russians may believe they have a natural, geographic, and historical claim to a sphere of interest in eastern Europe because they had it throughout much of the past four centuries. And many Chinese feel the same way about East Asia, which they once dominated. But even the Americans learned that claiming a sphere of interest is different from having one. For the first century of the United States’ existence, the Monroe Doctrine was a mere assertion—as hollow as it was brazen. It was only toward the end of the nineteenth century, when the country was able to enforce its claim, that the other great powers were grudgingly forced to accept it. After the Cold War, Putin and other Russians may have wanted the West to grant Moscow a sphere of interest in Europe, but such a sphere simply did not reflect the true balance of power after the Soviet Union fell. China may claim the “nine-dash line”—enclosing most of the South China Sea—as marking its sphere of interest, but until Beijing can enforce it, other powers are unlikely to acquiesce.

Some Western analysts nonetheless argued when the Cold War ended, and continue to argue now, that Washington and western Europe should have given in to Russia’s demand. But if Moscow could not enforce a sphere, then on what grounds should the West have acceded? Fairness? Justice? Spheres of interest are not about justice, and even if they were, consigning the Poles and other eastern Europeans to subservience to Moscow would have been a dubious justice. They knew what it was like to be under Moscow’s sway—the loss of independence, the imposition of rulers willing to take direction from the Kremlin, the squelching of individual liberties. The only way they would have accepted a return to Russia’s sphere was if they were compelled to by a combination of Russian pressure and the studied indifference of the West.

In fact, even if the United States had vetoed the accession of Poland and others to NATO, as some suggested at the time that it should have, the Balts, the Czechs, the Hungarians, and the Poles would have done everything they could to integrate themselves into the transatlantic community in every other possible way. They would have worked to join the global economy, to enter other Western-dominated international institutions, and to gain whatever commitment they could to their security—acts that almost certainly would have still antagonized Moscow. Once Putin began taking slices out of Ukraine (there would be no way for him to restore Russia to its previous great-power status without controlling Ukraine), the Poles and others would have come banging on NATO’s door. It seems unlikely that the United States and its allies would have continued to say no.

Russia’s problem was ultimately not just about its military weakness. Its problem was, and remains, its weakness in all relevant forms of power, including the power of attraction. At least during the Cold War, a communist Soviet Union could claim to offer the path to paradise on earth. Yet afterward, Moscow could provide neither ideology, nor security, nor prosperity, nor independence to its neighbors. It could offer only Russian nationalism and ambition, and eastern Europeans understandably had no interest in sacrificing themselves on that altar. If there was any other choice, Russia’s neighbors were bound to take it. And there was: the United States and its strong alliance, merely by existing, merely by being rich and powerful and democratic, offered a very good choice indeed.

Putin may want to see the United States as being behind all his troubles, and he is right that the country’s attractive power closed the door to some of his ambitions. But the real sources of his problems are the limitations of Russia itself and the choices that he has made not to accept the consequences of a power struggle that Moscow legitimately lost. Post–Cold War Russia, like Weimar Germany, never suffered an actual military defeat and occupation, an experience that might have produced a transformation of the sort that occurred in post–World War II Germany and Japan. Like the Weimar Republic, Russia was therefore susceptible to its own “stab-in-the-back myth” about how Russian leaders supposedly betrayed the country to the West. But although Russians can cast blame in any number of directions—at Gorbachev, at Yeltsin, and at Washington—the fact is that Russia enjoyed neither the wealth and power nor the geographic advantages of the United States, and it was therefore never suited to be a global superpower. Moscow’s efforts to sustain that position ultimately bankrupted its system financially and ideologically—as may well be happening again.

SOONER OR LATER

Observers used to say that Putin played a bad hand skillfully. It is true that he read the United States and its allies correctly for many years, pushing forward just enough to achieve limited goals without sparking a dangerous reaction from the West, up until this latest invasion. But even so, he had help from the United States and its allies, which played a strong hand poorly. Washington and Europe stood by as Putin increased Russian military capabilities, and they did little as he probed and tested Western resolve, first in Georgia in 2008 and then in Ukraine in 2014. They didn’t act when Putin consolidated Russia’s position in Belarus or when he established a robust Russian presence in Syria, from which his weapons could reach the southeastern flank of NATO. And if his “special military operation” in Ukraine had gone as planned, with the country subdued in a matter of days, it would have been a triumphant coup, the end of the first stage of Russia’s comeback and the beginning of the second. Rather than excoriating him for his inhumane folly, the world would again be talking about Putin’s “savvy” and his “genius.”

Thankfully, that was not to be. But now that Putin has made his mistakes, the question is whether the United States will continue to make its own mistakes 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 and the price of stopping them rises. The challenge posed by Russia is neither unusual nor irrational. The rise and fall of nations is the warp and woof of international relations. National trajectories are changed by wars and the resulting establishment of new power structures, by shifts in the global economy that enrich some and impoverish others, and by beliefs and ideologies that lead people to prefer one power over another. If there is any blame to be cast on the United States for what is happening in Ukraine, it is not that Washington deliberately extended its influence in eastern Europe. It is that Washington failed to see that its influence had already increased and to anticipate that actors dissatisfied with the liberal order would look to overturn it.

For the 70-plus years since World War II, the United States has actively worked to keep **revisionists** at bay. But many Americans hoped that with the end of the Cold War, this task would be finished and that their country could become a “normal” nation with normal—which was to say, limited—global interests. But the global hegemon **cannot tiptoe off the stage,** as much as it might wish to. It especially cannot retreat when there are still major powers that, because of their history and sense of self, cannot give up old geopolitical ambitions—unless Americans are prepared to live in a world shaped and defined by those ambitions, as it was in the 1930s.

Americans are part of a never-ending power struggle, whether they wish to be or not.

The United States would be better served if it recognized both its position in the world and its true interest in preserving the liberal world order. In the case of Russia, this would have meant doing everything possible to integrate it into the liberal order politically and economically while deterring it from attempting to re-create its regional dominance by military means. The commitment to defend NATO allies was never meant to preclude helping others under attack in Europe, as the United States and its allies did in the case of the Balkans in the 1990s, and the United States and its allies could have resisted military efforts to control or seize land from Georgia and Ukraine. Imagine if the United States and the democratic world had responded in 2008 or 2014 as they have responded to Russia’s latest use of force, when Putin’s military was even weaker than it has proved to be now, even as they kept extending an outstretched hand in case Moscow wanted to grasp it. The United States ought to be following the same policy toward China: make clear that it is prepared to live with a China that seeks to fulfill its ambitions economically, politically, and culturally but that it will respond effectively to any Chinese military action against its neighbors.

It is true that acting firmly in 2008 or 2014 would have meant risking conflict. But Washington is risking conflict now; Russia’s ambitions have created an inherently dangerous situation. It is better for the United States to risk confrontation with belligerent powers when they are in the early stages of ambition and expansion, not after they have already consolidated substantial gains. Russia may possess a fearful nuclear arsenal, but the risk of Moscow using it is not higher now than it would have been in 2008 or 2014, if the West had intervened then. And it has always been extraordinarily small: Putin was never going to obtain his objectives by destroying himself and his country, along with much of the rest of the world. If the United States and its allies—with their combined economic, political, and military power—had collectively resisted Russian expansionism from the beginning, Putin would have found himself constantly unable to invade neighboring countries.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult for democracies to take action to prevent a future crisis. The risks of acting now are always clear and often exaggerated, whereas distant threats are just that: distant and so hard to calculate. It always seems better to hope for the best rather than try to forestall the worst. This common conundrum becomes even more debilitating when Americans and their leaders remain blissfully unconscious of the fact that they are part of a never-ending power struggle, whether they wish to be or not.

But Americans should not lament the role they play in the world. The reason the United States has often found itself entangled in Europe, after all, is because what it offers is genuinely attractive to much of the world—and certainly better when compared with any realistic alternative. If Americans learn anything from Russia’s brutalization of Ukraine, it should be that **there really are worse things than U.S. hegemony.**

### AT: Unsustainable – China dependence

#### They have it backwards – China depends on the US for economic might, and decoupling is possible without failure

Green and Brands 22 – *\*senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair at CSIS and chair in modern and contemporary Japanese politics and foreign policy at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University,\*\*Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins SAIS, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and columnist for Bloomberg* (Mike\* interviewing Hal\*\*, February 25, 2022, “Twilight Struggle: Lessons from the Cold War for China Strategy Today,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, https://www.csis.org/analysis/twilight-struggle-lessons-cold-war-china-strategy-today)//KH

Mike Green: And maybe the biggest difference... And, again, you're not saying this is a new Cold War. But in terms of using that experience to understand the dynamics of geopolitical competition and what it means for the American way of government and strategy, probably the biggest difference, you'd agree, I think, is you didn't have such a stake in Soviet economic interests. You didn't have, you know, prominent Wall Street financiers, to this day, calling for basically no decoupling and faith in the marketplace with China. You didn't have soybean farmers in most states of the union getting most of their income from exports to China. You didn't have all of these stakeholders within the US system who had so much to gain from the Chinese economy.

Mike Green: You didn't talk a lot about that in the book, but how would you amend the lessons, given that piece of it? We've surveyed this, you know, at CSIS, and both thought leaders and the American public are quite willing to decouple on high tech and do things like that. But when it comes to stopping agricultural exports or things that benefit us or cheap consumer goods, there's not a lot of support, and that's very different from the Soviet Union. We had no economic relationship, really, that affected average Americans. So what do you do with that one when you're trying to look at the parallels and the lessons?

Hal Brands: Yeah. What's different is that there are very powerful interests in American society that have a very strong stake in a stable US-China relationship and an open US-China relationship, and that's not entirely a bad thing. I mean, I think that the key is to think not so much about broad or complete economic decoupling as to try to figure out what are the areas in which we absolutely cannot be dependent on China for critical goods or critical inputs? What are the areas in which we absolutely cannot be enabling China's development? Presumably, we don't want to make it easier for Huawei to wire the world with 5G telecommunications, things like that. And then what are the larger areas of not particularly sensitive or strategic trade where it's fine if there's a particularly extensive US-China relationship? I don't know that China buying a lot of agricultural products from the United States is necessarily a point of strategic vulnerability for us. I think, if anything, it testifies to a strategic vulnerability of China's, which is that they are highly dependent on imports of food and other goods from abroad.

### AT: Unsustainable – Afghanistan

#### Afghanistan wasn’t a failure or a litmus test for hegemonic decline – net success and biased hindsight prove

Kagan 21 – *Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; adjunct professor at Georgetown* (Robert, 8-26-2021, "Opinion: It wasn’t hubris that drove America into Afghanistan. It was fear," Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/08/26/robert-kagan-afghanistan-americans-forget/)//KH

Americans long remembered where they were when they learned about the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915. The shock and horror of that event, in which a German submarine deliberately sank a British ocean liner with nearly 2,000 men, women and children aboard, produced more than moral outrage. It also reshaped Americans’ perception of the world and their role in it, ultimately leading them into the First World War. But neither their outrage at Germany nor their reconfigured view of foreign policy lasted very long. Ten years later, Americans still remembered the Lusitania, but they did not remember why they went to war — or, more specifically, how they felt about the series of events, beginning with the sinking, that ultimately led them to embrace war as their only remaining option. Instead, they came to regret their intervention in that war and to wonder what or, rather, who had gotten them into it.

Americans have undergone a similar experience over the two decades since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The feelings and perceptions of threat that led them to war in Afghanistan have faded, and all that is left are the consequences of that decision, the costs in lives and money, the inevitably mixed and uncertain results, and the unanswerable question: Was it all worth it?

We live history forward, in the chaos of onrushing events, without a clear guide. But we judge history backward, smugly armed with the knowledge of what did happen and uninterested in what might have happened. This partly explains the oscillation of U.S. foreign policy over the decades between periods of high involvement overseas and periods of withdrawal and retrenchment. In the case of World War I, the recoiling from what came to be regarded as the great error of intervention led to two decades in which Americans so removed themselves from involvement in Europe and East Asia that they unwittingly helped bring about the next great war they would once again be dragged into fighting. One wonders whether this pattern will eventually repeat itself in Afghanistan.

A collective failure today to recall what the world looked like to Americans after 9/11 has certainly clouded our understanding of the consequential decisions taken in those first years. Today, one reads that Americans went to war “almost gleefully”; that in launching the intervention, President George W. Bush was filled with “optimism” based on the belief that “democracy would flourish when given the opportunity”; that “imperial hubris” led Americans to believe “that we could shape the world in our image using our guns and our money.” Today, we read that even as “the twin towers and the Pentagon were still smoldering, there was a sense among America’s warrior and diplomatic class that history was starting anew for the people of Afghanistan and much of the Muslim world.

This is a myth, or to use the term preferred by The Post’s extensive report on Afghanistan, a “lie.” For better or for worse, it was fear that drove the United States into Afghanistan — fear of another attack by al-Qaeda, which was then firmly ensconced in the Taliban-controlled country; fear of possible attacks by other groups using chemical, biological or even nuclear weapons; fear of other sleeper cells already hiding in the United States. Experts warned that it was just a matter of time before the next big attack. And these fears persisted.

A year after 9/11, a Pew Research Center poll found that the attacks had “left a lasting, perhaps indelible, imprint on life in America as well as on attitudes toward public policy.” More than 6 in 10 Americans worried about a new attack; 4 in 10 expected the terrorists to use chemical or biological weapons; and more than half of Americans believed the perpetrators of the next attack were already living in the United States. Women worried more than men, with the result that women were, suddenly, about as likely as men to favor increased defense spending and military action. By a margin of 48 percent to 29 percent, Americans agreed that increasing the U.S. military presence abroad was a more effective means of combating terrorism than decreasing it. A month before Bush went to Congress for authorization to use force in Iraq, 64 percent of Americans polled favored using military force to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

The decision to go to war in Afghanistan in October 2001 enjoyed almost universal support — authorizations were approved in September 98 to 0 in the Senate and 420 to 1 in the House. But there was no gleeful optimism about the likely outcome. A month into the war, 88 percent of Americans polled approved of the intervention, but only 40 percent thought it very likely that the United States would be able to drive the Taliban from power, and only 28 percent thought it very likely that the United States would capture or kill Osama bin Laden. This pessimism persisted, thanks in part to the continual warnings by experts and many in government that terrorist networks were growing, along with the chances of another attack. In 2006, these experts were still warning that it was “not over yet” and that Americans remained “all too vulnerable to another 9/11-like tragedy at the hands of the jihadists.”

To read Bob Woodward’s almost contemporaneous account of the Bush administration’s reaction to the 9/11 attacks is to read not of hubris but of panic, confusion, fear and guilt. Bush and his advisers were mortified that they had allowed this uniquely horrific attack on American soil, and their focus was on punishing those who had perpetrated it, as well as those who sheltered them. Bush personally wanted vengeance. As Secretary of State Colin Powell thought to himself, according to Woodward, Dan Balz and Jeff Himmelman, the president “wanted to kill somebody.” He wanted to do so for strategic reasons, as a deterrent to others. He wanted to do so partly to buoy the crushed spirits of Americans unaccustomed to being attacked. But he also wanted to avenge the lives that had been lost on his watch.

Bush had no idea what he wanted to do with Afghanistan once that goal had been accomplished. In truth, the Bush administration would have been content with any stable government capable of fending for itself and preventing the return of the Taliban, al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Bush was hardly inclined toward “nation-building.” On the contrary, he and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and other advisers had criticized the Clinton administration for precisely that — “international social work,” as one critic put it — and had come into office intending to pursue a far more restrained foreign policy. Faced with the problem of Afghanistan, however, Bush officials found themselves with only unpalatable choices. On the one hand, historian Fredrik Logevall writes, “they feared that Afghanistan could descend into chaos,” but on the other hand, they “didn’t want to be saddled with the tasks of nation-building.” Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, writes historian and former civilian adviser in Afghanistan Carter Malkasian, “wanted to outsource to Afghan partners and be done with the place as soon as possible.” In the end, Bush officials decided they had no choice but to stay for a while and try to establish a government that would allow American troops eventually to depart without fear of a return to the pre-9/11 circumstances.

This led them into efforts that could be described as “nation-building” but that were basically what the U.S. military has always done, or tried to do, when engaged in occupations in Vietnam and in the Balkans in the 20th century, in Cuba and the Philippines decades before that, and even in the South after the Civil War. Building schools and hospitals, trying to reduce corruption and improve local administration — this has been standard operating procedure following nearly all U.S. interventions.

But the idea that Americans sought nothing less than creating a “Western democracy" rather than “what was sustainable or workable in an Afghan context” is simply wrong. The word “democracy” does not once appear in Balz and Woodward’s eight-part series in 2002. Top officials knew that even bringing stability to Afghanistan was going to be a tall order. When someone suggested that at least it would be easier than dealing with the Balkans, with their centuries-old religious and ethnic conflicts, Rice responded, “We’re going to wish this was the Balkans.”

The United States turned toward nation-building in Afghanistan not because officials were confident of success but because it seemed the least bad of the available options. Nor were these efforts slipped past an American public kept in the dark. One year into the war, 56 percent of Americans favored “coming to the aid of Afghanistan to help it recover from the war,” and fully two-thirds agreed that the United States would have to continue to “deploy troops there to maintain civil order” for the foreseeable future. And still Americans remained doubtful and apprehensive. A year into the war, only 15 percent regarded it as successful; 12 percent called it a failure. And 70 percent thought it was too early to tell. Only a third of the public believed that terrorists were less able to launch a new attack than they had been a year earlier.

Bush was hardly the sunny cheerleader. From the beginning, he worried that Americans were not prepared for the long and difficult struggle ahead. “Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes,” he told Congress in the days after Sept. 11. “Americans should not expect one battle but a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen.” Certainly, in those first few years after 9/11, that was indeed what Americans expected — a long, nasty conflict with many casualties on both sides. But they regarded it as necessary. Bush never considered simply declaring victory and bringing the troops home. He has said that an option of “attack, destroy the Taliban, destroy al-Qaeda as best we could, and leave” was never appealing because “that would have created a vacuum [in] which … radicalism could become even stronger.” His successors all faced the same dilemma. As Malkasian observed last year, “Every U.S. president since 2001 … sought to reach a point in Afghanistan when the violence would be sufficiently low or the Afghan government strong enough to allow U.S. military forces to withdraw without significantly increasing the risk of a resurgent terrorist threat.”

That is one reason the intervention lasted so long. Another reason was that it was not all one steady downward spiral to failure. There were periods when the situation looked to be more or less under control. After the rapid rout of the Taliban in the fall of 2001, Afghanistan became deceptively peaceful for roughly four years. Bush was able to keep between 10,000 and 20,000 troops in the country, and U.S. casualties in these years were relatively low. On the political front, there was progress to point to: In January 2004, Afghan leaders approved a new constitution, which led to reasonably fair presidential and parliamentary elections and the election of the moderate Hamid Karzai as president. Afghanistan was still far from a “success,” but the progress was enough that the Bush team kept at it, especially given what the administration regarded as the likely consequences of withdrawal. As one Marine and intelligence officer who served five tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan recently put it, “At any given point in our 20-year Afghan odyssey, we were always — in our minds, at least — only a year or two out from a drawdown followed by an eventual withdrawal.”

But progress could never be sustained. The rise of a Taliban insurgency in the last years of the Bush administration led President Barack Obama to accept his military advisers’ recommendation for a “surge” of forces in 2009. There followed another period of relative progress. Over the next three years, the surge stabilized important parts of the country, breathed new life into the Afghan army and police, and strengthened support for the government. The costs to the United States went up, however. It was during the Obama surge that American casualties were at their highest — 1,500 troops killed and 15,000 wounded between 2009 and 2012, more than in any other period of the 20-year war. The killing of bin Laden in May 2011 led most Americans to believe that the mission had been accomplished, and Obama started speaking about the need to “focus on nation building here at home.” But as Obama withdrew the troops sent in for the surge and planned further drawdowns, the Taliban recovered, and outside Afghanistan the general terrorist threat increased with the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Much has been made of the supposed deception that successive administrations engaged in to make the situation look better than it was. But the suggestion that three consecutive administrations “hid the truth for two decades” is simply not true. Even when American officials tried to put the best face on a bad situation, they didn’t pretend there was no bad news. Consider the testimony of Gen. David Petraeus in March 2011. He told Congress optimistically that “the past eight months have seen important but hard-fought progress,” as indeed they had. But he also said that progress remained “fragile and reversible,” that “much difficult work” lay ahead, and that there had been “setbacks as well as successes.”

Any cautious optimism advanced by successive administrations was more than matched by members of Congress from both parties. At the same hearing where Petraeus testified, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.) reported, on the basis of his own visit to Afghanistan in January 2011, that the Afghan people in former Taliban strongholds were “returning to villages” and had “growing confidence in the ability of Afghan and coalition forces to provide security.” Members of Congress, and especially Democrats, were also enthusiastic about nation-building. Congress repeatedly demanded greater civilian efforts to complement military action, approving billions of dollars in aid and constantly pressing the administration to beef up such efforts. This aid also enjoyed public support. If nation-building in Afghanistan was a mistake, it was a mistake that lots of people made.

The fact was, no one was under any illusions, then or later, that an outright victory was close at hand. Even as Petraeus was making his highly qualified assessment of progress, U.S. intelligence officials were also testifying publicly on their concerns about whether the Afghan government had the ability to take over responsibility for governing. The head of the Defense Intelligence Agency observed at the time that, despite the surge of U.S. troops, there had been “no apparent degradation in” the Taliban’s “capacity to fight” and that its forces remained “resilient” and would be “able to threaten U.S. and international goals in Afghanistan through 2011.”

The notion that Americans were duped into believing that all was well in Afghanistan is belied by polls throughout the war. Only a small minority ever said they were “confident” that U.S. policies in Afghanistan would eventually succeed. In the summer of 2005, 75 percent were either “not confident” or “not sure.” Five years later, in 2010, that share was up to over 80 percent, while only 12 percent expressed confidence.

Yet despite this, a majority of Americans consistently supported continued involvement, and in 2009 a substantial majority supported Obama’s dramatic increase in troops. Indeed, voters had a higher opinion of Obama’s Afghanistan policy than of his handling of the economy and health care. Like the administration, the public and Congress knew the war wasn’t going particularly well but opposed departing and favored a greater U.S. commitment. By and large, Americans were all in it together, even if most have a hard time remembering that now.

From the beginning, the effort in Afghanistan faced severe constraints, many self-imposed. Afghanistan was a classic case, repeated many times throughout American history, of a United States with one foot out the door from the moment of intervention. This started with the Bush administration. The common theme of Afghanistan and Iraq was the belief by Rumsfeld and his subordinates that both interventions could be sustained without a large commitment of U.S. forces. Perhaps this belief could be attributed to hubris, but it was really just an effort to keep the American footprint to a minimum. Gen. Dan K. McNeill, the commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan in 2002-2003, told government interviewers that his superiors at the Pentagon mainly cared about keeping a lid on the number of deployed U.S. troops. Rumsfeld in particular would become exercised at any mention of additional forces. Some argued for more troops, but as Richard Haass, who was one of them, later recounted, “There was a profound sense of a lack of possibility in Afghanistan.” Instead, as in Iraq, the Pentagon worked to build an Afghan army capable of taking over. U.S. officials tended both to inflate the numbers and exaggerate the capabilities of the Afghan army. Why? To demonstrate that there was no need for more American troops or a more extended commitment. When the British commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan told Rumsfeld in 2006 that “we don’t have enough troops and resources,” Rumsfeld responded, “General, I don’t agree. Move on.”

Whatever chance of success the United States might have had was not improved by this half-in/half-out approach. The Taliban could see how eager the Americans were to get out and so bided its time. But as significant was the effect on America’s partners in Afghanistan. The very uncertainty of the American commitment worked at cross-purposes with the effort to build a government and an army that could stand on their own. As one American who served in Afghanistan has pointed out, one of the consequences was to increase corruption. “Our consistent **messaging that we were on our way out** of Afghanistan encouraged Afghans in positions of power to embrace corruption — specifically, the siphoning of resources for personal gain — as the one clear and sure means of survival. Corruption became a financial contingency plan, the choice any reasonable Afghan would make to ensure a safe future for their children.” Afghan fighters also had to make choices. They had barely held on in the fight against the Taliban with American help, including air support; why imagine that they could hold on without it? No one in the U.S. government ever believed the Afghan army was ready to stand on its own. Officials misjudged only the rapidity of its collapse, which proved embarrassing but should not have been surprising. In any case, it seems a bit unfair to say that America’s Afghan partners were simply “rotten.” Their lives depended on making the right judgment about American staying power, and that was always in doubt.

And it was not just the Afghans who had to make such calculations. Among the biggest obstacles to U.S. policy was Pakistan’s continuing support for the Taliban. Top Pakistani officials made no secret of the fact that they were hedging their bets. As the head of the Pakistani intelligence service told then-Ambassador Ryan Crocker, one day “you’ll be done with us, but we’re still going to be here … and the last thing we want with all of our other problems is to have turned the Taliban into a mortal enemy, so, yes, we’re hedging our bets.” As Crocker said in 2016, the only way to have compelled a different set of calculations would have been to make clear that there was no calendar for withdrawal, that the United States was prepared to keep its forces in Afghanistan for as long as necessary. As Crocker put it, “Americans are short-term. Our adversaries count on that, and our allies fear it.” One can only wonder how the various actors might have responded had the Bush administration and its successors said the United States was prepared to stay in Afghanistan for 20 years, instead of spending 20 years with one foot always out the door.

The further irony is that Americans have maintained troops in other countries for decades. They have kept troops in Korea for 70 years, guarding against the resumption of a war that has never formally ended and that could erupt again at any moment. They have kept American troops on the front lines of the Cold War in Europe and elsewhere in Asia for even longer. There were American forces in the Balkans for more than a decade. The fact is, Americans will keep troops in distant theaters for decades, so long as casualties are minimal.

Could things have gone differently in Afghanistan? Possibly, although that seems unlikely given the proclivities of all the parties involved. Successive U.S. administrations believed the likely price of lasting success in Afghanistan was higher than the American people wanted to pay, especially as the fear and anger after 9/11 faded. But the price of withdrawal was also too high. Under the circumstances, it was not surprising that successive presidents chose the route they did. And though there can be much second-guessing about both strategy and tactics, this was not one of those cases where the answer was obvious and only ideologues could not see it. So why the brutal recriminations? Why does every American setback have to be a morality tale, **a search for scapegoats and an indictment of American foreign policy in general**? The United States intervened in Afghanistan for perfectly good and understandable reasons after 9/11 and then did not know how to extricate itself with an acceptable outcome. Why has this been treated by so many as a tale of sin and hubris? Why has the “war on terror” come to be viewed as a symptom and for some the source of much of America’s troubles today?

In fact, the “war on terror” has been successful — astoundingly so. If you had told anyone after 9/11 that there would not be another major attack on the U.S. homeland for 20 years, few would have believed it possible. The prevailing wisdom at the time was that not only would there be other attacks, but they would be more severe. In 2004, Harvard’s premier foreign policy expert, Graham Allison, predicted that it was “more likely than not” that terrorists would explode a nuclear weapon in the United States in the coming decade. What former Obama and current Biden officials Rob Malley and Jon Finer observed three years ago remains true today: “No group or individual has been able to repeat anything close to the devastating scale of the 9/11 attacks in the United States or against U.S. citizens abroad, owing to the remarkable efforts of U.S. authorities, who have disrupted myriad active plots and demolished many terrorist cells and organizations.”

That this fact is rarely noted as Americans argue about Afghanistan is remarkable. Does anyone think these efforts would have been as successful if after 9/11 the United States had left the Taliban and al-Qaeda in place for all these years? And it is interesting that so many Americans now believe the price has been too high. As often happens, the fact that the United States hasn’t been hit again tends to reinforce the idea that there never was a serious threat to begin with, certainly not serious enough to warrant paying such a price. But this is again the difference between living history forward and judging history backward. If someone had told Americans after 9/11 that they could go two decades without another successful attack but that it would cost 4,000 American lives and $1 trillion, as well as tens of thousands of Afghan lives, would they have rejected it as too high? Likely not.

When Americans went to war in 2001, most believed that the dangers of inaction had become too great, that threats of both international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction were growing, and that serious efforts had to be made to address them. Today, many Americans increasingly believe that those earlier perceptions were mistaken or perhaps even manufactured. With America’s departure from Afghanistan, we may begin to learn who was more right.

### Russia revisionist

#### Neither US influence nor NATO expansion are the cause of Russian aggression – Putin is ideologically revisionist, proven by Russian history

Brands 22 – *Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor at the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments*. (Hal, 15 March, 2022, "Putin’s Biggest Lie: Blaming NATO for His War," https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/3532081/hal-brands/putin%E2%80%99s-biggest-lie-blaming-nato-his-war)//KH

The great NATO enlargement debate never ends. In the 1990s, US officials and academics argued about whether pushing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into Eastern Europe was likely to sustain the post-Cold War peace or prematurely end it. More recently, critics have charged that Russia’s war in Ukraine is a natural response to the aggressive expansion of America’s most powerful alliance.

Now Russian officials, and even President Vladimir Putin himself, have echoed — and sometimes directly cited — American scholars such as political scientist John Mearsheimer, who argues that the current crisis “is the West’s fault.”

The “blame NATO” argument tells a story of hubris, arrogance and tragedy. It holds that there was a golden chance for lasting peace in Europe, but the US threw it all away. Rather than conciliating a defeated rival, Washington repeatedly humiliated it by expanding a vast military alliance up to Russia’s borders and even into the former Soviet Union. This pursuit of American hegemony in a liberal-democratic guise eventually provoked a violent rebuke.

In this telling, Putin’s wars against Georgia and Ukraine are just the natural response of one great power whose vital interests are being heedlessly threatened by another.

The argument isn’t wholly wrong. Putin’s wars are indeed meant, in part, to push Western influence back from Russia’s frontiers. But the idea that NATO expansion is the root of today’s problems is morally and geopolitically bizarre.

Far from being a historic blunder, NATO expansion was one of the great American successes of the post-Cold War era. Far from being the act of a domineering superpower, it was part of a long tradition of vulnerable states begging to join America’s liberal empire. And far from posing a mortal threat to Moscow, NATO enlargement actually provided Russia with far greater security than it could have provided itself.

NATO was founded in 1949 with 12 members in Western Europe and North America. It gradually added additional states — Turkey, Greece, West Germany, Spain — over the course of the Cold War. But the big bang of enlargement came once the superpower conflict ended. NATO incorporated the former East Germany into the alliance in 1990; it then added three Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic) in 1999; then seven more, including the Baltic states, in 2004.

To understand why NATO grew so rapidly, we have to remember something that nearly everyone has now forgotten: There was no guarantee that Europe would be mostly stable, peaceful and democratic after the Cold War. In fact, many of the analysts who now view NATO expansion as a catastrophe once warned that a post-Cold War Europe could become a violent hellscape.

It wasn’t an outlandish scenario. A reunified Germany might once again try to dominate its neighbors; the old enmity between Moscow and Berlin could reignite. The collapse of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe could liberate those states to pursue long-suppressed territorial claims and nationalist agendas. Ethnic tensions and nuclear proliferation might explode as the Cold War order crumbled.

If the US pulled back once the Soviet threat was gone, there would be no extra-European superpower to put out fires on a continent with lots of geopolitical kindling. “The prospect of major crises, even wars, in Europe is likely to increase dramatically,” Mearsheimer predicted in 1990.

NATO enlargement was the logical answer to these fears. Expansion was a way of binding a reunified Germany to the West and surrounding it with democratic allies. Joining NATO required new members to lay aside any revanchist designs, while allowing them to pursue economic and political reforms rather than investing heavily in military capabilities to defend their newly won autonomy.

NATO’s move to the east also ensured that Poland and other states that easily could have built nuclear weapons didn’t need to, because they had American protection. Most important, enlargement kept the US firmly planted in Europe, by preventing the centerpiece of the transatlantic relationship from becoming obsolete.

No other initiative could have accomplished these objectives. Partnership for Peace — a series of loose security cooperation agreements with former Soviet-bloc states — didn’t offer the ironclad guarantees that came with NATO membership. (If you want to understand the difference between “security partner” and “NATO ally,” just look at what is happening today to Ukraine, one of the former.)

The idea of creating a pan-European security architecture (one that included Russia) had the same defect; plus, it would have given Moscow veto power over the security arrangements of the countries the Soviet Union had so recently dominated.

Only American power and promises could provide stability in Europe, and NATO was the continent’s critical link to the US. Since 1949, Washington had tamped down rivalries between old enemies such as France and Germany, while also protecting them from external threats. After 1991, NATO expansion took this zone of peace, prosperity and cooperation that had emerged in Western Europe and moved it into Eastern Europe as well.

The revolutionary nature of this achievement seemed obvious not so long ago. “Why has Europe been so peaceful since 1989?” Mearsheimer asked in 2010. The answer, he acknowledged, was because “America has continued to serve as Europe’s pacifier,” protecting the continent from dangers within and without.

Today, of course, the critics don’t buy this account. They argue that NATO expansion represented crude power politics, as the US exploited the Soviet collapse to engorge its own empire. What resulted, pundits such as Thomas Friedman contend, was a sort of Weimar Russia — a country whose dignity was affronted, security imperiled and democracy undermined by a harsh, humiliating peace.

There is a kernel of truth here, too. Once Russian democracy began to wobble in 1993-94, officials in the Bill Clinton administration saw NATO expansion — in part — as a way of preventing a potentially resurgent, aggressive Russia from rebuilding the Soviet sphere of influence. Russian leaders of all stripes griped about NATO expansion from the early 1990s onward, warning that it could jeopardize the peace of the continent.

In hindsight, NATO expansion was one of several issues — including disputes over the Balkans and the collapse of the Russian economy in the late 1990s — that gradually soured Russia’s relationship with the West. Yet this story omits three vital facts.

First, all policies have costs. The price of NATO expansion was a certain alienation of Russian elites — although we often forget that Clinton softened the blow by continually courting Russian President Boris Yeltsin, bringing Russia into elite Western institutions such as the Group of Seven, and making Moscow a partner in the intervention in Bosnia in 1995-96. Yet the cost of not expanding NATO might have been forfeiting much of the stability that initiative provided. Trade-offs are inevitable in foreign policy: There was no magic middle path that would have provided all the benefits with none of the costs.

Second, if NATO expansion was a manifestation of American empire, it was a remarkably benign and consensual form of empire. When Clinton decided to pursue enlargement, he did so at the urging of the Poles, Czechs and Hungarians. The Baltic countries and others were soon banging at the door. The states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were desperate to join America’s sphere of influence, because they were desperate to leave Moscow’s.

This, too, was part of an older pattern: The US has often extended its influence by “invitation” rather than imposition. The creation of NATO in 1949 was **mostly a European idea**: Countries that were terrified of Moscow sought protection from Washington. One reason Putin’s wars to keep countries from escaping Moscow’s empire are so abhorrent to Americans is that the US empire has trouble keeping members out.

Putin may not see it that way. All that matters to him is that the mightiest peacetime alliance in history has crept closer to Russian soil. But here a third fact becomes relevant: Russia was one of the biggest beneficiaries of NATO’s move east.

Open terrain has often left Russia vulnerable to invasion and instability emanating from Europe. Napoleonic France, Imperial Germany and Nazi Germany all swept through Eastern Europe to wreak havoc on Russian or Soviet territory. This is one reason why the great strategist George Kennan opposed NATO expansion — because it would surely re-activate this fear of encroachment from the west.

Yet this was a red herring, because NATO posed no military threat. The alliance committed, in 1997, not to permanently station foreign troops in Eastern Europe. After the Cold War, America steadily withdrew most of its troops and all of its heavy armor from the continent. US allies engaged in a veritable race to disarm.

The prospect that NATO could invade Russia, even had it wanted to, was laughable. What the alliance could do was tame the perils that might otherwise have menaced the Russian state.

Germany could hardly threaten Russia: It was nestled snugly into an alliance that also served as a strategic straitjacket. NATO, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had candidly said in 1990, could “play a containing role” vis-à-vis Berlin. Moscow didn’t have to worry about a nuclear Poland — Warsaw didn’t need nukes because it had the protection of the United States. Aside from the Balkan wars of the 1990s, Eastern Europe was comparatively free of the geopolitical intrigues and military quarrels that might have made Russia jumpy.

NATO expansion hadn’t just alleviated Europe’s security problems; it had protected Russia’s vital interests as well. Moscow might have lost an empire, but it had gained remarkable safety from external attack.

Part of the answer is that NATO expansion wasn’t really the problem, in the sense that Russia didn’t need that pretext to seek renewed hegemony in its near-abroad. The Soviet Union, and the Russian empire before it, had traditionally sought to control countries along their frontiers and used brutal means to do it. To say that NATO expansion caused Russian belligerence is thus to make an extremely dubious assertion: that absent NATO expansion, Moscow would have been a satisfied, status quo power.

And this is exactly why a bigger NATO has posed a real problem for Putin. After all, safety from external attack isn’t the only thing that states and rulers want. They want glory, greatness and the privileges of empire. For 20 years, Putin has been publicly lusting after the sphere of influence that the Soviet Union once enjoyed. NATO expansion stood athwart that ambition, by giving Moscow’s former vassals the ability to resist its pressure.

NATO also threatened a certain type of Russian government — an autocracy that was never secure in its own rule. A democratic Russia wouldn’t so much have minded being neighbors with Western-leaning democracies, because political liberty in those countries wouldn’t have threatened to set a subversive example for anti-Putin Russians.

Yet, as Russia became more autocratic in the early 2000s, and as Putin’s popularity declined with the Russian economy after 2008, the imperative of preventing ideological spillover from a US-backed democratic community loomed large.

So Putin began pushing back against NATO’s eastward march. In 2008, he invaded Georgia, a country that was moving — too slowly for its own safety — toward the West. Since 2014, he has been waging war against Ukraine, in hopes of rebuilding the Russian empire and halting Kiev’s westward drift. America’s vision of Europe has now run into Putin’s program of violent coercion.

To be sure, US officials made mistakes along the way. Because Russia was prostrate, militarily and economically, during the 1990s, Washington acquired a bad habit of issuing security guarantees without really considering how it would fulfill them in a crisis. The Pentagon has thus been scrambling, since 2014, to devise a credible defense of NATO’s eastern flank.

As Russia regained its strength, US officials also failed to grasp the danger of provoking Putin without adequately deterring him. When, in 2008, NATO declined to endorse membership for Georgia and Ukraine but issued a vague statement saying that they would someday join the alliance, it created the worst of all worlds — giving Putin both the pretext and the time to pre-empt future expansion by tearing those two countries apart.

Yet there is a curious morality in accounts that blame the West, which sought to protect vulnerable states in Eastern Europe, for the current carnage, rather than blaming Putin, who has worked to dismember and intimidate those countries. It is sloppy thinking to tally up the costs of NATO expansion without considering the historic achievements of a policy that served American, European and even certain Russian interests remarkably well.

And if nothing else, NATO expansion pushed the dividing line between Moscow and the democratic world to the east after one Cold War — a factor of great significance now that a second cold war is underway.

The legacy of NATO expansion isn’t simply a matter of historical interest. Americans’ understanding of the past has always influenced their view of what policies to pursue in the future. During the 1920s and 1930s, the widespread, if inaccurate, belief that America had entered World War I to serve the interests of banks and arms manufacturers had a paralyzing effect on US policy amid the totalitarian aggression that set off World War II.

Today, the US faces a long, nasty struggle to contain Putin’s imperial project and protect an endangered world order. Introspection is an admirable quality, but the last thing America needs is another bout of self-flagellation rooted in another misapprehension of the past.

#### Russian and Chinese revisionism on a double front proves now is critical for the US to leverage its ample capabilities to hedge back

Brands 22 – *Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and a Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute* (Hal, 2-25-2022, "The Eurasian Nightmare," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-02-25/eurasian-nightmare)//KH

The greatest strategic problem the United States faces is the convergence of its two main rivals, China and Russia—countries that don’t always like or trust each other but nonetheless derive great benefits from their simultaneous assaults on the existing international order. And as Moscow and Beijing contest the balance of power at both ends of Eurasia, they are drawing together in ominous ways.

China has refused to condemn Russia's brazen invasion of Ukraine. Instead, on the day of Russia's attack, it accused the United States and its allies of “fanning the flames.” China’s non-denunciation is part of a broader pattern of Sino-Russian convergence, as both Beijing and Moscow are using old and new methods to upend the global status quo. In January 2022, China publicly supported Russia’s intervention in Kazakhstan to thwart a “color revolution” in the two countries’ shared backyard. In early February, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping issued a long joint statement endorsing efforts to keep U.S. influence out of their near abroads, attacking the United States’ alliances as Cold War relics, defending their own autocratic models of government, and declaring that Sino-Russian friendship has “no limits.” All of this follows significant, sustained upticks in military, economic, diplomatic, and technological cooperation. Expect more in the future: as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine crystallizes tensions between Putin and the West, it also underscores his need for support from Beijing.

The Sino-Russian convergence gives both powers more room for maneuver by magnifying Washington’s two-front problem: the United States now faces increasingly aggressive near-peer rivals in two separate theaters—eastern Europe and the western Pacific—that are thousands of miles apart. Sino-Russian cooperation, while fraught and ambivalent, raises the prospect that America’s two great-power rivalries could merge into a single contest against an autocratic axis. Even short of that, the current situation has revived the great geopolitical nightmare of the modern era: an authoritarian power or entente that strives for dominance in Eurasia, the central strategic theater of the world.

That nightmare traces back to the writings of the political geographer Halford Mackinder, who warned in 1904 that the coming era would feature high-stakes struggles to rule Eurasia and its surrounding oceans. That prophesy played out in the two cataclysmic hot wars and one global cold war that followed. Mackinder’s vision has become newly relevant in the twenty-first century: the United States’ rivals are working to create a radically revised global order with an autocratic Eurasia at its core.

THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Mackinder is considered by many to be the father of geopolitics, and argued in his famous “heartland” theory of political geography (as well as subsequent publications) that three revolutions were putting Eurasia at center stage in global affairs. First, the colonization of Africa and much of Asia meant that possibilities for easy imperial expansion were fading, presaging fiercer fights between great powers in Eurasia, the world’s geopolitical core. Second, the proliferation of railroads was making it possible to project power across vast territories and creating new opportunities for conquest on the Eurasian landmass. Third, illiberal states were harnessing rapidly industrializing economies to underwrite horrific repression at home and dramatic expansion abroad. If such states were able to dominate Eurasia, global supremacy would be within their reach.

Eurasia, Mackinder pointed out, controlled most of the world’s population and industrial potential. A power or coalition that gained control of Eurasia’s resources could then build unrivaled navies and expand its empire across the seas. The coming geopolitical dramas would thus play out on and around this vital landmass. Autocratic bids for expansion would trigger fights with coalitions linking offshore powers—the United Kingdom and later the United States—to onshore allies whose existence would be threatened by a Eurasian hegemon.

Mackinder got plenty wrong: the big challenges to Eurasian equilibrium initially came not from Russia, as he had expected, but from Germany and Japan. This led the strategist Nicholas Spykman to argue that the supercontinent’s crucial theaters were its European and East Asian “rimlands” rather than its Russian “heartland.” But Mackinder nailed the basic pattern. The three great showdowns of the twentieth century—World War I, World War II, and the Cold War—were brawls between autocratic states, which sought to dominate huge swaths of Eurasia and its adjoining oceans, and the amphibious alliances, anchored by London and then Washington, which sought to contain them.

The contours of these contests changed over time. Germany and Japan pursued outright conquest, often by exploiting new technologies—tanks and tactical airpower, submarines and aircraft carriers—to project power on an unprecedented scale. During the Cold War, nuclear stalemate led the Soviet Union to rely mostly on military intimidation, political subversion, and proxy forces. Yet the stakes remained the same: U.S. policymakers, from Woodrow Wilson to George Kennan, understood that a hostile, autocratic Eurasia would fundamentally reshape the globe. And after a brief, post–Cold War respite, the United States confronts a new version of the old nightmare today.

HEGEMONIC GAMBITS

The present Sino-Russian partnership naturally invites comparison to the Sino-Soviet alliance during the Cold War. But a better analogy might be Germany and Japan before World War II. Though formally allied, Tokyo and Berlin were ambivalent, distrustful partners with fundamentally different long-term visions. Nonetheless, each was committed to overthrowing the existing order, and each profited from the chaos created by the other’s advances.

Presently, neither China nor Russia has engaged in anything approaching World War II–scale aggression. But both countries fundamentally resent the U.S.-led international order because American influence obstructs their paths to domination in world affairs, and because the liberal principles enshrined in the international system are at odds with the illiberal orders that their leaders have constructed at home. China and Russia may be pursuing distinct agendas, but together they present a comprehensive challenge to the geopolitical balance in Eurasia and beyond.

Moscow and Beijing are drawing together in ominous ways.

China’s capabilities are greater than Russia’s, which makes its efforts more audacious. Beijing aims to excise U.S. power from maritime Asia in order to consolidate a Chinese sphere of influence encompassing much of the Western Pacific. China is simultaneously reaching into Eurasia through investment and infrastructure programs, such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Digital Silk Road, that cast its economic, political, and military influence into Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and regions further afield. In short, Beijing is looking for hybrid hegemony on land and at sea.

China’s gambit intersects with Russia’s efforts to revise the status quo. For years, Putin has been vying to reestablish Russian primacy from Central Asia to eastern Europe. Putin seems to envision a Europe in which NATO is effectively rolled back to its Cold War frontiers and its relationship with Washington is badly weakened. As Russia has recovered its strength after the early post–Cold War era, Moscow has also projected power into the Artic, North Atlantic, Middle East, and other flanking theaters. Moscow has no hope of building a Russo-centric global order, but it can weaken the existing system from one direction as China attacks it from others.

As they have throughout the past century, attempts at Eurasian expansion reflect the shifting nature of global power. Beijing’s record-shattering naval buildup, Moscow’s serial aggression against disobedient neighbors, and both countries’ efforts to fundamentally upend the military balance in key regions such as eastern Europe and East Asia show that hard power hasn’t gone out of style. And both countries are also using more novel methods to weaken their rivals and spread their influence: Russian cyberattacks and digital disinformation campaigns are the counterpart to China’s infrastructure projects, efforts to control the world’s 5G networks, and other non-military measures that extend its global sway.

TOGETHER, AND SEPARATE

Because both China and Russia seek to break the existing order, it is unsurprising that convergence has birthed cooperation. The two countries have reportedly swapped tips on how to manage the Internet and control dissent at home; they have also worked, through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to fortify friendly dictators in Central Asia. The bilateral trade, finance, and energy relationship between China and Russia has broadened, and Beijing and Moscow have lent each other important, if sometimes tacit, diplomatic support in the UN Security Council. Not least, an expanding military relationship features joint exercises in Central Asia and the Baltic and South China Seas, transfers of weaponry, and burgeoning defense technological cooperation, some of which is likely happening in secret.

Yet formal cooperation between Beijing and Moscow is an insufficient measure of their partnership, because the two help each other simply by pursuing their individual goals. When China and Russia use disinformation and strategic corruption to meddle in liberal societies, or work to make international organizations friendlier to illiberal rule, they contribute to a global autocratic resurgence that benefits both states. And it is at the strategic level where the payoffs of convergence are most pronounced.

Both Beijing and Moscow seem to have learned a vital lesson from the Soviet defeat in the Cold War: that it makes poor strategy to compete with Washington on one front while antagonizing a second enemy on another. China and Russia have thus resolved to stand “back to back” along their shared Eurasian border, freeing them to focus on eroding the U.S.-led order.

Washington’s rivals are working to create a revised global order with an autocratic Eurasia at its core.

The Russian Far East, for instance, presently houses fewer military assets than at any time since Nazi forces were at Moscow’s gates in 1941, a testament to the way that reduced tensions with China enable Russia to concentrate on intimidating the West. By the same token, the existence of simultaneous threats from China and Russia prevents Washington from concentrating its power against either rival, and leaves it vulnerable to being whipsawed by two separate competitors. The Sino-Russian relationship isn’t an alliance, but it doesn’t need to be one in order to cause strategic migraines for the United States.

To be sure, the partnership suffers from real constraints. China and Russia are unlikely to come to each other’s defense in a conflict with Washington, although they might seek subtle ways—such as sharing intelligence or posturing troops menacingly—to prevent the United States from decisively defeating one opponent and then homing in on the other. Russia, having invaded Ukraine and facing comprehensive sanctions from the West, won’t find equivalent economic relief from Beijing, in part because China isn’t eager to bring down the financial wrath of the hegemon by engaging in sanctions-busting on a massive scale. Tensions lurk in Central Asia, where both countries can’t be preeminent simultaneously; in the Arctic, where Russia is a resident power and China is an interloper; and in Africa, where Moscow generates instability that hardly improves prospects for repayment of Chinese loans. Eventually, the overall clash of interests could be severe, because Russia wouldn’t particularly enjoy living in the Sinocentric world that Xi envisions.

For the time being, however, Washington’s Eurasian predicament will only get worse: threats to the existing order are intensifying, and its opponents’ bellicosity is increasing, on both sides of that landmass at once. Although Xi's and Putin's ultimate objectives diverge, their intermediate goals can keep them closely aligned for years to come.

BREAKING THE GREAT-POWER TRIANGLE

History suggests a solution to this predicament, but the obvious answer—using concessions and diplomacy to turn Moscow against Beijing—is the wrong one. Although the idea may tempt observers in Washington and Europe who hope to improve the strategic geometry of the great-power triangle, Sino-Russian tensions aren’t yet sharp enough to produce the sort of split that happened in the late 1960s, and any efforts to purchase Moscow’s cooperation would surely backfire.

Putin has made clear that the price of sustained de-escalation with the West is overturning the post–Cold War settlement in Europe—and if Putin were offered such a deal, he might well conclude that his strategy of pressure is working and push even harder. There is no diplomatic fix to the Sino-Russian alignment that doesn’t involve gravely weakening the United States’ position at one end of the Eurasian landmass. And it is hard to imagine that an effective U.S. global strategy can withstand such a blow.

A more useful lesson from history is that there may be no good alternative to facing challenges on both sides of Eurasia at once. In 1940 and 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt declined the advice of those who argued that he must appease Japan in order to concentrate on Nazi Germany, because he recognized that both countries posed mortal threats to the United States’ vision for the international order. And later, throughout the first two decades of the Cold War, the United States sought to contain both China and the Soviet Union after concluding that there was no acceptable way of separating them for the time being.

The United States confronts a new version of the old nightmare today.

The United States and its allies have the raw power to pursue a similar dual containment strategy today. As National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has noted, even a more united Sino-Russian axis would be dwarfed in economic, diplomatic, and military capabilities by Washington and its allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific.

Granted, the United States and its friends can’t do this on the cheap. Checking dual challenges would likely require major rearmament programs and deeper cooperation against political and economic coercion, all underpinned by a sharper awareness of the threat posed by China and Russia’s autocratic convergence. Put differently, it won’t work to pursue a Cold War–style strategy with post–Cold War levels of urgency and investment. But the best way of resisting a familiar challenge—a bloc of autocracies at the heart of Eurasia—is through a familiar remedy: strengthening the collective resilience of the countries holding the balance along its periphery.

This strategy may initially encourage Sino-Russian cooperation. Yet history also suggests that driving ambivalent partners apart may first require pushing them together. During the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration wagered that a policy of pressure was more likely to break the Sino-Soviet pact than one of inducement, because it would force the weaker party—Beijing—into a position of reliance on the stronger—Moscow—that would ultimately make both countries quite uncomfortable. Eisenhower reasoned, correctly, that Washington might someday find an opportunity to exploit tensions between its two enemies, but only after it had shown that their partnership would produce more misery than profit.

If the United States is to promote an eventual strategic reorientation in Moscow, it first must demonstrate that **Putin’s policy of revisionism** and alignment with Beijing is not working—and that the alternative to decent relations with the West is an ever-greater dependence on a China whose abrasiveness seems to grow with its power. If that message can be driven home over a period of years, it could have a constructive effect on Russian thinking, if not under Putin then under his successor. Such an outcome may seem like a distant aspiration, which implies waging not one but two cold wars along the way. If nothing else, then, the Sino-Russian convergence has clarified how serious the new Eurasian challenge is—and what will be required to meet it.

### China revisionist

#### China is revisionist – territorial expansion, 5-year plans, and anti-democratic innovation on all fronts

Beckley 22 – *Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University* (Michael, March/April 2022, "Enemies of My Enemy," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2021-02-14/china-new-world-order-enemies-my-enemy)//KH

ENTER THE DRAGON

There has never been any doubt about what China wants, because Chinese leaders have declared the same objectives for decades: to keep the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in power, reabsorb Taiwan, control the East China and South China Seas, and return China to its rightful place as the dominant power in Asia and the most powerful country in the world. For most of the past four decades, the country took a relatively patient and peaceful approach to achieving these aims. Focused on economic growth and fearful of being shunned by the international community, China adopted a “peaceful rise” strategy, relying primarily on economic clout to advance its interests and generally following a maxim of the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping: “Hide your strength, bide your time.”

In recent years, however, China has expanded aggressively on multiple fronts. “Wolf Warrior” diplomacy has replaced friendship diplomacy. Perceived slights from foreigners, no matter how small, are met with North Korean–style condemnation. A combative attitude has seeped into every part of China’s foreign policy, and it is confronting many countries with their gravest threat in generations.

This threat is most apparent in maritime East Asia, where China is moving aggressively to cement its vast territorial claims. Beijing is churning out warships faster than any country has since World War II, and it has flooded Asian sea-lanes with Chinese coast guard and fishing vessels. It has strung military outposts across the South China Sea and dramatically increased its use of ship ramming and aerial interceptions to shove neighbors out of disputed areas. In the Taiwan Strait, Chinese military patrols, some involving a dozen warships and more than 50 combat aircraft, prowl the sea almost daily and simulate attacks on Taiwanese and U.S. targets. Chinese officials have told Western analysts that calls for an invasion of Taiwan are proliferating within the CCP. Pentagon officials worry that such an assault could be imminent.

China has gone on the economic offensive, too. Its latest five-year plan calls for dominating what Chinese officials call “chokepoints”—goods and services that other countries can’t live without—and then using that dominance, plus the lure of China’s domestic market, to browbeat countries into concessions. Toward that end, China has become the dominant dispenser of overseas loans, loading up more than 150 countries with over $1 trillion of debt. It has massively subsidized strategic industries to gain a monopoly on hundreds of vital products, and it has installed the hardware for digital networks in dozens of countries. Armed with economic leverage, it has used coercion against more than a dozen countries over the last few years. In many cases, the punishment has been disproportionate to the supposed crime—for example, slapping tariffs on many of Australia’s exports after that country requested an international investigation into the origins of COVID-19.

China has also become a potent antidemocratic force, selling advanced tools of tyranny around the world. By combining surveillance cameras with social media monitoring, artificial intelligence, biometrics, and speech and facial recognition technologies, the Chinese government has pioneered a system that allows dictators to watch citizens constantly and punish them instantly by blocking their access to finance, education, employment, telecommunications, or travel. The apparatus is a despot’s dream, and Chinese companies are already selling and operating aspects of it in more than 80 countries.

#### Western encirclement, aging populations, and attempted expansion prove China is a volatile revisionist power on the verge of lash-out

Beckley and Brands 21– *\*Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University; \*\*resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies*. (\*Michael and \*\*Hal, January 1, 2021, “Into the Danger Zone - Coming Crisis in US-China Relations," American Enterprise Institute, Targeted News Service, ProQuest via UMich Libraries, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27632?seq=1)//KH

Red Flags

Most debate on America's China policy focuses on the dangers of a rising and confident China.3 But the United States actually faces a more complex and volatile threat: an already powerful but increasingly insecure China beset by internal problems and a brewing international backlash.

China already has the money and muscle to challenge the United States in key areas. Thanks to decades of rapid growth, China boasts the world's largest economy (measured by purchasing power parity), manufacturing output, trade surplus, financial reserves, navy by number of ships, and conventional missile force. Chinese nationals lead four of the 15 United Nations specialized agencies.4 Chinese investments and loans span the globe, and Beijing is pushing for primacy in key technologies such as 5G telecommunications and artificial intelligence (AI).5 Add in that the American-led world order has experienced four years of geopolitical disarray under President Donald Trump and that much of the world has suffered through many months of a crippling COVID-19 pandemic, and it is hardly surprising that Beijing is testing the status quo everywhere from the South China Sea to the border with China.

But China's geopolitical window of opportunity may be closing as fast as it opened. Since 2007, China's annual economic growth rate has dropped by more than half, and productivity has declined by nearly 10 percent, meaning that China is spending more to produce less.6 Meanwhile, debt has ballooned eightfold and is on pace to total 335 percent of gross domestic product by the end of 2020.7 No country has racked up so much debt so fast in peacetime.

China has little hope of reversing these trends, because it is about to suffer the worst aging crisis in history. Over the next 30 years, China will lose 200 million working-age adults and gain 300 million senior citizens./8 Any country that has aged, accu-mulated debt, or lost productivity at anything close to China's current pace has lost at least one decade to near-zero economic growth. And as economic growth falls, the dangers of social and political unrest rise./9 China's leaders are well aware of these trends./10 President Xi Jinping has given multiple internal speeches warning party members of the potential for a Soviet-style collapse./11 China's gov-ernment has outlawed negative economic news, and Chinese elites are moving their money and children out of the country en masse./12

Meanwhile, China faces a rising wave of foreign hostility. According to leaked Chinese government reports and independent Western analyses, nega-tive views of China have soared to highs not seen since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989./13 This surge of anti-China sentiment is a response to Beijing's internal repression and external assertiveness, and it is now manifesting in ways that threaten to crush China's geopolitical ambitions. Nearly a dozen countries have suspended or canceled their participation in Belt and Road Initiative projects./14 Another 16 countries, including eight of the world's 10 largest economies, have banned or severely restricted use of Huawei products in their 5G networks./15 India has been turning hard against China, since a clash between the two countries killed 20 soldiers in June. Japan has ramped up military spending, turned amphibious ships into aircraft carriers, and strung missile launchers along the Ryukyu Islands near Taiwan, where a record number of citizens now identify solely as Taiwanese, not Chinese./16 The European Union has labeled China a "systemic rival," and Europe's three great powers--France, Germany, and the United Kingdom--are sending naval patrols to counter Beijing's expansion in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean./17

These intensifying headwinds will make China a less competitive long-term rival to the United States but a more explosive **near-term threat**. Simply put, it is hard to see how a country facing so many severe challenges can ultimately outpace America and its many allies. Yet whereas a rising China could afford to shelve disputes and deescalate crises--confident that its wealth, power, and status were growing and that the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) legitimacy was secure--a slowing and increasingly encircled China will be eager to score geopolitical wins while it still can. There is no mystery about what China's ambitions are, because the CCP has enshrined them in national law: to make the Chinese nation whole again; reunite Taiwan with the mainland; control the East and South China Seas, thereby turning the western Pacific into a Chinese lake; and restore China's status as a great power. The looming danger is that China will act more aggressively to achieve them as its future prospects dim.

History Rhymes

If China goes down this ugly path, it wouldn't be the first great power to do so. We tend to think that rising revisionists pose the greatest danger to the existing order. "It was the rise of Athens and the **fear that this inspired in Sparta** that made war inevitable," Thucydides wrote. But historically, the most desperate dashes have often come from dissatisfied powers that had been on the ascent but grew worried that their time was running short./18

World War I is the classic example. The growing German challenge to the United Kingdom provided the strategic background to that conflict. Yet in the foreground in the run-up to 1914 were nagging German fears of decline. The growth of Russian military power and strategic mobility was menacing the eastern flank. New French conscription laws were changing the balance in the west. A tightening Franco-Russian-British entente was leaving Germany surrounded. If Berlin did not act quickly, its military strategy--based on fighting a two-front war--would collapse, its dreams of world power and geopolitical greatness would vanish, and the internal strains caused by intensifying political clashes might become unmanageable. This was a principal reason Berlin acted so recklessly during the July crisis--by issuing its "blank check" to Austria-Hungary and then enacting its plan for a rapid, two-front war--despite the obvious peril, as Chief of General Staff Helmut von Moltke acknowledged, of a continental war that might "annihilate the civilization of almost the whole of Europe for decades to come."/19

The same decision-making dynamics were present in other cases. Imperial Japan made its fatal gamble in 1941, after the US oil embargo and naval rearma-ment made it clear that Tokyo's window to dominate the Asia-Pacific was closing fast./20 In the 1970s, Soviet global expansion peaked as Moscow's military buildup matured and the slowing of the Soviet economy created an impetus to lock in geopolitical gains sooner than later. Even the United States once fit this pattern. The flurry of American expansion and the buildup of US naval power in the 1890s came after an economic slump that exacerbated internal tensions and amid a global upsurge of imperial aggran-dizement that left some US strategists concerned that Washington would be left behind by emerging European mega-empires.

In some of these instances, it was economic dis-tress following a long period of growth that stoked anxious aggression. In others, it was the onset of strategic encirclement, often self-provoked, by rival powers. In all cases, an upsurge in a revisionist state's power gave it the means to challenge the status quo, but an apparent downturn in its future prospects gave it the motive to do so boldly, even violently. Given that China is currently facing both a grim economic forecast and tightening strategic encirclement, the next few years may prove partic-ularly turbulent./21

#### China is rising – domestic and international infrastructure and agricultural exports outpace any other nation

McCoy 22 – *Alfred McCoy is the J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison* (Alfred, 2-25-2022, "Will the Fight for Hegemony Survive Climate Change?," Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/environment/climate-china-usa-beijing/)//KH

THE RISE OF CHINESE GLOBAL HEGEMONY

China’s rise to world power could be considered not just the result of its own initiative but also of American inattention. While Washington was mired in endless wars in the Greater Middle East in the decade following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, Beijing began using a trillion dollars of its swelling dollar reserves to build a tricontinental economic infrastructure it called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that would shake the foundations of Washington’s world order. Not only has this scheme already gone a long way toward incorporating much of Africa and Asia into Beijing’s version of the world economy, but it has simultaneously lifted many millions out of poverty.

During the early years of the Cold War, Washington funded the reconstruction of a ravaged Europe and the development of 100 new nations emerging from colonial rule. But as the Cold War ended in 1991, more than a third of humanity was still living in extreme poverty, abandoned by Washington’s then-reigning neoliberal ideology that consigned social change to the whims of the free market. By 2018, nearly half the world’s population, or about 3.4 billion people, were simply struggling to survive on the equivalent of five dollars a day, creating a vast global constituency for Beijing’s economic leadership.

For China, social change began at home. Starting in the 1980s, the Communist Party presided over the transformation of an impoverished agricultural society into an urban industrial powerhouse. Propelled by the greatest mass migration in history, as millions moved from country to city, its economy grew nearly 10 percent annually for 40 years and lifted 800 million people out of poverty—the fastest sustained rate ever recorded by any country. Meanwhile, between 2006 and 2016 alone, its industrial output increased from $1.2 trillion to $3.2 trillion, leaving the United States in the dust at $2.2 trillion and making China the workshop of the world.

By the time Washington awoke to China’s challenge and tried to respond with what President Barack Obama called a “strategic pivot” to Asia, it was too late. With foreign reserves already at $4 trillion in 2014, Beijing launched its Belt and Road Initiative, while establishing an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, with 56 member nations and an impressive $100 billion in capital. When a Belt and Road Forum of 29 world leaders convened in Beijing in May 2017, President Xi Jinping hailed the initiative as the “project of the century,” aimed both at promoting growth and improving “people’s well-being” through “poverty alleviation.” Indeed, two years later a World Bank study found that BRI transportation projects had already increased the gross domestic product in 55 recipient nations by a solid 3.4 percent.

Amid this flurry of flying dirt and flowing concrete, Beijing seems to have an underlying design for transcending the vast distances that have historically separated Asia from Europe. Its goal: to forge a unitary market that will soon cover the vast Eurasian land mass. This scheme will consolidate China’s control over a continent that is home to 70 percent of the world’s population and productivity. In the end, it could also break the US geopolitical grip over a region that has long been the core of, and key to, its global power. The foundation for such an ambitious transnational scheme is a monumental construction effort that in just two decades has already covered China and much of Central Asia with a massive triad of energy pipelines, high-speed rail lines, and highways.

To break that down, start with this: Beijing is building a transcontinental network of natural gas and oil pipelines that will, in alliance with Russia, extend for 6,000 miles from the North Atlantic Ocean to the South China Sea.

For the second arm in that triad, Beijing has built the world’s largest high-speed rail system, with more than 15,000 miles already operational in 2018 and plans for a network of nearly 24,000 miles by 2025. All this, in turn, is just a partial step toward what’s expected to be a full-scale transcontinental rail system that started with the “Eurasian Land Bridge” track running from China through Kazakhstan to Europe. In addition to its transcontinental trunk lines, Beijing plans branch-lines heading due south toward Singapore, southwest through Pakistan, and then from Pakistan through Iran to Turkey.

To complete its transport triad, China has also constructed an impressive set of highways, representing (like those pipelines) a problematic continuation of Washington’s current petrol-powered world order. In 1990, that country lacked a single expressway. By 2017, it had built 87,000 miles of highways, nearly double the size of the US interstate system. Even that breathtaking number can’t begin to capture the extraordinary engineering feats necessary—the tunneling through steep mountains, the spanning of wide rivers, the crossing of deep gorges on towering pillars, and the spinning of concrete webs around massive cities.

### Transition wars

#### Transition wars are likely – escalation in the SCS and empirics prove

Ferguson 21 – *senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and managing director of Greenmantle, a political-economic advisory firm* (Niall Ferguson, 8-20-21, "Niall Ferguson on why the end of America’s empire won’t be peaceful," Economist, https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2021/08/20/niall-ferguson-on-why-the-end-of-americas-empire-wont-be-peaceful)//KH

The end of empires

America’s empire may not manifest itself as dominions, colonies and protectorates, but the perception of international dominance, and the costs associated with overstretch, are similar. Both left and right in America now routinely ridicule or revile the idea of an imperial project. “The American Empire is falling apart,” gloats Tom Engelhardt, a journalist in The Nation. On the right, the economist Tyler Cowen sardonically imagines “what the fall of the American empire could look like.” At the same time as Cornel West, the progressive African-American philosopher, sees “Black Lives Matter and the fight against US empire [as] one and the same”, two pro-Trump Republicans, Ryan James Girdusky and Harlan Hill, call the pandemic “the latest example of how the American empire has no clothes.”

The right still defends the traditional account of the republic’s founding—as a rejection of British colonial rule—against the "woke” left’s attempts to recast American history as primarily a tale of slavery and then segregation. But few on either side of the political spectrum pine for the era of global hegemony that began in the 1940s.

In short, like Britons in the 1930s, Americans in the 2020s have fallen out of love with empire—a fact that Chinese observers have noticed and relish. Yet the empire remains. Granted, America has few true colonies: Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands in the Caribbean, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands in the north Pacific, and American Samoa in the south Pacific. By British standards, it is a paltry list of possessions. Nevertheless, the American military presence is almost as ubiquitous as Britain’s once was. American armed-forces personnel are to be found in more than 150 countries. The total number deployed beyond the borders of the 50 states is around 200,000.

The acquisition of such extensive global responsibilities was not easy. But it is a delusion to believe that shedding them will be easier. This is the lesson of British history to which Americans need to pay more heed. President Joe Biden’s ill-advised decision for a “final withdrawal” from Afghanistan was just the latest signal by an American president that the country wants to reduce its overseas commitments. Barack Obama began the process by exiting Iraq too hastily and announcing in 2013 that “America is not the world's policeman.” Donald Trump’s “America First” doctrine was just a populist version of the same impulse: he too itched to get out of Afghanistan and to substitute tariffs for counterinsurgency.

The problem, as this month’s debacle in Afghanistan perfectly illustrates, is that the retreat from global dominance is rarely a peaceful process. However you phrase it, announcing you are giving up on your longest war is an admission of defeat, and not only in the eyes of the Taliban. China, which shares a short stretch of its vast land border with Afghanistan, is also closely watching. So is Russia, with zloradstvo—Russian for Schadenfreude. It was no mere coincidence that Russia intervened militarily in both Ukraine and Syria just months after Obama’s renunciation of global policing.

Mr Biden’s belief (expressed to Richard Holbrooke in 2010) that one could exit Afghanistan as Richard Nixon exited Vietnam and “get away with it” is bad history: America’s humiliation in Indochina did have consequences. It emboldened the Soviet Union and its allies to make trouble elsewhere—in southern and eastern Africa, in Central America and in Afghanistan, which it invaded in 1979. Reenacting the fall of Saigon in Kabul will have comparable adverse effects.

The end of American empire was not difficult to foresee, even at the height of neoconservative hubris following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. There were at least four fundamental weaknesses of America’s global position at that time, as I first argued in “Colossus: The Rise and Fall of America’s Empire” (Penguin, 2004). They are a manpower deficit (few Americans have any desire to spend long periods of time in places like Afghanistan and Iraq); a fiscal deficit (see above); an attention deficit (the electorate’s tendency to lose interest in any large-scale intervention after roughly four years); and a history deficit (the reluctance of policymakers to learn lessons from their predecessors, much less from other countries).

These were never deficits of British imperialism. One other difference—in many ways more profound than the fiscal deficit—is the negative net international investment position (NIIP) of the United States, which is just under -70% of GDP. A negative NIIP essentially means that foreign ownership of American assets exceeds American ownership of foreign assets. By contrast, Britain still had a hugely positive NIIP between the wars, despite the amounts of overseas assets that had been liquidated to finance the first world war. From 1922 until 1936 it was consistently above 100% of GDP. By 1947 it was down to 3%.

Selling off the remaining imperial silver (to be precise, obliging British investors to sell overseas assets and hand over the dollars) was one of the ways Britain paid for the second world war. America, the great debtor empire, does not have an equivalent nest-egg. It can afford to pay the cost of maintaining its dominant position in the world only by selling yet more of its public debt to foreigners. That is a precarious basis for superpower status.

Facing new storms

Churchill’s argument in “The Gathering Storm” was not that the rise of Germany, Italy and Japan was an unstoppable process, condemning Britain to decline. On the contrary, he insisted that war could have been avoided if the Western democracies had taken more decisive action earlier in the 1930s. When President Franklin Roosevelt asked him what the war should be called, Churchill “at once” replied: “The Unnecessary War.”

In the same way, there is nothing inexorable about China’s rise, much less Russia’s, while all the lesser countries aligned with them are economic basket cases, from North Korea to Venezuela. China’s population is ageing even faster than anticipated; its workforce is shrinking. Sky-high private-sector debt is weighing on growth. Its mishandling of the initial outbreak of covid-19 has greatly harmed its international standing. It also risks becoming the villain of the climate crisis, as it cannot easily kick the habit of burning coal to power its industry.

And yet it is all too easy to see a sequence of events unfolding that could lead to another unnecessary war, most probably over Taiwan, which Mr Xi covets and which America is (ambiguously) committed to defend against invasion—a commitment that increasingly lacks credibility as the balance of military power shifts in East Asia. (The growing vulnerability of American aircraft carriers to Chinese anti-ship ballistic missiles such as the DF-21D is just one problem to which the Pentagon lacks a good solution.)

If American deterrence fails and China gambles on a coup de main, the United States will face the grim choice between fighting a long, hard war—as Britain did in 1914 and 1939—or folding, as happened over Suez in 1956.

Churchill said that he wrote “The Gathering Storm” to show:

how the malice of the wicked was reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous; how the structure and habits of democratic States, unless they are welded into larger organisms, lack those elements of persistence and conviction which can alone give security to humble masses; how, even in matters of self-preservation … the counsels of prudence and restraint may become the prime agents of mortal danger … [how] the middle course adopted from desires for safety and a quiet life may be found to lead direct to the bull’s-eye of disaster.

He concluded the volume with one of his many pithy maxims: “Facts are better than dreams.” American leaders in recent years have become over-fond of dreams, from the “full spectrum dominance” fantasy of the neoconservatives under George W. Bush to the dark nightmare of American “carnage” conjured up by Donald Trump. As another global storm gathers, it may be time to face the fact that Churchill understood only too well: the end of empire is seldom, if ever, a painless process.

### AT: Multipolarity

#### Unipolarity is inevitable and multipolarity collapses into anarchy with a US-China rivalry

Beckley 22 – *Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, associate professor at Tufts University* (Michael, March/April 2022, "Enemies of My Enemy," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2021-02-14/china-new-world-order-enemies-my-enemy)//KH

THE CLASH OF SYSTEMS

The history of international order building is one of savage competition between clashing systems, not of harmonious cooperation. In the best of times, that competition took the form of a cold war, with each side jockeying for advantage and probing each other with every measure short of military force. In many cases, however, the competition eventually boiled over into a shooting war and ended with one side crushing the other. The victorious order then ruled until it was destroyed by a new competitor—or until it simply crumbled without an external threat to hold it together.

Today, a growing number of policymakers and pundits are calling for a new concert of powers to sort out the world’s problems and divide the globe into spheres of influence. But the idea of an inclusive order in which no one power’s vision prevails is a fantasy that can exist only in the imaginations of world-government idealists and academic theorists. There are only two orders under construction right now—a Chinese-led one and a U.S.-led one—and the contest between the two is rapidly becoming a clash between autocracy and democracy, as both countries define themselves against each other and try to infuse their respective coalitions with ideological purpose. China is positioning itself as the world’s defender of hierarchy and tradition against a decadent and disorderly West; the United States is belatedly summoning a new alliance to check Chinese power and make the world safe for democracy.

Disparate actors are starting to join forces to roll back Beijing’s power. In the process, they are reordering the world.

This clash of systems will define the twenty-first century and divide the world. China will view the emerging democratic order as a containment strategy designed to strangle its economy and topple its regime. In response, it will seek to protect itself by asserting greater military control over its vital sea-lanes, carving out exclusive economic zones for its firms, and propping up autocratic allies as it sows chaos in democracies. The upsurge of Chinese repression and aggression, in turn, will further impel the United States and its allies to shun Beijing and build a democratic order. For a tiny glimpse of what this vicious cycle might look like, consider what happened in March 2021, when Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the EU sanctioned four Chinese officials for human rights abuses in Xinjiang. The sanctions amounted to a slap on the wrist, but Beijing interpreted them as an assault on its sovereignty and unleashed a diplomatic tirade and a slew of economic sanctions. The EU returned fire by freezing its proposed EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment.

In the coming years, the trade and technology wars between China and the United States that began during the Trump administration will rage on as both sides try to expand their respective spheres. Other countries will find it increasingly difficult to hedge their bets by maintaining links to both blocs. Instead, China and the United States will push their partners to pick sides, compelling them to reroute their supply chains and adopt wholesale the ecosystem of technologies and standards of one side’s order. The Internet will be split in two. When people journey from one order to the other—if they can even get a visa—they will enter a different digital realm. Their phones won’t work, nor will their favorite websites, their email accounts, or their precious social media apps. Political warfare between the two systems will intensify, as each tries to undermine the domestic legitimacy and international appeal of its competitor. East Asian sea-lanes will grow clogged with warships, and rival forces will experience frequent close encounters.

The clash of systems between China and the United States will define the twenty-first century and divide the world.

The standoff will end only when one side defeats or exhausts the other. As of now, the smart money is on the U.S. side, which has far more wealth and military assets than China does and better prospects for future growth. By the early 2030s, Xi, an obese smoker with a stressful job, will be in his 80s, if he is still alive. China’s demographic crisis will be kicking into high gear, with the country projected to lose roughly 70 million working-age adults and gain 130 million senior citizens between now and then. Hundreds of billions of dollars in overseas Chinese loans will be due, and many of China’s foreign partners won’t be able to pay them back. It is hard to see how a country facing so many challenges could long sustain its own international order, especially in the face of determined opposition from the world’s wealthiest countries.

#### Chinese hegemony is temporary – environmental costs zero its economic and military growth by 2050 even in the world of renewables

McCoy 22 – *Alfred McCoy is the J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison* (Alfred, 2-25-2022, "Will the Fight for Hegemony Survive Climate Change?," Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/environment/climate-china-usa-beijing/)//KH

Simultaneously, China was also becoming the world’s largest auto manufacturer as the number of vehicles on its roads soared to 340 million in 2019, exceeding America’s 276 million. However, all of this impressive news is depressing news as well. After all, by clinging to coal production on a major scale, while reaching for a bigger slice of the world’s oil imports for its transportation triad, China’s greenhouse-gas emissions doubled from just 14 percent of the world’s total in 2000 to 30 percent in 2019, far surpassing that of the United States, previously the planet’s leading emitter. With only 150 vehicles per thousand people, compared to 850 in America, its auto industry still has ample growth potential—good news for its economy, but terrible news for the global climate (even if China remains in the forefront of the development and use of electric cars).

To power such headlong development, China has, in fact, raised its domestic coal production more than a thousand-fold, from just 32 million metric tons in 1949 to a mind-boggling record of 4.1 billion tons by 2021. **Even if you take into account** those massive **natural-gas pipelines** it is building, its enormous **hydropower dams,** and its **world leadership in wind power**, as of 2020 China **still depended on coal** for a startling 57 percent of its total energy use, even as its share of total global coal-fired power climbed relentlessly to a record 53 percent. In other words, nothing, it seems, can break that country’s leadership of its insatiable hunger for the dirtiest of all fossil fuels.

On the global stage, Beijing has been similarly obsessed with economic growth above all else. Despite its promises to curb greenhouse-gas emissions at recent UN climate conferences, China is still promoting coal-fired power at home and abroad. In 2020, the Institute of International Finance reported that **85 percent** of all projects under Beijing’s BRI entailed high greenhouse-gas emissions, particularly the 63 coal-fired electrical plants the project was financing worldwide.

When the 2019 UN climate conference opened, China itself was actively constructing new coal-fueled electrical plants with a combined capacity of 121 gigawatts—substantially more than the 105 gigawatts being built by the rest of the world combined. By 2019, China was the largest single source of pollution on the planet, accounting for nearly one-third of the world’s total greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, UN Secretary General António Guterres was warning that such emissions were “putting billions of people at immediate risk.” With an impassioned urgency, he demanded “a death knell for coal and fossil fuels before they destroy our planet” by banning all new coal-fired power plants and phasing them out of developed nations by 2030.

Together, the planet’s two great imperial powers, China and the United States, accounted for 44 percent of total CO2 emissions in 2019 and so far both have made painfully slow progress toward renewable energy. In a joint declaration at the November 2021 Glasgow climate conference, the United States agreed “to reach 100% carbon-pollution-free electricity by 2035,” while China promised to “phase down” (but note, not “phase out”) coal starting with its “15th Five-Year Plan.”

The US commitment soon died a quiet death in Congress, where President Biden’s own party killed his green-energy initiative. Amid all the applause at Glasgow, nobody paid much attention to the fact that China’s next five-year plan doesn’t even start until 2026, just as President Xi Jinping’s promise of carbon neutrality by 2060 is a perfect formula for not averting the climate disaster that awaits us all.

In its hell-bent drive for development, in other words, China is digging its own grave (and ours as well).

CLIMATE CATASTROPHE CIRCA 2050

Even if China were to become the preeminent world power around 2030, the accelerating pace of climate change will likely curtail its hegemony within decades. As global warming batters the country by mid-century, Beijing will be forced to retreat from its projection of global power to address urgent domestic concerns.

In 2017, scientists at the nonprofit group Climate Central calculated, for instance, that rising seas and storm surges could, by 2060 or 2070, flood areas inhabited by 275 million people worldwide, with Shanghai deemed “the most vulnerable major city in the world to serious flooding.” In that sprawling metropolis, 17.5 million people are likely to be displaced as most of the city “could eventually be submerged in water, including much of the downtown area.”

Advancing the date of this disaster by at least a decade, a 2019 report on rising sea levels in Nature Communications found that 150 million people worldwide are now living on land that will be submerged by 2050 and Shanghai was, once again, found to be facing serious risk. There, rising waters “threaten to consume the heart” of the metropolis and its surrounding cities, crippling one of China’s main economic engines. Dredged from sea and swamp since the fifteenth century, much of that city is likely to return to the waters from whence it came in the next three decades.

Simultaneously, soaring temperatures are expected to devastate the North China Plain between Beijing and Shanghai, one of that country’s prime agricultural regions currently inhabited by 400 million people, nearly a third of that country’s population. It could, in fact, potentially become one of the most lethal places on the planet.

“This spot is going to be the hottest spot for deadly heat waves in the future,” said Elfatih Eltahir, a climate specialist at MIT who published his findings in the journal Nature Communications. Between 2070 and 2100, he estimates, the region could face hundreds of periods of “extreme danger” and perhaps five lethal periods of 35° Wet Bulb Temperature (where a combination of heat and high humidity prevents the evaporation of the sweat that cools the human body). After just six hours under such conditions, a healthy person at rest will die.

Rather than sudden and catastrophic, the impact of climate change in North China is likely to be incremental and cumulative, escalating relentlessly with each passing decade. If the “Chinese century” does indeed start around 2030, it’s unlikely to last long once its main financial center at Shanghai is flooded out and its agricultural heartland is baking in insufferable heat.

#### China is irredeemably hostile – multipolarity fails even if it’s the most beneficial action

Zelikow 22 - *Professor of History at the University of Virginia. A former U.S. diplomat and Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, he has worked for five presidential administrations* (Philip, July/August 2022, "The Hollow Order," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2022-06-21/hollow-order-international-system)//KH

IN IT TOGETHER

It may be easy, and perhaps natural, for the would-be architects of the new system to organize it around Washington. But that would be a mistake. The enemies of this new order, united by their resentment of the United States, will seek to discredit it as just another effort to dominate global affairs. For this new order to be viable, it must be conceived in such a way that the charge is false.

The new order must also be decentralized to be effective; the resources and wisdom needed to solve many vexing problems are not concentrated in the United States. For instance, on the enormous issue of defining rules for a digitized world, Washington has been confused and passive, despite—or perhaps because of—its dominance in such commerce. It is the European Union that has led the way. The EU’s General Data Protection Regulation, its Digital Services Act, and its Digital Markets Act created the standards that influence most of the world, including the Americas. Decentralized leadership has also proved critical to responding to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. The nucleus of the emerging pro-Ukraine coalition, for instance, is not just the United States but the entire G-7, including the European Commission. South Korea and Australia should be invited to join this coalition as well.

Yet a revised system of world order shouldn’t be limited to the United States and its traditional allies. It must be open to any countries that can and will help attain its common objectives. India should have a place at any symbolic high table, for example, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. But India’s leaders are still making their choices about their will and capacity to work on common problems. Even China should be welcome at the table. After much internal debate in the early 1990s, China’s leaders chose to play a major and often constructive role in the global commonwealth system that emerged after the end of the Cold War. In 2005, Zoellick famously urged Beijing to become a “responsible stakeholder.” As late as 2017, Kurt Campbell, who now leads Asia policy for the Biden White House, thought this invitation was a wise move.

But Zoellick’s words were a challenge, one that Beijing is failing to meet. China’s partnership with Putin—whom Xi described to the Russian press as “my best and bosom friend”—is the opposite of responsible. Instead, it shows that China and Russia lead a primarily Eurasian grouping of dangerous states, including the likes of Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan. Their loose confederation has its cross-purposes and is united mainly by hostility toward the United States. But it is building tighter links, better divisions of labor, and more effective coordination than existed among the Axis powers before or during World War II.

For these and other reasons, pessimists believe China is irredeemably hostile. They argue that China has written off the United States as a country determined to resist China’s rise and that Chinese leaders may feel they have little to lose by embracing confrontation. In this pessimistic view, China is trying to shift from the post–Cold War era’s emphasis on global interdependence toward a Chinese grand strategy of Eurasian dominance and growing national self-sufficiency. China’s leaders are now using the pandemic to keep a chokehold on international travel and strengthen domestic surveillance.

That does seem to be China’s current plan. But it is unclear whether this plan will work. It rests on unproven social, political, and economic premises that are starting to deeply disturb parts of Chinese society essential to its past and future success—such as the many residents of Shanghai who have been trapped during the city’s draconian recent lockdown.

The resources and wisdom needed to solve many global problems are not concentrated in the United States.

Chinese leaders may also have noticed that, in backing the Putin regime, they have tethered themselves to an adventurist Russian government that, for 30 years, has treated its neighbors much as Japan treated China between 1915 and 1945. For instance, Putin insists that Russia is not invading Ukraine. There is no war, he declared; there is only a “special military operation.” Many Chinese people will recall that, from 1937 to 1941, Japan insisted that it, too, was not invading China. There was no war, the Japanese said; there was merely a “China incident.”

Throughout the years of Japanese aggression, the United States defended China’s territorial integrity. Even amid times of misjudgment and weakness, Washington maintained that stance, refusing in November 1941 to make a deal with Japan at China’s expense. Ten days later, Japan went to war against the United States. As they watch what is happening in 2022, Chinese leaders can still reflect on this past and consider what decisions to make.

If Beijing charts a new course, it would not be the first time it has chosen to change. But if China does rejoin a system of world order, it should be a new one. The old system has fractured and must be remade. Facing tragic realities, the citizens of the free world must rebuild a global order that is practical enough to address the most vital common problems, even if it cannot and does not promise progress on all the values and concerns people face. This system will be far more effective if the world’s most populous country joins it, and China faces another time of choosing. Regardless of China’s participation, responsible actors must begin the hard, substantive work of protecting the planet from war, climate, economic, and health risks. The time for rhetoric and posturing is over.

## Hegemony is bad!

### UN Adv CP

The card says this would kind of fiat multipolarity. I think this loses to the perm! I just wrote it because the evidence advocates for it.

#### CP text: The United Nations should

#### --- establish sovereign authority over emission controls, refugee resettlement, and environmental reconstruction;

#### --- authorize a high commissioner to supercede national sovereignty in requiring temperate countries to deal with climate refugees;

#### --- transfer sufficient funds to communities adversely effected by climate change;

#### --- establish a democratized security council over climate change

Or

#### CP text: The United States federal government should enter into an agreement with every member-state of the United Nations to

#### --- establish United Nations sovereign authority over emission controls, refugee resettlement, and environmental reconstruction;

#### --- authorize a high commissioner to supersede national sovereignty in requiring temperate countries to deal with climate refugees;

#### --- transfer sufficient funds to communities adversely effected by climate change.

#### Solves – climate governance is the sole route to a liberal multipolar order

McCoy 22 – *Alfred McCoy is the J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison* (Alfred, 2-25-2022, "Will the Fight for Hegemony Survive Climate Change?," Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/environment/climate-china-usa-beijing/)//KH

A DEMOCRATIC WORLD ORDER

After 2050, the international community will face a growing contradiction, even a head-on collision, between the two foundational principles of the current world order: national sovereignty and human rights. As long as nations have the sovereign right to seal their borders, the world will have no way of protecting the human rights of the 200 million to 1.2 billion climate-change refugees expected to be created by 2050, both within their own borders and beyond. Faced with such extreme disorder, it is just possible that the nations of this planet might agree to cede some small portion of their sovereignty to a global government set up to cope with the climate crisis.

To meet the extraordinary mid-century challenges to come, a supranational body like the UN would need sovereign authority over at least three significant priorities—emission controls, refugee resettlement, and environmental reconstruction. First, a reformed UN would need the power to compel nations to end their emissions if the transition to renewable energy is still not complete by, at the latest, 2050. Second, an empowered UN high commissioner for refugees would have to be authorized to supersede national sovereignty by requiring temperate northern countries to deal with the tidal flows of humanity from the tropical and subtropical regions most impacted and made least inhabitable by climate change. Finally, the voluntary transfer of funds like the $100 billion promised poor nations at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference would have to become mandatory to keep afflicted communities, and especially the world’s poor, relatively safe.

In the crisis to come, such initiatives would by their very nature change the idea of what constitutes a world order from the amorphous imperial ethos of the past five centuries to a new form of global governance. To exercise effective sovereignty over the global commons, the UN would have to enact some long overdue reforms, notably by creating an elective Security Council without either permanent members or the present great-power prerogative of unilaterally vetoing measures. Instead of superpower strength serving as the ultimate guarantor for UN decisions, a democratized Security Council could reach climate decisions by majority vote and enforce them through the moral authority, as well as the self-interest, of a more representative international body.

If a UN of this sort were indeed in existence by at least 2050, such a framework of democratic world governance could well be complemented by a globally decentralized system of energy. For five centuries now, energy and imperial hegemony have been deeply intertwined. In the transition to alternative energy, however, households will, sooner or later, be able to control their own solar power everywhere the sun shines, while communities will be able to supplement that variable source with a mix of wind turbines, biomass, hydro, and mini-reactors.

Just as the demands of petroleum production shaped the steep hierarchy of Washington’s world order, so decentralized access to energy could foster a more inclusive global governance. After five centuries of Iberian, British, American, and Chinese hegemony, it’s at least possible that humanity, even under the increasingly stressful conditions of climate change, could finally experience a more democratic world order.

### Sustainability

#### Japan and Germany indicate a US hegemonic decline in Europe and East Asia

Leonard 22 – *Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations* (Mark, 6-13-2022, "The Real End of Pax Americana," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/japan/2022-06-13/real-end-pax-americana)//KH

“NORMAL POWERS”?

Over the years, Germany and Japan have had several national debates about becoming “normal powers” and have gradually moved in that direction. Both countries are now more active militarily than they have been in decades, but they still punch way under their economic weight. The **war in Ukraine could change that**, however.

For the first time in the postwar era, both Germany and Japan face unavoidable threats. After Germany was reunified in 1990, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was fond of saying that the country was “surrounded only by friends and partners.” Now, there seems to be societal consensus in Germany that this has changed: even before Moscow launched its invasion, more than half of German respondents to a January 2022 poll claimed that Russia’s stance on Ukraine posed a large military threat to their country. And many Japanese fear that a war over Taiwan could be next. Polls shows that a large majority of the Japanese public is concerned that Russia’s war in Ukraine will impact how China deals with its territorial disputes. And as Narushige Michishita, vice president of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo, told me, “If there is a war in the Taiwan Strait, Japan would almost automatically be involved as Japan accommodates U.S. bases and China would attack them.”

Also auguring for a more muscular security stance is generational change: German and Japanese guilt is dying out along with the last surviving perpetrators and victims of World War II. As the historian Andreas Wirsching has argued, the war in Ukraine is accelerating Germany’s break with its Nazi past (in ways he finds troubling). Having taken a stand against Moscow, Berlin is finally “on the right side of history.” And with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin, there is another villain on the European continent accused of genocide and pursuing a war of extermination. Meanwhile, in Japan, fear of China’s rising power is eclipsing the memory of the country’s past crimes, both among the Japanese public and in many Asian capitals.

Finally, Germany and Japan may no longer feel they can rely on the United States for their security. According to one recent poll, 56 percent of German respondents believe that in ten years, China will be a stronger power than the United States. Fifty-three percent said that Americans cannot be trusted after electing Donald Trump president in 2016, and 60 percent said Germany cannot always count on the United States to defend it and so must invest in European defense. These fears are shared among even the most Atlanticist segments of the elite. As Wolfgang Ischinger, a former German ambassador to the United States, told me, “Germans are fortunate to have Biden in the White House, but Germany needs to have a plan B in case there are big changes to American politics.” He believes Germany should explore the possibility of a nuclear guarantee from France, something that would have been unthinkable even a few months ago.

Doubts about American power and reliability are less openly articulated in Japan. According to an April poll, however, nearly two-thirds of Japanese support strengthening Japan’s defense capabilities, and a majority agree with the LDP proposal of spending two percent of GDP on defense. Ken Jimbo, a security specialist at Keio University, explained that after the tumult of the Trump years, many Japanese strategists think the country needs to invest more in its own defense and “diversify beyond the United States.” They watched with concern as Washington declined to intervene directly in Ukraine after highlighting the difference between a NATO and a non-NATO ally and warning of the dangers of confronting a nuclear Russia. “The question,” according to Jimbo, “is how much we can trust the United States to defend Taiwan in the face of Chinese nuclear threats.”

#### “Hegemony sustainable” scholars underestimate domestic influence on international standing – US divisions mean zero chance the plan revitalizes heg

Acharya 22 – *Distinguished Professor of International Relations at the School of International Service at American University* (Amitav, July/August 2022, "Hierarchies of Weakness," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2022-06-21/hierarchies-weakness-social-divisions)//KH

In the year and a half since U.S. President Joe Biden came to office, the international order has often seemed defined by a resurgence of great-power conflict. China and the United States remain locked in a robust rivalry. In the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Washington and its NATO allies have been drawn into a large-scale war in Europe that pits the liberal West against an autocratic Russia. In this volatile world, many analysts suggest, the most important kinds of power are once again military and economic: the continued ability of the United States to limit the threat of authoritarian rivals depends on the extent to which it can maintain the most advanced armed forces in the world and ensure that its economic might can outpace China’s.

Often overlooked in the commentary, however, are the ways in which military and economic power are dependent on social stability at home. Biden’s populist predecessor, Donald Trump, exploited growing divisions over class, race, gender, and religion for political purposes. He also shunned multilateral alliances, pulled out of international agreements, and cultivated cozy relations with autocrats such as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Russian President Vladimir Putin, all in the name of rejecting the values of liberal elites and the existing Western establishment in favor of a more nationalist, “America first” vision. One result is that many U.S. allies today have much less confidence in the ability of Washington to uphold the liberal international order. Although they have welcomed renewed U.S. engagement in NATO and Europe, many European governments wonder how long the approach will last if another populist president is elected in 2024.

The United States is not alone in facing deep social polarization. In many countries—in both the West and other parts of the world—political and social cleavages over class, race, gender, and religion have become increasingly pronounced. Rising income inequality has slowed growth and social mobility since the Great Recession of 2008, not only in countries such as Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States but also in Finland, Norway, and Sweden—countries known for their more equitable wealth distributions. Anti-Asian hate crimes have risen sharply in the United States and globally since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, China and India have also experienced rising income inequality, and they now rank at the bottom of the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index on women’s health and survival. And religious freedom is diminishing in both of these countries, as well as in Hungary, Indonesia, and Russia.

These tensions underscore a key point: as Western governments focus on international conflicts, strategic competition, and disruptions to the global economy, an even greater threat to world stability may come from internal social divisions that sap countries’ unity and strength. These forces are all part of what might be called “power within”—the domestic social hierarchies that determine who gets to have power and why. And just as these hierarchies can affect national prosperity and social stability, they can also enhance or constrain a country’s influence in the world. For any given country, the internal distribution of power may be as important to international relations as external geopolitical and ideological forces, since social hierarchies are often more deep-rooted, ubiquitous, insidious, and enduring. It is vital, then, to address these cleavages if the United States and its allies are to defend and revive the liberal international order.

POWER WITHIN

For decades, international relations experts have tended to downplay the role of domestic power relationships in shaping the world order. This has been true even with the growing recognition of soft power and other indirect forms of international influence: the concept of international power—whether exercised through coercion, persuasion, seduction, or cooperation—continues to be understood as fundamentally a matter of external relations between countries. Of course, political scientists have long recognized that foreign policy goals and outcomes are influenced by domestic politics. U.S. politicians often talk about getting their own house in order as a prerequisite for maintaining U.S. primacy in world affairs; Biden’s version of this has been to call for “a foreign policy for the middle class.” But whether in the United States or elsewhere, such rhetoric has rarely led to a systematic and serious effort to understand how internal social hierarchies affect international power

The neglect has two main causes. First, scholars and policymakers have tended to frame the concept of power around national security. National security has traditionally been defined as protecting a country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity against foreign military threats, an approach that tends to ignore nonmilitary and noneconomic sources of power. Second, the idea of world order is often conflated with the distribution of military and economic capabilities among countries, without taking account of the variations in social hierarchies within them.

Racial disparities at home limit political and economic power abroad.

But as recent history has shown, analysts ignore these internal forces at their peril. There is now a significant body of data on the effects of social cleavages—whether based on class, race, gender, or religion—on political and economic power. Uneven access to new technology and education, for example, along with economic deregulation and cuts in welfare benefits, has led to a growing class divide between those at the top of social hierarchies and those lower down. According to the Pew Research Center, the income gap between the top ten percent and the bottom ten percent of earners in the United States increased by 39 percent between 1980 and 2018. The pattern is being repeated in middle-income and emerging-market countries, such as China and India, with an estimated two-thirds of the global population now experiencing growing income inequality. A Credit Suisse report found that at the end of 2019, only one percent of the world’s adult population controlled over 43 percent of global personal wealth, whereas 54 percent of adults accounted for just two percent.

Race has become another source of social and political division. Although racial disparities have never been far from the surface in the United States and other Western democracies, they have received much greater scrutiny in recent years. The Black Lives Matter movement has generated worldwide attention, driving activist campaigns to remove the statues of slaveholders and colonial rulers from public places, to seek reparations for the descendants of enslaved people, and to remove the names of avowed racists from venerable institutions. But these demands have also provoked a growing backlash from the nativistic right in both the United States and Europe, where racist violence has grown and racist ideas have increasingly come into the mainstream. In the United States, laws designed to protect the economic opportunities and voting rights of minorities have been rolled back.

Although distinct from those of race, hierarchies of caste—social groupings based on work or descent—continue to shape political and economic power in many parts of the world. The Asia Dalit Rights Forum—an organization devoted to defending the rights of members of low castes—has estimated that some 260 million people worldwide, the majority of them in India and Nepal, suffer discrimination on the basis of caste identity. Under India’s Hindu nationalist government, discrimination and abuse based on caste have grown in recent years, including a rise in violence against low-caste women.

Gender disparities and religious persecution also continue to be widely prevalent. Despite progress in recent decades, the World Bank has estimated that some 2.4 billion working-age women worldwide still lack full economic rights. In 95 countries, women have no guarantee of equal pay, and 76 countries restrict women’s property rights. In the case of religion, repressive practices have not only persisted but appear to be growing. The Pew Research Center has found that between 2007 and 2017, the number of governments imposing “high” or “very high” levels of restrictions on religion increased from 40 to 52, and the number of countries experiencing high levels of “social hostilities involving religion” jumped from 39 to 56. Notably, in a number of major states, leaders increasingly invoke their country’s civilizational past in ways that encourage discrimination against minority groups and faiths. Consider India, where attacks on Muslim-owned businesses and Christian schools have dramatically increased, or Turkey, which has witnessed a steady erosion of secular values and a growing repression of religious minorities, or China, which has confined hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities in “reeducation camps.”

These social fault lines can have a direct impact on international relations. A country that can effectively manage its social hierarchies can often enhance its productivity, economic growth, and political stability, thereby increasing its influence in the world order. A country that cannot, however, may damage or undercut its international standing by eroding other countries’ confidence in its stability or its commitment to international norms of social and human rights. Moreover, an unequal or socially restrictive internal distribution of power may also affect a country’s long-term political and economic influence. It is particularly concerning, then, that domestic social disparities remain alarmingly high and in some cases appear to be increasing in many liberal democracies, including the United States.

DIMINISHING RETURNS

The distribution of power within countries matters to the international order above all because of its far-reaching economic impact. A 2014 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, for example, found that in the years leading up to the 2008 global financial crisis, rising income inequality lowered economic growth in Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States by between six and nine percentage points; for Mexico and New Zealand, the loss was an even larger ten percent. The same study also found that France, Ireland, and Spain—countries in which income inequality was kept in check—benefited from higher GDP growth.

Many countries are also held back by racial disparities. Although the institution of slavery once propelled the United States and the West to global dominance—by cheapening the cost of labor and boosting overall exports—there is growing evidence that the long-term legacy of this unjust system has been lower economic growth, higher social instability, and persistent racial hierarchies. The consulting firm McKinsey & Company has estimated that between 2019 and 2028, the wealth gap between Black and white Americans will cost the U.S. economy $1 trillion to $1.5 trillion in lost consumption and investment. In India, caste plays a similar role. Although caste can increase economic activity and efficiency in the short run—through networking and mutual support within castes—the rigid social hierarchies it creates restrict capital and labor mobility. As researchers have pointed out, persistent caste structures have likely reduced India’s growth by undermining efforts to alleviate poverty and achieve greater income equality and by slowing the country’s transition to a full-fledged industrial economy.

Similarly large is the impact of gender discrimination on national productivity. By restricting or limiting women’s access to education, business, politics, and other areas of economic activity, gender discrimination also limits the labor supply. In developing countries, this is especially true in the agricultural sector, where women play a critical role. Constraints on women’s participation in the workforce make it harder for low-income countries to move out of poverty. But gender barriers can affect advanced countries, as well. In 2016, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimated that gender discrimination costs the global economy as much as $12 trillion per year, or about 16 percent of global GDP.

Religious restrictions also make the business environment in many countries less attractive. In Egypt, for example, where tourists provide a major source of economic activity, the tourism sector has been negatively affected by religious conflicts, including violence between Christians and Muslims and between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Extensive religious restrictions in many Arab countries—such as subjecting financial instruments to the arbitrary and inconsistent regulations of Islamic law boards—have prompted young entrepreneurs to take their talents overseas. Sometimes, countries’ repressive religious practices can also interfere with major international business deals. In 1999, Goldman Sachs had to restructure its initial public offering agreement with the China National Petroleum Corporation, which had investments in Sudan, after the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended sanctions on Sudan for violations of religious freedom. (In the restructured deal, Goldman created a new company with CNPC that would operate only in China.) In all these ways, then, internal social divisions can have a direct impact on a country’s economic performance and, hence, on one of the core forms of international power.

FROM CLEAVAGES TO CONFLICT

But the effects of social cleavages can go well beyond economic growth. When social divisions are allowed to fester, they may threaten a country’s underlying social and political stability. Recent conflicts in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Yemen, among other places, have been driven by internal religious divisions. In 2021, the scholars Weiling Jiang and Igor Martek found that religious tensions ranked among the top four “significant political risk factors” affecting foreign investment in the energy sector in 74 developing countries. In countries with acute income inequality, citizens may also be more prone to rise up against the government to achieve economic, social, and political parity. Governments that promote or sustain racial and religious discrimination may also encourage higher rates of violence or extremism. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, on average, a low-caste Indian person was victimized by a crime every ten minutes.

Gender-based violence has been particularly persistent in many countries. According to the World Health Organization, in 2021, 27 percent of women worldwide in the 15–49 age group who were in a relationship experienced some form of abuse, either physical or sexual violence or both, by an intimate partner. In the developing world, women suffer from specific forms of violence because of traditional social practices such as requiring dowries, honor killing, and genital mutilation. But violence against women is not restricted to poor countries. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime, for example, has included Australia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom among the countries that have the highest reported rates of sexual violence. The United States has a notably high rate of rape.

Social tensions at home are likely to play out internationally. States experiencing violence or social instability may be limited in their ability to project soft power; they may also be prone to creating bilateral tensions and undermining free-trade negotiations and other forms of multilateral cooperation. Caste tensions are a perennial cause of political violence in India, which has undercut the country’s global reputation.

MORE TOLERANCE, MORE POWER

Although divisions over class, race, gender, and religion are increasing in many parts of the world, evidence suggests that when such tensions are reduced, countries can enhance their international power. For example, providing women with stronger legal rights and better access to health care, education, financial services, and technology is good not just for human rights or social justice but also for increasing productivity. According to Oxfam, rising numbers of women in the paid workforce in Latin America contributed to a 30 percent reduction in poverty between 2000 and 2010. In 2015, the McKinsey Global Institute estimated that the benefits to the world economy offered by the full inclusion of women in the paid workforce would equal $28 trillion by 2025.

Reducing social cleavages in the workforce could add $7.2 trillion a year to U.S. GDP.

Countries can make similar gains by eliminating racial disparities. A study by the think tank PolicyLink and the University of Southern California found that removing the pay gap between racial groups would increase U.S. economic growth by 14 percent; the Washington Center for Equitable Growth has estimated that reducing racial, ethnic, and gender gaps could add $7.2 trillion a year to U.S. GDP. Such benefits would need to be weighed against the costs of government spending to equalize pay, but the rewards would still be substantial.

Enhancing religious tolerance and freedom can also affect national economic competitiveness. Notably, none of the ten countries that the Pew Research Center has ranked as having “very high” restrictions on religion—a group that includes Algeria, China, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, the Maldives, Russia, Syria, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan—is among the top 20 most competitive countries in the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Index.

A WARNING TO THE WEST

Recognizing that power within can affect the external strength of countries offers important lessons for international relations. For the West, the growth of social cleavages should come as a warning. As a growing body of research shows, democracy does not inevitably lead to a reduction of hierarchies based on income, race, gender, or religion. Western democracies as a group have not performed particularly well in any of these areas. To the contrary, democratic institutions can provide cover for social divisions and allow them to be exploited for political gain, as has occurred in the United States and elsewhere in recent years. As these disparities become more pronounced, moreover, they also weaken the ability of the West to counter the spread of autocracy. For example, scholars have noted that rising income inequality has contributed to the eroding appeal of the liberal international order.

These trends are not irreversible. In contrast to their nondemocratic counterparts, advanced democracies have the capacity to self-correct and challenge persistent social hierarchies. Because of their greater transparency, freedom of expression, and culture of open debate, democratic societies can expose these divisions, and their electorates can change governments that are viewed as unwilling or unable to address the root causes. Yet in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, democracies have been constrained by political polarization and the rise of right-wing populism, which have made it increasingly difficult to form a political consensus to tackle cleavages based on class, race, gender, and religion. At the same time, many advanced countries have established economic interests that may have a stake in reinforcing existing practices.

Of course, internal power structures can also limit the influence of many non-Western countries. Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa are particularly striking examples of countries with large economies and significant socioeconomic disparities based on caste, gender, and religious identity. According to the World Bank, South Africa is the most unequal country in the world, with the wealthiest one percent of the population holding 80.6 percent of the country’s financial assets. This is important not only because of the link between income inequality and low growth but also because of the incentive it creates for corruption and instability. In many countries, moreover, different types of social hierarchies often appear in tandem and are mutually reinforcing. Income inequality, for example, often correlates with racial, caste, gender, and religious discrimination. Racial prejudice is a trigger for religious intolerance and vice versa. Hence, policymakers will need to develop strategies that go beyond specific disparities to address the conditions that lead to all types of social hierarchies.

Reducing social cleavages will not eliminate differences in power and status among countries. But those that better develop and harness their power within by ensuring fairer wage distribution and curbing discriminatory practices—and therefore maximizing growth—are likely to enjoy greater stability and influence in the long run. Such efforts will need to begin at home, including in the United States and in many of its European allies. But given the prevalence of these divisions in many countries, lasting progress is unlikely to be achieved through domestic politics alone. Stepped-up global cooperation will be needed, including collective efforts to strengthen international human rights agreements and other international rules aimed at preventing discrimination on the basis of race, caste, gender, and religious belief. Since all countries, rich and poor, suffer from these disparities, reform efforts can and should be framed as a common challenge of humankind. By creating a more level playing field among social groups, the United States and other members of the liberal international order can better mobilize their power within and promote their collective ability to enhance stability and peace in the world as a whole.

#### The US’ current hegemonic trajectory is unsustainable, meeting multiple markers fitting declining powers

Mazarr 22 – *Senior Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation*. (Michael J., July/August 2022, "What Makes a Power Great," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2022-06-21/what-makes-power-great)//KH

A BALANCED RECIPE

Each of these seven characteristics is associated with national competitiveness, but not even societies that boast all of them can be assured of long-term success. Nations that prevail in long-term competitions must achieve balance in each trait, since all of these advantages can spiral into excess and become liabilities. This is perhaps most true of national ambition, which can lead nations to overextend themselves. But it is also true of the other characteristics. Efforts to build an active state can, for example, produce a centralizing agenda that curdles into authoritarianism and intolerance. Effective institutions can become bloated and stifling bureaucracies. Too much pluralism can dissolve national unity. Most dynamic and successful nations have therefore sought all seven of the essential characteristics in healthy moderation.

Nations gain tremendous competitive advantage from an active, public-minded elite.

They have also enabled the characteristics to reinforce one another. The most potent advantage of each trait arises not from its individual consequences but from its combined effect with those of the others. National ambition and a culture of learning and adapting strongly reinforce each other, as do an active state and effective institutions. Shared opportunity must be combined with some diversity and pluralism to gain its true value. This recipe for national success, with mutually reinforcing ingredients, shows up in all the competitively dominant societies, allowing for differences in era and approach. It mixes strong state-supported national ambition with varied and diverse human capital, effective social institutions and rule of law, a spirit of shared national community, and a deeply felt reverence for experimentation and new ideas.

In order for this recipe to produce competitive success, a society must have a public-spirited elite class. Nations gain tremendous competitive advantage from an active, public-minded elite that is representative of the broader society and connected to it via avenues of social mobility. But when a nation’s elite, or much of it, becomes corrupt or engages in rent-seeking behavior, that nation’s vibrancy, resilience, and competitive edge will erode. Crucially, the quality of a nation’s elite plays a vital role in determining the legitimacy of its governing institutions. Where elites are seen as corrupt and self-interested rather than devoted to the public good, societies and the institutions that govern them often atrophy or break down.

OVER THE HILL?

All this should give American leaders pause. In the second half of the twentieth century, the United States mastered the recipe for national competitiveness better than any nation in history. And even now, aspects of American society continue to exhibit strong elements of the seven essential characteristics: social mobility, diversity and political pluralism, in particular. Despite their troubles, moreover, U.S. government institutions from the local to the federal level still rank high in global evaluations of transparency and effectiveness. But there are also serious reasons for concern. If the United States continues on its current trajectory, it will risk weakening or even losing many of the traits that for the last 75 years have made it the world’s dominant power.

Four of the seven characteristics are especially at risk. One is national will and ambition. Survey evidence suggests that younger Americans do not view the United States, its values, or its ambitions in the same way as older Americans. A 2019 Eurasia Group Foundation survey, for example, found that fully 55 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 do not think the United States is “exceptional,” compared with only 25 percent of Americans over 60. Belief in American exceptionalism is not the same as ambition, of course, but it does indicate confidence in the national mission. Taken together with the many surveys that show growing popular skepticism about the need to project U.S. military power overseas, Americans’ waning confidence in their national mission suggests a country that is less self-assured than it once was. Across a wide range of issues, polls reveal that Americans generally have less faith in the future and in their major political and social institutions than they have in half a century. Such survey results have always ebbed and flowed, and Americans have had little faith in some institutions, such as Congress, for many decades now. But on the whole, public opinion polls paint a picture of a nation that is no longer sure of itself, much less of its right and duty to impose its will on the world.

The United States’ shared national identity may be in even greater peril. Increasingly, polling data and other observable trends—such as “associative sorting,” wherein people move to live closer to others with similar views—suggest that the country is becoming divided into mutually suspicious camps with little common ground. This national fragmentation has been accelerated by a siloed information environment that allows disinformation and conspiracy theories to thrive.

Shared opportunity also shows signs of waning. Inequality is rising, and intergenerational mobility appears to be stalled. As the economist Raj Chetty and his collaborators at Harvard’s Opportunity Insights project have shown, only half of young people today earn more than their parents did, compared with 90 percent of people born in 1940. Efforts to close opportunity gaps in areas such as access to venture capital have not been sufficient to reverse these troubling trends. At best, the level of shared opportunity has plateaued, and it may well be retreating after decades of progress.

Finally, the spirit of learning and adaptation in the United States is increasingly threatened by the corrosive information environment. Competitive societies are information-processing organisms whose various components take insights about the world and turn them into behavior. Yet the U.S. information marketplace is being corrupted, in part because of the tremendous amounts of misinformation sloshing through social media, the sensationalism of the news media, the fragmentation of information sources, and the emergence of a “trolling” ethic that encourages hostility and mean-spiritedness in public discourse.

The United States continues to exhibit clear societal strengths. But data on issues as varied as the explosive rise of bureaucratic and administrative functions across many U.S. public and private institutions and the growing proportion of investment devoted to so-called value extraction, including via stock buybacks, suggest that the country may be living off the accumulated benefits of long-standing advantages rather than generating new competitive strengths. The United States displays some of the characteristics of a once dominant power that has passed its competitive prime: by some important measures, it is complacent, highly bureaucratized, and seeking short-term gains and rents rather than long-term productive breakthroughs. It is socially and politically divided, cognizant of the need for reforms yet unwilling or unable to make them, and suffering a loss of faith in the shared national project that once animated it.

Today, the United States finds itself deficient in many of the qualities that powered its rise.

At the same time that the United States has allowed some of its societal strengths to atrophy, its closest rival—China—has built up tremendous societal strengths in some areas but also allowed potentially fatal weaknesses to fester in others. China clearly benefits from a potent national will and ambition, both domestically and internationally, and a unified national identity among much of the population. It has an active state that is pouring resources into human capital, research and development, high technology, and infrastructure. Its subnational governments theoretically offer platforms for vibrant, pluralistic experiments in social policy. China has a proud tradition of learning and education, and its governing institutions appear to have a high degree of legitimacy: in the 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer, an online survey of public opinion in 28 countries, China scored toward the top of the rankings for average levels of trust in nongovernmental organizations, business, government, and media. In some ways, therefore, China seems to be cultivating a powerful combination of essential characteristics for competitive success and positioning itself to leap ahead of the United States.

#### Insufficient institutional COVID response destroyed the US-led LIO

Nolke 22 – *Professor of Political Science at Goethe University (Frankfurt) and Senior Researcher at the Leibniz Institute for Financial Research SAFE*. (Andreas Nolke, May 10, 2022, Post-Corona Capitalism, “Chapter 27: China– US Struggle for Global Economic Hegemony: Contender or Incumbent?” pp. 169-173, Bristol University Press, Project Muse via UMich Libraries, https://muse.jhu.edu/book/100967)//KH

The coronavirus crisis as a challenge to the liberal global order

Very early in the pandemic, the crisis was seen as a problem for the liberal economic order (Norrlöf, 2020a). Next to the challenges of democratic and liberal capitalism on the domestic level (see Chapters 30 and 31), it also affected some of the core pillars of the LIO in the international economic realm; for example, the freedom of individual movement (see Chapter 6), the transnational openness for the movement of goods (see Chapters 17 and 20) and the transnational openness of financial markets (see Chapter 18). Importantly, these are challenges to the specific LIO, not to intergovernmental cooperation or international organizations per se; the latter often were even able to expand their scope and policy instruments during the crisis (Debre and Dijkstra, 2020), although they were unable to ensure comprehensive international cooperation on core issues such as the prevention of ‘vaccine nationalism’ (Abbas, 2020).

Similarly, the core Western institutions of the liberal global order – in particular, the G7 and the OECD – did not play a leading role during the crisis. In general, the latter was fought individually on the domestic level, with very little multilateral coordination (Levy, 2021: 562– 3). Obligations to international institutions, from the WTO to the Paris Agreement on climate change targets, took a back seat. As far as multilateral economic coordination took place, it involved the G20, an international institution much less dominated by the West and quite neutral to the core normative principles of the LIO. Opportunities for the creation of powerful international institutions were also limited by the rise of nationalism triggered by the pandemic. The latter had a ‘rally- around- the- flag’ effect, which also has led to a more confrontational climate in foreign policy between China and Western countries, as for example witnessed in the case of Australia’s China policy (Pan and Korolev, 2021: 127– 33). China- based observers applaud the weakening of the LIO during the pandemic – inter alia, due to the entrenchment of authoritarianism, the increasing nationalism and the return of big power rivalry – and assume that it provides China with many options to increase its options globally. They also argue that China has weathered the storm of the pandemic better than the US (Dunford and Qi, 2020; Huang, 2021).

#### Their ev assumes current pandemic conditions, but long-term trends prove China’s rise will outpace the US

Nolke 22 – *Professor of Political Science at Goethe University (Frankfurt) and Senior Researcher at the Leibniz Institute for Financial Research SAFE*. (Andreas Nolke, May 10, 2022, Post-Corona Capitalism, “Chapter 27: China– US Struggle for Global Economic Hegemony: Contender or Incumbent?” pp. 169-173, Bristol University Press, Project Muse via UMich Libraries, https://muse.jhu.edu/book/100967)//KH

Is China prepared for global leadership? A core requirement for this leadership role would be political and economic stability. These two aspects are interrelated, as political stability in an authoritarian regime such as China depends primarily on the ability to guarantee a constantly improving standard of living. In comparative political economy research on the Chinese economy, we can identify two perspectives on the likeliness of this stability. On the one hand, there are mainly Western observers with a background in liberal economics (for example, Economy, 2007). These observers of China predict that China will be not be able to continue its economic rise, due to the lack of sustainability of its state- centred economy – but they have been articulating this negative prediction for many years already, to no avail. The alternative perspective, more often articulated by political economists and non- Western observers, is that China’s economic rise will continue, since it is based on a coherent non- liberal model of capitalism (Nölke et al, 2020). What does the evidence of the coronavirus crisis tell us with regard to these two competing perspectives? Several issues are at stake. China may suffer from a decoupling of global production networks (see Chapter 17). It also encounters backlashes with regard to the acquisition of foreign companies and technologies (see Chapter 18). The Chinese economy, however, has weathered the pandemic well so far. Based on draconian health measures and substantial fiscal as well as monetary policy interventions, China recovered quickly (Tian, 2020), particularly in international comparison.

With regard to its international leadership role, China has suffered some setbacks, such as a bad image as country of origin of the virus. However, China has tried to overcome these setbacks by its concerted diplomatic efforts in terms of health assistance, including emergency supplies to EU member states: ‘China’s public diplomacy has gone into overdrive’ (Seaman, 2020: 8). In contrast to the EU and the US, China has used its health diplomacy successfully as a soft- power weapon in order to further its geo- economic influence (Gauttam et al, 2020). Moreover, China has used the crisis to promote its pre- existing ‘techno- authoritarian project’ that fuses technological surveillance, a strong focus on public security and public health, although it is yet unclear whether this approach will diffuse globally (Greitens, 2020).

To sum up, it is possible that the rise of China may temporarily slow down due to the pandemic, but there are no indications that it will not continue in the long run. This tendency is also supported by the erosion of the US leadership role with regard to the global institutions of liberal capitalism. While the US is still in a more powerful position than China, due to its control of important economic networks and over the global reserve currency (Drezner, 2020: E28), the slow erosion of its dominant role will continue.

#### China won’t rise to hegemon – its leaders want a peaceful multipolar world order

Golden 22 – *Senior Associate Researcher, CIDOB* (Sean, March 2022, “China’s “enlightened authoritarianism” as an alternative to liberal democracy,” Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication\_series/opinion/2022/china\_s\_enlightened\_authoritarianism\_as\_an\_alternative\_to\_liberal\_democracy)//KH

China wants a new world order, but not the new world order initiated in Ukraine by the Putin regime. A joint statement issued by China and Russia before the invasion proposed to “uphold the outcomes of the Second World War and the existing post-war world order” and to “resist attempts to deny, distort, and falsify the history of the Second World War”. The Cold War froze in place one aspect of that outcome —the Yalta agreement. The fall of the USSR eroded that example of Realpolitik. The Warsaw Pact disappeared but NATO expanded, claiming interests that run from Vladivostok to Vancouver. China is a nervous observer of this process.

The joint statement also proposes to “protect the United Nations-driven international architecture and the international law-based world order, seek genuine multipolarity” and to “promote more democratic international relations, and ensure peace, stability and sustainable development across the world”. Implicit in this catalogue, in addition to a defence of the veto power of the victors in WWII, is a criticism of a world order dominated in the voting systems of the Bretton Woods institutions by the USA and Western Europe, and the elevation of the losing WWII enemies (Germany and Japan) to the status of NATO allies at the cost of two of the winning allies (then the USSR and the Republic of China, now Russia and the PRC). More important is the insistence on “genuine multipolarity”, “more democratic international relations” and “sustainable development” without interference in the interest of developed countries.

China cannot endorse what Russia has done in Ukraine because the maintenance of territorial integrity is primordial in Chinese foreign policy, with special reference to the reintegration of Taiwan and resistance to secessionist movements within continental China. Ukraine is also an important partner for China in terms of raw materials and the Belt and Road Initiative. But China cannot align itself either with a US-dominated NATO that it sees as an instrument of US hegemony. The situation is fluid, but China is trying to maintain an equidistant stance and would prefer to broker a return to a pacific rules-based world order founded on a balance of power that favours neither NATO nor Russia. Such a stance is probably more in tune with the attitude of the developing world —the largest part of the world’s population— as long as China itself does not exhibit hegemonic tendencies.

Uncertainty about the constancy and reliability of the USA as a world leader (NATO’s point of view) or as a hegemonic power (the point of view of Russia and China and developing countries) have eroded America’s moral authority in world affairs. “America First” and neo-isolationism could return to power in 2024 elections and the current opposition party flirts with and even endorses populist nationalism and white supremacy, defending a right-wing insurrection as “normal political discourse”. At the same time, Vladimir Putin’s return to a nineteenth century “Great Powers” vision of the world order as a response to NATO’s abandonment of the “Yalta Agreement” that cemented a post-World War II order is not the alternative that China wants[CC1] .

Xi Jinping offers his “China Model” as an alternative to neo-liberalism in a new world order. China advocates a diverse and multipolar world as an alternative to US/NATO hegemony. The architect of Xi’s China Model ideology has been Wang Huning, a discrete member of the current Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the PRC, who together with Wang Qishan may be one of the most powerful leaders in China. It will be interesting to see what happens with both, Wang’s as well as Xi, in the renovation of the Politburo and Standing Committee later this year

In a period when liberal democratic political systems have been riven by radical polarisation, lack of a broad consensus, hostile party politics and rampant inequality, China offers its version of an efficient technocratic “benevolent authoritarianism” as an alternative. Confucian political philosophy always advocated government based on 仁 rén, a concept with connotations of human, humane and humanitarian, as well as empathy, compassion and reciprocity. The associated concept 共 gòng emphasises the common good, the commonwealth, as opposed to 私 sī, private interest.

The Party’s think tanks promote “Studies on China’s National Condition” (国情研究 Guóqíng yánjiū), developing the idea that China is peaceful by nature and will not be aggressive but will pursue “benevolent pacifism”, “peaceful development”, “harmonious society”, a “harmonious world” and “harmonious inclusionism” or win-win diplomacy foreign trade and foreign policy. The Party insists that it is the only guarantor of social equity and peaceful sustainable development, rejecting a multiparty system with alternation in power among diverse political parties because each political “party” is “partial” and only “a part” of society — only the Communist Party is “common” to all of society

Another key organic intellectual, Wang Shaoguang, distinguishes between “formal” democratic governance (“there are some political systems that, in terms of form, because they use competitive elections, appear to be ‘representative,’ yet their responsiveness may not be very high”) and “responsive” governance (“there are some political systems without multi-party elections but which are quite responsive to the people’s demands”). He argues that, unlike Western liberal democracy, “what Chinese sages focused on … was not the form of government or the form of the political system, but rather the way of government or the goals and methods in the functioning of the political system”. And he insists that the “China model” offers advantages over liberal democracy’s “veto players” —political parties, lobbies, interest groups— in promoting social equity and responsiveness to popular needs. He also cautions that although having few “veto players” in the Chinese political system may be an advantage for a problem-solving system of governance, it can also become a danger if centralised control of power fails to be responsive to the needs of the common good, a problem not yet entirely solved in the case of the PRC.

It remains to be seen whether China’s alternative can take hold in the face of NATO’s attempt to forge a unified response to the Ukrainian war.

#### Afghanistan and economic instability deck sustainability

Bello 22 – *PhD, Princeton, sociology, professor at Cal Berkeley, former member of the Philippines House of Reps* (Walden, 1-12-2022, "Bin Laden and Trump: Two Bookends to America's Imperial Decline," Foreign Policy In Focus, https://fpif.org/bin-laden-and-trump-two-bookends-to-americas-imperial-decline/)//KH

The end of 2021 and the beginning of a new year is a convenient time to take stock of the causes of America’s decline.

This past year saw both Washington’s inglorious exit from Afghanistan after 20 years in the country that had served as the launching pad for its direct military intervention in the Middle East and an historic insurrection at the very heart of the empire. Add to this the absolute lack of traction for President Biden’s recent “Democracy Summit” in contrast to Beijing’s surefooted diplomacy, the erosion of an already weak U.S. economy by COVID-19 followed by uncontrolled inflation, and the deepening of the country’s informal but very real civil war — and it is hard to avoid the sense that we are indeed at the end of an era.

Serving as the bookends of this era were two individuals that stamped their personalities on it: Osama bin Laden at the beginning and Donald Trump at the end.

Varieties of Imperial Decline

Ever since Paul Kennedy wrote The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, historians and others have tried to discover the universal elements of the phenomenon he called “imperial overstretch.”

This might, however, be a futile enterprise. Tolstoy said that all families are unhappy but each of them is unhappy in its own way. The same thing might be said of the end of empires. All empires end, but each exits in its own distinct unhappy fashion.

Bankrupt at the end of the Second World War and facing spiraling financial and political costs as independence movements challenged their hegemony from East Asia to Africa, the British chose to cut their losses and liquidate most of their holdings, passed the task of ruling to indigenous elites, and largely left the defense of global capitalism to the Americans.

The French chose to hang on despite defeat in Indochina and a bloody stalemate in Algeria and could only be persuaded to give the latter independence when renegade military men threatened to take over the government itself to continue the empire. The Soviet Union was largely dissolved by a domestic reform effort that ran out of control, though defeat in Afghanistan made a not insignificant contribution.

Like the ascent to the zenith of empire, the descent from it does not follow a predetermined path but one that is shaped by contingencies, many of them surprising and unexpected.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the U.S. had staved off the economic challenge of Japan and seen the political and military challenge posed by the Soviets dissipate. Moreover, it seemed to have thrown off the “Vietnam Syndrome” with its victory over Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War. The American Empire appeared to be experiencing a second wind.

At this juncture, the choices for maintaining the empire boiled down to two. One, identified with the Democrats, favored the U.S. ruling via a multilateral economic order undergirded by the supremacy of its corporations and a liberal global political order propped up by unchallenged American military power and promoted by the “soft power” of liberal democracy. The other was championed by neoconservatives largely ensconced in the Republican Party who claimed the “unipolar” status of the United States provided a unique opportunity for reordering the world to the lasting advantage of the United States both strategically and economically — and demanded unilateral action to bring that about.

The debate between these two visions of the imperial future dominated American politics during the eight-year reign of the Democrats presided over by Bill Clinton.

Under the succeeding Republican administration of George W. Bush, US power was primed to do just what the neoconservatives wanted. It was, however, not predetermined that the Middle East would be the prime target of their global push to reorder the world. Tension with China was high in the first months of the new administration, with the Pentagon, in fact, identifying Beijing no longer as a strategic partner, as the Clinton administration did, but as a strategic rival. A new Cold War could have been launched at that juncture, with a China that was much, much weaker militarily and economically relative to the U.S. than it is now.

What made the difference in the fateful calculations of the neocons was one man: Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden’s Historic Role

Bin Laden puts paid to those historians who belittle the role of personality in history. For what he did, probably without intending it, was direct U.S. military power to Afghanistan and the broader Middle East with his attack on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001.

Bin Laden hoped to create a hundred Islamic insurgencies by boldly baiting the Great Satan, much like Che Guevara hoped to create more Cubas in Latin America with his guerrilla experiment in Bolivia. Bin Laden failed in bringing about the purifying Islamic revolutions he sought, but he was wildly successful in a way he had not intended. For his move gave the American neocons the opportunity for the military action they had devoutly wished for to enable them to consolidate their new unipolar order.

Desire did not, however, end up with the object of desire, for the terrain in which the U.S. chose to wage an “exemplary war” to teach the rest of the world to get out of the way of America’s hegemonic mission turned out to be populated by people, Afghans and Iraqis, who were no pushovers.

Bush II got the war he wanted but not the outcome he sought. Instead of his legions coming back home in triumph, they were plunged into what quickly became a quicksand from which they could not be extricated for two decades, and then only in shame and defeat under a Democratic administration in 2021.

The Economic Consequences of the Forever Wars

Being pinned down in what critics called the “forever wars” in the Middle East had momentous political and economic consequences for the United States. Washington set aside its definition of China as a strategic rival and sought instead to enlist Beijing as an ally in its “war on terror.” China obliged, but devoted most of its efforts to economic diplomacy to gain markets and cultivate good relations with countries in the Global South, a contrast with Washington’s bellicose behavior that did not go unnoticed.

The U.S. wasted trillions on fruitless military adventures, but the main economic consequence of the Middle East wars was to boost China’s economic ascent at its expense.

With China reaffirmed as a political ally, the U.S. transnational corporations that had promoted the entente with China in their search for cheap labor during the Clinton presidency accelerated the transfer of their manufacturing processes to China, making the 16 years of the Bush II and Obama administrations a period of irreversible deindustrialization. Thousands of factories closed down in the industrial heartland in the Midwest and Northeast and at least 2.5 million high paying manufacturing jobs were lost to what some economists called the “China Shock.”

China’s rise to industrial prominence was not, in other words, predetermined. Bin Laden’s baiting the U.S. — and Washington taking the bait — was a major reason why the China-TNC alliance continued and gathered force during the Bush II presidency instead of being sidelined by strategic concerns about China that were prominent both at the Pentagon and the neocons during Bush’s first months in office.

#### Unsustainable – rising risk of civil war and domestic economic strife

Bello 22 – *PhD, Princeton, sociology, professor at Cal Berkeley, former member of the Philippines House of Reps* (Walden, 1-12-2022, "Bin Laden and Trump: Two Bookends to America's Imperial Decline," Foreign Policy In Focus, https://fpif.org/bin-laden-and-trump-two-bookends-to-americas-imperial-decline/)//KH

Trump and the Crisis of the Imperial Order

But endless wars and the unraveling of the financialized U.S. economy are insufficient to explain the drastic decline of the empire from “unipolarism” to severe dislocation in less than two decades. One must bring into the equation the unfolding of what I have called the informal civil war in the United States. Central to explaining this cancer eating at the heart of the American political system was the evolution of white supremacy as a political and ideological force.

While the Republican Party had exploited the racial insecurities of the white population successfully since the late 1960s through the so-called “Southern Strategy” and racist dog whistle politics, it was not predetermined that white supremacy would become the dominant stream in conservative, right-wing politics that would subordinate and fuse with other streams such as cultural and religious conservatism, anti-liberalism, and populist disdain for scientific expertise.

Again, this was not inevitable. A key contribution to the expansion and consolidation of white supremacy was the defection from the Democratic Party of large sections of its white working class base — the pillar of the once solid “New Deal Coalition” put together by Franklin Delano Roosevelt — as “Third Way” Democrats from Clinton to Barack Obama legitimized and led in promoting neoliberal policies that had such a damaging consequences on the jobs and income of workers.

The Democratic Party leadership’s surrender to neoliberalism has been well analyzed by Thomas Piketty, who noted that the base of the party from the 1960s on increasingly became composed of people with relatively high levels of education — professionals, academics, intellectuals, and even managers. The relatively well educated leadership of the party increasingly responded to the interests of these like-minded followers, resulting in many in the old union, working class base being steadily alienated from them.

Increasingly, what Piketty terms the “Brahmin Left” in the Democratic Party represented by the Clintons and Obama found a coincidence of intellectual and material interests with conservatives traditionally ensconced in the Republican Party. Their common agenda came to be espousal of neoliberalism, with the difference that the Democrats favored neoliberalism with “safety nets.” This ideological convergence assured that while the independent left would be loud in its denunciation of neoliberalism, the dominant political response to neoliberalism would not come from the left but from another quarter when the right conjuncture emerged.

That conjuncture came with the outbreak of the Great Recession in 2008. Its volatile mix of high unemployment and high inequality provided an indispensable context for white supremacy’s breaking out to become the driving force of the politics of the white population, a development that took liberals and others by surprise.

Still, it could not have turned into the virulent, destabilizing movement it became were it not for one man. This brings us again to the role of personality, a factor that at certain historical junctures can become decisive. It was a volatile opportunist with weak ties to either the Republican establishment or Democratic establishment who elevated white supremacy from one of several streams of American right-wing politics to its hegemonic status.

In the 2016 elections, Donald Trump smelled an opportunity that a Democratic leadership tied to Wall Street ignored. By tying the crisis created by deindustrialization, financialization, and neoliberalism to anti-migrant rhetoric and dog whistle anti-black appeals in a boisterous, redneck-captivating style, he was able to break through to the white working class that had already given signals earlier that it was ripe to be mobilized along racial lines.

The culmination of that process was the January 6 insurrection, a battle that Trump lost which may actually serve as a prelude to his winning the war, just as the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch in 1923 prefigured Hitler’s gaining power in 1933.

A Third Wind?

As the era 2001 to 2021 comes to an end, the American empire continues to be dominant, but its pillars have been severely eroded.

Its ability to discipline the rest of the world has been shattered by its defeat in Afghanistan. Its credibility even among its western allies as a reliable partner is at an all-time low. Its economy may still be the largest in the word, but it is no longer the center of global capital accumulation and confronts the prospect of its unraveling accelerating — especially now that the $1.75 trillion “Build Back Better” social and climate public spending bill that was supposed to be its program for revitalization faces uncertain approval in a deeply divided Congress. Meanwhile white supremacist politics has become the hegemonic force in the politics of the white population, creating not only deep polarization but an existential threat to the world’s oldest democracy itself.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the U.S. empire seemed to have a second wind, appearing to have put the “Vietnam Syndrome” behind it and its economy apparently gliding into a prosperous maturity. As events proved, that illusory second wind was short lived.

A third wind is, of course, a theoretical possibility. But while we should be wary of deterministic projections, how such a rejuvenation can take place is much, much less evident today. Each empire descends from the zenith in its own unique way, but if there is one path that is broadly similar to that being trodden by the United States, it is that of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century. Like the Ottomans then, the United States now is a very sick empire, faced abroad by powerful challenges to its hegemony, eroded by economic stagnation, shorn of ideological legitimacy, and torn apart internally by a civil war in all but name.

#### Hegemony collapse via Chinese economic and military takeover is inevitable

McCoy 22 – *Alfred McCoy is the J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison* (Alfred, 2-25-2022, "Will the Fight for Hegemony Survive Climate Change?," Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/environment/climate-china-usa-beijing/)//KH

Consider us **at the edge** of the sort of epochal change not seen for centuries, even millennia. By the middle of this century, we will be living under such radically altered circumstances that the present decade, the 2020s, will undoubtedly seem like another era entirely, akin perhaps to the Middle Ages. And I’m not talking about the future development of flying cars, cryogenics, or even as-yet-unimaginable versions of space travel.

After leading the world for the past 75 years, the **U**nited **S**tates is ever so fitfully losing its grip on global hegemony. As Washington’s power begins to fade, the liberal international system it created by founding the United Nations in 1945 is facing potentially fatal challenges.

After more than 180 years of Western global dominion, leadership is beginning to move from West to East, where Beijing is likely to become the epicenter of a new world order that could indeed rupture longstanding Western traditions of law and human rights.

More crucially, however, after two centuries of propelling the world economy to unprecedented prosperity, the use of fossil fuels—especially coal and oil—will undoubtedly fade away within the next couple of decades. Meanwhile, for the first time since the last Ice Age ended 11,000 years ago, thanks to the greenhouse gases those fossil fuels are emitting into the atmosphere, the world’s climate is changing in ways that will, by the middle of this century, start to render significant parts of the planet uninhabitable for a quarter, even possibly half, of humanity.

For the first time in 800,000 years, the level of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere has blown past earlier highs of 280 parts per million to reach 410 parts. That, in turn, is unleashing climate feedback loops that, by century’s end, if not well before, will aridify the globe’s middle latitudes, partly melt the polar ice caps, and raise sea levels drastically. (Don’t even think about a future Miami or Shanghai!)

In trying to imagine how such changes will affect an evolving world order, is it possible to chart the future with something better than mere guesswork? My own field, history, generally performs poorly when trying to track the past into the future, while social sciences like economics and political science are loath to project much beyond medium-term trends (say, the next recession or election). Uniquely among the disciplines, however, environmental science has developed diverse analytical tools for predicting the effects of climate change all the way to this century’s end.

Those predictions have become so sophisticated that world leaders in finance, politics, and science are now beginning to think about how to reorganize whole societies and their economies to accommodate the projected disastrous upheavals to come. Yet surprisingly few of us have started to think about the likely impact of climate change upon global power. By combining political projections with already carefully plotted trajectories for climate change, it may, however, be possible to see something of the likely course of governance for the next half century or so.

To begin with the most immediate changes, social-science analysis has long predicted the end of US global power. Using economic projections, the US National Intelligence Council, for instance, stated that, by 2030, “Asia will have surpassed North America and Europe combined in terms of global power,” while “China alone will probably have the largest economy, surpassing that of the **U**nited **S**tates a **few years before 2030**.” Using similar methods, the accounting firm PwC calculated that China’s economy would become **60 percent larger** than that of the **U**nited **S**tates by 2030.

If climate science proves accurate, however, the hegemony Beijing could achieve by perhaps 2030 will last, at best, only a couple of decades or less before unchecked global warming ensures that the very concept of world dominance, as we’ve known it historically since the sixteenth century, may be relegated to a past age like so much else in our world.

Considering that likelihood as we peer dimly into the decades between 2030 and 2050 and beyond, the international community will surely have good reason to **forge a new kind of world order—**one made for a planet truly in danger and unlike any that has come before.

#### Unsuccessful pursuit of hegemony over China worsens current unsustainability, blows back, and pushes climate over the brink

McCoy 22 – *Alfred McCoy is the J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison* (Alfred, 2-25-2022, "Will the Fight for Hegemony Survive Climate Change?," Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/environment/climate-china-usa-beijing/)//KH

A planet ever more battered by climate change, one in which neither an American nor a Chinese “century” will have any meaning, will certainly need a newly empowered world order that can supersede national sovereignty to protect the most fundamental and transcendent of all human rights: survival. The environmental changes in the offing are so profound that anything less than a new form of democratic global governance will mean not just incessant conflicts but, in all likelihood, disaster of an almost-unimaginable kind. And no surprise there, since we’ll be dealing with a planet all too **literally on the brink.**

Whenever you hear senior US officials tout Washington’s determination to “shape” the world order pursuant to America’s vision of all that is right and good, make sure you have your flak jacket handy. In practice, “shaping” typically culminates in exchanges of gunfire.

Recently, in a much-anticipated speech, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken outlined the Biden administration’s plan to “shape the strategic environment around Beijing to advance our vision for an open, inclusive international system.” In an age that celebrates openness and inclusivity, Blinken’s vision sounds benign.

Yet, to judge by the recent past, this latest effort to shape will leave Americans and the world worse off. To shape is to impose. Incorporating expectations of compliance, the effort is inherently coercive. When the United States sets out to shape, **brace yourself for blowback.**

Recall that during the Cold War, US strategy had centered on containment. However imperfectly implemented, the overarching idea was quite specific: Prevent the spread of communism and avert a cataclysmic Third World War. Yet the Cold War’s abrupt conclusion in 1989 found the world’s sole remaining superpower in a dominant position without any sense of how to put that dominance to work.

The possibility of claiming a “peace dividend”—the Pentagon effectively declaring Mission Accomplished—apparently never received more than perfunctory consideration. Refashioning the old mission into a new, more proactive one caught Washington’s fancy instead. Shaping—bringing the world into conformity with American values and interests—appeared to fill the bill.

Back in September 1993, Anthony Lake, then serving as national security adviser to President Bill Clinton, unveiled this project, which he styled a “strategy of enlargement.” This strategy was not an explicitly military enterprise. Its advertised purpose, according to Lake, was to “mobilize our nation in order to enlarge democracy, enlarge markets, and enlarge our future”—shaping over multiple dimensions.

Yet Clinton administration exertions in Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, and the Persian Gulf soon revealed a preference for taking a strong-arm approach. To invade, occupy, overthrow—or at the very least bomb—seemingly offered an expedient way of obliging the recalcitrant to shape up. With Donald Trump a partial exception, Clinton’s successors endorsed that proposition.

Even as the US penchant for armed intervention grew (and as Pentagon spending soared), the advertised rationale of the enterprise remained as Lake had described it: to shape an international order conducive to liberal democratic values. Especially after 9/11, however, any connection between those values and the outcomes actually achieved—not to mention the means employed—became increasingly difficult to discern. In the Greater Middle East, shaping soon yielded to the forever war.

When former president George W. Bush recently confused Russia’s war in Ukraine with the American war in Iraq that he had inaugurated in 2003, he came precariously close to uttering a very uncomfortable truth. If not siblings, the two conflicts are at least first cousins—each one an illegal war of choice recklessly undertaken, each justified by the flimsiest ideological rationale (liberating Iraq, denazifying Ukraine), and each resulting in unmitigated disaster.

Even so, as if oblivious to what prior efforts have yielded, the Biden administration is now eager to take another stab at shaping—this time as a response to China’s rise. Yet the China “threat,” to the extent one exists, is not primarily military. It is economic, commercial, technological, and environmental. If the United States feels the need to compete with China, it should focus on such matters.

Imagine, for example, Washington undertaking its own equivalent of Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative, by diverting a measly 10 percent of the Pentagon’s budget to fund international development programs. That would come to a tidy $80 billion per year.

Instead, the Biden administration’s major economic initiative in the region amounts to a hefty serving of weak tea. The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework isn’t even a trade agreement—it’s an agreement to begin consultations over negotiations about regional rules and standards. If that doesn’t sound very exciting to you, you’re not alone—IPEF has utterly failed to resonate among the nations America hopes to enlist in our “shaping” project. It’s akin to an invitation to a party no one wants to attend

An African diplomat is said to have remarked that every time China visits we get a hospital, while every time Britain visits we get a lecture. The diplomat might have added that when the US visits, it does so to display American military might. Rather than an invitation to partner, the implicit message is one of paternalism: You need our protection. America’s actual effort to shape the strategic environment around China will instead emphasize bases, enhanced power projection capabilities, provocative military exercises, and arms sales. Indeed, these already describe the principal facets of the Pentagon’s much-touted Asian “pivot.” Needless to say, the Pentagon budget continues to grow apace.

Back in 1993, Anthony Lake proposed his Strategy of Enlargement just two weeks before the famous Mogadishu firefight blew a hole in the Clinton administration’s naive expectations of shaping the future of Somalia. Nearly 30 years later, US troops remain in that recalcitrantly out-of-shape country, with mission accomplishment nowhere in sight.

If the United States should take one lesson from its decades in Somalia, it is this: Relying on military power to shape the course of events in distant countries requires very deep pockets and infinite patience—neither of which we currently possess. And in comparison with China, Somalia would seem to be an easy case.

Emphasizing carrots rather than sticks has served China well. The US reliance on sticks to shape the behavior of others has proven to be a costly failure. Especially when our real priority should be to reshape—and repair—our democracy at home, surely we can do better.

### AT: China Rise

#### China is a defensive realist – Xi will never go to war with Taiwan and will only practice strategic patience

Nathan 22 – *professor at Columbia polisci, Ph.D., Harvard, MA, Harvard, BA, Harvard* (Andrew J. Nathan, 6-23-2022, "Beijing Is Still Playing the Long Game on Taiwan," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-06-23/beijing-still-playing-long-game-taiwan)//KH

Concern is growing in Taiwan, in the United States, and among U.S. allies in Asia that China is preparing to attack Taiwan in the near future. Testifying before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee last year, Admiral Philip Davidson, then the commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, warned that Beijing might attempt to seize the island in the next six years. Unifying Taiwan with mainland China is a key element of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s “Chinese dream.” And as the political scientist Oriana Skylar Mastro has argued in these pages, Xi wants “unification with Taiwan to be part of his personal legacy,” suggesting that an armed invasion could come before the end of his third term as secretary-general of the Chinese Communist Party in 2027 and almost certainly before the end of his probable fourth term in 2032.

Putin’s war in Ukraine has intensified these concerns. Xi’s announcement just before the Russian invasion of a “no limits” partnership with Moscow, coupled with his failure to condemn Putin’s actions and the Chinese media’s endorsement of Russian propaganda, seem to signal Beijing’s support for Russia’s territorial aggression. Beijing may see a strategic opening now that U.S. political and military resources are tied up in Europe. Moreover, Chinese leaders may have interpreted the West’s response to the Russian attack as an indication that the United States will not intervene militarily to defend a country to which it is not bound by a defense treaty, especially against a nuclear-armed adversary. As David Sacks of the Council on Foreign Relations has argued, “Chinese policymakers may conclude that Russia’s nuclear arsenal effectively deterred the United States, which would be unwilling to go to war with a nuclear power over Taiwan.”

But fears of an imminent Chinese attack are misplaced. For decades, China’s policy toward Taiwan has been characterized by strategic patience, as has its approach to other territorial claims and disputes—from India to the South China Sea. Far from spurring China to jettison this approach in favor of an imminent military assault on Taiwan, the war in Ukraine will reinforce Beijing’s commitment to playing the long game. The price Moscow has paid, both militarily and in the form of international isolation, is but a fraction of what China could expect if it were to attempt to take Taiwan by force. Better to wait patiently for Taiwan’s eventual surrender, as Beijing sees it, than to strike now and risk winning the island at too high a cost—or losing it forever.

IMPENDING ATTACK?

Fear that China will attack Taiwan had been growing well before Putin invaded Ukraine. As Robert Blackwill and Philip Zelikow observed in a 2021 report published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Taiwan is “becoming the most dangerous flash point in the world for a possible war that would involve the United States of America, China, and probably other major powers.” In addition to its historical and economic motives for controlling Taiwan, Beijing feels the need to prevent other powers from using the island as a base to pressure China militarily or subvert it politically. For its part, the United States has strong motives for insisting on what Washington has referred to since 1972 as the “peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue”—which, given the anti-unification sentiments of the Taiwanese people, means an open-ended and perhaps permanent state of de facto autonomy for the island. Although there is much emotion on both sides—for China, nationalism; for the United States, commitment to democracy—what makes the Taiwan issue truly nonnegotiable are the two countries’ security interests.

In 1979, when the United States broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan to normalize relations with China, Beijing had a reasonable chance of winning over Taiwan without using force. Taiwan was diplomatically isolated, militarily weak, and increasingly economically dependent on the mainland. China encouraged this dependence by establishing a host of incentives for Taiwanese enterprises to do business on the mainland, by purchasing Taiwanese exports, and by sending Chinese tourists to the island. Beijing also invested in Taiwanese media with the aim of generating favorable news coverage and held exchanges with leaders of the anti-independence Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party.

But these efforts proved insufficient to stem the tide against unification in Taiwanese public opinion and politics. According to opinion polls, the share of Taiwanese voters favoring unification fell from 28 percent in 1999 to less than two percent in 2022. An overwhelming majority favor “maintaining the status quo,” which in the language of Taiwanese politics means sustaining autonomy without formally declaring independence. Since 2016, the anti-unification Democratic Progressive Party has controlled both the presidency and the legislature, and it looks well positioned to win the next set of national elections in 2024.

Fears of an imminent Chinese attack are misplaced.

These trends have prompted China to adopt a more threatening posture toward Taiwan. Beijing has stepped up measures to isolate the island diplomatically, slowed imports and the tourist trade, trained the Chinese military to conduct the complicated joint operations necessary for a cross-strait invasion, and conducted frequent probes of Taiwan’s air defense identification zone. China has also developed what the Pentagon calls “anti-access/area denial” capabilities—including long-range precision missiles, submarine-launched torpedoes, antiship ballistic missiles, cybertools, and space capabilities—designed to hold at bay a U.S. defense of Taiwan.

These moves have fed speculation that China is building up to a full-scale attack. In addition to Xi’s desire to secure his legacy, the shifting balance of power between China and the United States is often cited by U.S. analysts as a possible motivation for Xi. The scholars Michael **Beckley and** Hal **Brands**, for instance, have suggested that China may attack in the near term because it has reached the peak of its national strength—and China’s leaders know it. China is looking at a period of decline caused by a combination of unsustainable debt, rising labor costs, an aging population, declining productivity, and a critical water shortage. Meanwhile, the United States and Taiwan have recently started to readjust their military postures to counter the asymmetric threat China poses. The Biden administration is pulling Japan and South Korea together around a commitment to “stability in the Taiwan Strait,” and Western businesses are gradually moving their production sites out of China because of rising labor costs, lack of a level playing field in the Chinese market, and COVID-19 restrictions. As this reorientation gathers steam, the West’s economic incentives to avoid war with China will diminish. By this logic, Beijing has reason to strike before its adversaries are ready.

WAITING GAME

The facts on which such forecasts are based are not wrong, but they are incomplete. A fuller set of facts suggests that China is still pursuing a strategy of strategic patience when it comes to Taiwan. First, Chinese leaders—rightly or wrongly—seem confident that they can handle their own problems better than the West can handle its problems. They don’t deny the challenges that Beckley and Brands highlight, but they believe the West is in decline, hobbled by ill-managed and slow-growing economies, social divisions, and weak political leaders. However, Chinese strategists do not seem to believe that China has yet reached a favorable power balance with the West. As Yan Xuetong, dean of the Institute of International Relations at Tsinghua University, has argued, “China’s global reach still has its limits. Despite being a major power, China also thinks of itself as a developing country—and rightly so, considering that its GDP per capita remains far behind those of advanced economies.”

Beijing can afford to wait for power in the Western Pacific to tip decisively in its favor. When Washington comes to understand that the cost of defending Taiwan is beyond its means, and Taiwanese officials realize that Washington no longer has the appetite for a clash with China, Taiwan will pragmatically negotiate an arrangement that Beijing can accept. In the meantime, China needs only to deter Taipei and Washington from attempting to lock in formal Taiwanese independence. Beijing’s shows of force are not precursors of an imminent attack, therefore, but measures intended to buy time for history to take its course.

Second, contrary to the common portrayal of China as itching for war, Beijing has demonstrated strategic patience in pursuit of its other goals. A good example is Beijing’s behavior in the South China Sea, where China has built and militarized seven sand islands without triggering a war with the United States or rival territorial claimants. It did so by building only on landforms it already controlled, claiming all along that it wasn’t doing what it was doing. The rival territorial claimants were too weak to confront China, while the United States lacked a justification for doing so because it has no territorial claims where China was building. Beijing restricted access to but refrained from seizing a landform it contests with the sole U.S. treaty ally involved in these disputes—the Philippines—which in any case lacked an appetite to invoke its alliance with Washington by moving militarily to defend itself.

The conflict in Ukraine is reminding Xi that war is unpredictable and rule over a resisting population is costly.

China likewise changed the strategic status quo without triggering an armed conflict over the contested Senkaku Islands, known in China as the Diaoyu Islands, by escalating from an occasional maritime presence in Japanese waters to a permanent one, supplementing its naval forces with less confrontational coast guard, maritime militia, and fishing vessels. Beijing followed a similar playbook in the contested Ladakh region of India, where Chinese troops gradually advanced their positions and established a series of new lines of control with only one confirmed outbreak of shooting that was quickly contained.

China has invested in ostensibly civilian port projects across the Indian Ocean and beyond that could serve as foundations for future naval operations, raising some alarm but no counteraction. Beijing has also used its economic and diplomatic influence in Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Oceania and its norm-setting power in international institutions to incentivize governments to align with China’s interests, again generating some alarm but no effective resistance. Such diplomatic, economic, and military “**gray zone tactics”** illustrate that China’s strategic behavior is geared toward the long term rather than the short term, moving from no presence to sustained presence in a host of arenas without generating substantial pushback, much less armed conflict (with the exception of the fighting in Ladakh). That same strategic caution has so far been evident in China’s policy toward Taiwan, where Beijing has dialed up tension and deterred a Taiwanese drive for independence without precipitating a crisis.

Finally, the lesson Xi is likely drawing from Putin’s war in Ukraine is not that territorial aggression would go unpunished militarily by the West but that it would be both difficult and costly. There is no reason to believe that Xi is surrounded, as Putin seems to be, by yes men who will tell him that a war over Taiwan can be easily won. Even if he is, however, the grinding conflict in Ukraine is reminding him that war is unpredictable and rule over a resisting population is costly. The amphibious operation China would need to undertake to seize Taiwan would be far more difficult than the land invasion Russia has carried out in Ukraine. Xi has been reforming the Chinese military’s command structure and ramping up training for such an operation, but Chinese forces remain untested in actual combat operations. Meanwhile, the chances that the United States would intervene to defend Taiwan have increased as anti-Chinese sentiment has risen in the United States and Europe—and after U.S. President Joe Biden remarked last month that defending Taiwan is “the commitment we made.”

Even if Beijing could win a war over Taiwan, it is unclear that it could win what would come next. As painful as Russia’s isolation from Western economies has been for Moscow, the postwar scenario for the Chinese economy would be even more damaging. China imports 70 percent of its oil and 31 percent of its natural gas; it is the world’s largest coal producer but still needs to import more. Although it is striving for food self-sufficiency, China is the world’s largest importer of food, especially corn, meat, seafood, and soybeans. Some of these energy and food imports come from Russia, but many come from countries that would sanction China if it invaded Taiwan. And even if they did not, China’s navy doesn’t have the global reach to defend the shipping routes across which these and many other vital commodities flow. Any war over Taiwan, even a successful one for Beijing, would deal a devastating blow to the Chinese economy, creating conditions that would threaten domestic political stability and usher in the failure, not the realization, of the Chinese dream.

FIGHTING PATIENCE WITH PATIENCE

None of this is reason for American or Taiwanese complacency. China is following the dictum of the ancient strategist Sun-tzu: “To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.” If Beijing eventually succeeds in taking Taiwan, it will fatally undermine Washington’s credibility with its Asian—and even its European—allies, challenging Australia, Japan, South Korea, and other countries to either come to terms with China or prepare to defend themselves without American help.

The only way to defeat China’s Taiwan strategy of strategic patience is to exercise corresponding patience, continually adapting American and Taiwanese deterrence as Chinese arms and training present an ever-changing and ever-growing threat. This is a tall order for the United States at a time when its share of global GDP has declined to less than 25 percent (from 40 percent in 1960) and the U.S. Navy complains that it doesn’t have enough ships to perform all the missions it is charged with. It is an even taller order for an island that spends only 2.1 percent of its GDP on defense and that has only recently begun to move away from an unrealistic reliance on expensive advanced platforms to stave off a Chinese attack and toward a more realistic “porcupine strategy” involving mines, short-range missiles, civil defense, and guerrilla resistance. But if a prolonged standoff in the Taiwan Strait is the most likely prospect for the future, the side that that stays in the game the longest is the one that is likely to come out on top.

#### China isn’t revisionist – economic interdependence and conflict avoidance

Bader 16 – *the senior director for Asian affairs on the National Security Council in the Obama Administration and a former United States Ambassador to Namibia* (Jeffrey, February 2016, “How Xi Jinping Sees the World . . . and Why,” Brookings Institution, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/xi\_jinping\_worldview\_bader-1.pdf)//KH

China’s rise has rightfully been drawing attention since long before Xi Jinping assumed office. But questions about whether China is a threat to the international system, a revisionist power, and a would-be regional hegemon have become much sharper in the three years since he assumed leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. How valid are such concerns?

Xi is certainly a more forceful, assertive, and ambitious leader than his predecessor. He has behind him a China with greater capacity—economic and military—than any of his predecessors.

China’s regional and global footprint is considerably larger than before, and this has made countries near and far anxious. But it would be a mistake, in my view, to view the evolution of China in the last few years primarily as the product of the vision and imagination of an aggressive leader. Most of the actions and trends that worry observers have been present for some time: the military build-up, the assertive behavior in the South and East China Sea, the growing gravitational pull of China’s economy, and the political repression and denial of basic rights to its citizens. There are questions that deserve attention about how Xi is steering China. But the larger questions about China’s direction both pre-date and will post-date Xi’s tenure.

China is likely to continue, whether under Xi or his successor, to follow a zig-zag path in its attitude toward the international system similar to the one described in this paper. It will further develop its relationship with the international system and interdependence with other countries, but at the same selectively adhere to international norms where they fit its interests and ignore or seek to change them where they do not. For example, Chinese economic success is firmly anchored in its relationship with other markets. Autarky and self-reliance are not feasible alternatives. China benefits from international rules and norms not only in the trade and investment area, but in the security realm as well. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and uncontrolled ethnic and civil strife in Central and Western Asia would be damaging to China’s interests.

### AT: Kagan

#### Kagan’s research method is biased and obfuscates American interventionist mistakes

Bacevich 22 – *Professor Emeritus of International Relations and History at Boston University* (Andrew J. Bacevich, April 13, 2022, "Robert Kagan's Selective Memory," American Conservative, https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/robert-kagans-selective-memory/)//KH

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.

### AT: Transition wars

#### Empirics and growing normal powers ensure hegemony decline will be peaceful! Indicts Kagan specifically!

Leonard 22 – *Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations* (Mark, 6-13-2022, "The Real End of Pax Americana," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/japan/2022-06-13/real-end-pax-americana)//KH

Greater German and Japanese assertiveness is likely to go hand in hand with U.S. retrenchment (and a shrinking of Washington’s relative economic and military might) over the long haul, a trend that is unlikely to change with the war in Ukraine. The United States will be forced to concentrate its limited resources on the challenges posed by China. Analysts such as Robert Kagan have argued that Pax Americana could give way to global chaos. That is definitely possible. But it is **not what has happened** in much of the Middle East, where the United States was most engaged for the last two decades and where it is now pulling back most dramatically. Julien Barnes-Dacey and Hugh Lovatt of the European Council on Foreign Relations have described how there was an initial surge in regional competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia and in military conflicts that drew in outside powers, such as Russia and Turkey. But then many of these **conflicts slowed down,** and more locally driven reordering processes began, exemplified by the August 2021 Baghdad conference that brought key regional actors into dialogue with one another.

In Europe, U.S. retrenchment could yield greater sovereignty once Europeans finally realize that the war in Ukraine will not stop Washington’s long-term pivot to Asia. One reason that Europeans have failed to develop a common foreign policy is their lack of trust in one another. But Moscow’s aggression has brought Europeans together, convincing countries that previously favored engagement with Russia, such as Germany and Italy, to embrace a policy of containment. If this convergence holds, one could see a real European strategic alignment, backed eventually by a European armaments industry and even conceivably by a more common European nuclear deterrent (or at least a willingness by France to share its deterrent). In the long term, Europe could forge a common framework to manage relations with other powers, such as Russia and Turkey, including through deterrence, selective decoupling to minimize tensions, and some form of dialogue to prevent escalation. Instead of continuing to expand the EU and NATO, Europe might opt for smaller, more flexible multilateral arrangements involving some of the most important players, much like the Quad in Asia. In short, the European order might become more Asian.

At the same time, Asia is likely to become more European. The United States will maintain its shift in focus to the Indo-Pacific, but its economic and military weight will shrink compared with China’s. As a result, Tokyo and other regional powers will probably strengthen their ties with the United States yet continue to diversify beyond their traditional alliances with Washington. As Michishita put it: “What we are trying to do is to invite more friends into the Japan-U.S. alliance.” Already a new Asian order is emerging that includes ties with the United States and closer cooperation among powers such as Australia, India, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. Jimbo says Asian countries won’t form a NATO-like alliance but rather increase cooperation in areas such as intelligence, maritime security, and law enforcement. In trade and commerce, a certain level of regional integration has already occurred **without Washington’s participation** through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership—which took shape after the United States walked away from its predecessor—and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

In terms of security, a more balanced division of labor could emerge. Europeans will have to take more direct responsibility for security in eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East. In Asia, regional powers will have to invest more in their own capabilities to balance Chinese influence in the region. Elbridge Colby, who served as a U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense in the Trump administration, put it this way in an interview with Nikkei Asia: “The United States is 5,000 miles away from Japan and Taiwan, so we need Japan to do more.” And as the European and Indo-Pacific theaters become more connected—not least through the Sino-Russian rapprochement—it is even possible that European and Asian powers will support one another. Japan and South Korea, for instance, might ask Europeans to reciprocate their support for sanctions on Russia. The result would be more complex regional orders in which the United States still plays an important role but no longer calls the shots.

### Multipolarity

#### Peaceful multipolarity is likely after a hegemonic decline --- changes in German and Japanese dependence indicate broader regional shift

Leonard 22 – *Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations* (Mark, 6-13-2022, "The Real End of Pax Americana," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/japan/2022-06-13/real-end-pax-americana)//KH

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ALLIANCE

The Biden administration hopes that the war in Ukraine will cement a global alliance of democracies, putting both Russia and China on the back foot. As a result, Beijing regards the conflict as a proxy war aimed in part at weakening China by convincing Asian countries of the parallels between Ukraine and Taiwan. The other side of this coin, of course, is Washington’s effort to convince Europeans that if they want to continue to benefit from U.S. support, they will need to align with the United States against China.

But as Germany and Japan become more powerful and more embedded in their respective regional security orders, they are likely to become more assertive in setting their own agendas. That is precisely what happened in the Middle East, where U.S. retrenchment has made countries less willing to follow Washington’s lead without getting something in return. Saudi Arabia, for instance, rejected U.S. requests to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and to increase oil production to meet elevated demand. Instead, Riyadh worked with Moscow to keep oil prices high. Other U.S. allies in the region, including Israel and the United Arab Emirates, have been similarly resistant to U.S. demands.

Many American analysts and officials seem to think that the historic debt of U.S. allies means that they can be expected to side with the United States against China in more and more domains and at ever greater cost. Trump provided the perfect illustration of this when he threatened to withdraw from NATO while demanding that Europeans ban the Chinese technology giant Huawei from their 5G networks.

But the changes afoot in Berlin and Tokyo suggest that a different kind of relationship is on the horizon, one that is more balanced than the alliances Washington built and maintained in the postwar era. As the relative importance of U.S. defense contributions falls and the costs of alignment rise, it seems unlikely that Washington will be able to count on automatic support. Instead, the United States will have to get used to more cooperative and equitable relationships in which alignment is earned. This will create challenges and headaches initially, especially as Washington is forced to rein in its unipolar instincts. But if the new international order proves stable and helps promote U.S. interests, American taxpayers might once again start to see the country’s network of alliances as an asset rather than a drain on public resources. Not only could the burden of providing security be shared more equitably in such an order but the United States and its allies would be able to establish standards and promote liberal values that, although not solely American, would definitely be more American than Chinese. In other words, Pax Americana could give way not to chaos but to a cooperative model of shared leadership.

#### Multipolarity solves – it’s the only option in a post-pandemic world

Zelikow 22 - *Professor of History at the University of Virginia. A former U.S. diplomat and Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, he has worked for five presidential administrations* (Philip, July/August 2022, "The Hollow Order," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2022-06-21/hollow-order-international-system)//KH

IN IT TOGETHER

It may be easy, and perhaps natural, for the would-be architects of the new system to organize it around Washington. But that would be a mistake. The enemies of this new order, united by their resentment of the United States, will seek to discredit it as just another effort to dominate global affairs. For this new order to be viable, it must be conceived in such a way that the charge is false.

The new order must also be decentralized to be effective; the resources and wisdom needed to solve many vexing problems are not concentrated in the United States. For instance**, on the enormous issue of defining rules for a digitized world,** Washington has been confused and passive, despite—or perhaps because of—its dominance in such commerce. It is the European Union that has led the way. The EU’s General Data Protection Regulation, its Digital Services Act, and its Digital Markets Act created the standards that influence most of the world, including the Americas. Decentralized leadership has also proved critical to responding to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. The nucleus of the emerging pro-Ukraine coalition, for instance, is not just the United States but the entire G-7, including the European Commission. South Korea and Australia should be invited to join this coalition as well.

Yet a revised system of world order shouldn’t be limited to the United States and its traditional allies. It must be open to any countries that can and will help attain its common objectives. India should have a place at any symbolic high table, for example, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. But India’s leaders are still making their choices about their will and capacity to work on common problems. Even China should be welcome at the table. After much internal debate in the early 1990s, China’s leaders chose to play a major and often constructive role in the global commonwealth system that emerged after the end of the Cold War. In 2005, Zoellick famously urged Beijing to become a “responsible stakeholder.” As late as 2017, Kurt Campbell, who now leads Asia policy for the Biden White House, thought this invitation was a wise move.

## Misc.

### Yes Taiwan War

#### China will look at Ukraine as motivation for a speedy, violent attack – war!

Brands 22 – *Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor at the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments* (Hal, 4-22-22, "Putin’s Struggles in Ukraine May Embolden Xi on Taiwan,” Asharq Al-Awsat, https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/3605626/hal-brands/putin%E2%80%99s-struggles-ukraine-may-embolden-xi-taiwan)//KH

One of the biggest questions of the Ukraine war concerns tensions half a world away: What lessons will China draw from the Russian invasion?

Western observers hope that Russian President Vladimir Putin’s faltering invasion of Ukraine will convince China to go slow — that it will discourage President Xi Jinping from undertaking an invasion of Taiwan. Yet there’s a real possibility that it could actually induce Beijing to go fast — to use force more harshly and decisively in hopes of avoiding the type of quagmire into which Moscow has stumbled.

Learning from other people’s wars is a time-honored tradition. In the early 20th century, Western observers scrutinized the Russo-Japanese war for hints about the dynamics of modern conflict. During the Cold War, lessons drawn from the Arab-Israeli wars strongly influenced Moscow’s and Washington’s preparations for a superpower showdown that, mercifully, never occurred.

Today, Chinese observers are surely scrutinizing events on the battlefield as well as the global response to Putin’s assault. There are two conflicting narratives about what they are learning.

The first, touted by high-ranking Pentagon officials and some other analysts, is that Ukraine offers a cautionary tale for Beijing. In this telling, Chinese officials now see how hard it is to conquer a country that is fighting for national survival. The People’s Liberation Army, which has not waged a significant conflict in more than 40 years, has likely been sobered by how poorly another autocratic military has executed the complex tasks associated with contemporary warfare.

Xi must also be stunned by the performance of US intelligence, which deprived Putin of anything resembling strategic surprise and has thus given fair warning that China, too, might have any aggressive plans laid bare. The economic costs that the democratic world has imposed on Moscow, the unity it has summoned in response to an unprovoked attack, and the fact that the conflict is creating a larger, more invigorated North Atlantic Treaty Organization cannot escape Xi’s attention, either.

From this vantage point, a bloody war in Europe could help preserve the peace in Asia. It could force Xi’s government to revisit a whole range of assumptions about how well the PLA would perform under wartime stress and what consequences a war might bring down on Beijing.

This is certainly the lesson Western officials want Xi to draw — a desire that surely reflects some of the self-congratulation that has crept into the West’s assessment of its own performance. If the democracies have stunned themselves with their support for Ukraine, then surely Xi has been stunned as well.

Or perhaps China’s ruler is drawing a much different lesson.

Xi has presumably noticed that the US and other democracies have given arms, training and money to Ukraine but refrained from joining the fighting. Beijing may not be impressed with the sanctions imposed on Moscow, given Europe’s reluctance to take more drastic steps, such as quickly halting purchases of Russian energy, that would inflict pain on its own citizens. The Chinese know, moreover, that their larger, more sophisticated economy would be far harder to strangle than Russia’s.

And maybe, in Xi’s view, Putin’s mistake was not his decision to invade Ukraine — it was that he conducted the invasion in such a bumbling, indecisive manner, giving the Ukrainians the chance to fight back and Washington and its allies the opportunity to make Moscow pay.

This interpretation might push Xi in a more dangerous direction. It could convince him that the key to winning a potential Taiwan conflict is to use overwhelming force — ~~crippling~~ [powerful] missile barrages, coordinated cyberattacks, assassination and subversion campaigns, followed by a decisive, large-scale invasion — to break the country’s resistance before the US and other nations can get in the way.

This conclusion would mesh well with a Chinese military tradition that has long emphasized surprise attacks, and with doctrinal writings that call for asserting control of a contest in its earliest moments. “Seize the battlefield initiative, paralyze the enemy’s war command, and give shock to the enemy’s will,” one of China’s authoritative military publications exhorts.

There is, unavoidably, some guesswork here. Even talented China watchers struggle to pierce the opacity of the regime and know what is in Xi’s mind. China’s lessons from Ukraine may evolve as the conflict does: Whether Russia ultimately succeeds or fails could be critical.

The two narratives sketched here aren’t even necessarily contradictory. Putin’s difficulties could give Xi pause about whether to invade Taiwan, while also pushing the PLA to be more forceful in how it conducts any prospective assault.

Yet if Xi is as committed to unification with Taiwan as his public rhetoric and the PLA’s feverish preparations suggest, then “go fast” is at least as plausible a takeaway as “go slow.” American observers need to be wary of mirror-imaging — of assuming that our rivals perceive reality as we do. In supporting Ukraine, the world’s democracies may think they are convincing Xi not to invade Taiwan. They may simply be encouraging him to do it faster and better.

#### Yes invasion – any US attempt at deterrence causes a China-Taiwan war

Mastro 21 – *Center Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University and a Senior Nonresident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute*. (Oriana Skylar, July/August 2021, "The Taiwan Temptation," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-06-03/china-taiwan-war-temptation)//KH

For more than 70 years, China and Taiwan have avoided coming to blows. The two entities have been separated since 1949, when the Chinese Civil War, which had begun in 1927, ended with the Communists’ victory and the Nationalists’ retreat to Taiwan. Ever since, the strait separating Taiwan from mainland China—81 miles wide at its narrowest—has been the site of habitual crises and everlasting tensions, but never outright war. For the past decade and a half, cross-strait relations have been relatively stable. In the hopes of persuading the Taiwanese people of the benefits to be gained through a long-overdue unification, China largely pursued its long-standing policy of “peaceful reunification,” enhancing its economic, cultural, and social ties with the island.

To help the people of Taiwan see the light, Beijing sought to isolate Taipei internationally, offering economic inducements to the island’s allies if they agreed to abandon Taipei for Beijing. It also used its growing economic leverage to weaken Taipei’s position in international organizations and to ensure that countries, corporations, universities, and individuals—everyone, everywhere, really—adhered to its understanding of the “one China” policy. As sharp as these tactics were, they stopped well short of military action. And although Chinese officials always maintained that they had a right to use force, that option seemed off the table.

In recent months, however, there have been disturbing signals that Beijing is reconsidering its peaceful approach and contemplating armed unification. Chinese President Xi Jinping has made clear his ambition to resolve the Taiwan issue, grown markedly more aggressive on issues of sovereignty, and ordered the Chinese military to increase its activity near the island. He has also fanned the flames of Chinese nationalism and allowed discussion of a forceful takeover of Taiwan to creep into the mainstream of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The palpable shift in Beijing’s thinking has been made possible by a decades-long military modernization effort, accelerated by Xi, aimed at allowing China to force Taiwan back into the fold. Chinese forces plan to prevail even if the United States, which has armed Taiwan but left open the question of whether it would defend it against an attack, intervenes militarily. Whereas Chinese leaders used to view a military campaign to take the island as a fantasy, now they consider it a real possibility.

U.S. policymakers may hope that Beijing will balk at the potential costs of such aggression, but there are many reasons to think it might not. Support for armed unification among the Chinese public and the military establishment is growing. Concern for international norms is subsiding. Many in Beijing also doubt that the United States has the military power to stop China from taking Taiwan—or the international clout to rally an effective coalition against China in the wake of Donald Trump’s presidency. Although a Chinese invasion of Taiwan may not be imminent, for the first time in three decades, it is time to take seriously the possibility that China could soon use force to end its almost century-long civil war.

“NO OPTION IS EXCLUDED”

Those who doubt the immediacy of the threat to Taiwan argue that Xi has not publicly declared a timeline for unification—and may not even have a specific one in mind. Since 1979, when the United States stopped recognizing Taiwan, China’s policy has been, in the words of John Culver, a retired U.S. intelligence officer and Asia analyst, “to preserve the possibility of political unification at some undefined point in the future.” Implied in this formulation is that China can live with the status quo—a de facto, but not de jure, independent Taiwan—in perpetuity.

But although Xi may not have sent out a save-the-date card, he has clearly indicated that he feels differently about the status quo than his predecessors did. He has publicly called for progress toward unification, staking his legitimacy on movement in that direction. In 2017, for instance, he announced that “complete national reunification is an inevitable requirement for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” thus tying Taiwan’s future to his primary political platform. Two years later, he stated explicitly that unification is a requirement for achieving the so-called Chinese dream.

Xi has also made clear that he is more willing than his predecessors to use force. In a major speech in January 2019, Xi called the current political arrangement “the root cause of cross-strait instability” and said that it “cannot go on generation to generation.” Chinese scholars and strategists I have spoken to in Beijing say that although there is no explicit timeline, **Xi wants unification with Taiwan to be part of his personal legacy.** When asked about a possible timeline by an Associated Press journalist in April, Le Yucheng, China’s vice foreign minister, did not attempt to assuage concerns of an imminent invasion or deny the shift in mood in Beijing. Instead, he took the opportunity to reiterate that national unification “will not be stopped by anyone or any force” and that while China will strive for peaceful unification, it does not “pledge to give up other options. No option is excluded.”

Chinese leaders, including Xi, regularly extol the virtues of integration and cooperation with Taiwan, but the prospects for peaceful unification have been dwindling for years. Fewer and fewer Taiwanese see themselves as Chinese or desire to be a part of mainland China. The reelection in January 2020 of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, who favors pursuing more cautious ties with China, reinforced Beijing’s fears that the people of Taiwan will never willingly come back to the motherland. The death knell for peaceful unification came in June 2020, however, when China exerted sweeping new powers over Hong Kong through a new national security law. Hong Kong’s “one country, two systems” formula was supposed to provide an attractive template for peaceful unification, but Beijing’s crackdown there demonstrated clearly why the Taiwanese have been right to reject such an arrangement.

Many in Beijing doubt that the United States has the military power to stop China from taking Taiwan.

Chinese leaders will continue to pay lip service to peaceful unification until the day the war breaks out, but their actions increasingly suggest that they have something else in mind. As tensions with the United States have heated up, China has accelerated its military operations in the vicinity of Taiwan, conducting 380 incursions into the island’s air defense identification zone in 2020 alone. In April of this year, China sent its largest-ever fleet, 25 fighters and bombers, into Taiwan’s air defense identification zone. Clearly, Xi is no longer trying to avoid escalation at all costs now that his military is capable of contesting the U.S. military presence in the region. Long gone are the days of the 1996 crisis over Taiwan, when the United States dispatched two aircraft carrier battle groups to sail near the strait and China backed off. Beijing did not like being deterred back then, and it spent the next 25 years modernizing its military so that it would not be so next time.

Much of that modernization, including updates to hardware, organization, force structure, and training, was designed to enable the People’s Liberation Army to invade and occupy Taiwan. Xi expanded the military’s capabilities further, undertaking the most ambitious restructuring of the PLA since its founding, aimed specifically at enabling Chinese forces to conduct joint operations in which the air force, the navy, the army, and the strategic rocket force fight seamlessly together, whether during an amphibious landing, a blockade, or a missile attack—exactly the kinds of operations needed for armed unification. Xi urgently pushed these risky reforms, many unpopular with the military, to ensure that the PLA could fight and win wars by 2020.

The voices in Beijing arguing that it is time to use these newfound military capabilities against Taiwan have grown louder, a telling development in an era of greater censorship. Several retired military officers have argued publicly that the longer China waits, the harder it will be to take control of Taiwan. Articles in state-run news outlets and on popular websites have likewise urged China to act swiftly. And if public opinion polls are to be believed, the Chinese people agree that the time has come to resolve the Taiwan issue once and for all. According to a survey by the state-run Global Times, 70 percent of mainlanders strongly support using force to unify Taiwan with the mainland, and 37 percent think it would be best if the war occurred in **three to five years.**

The Chinese analysts and officials I have spoken to have revealed similar sentiments. Even moderate voices have admitted that not only are calls for armed unification proliferating within the CCP but also they themselves have recommended military action to senior Chinese leadership. Others in Beijing dismiss concerns about a Chinese invasion as overblown, but in the same breath, they acknowledge that Xi is surrounded by military advisers who tell him with confidence that China can now regain Taiwan by force at an acceptable cost.

BATTLE READY

Unless the United States or Taiwan moves first to alter the status quo, Xi will likely consider initiating armed unification only if he is confident that his military can successfully gain control of the island. Can it?

The answer is a matter of debate, and it depends on what it would take to compel Taiwan’s capitulation. Beijing is preparing for four main campaigns that its military planners believe could be necessary to take control of the island. The first consists of joint PLA missile and airstrikes to disarm Taiwanese targets—initially military and government, then civilian—and thereby force Taipei’s submission to Chinese demands. The second is a blockade operation in which China would attempt to cut the island off from the outside world with everything from naval raids to cyberattacks. The third involves missile and airstrikes against U.S. forces deployed nearby, with the aim of making it difficult for the United States to come to Taiwan’s aid in the initial stages of the conflict. The fourth and final campaign is an island landing effort in which China would launch an amphibious assault on Taiwan—perhaps taking its offshore islands first as part of a phased invasion or carpet bombing them as the navy, the army, and the air force focused on Taiwan proper.

Among defense experts, there is little debate about China’s ability to pull off the first three of these campaigns—the joint strike, the blockade, and the counterintervention mission. Neither U.S. efforts to make its regional bases more resilient nor Taiwanese missile defense systems are any match for China’s ballistic and cruise missiles, which are the most advanced in the world. China could quickly destroy Taiwan’s key infrastructure, block its oil imports, and cut off its Internet access—and sustain such a blockade indefinitely. According to Lonnie Henley, a retired U.S. intelligence officer and China specialist, “U.S. forces could probably push through a trickle of relief supplies, but not much more.” And because China has such a sophisticated air defense system, the United States would have little hope of regaining air or naval superiority by attacking Chinese missile transporters, fighters, or ships.

But China’s fourth and final campaign—an amphibious assault on the island itself—is far from guaranteed to succeed. According to a 2020 U.S. Department of Defense report, “China continues to build capabilities that would contribute to a full-scale invasion,” but “an attempt to invade Taiwan would likely strain China’s armed forces and invite international intervention.” The then commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Philip Davidson, said in March that China will have the ability to successfully invade Taiwan in six years. Other observers think it will take longer, perhaps until around 2030 or 2035.

The voices in Beijing arguing that it is time to use newfound military capabilities against Taiwan have grown louder.

What everyone agrees is that China has made significant strides in its ability to conduct joint operations in recent years and that the United States needs adequate warning to mount a successful defense. As Beijing hones its spoofing and jamming technologies, it may be able to scramble U.S. early warning systems and thereby keep U.S. forces in the dark in the early hours of an attack. Xi’s military reforms have improved China’s cyberwarfare and electronic warfare capabilities, which could be trained on civilian, as well as military, targets. As Dan Coats, then the U.S. director of national intelligence, testified in 2019, Beijing is capable of **offensive cyberattacks** against the United States that would cause “localized, temporary disruptive effects on critical infrastructure.” China’s offensive weaponry, including ballistic and cruise missiles, could also destroy U.S. bases in the western Pacific in a matter of days.

In light of these enhanced capabilities, many U.S. experts worry that China could take control of Taiwan before the United States even had a chance to react. Recent war games conducted by the Pentagon and the RAND Corporation have shown that a military clash between the United States and China over Taiwan would likely result in a U.S. defeat, with China completing an all-out invasion in just days or weeks.

Ultimately, on the question of whether China will use force, Chinese leaders’ perceptions of their chances of victory will matter more than their actual chances of victory. For that reason, it is bad news that Chinese analysts and officials increasingly express confidence that the PLA is well prepared for a military confrontation with the United States over Taiwan. Although Chinese strategists acknowledge the United States’ general military superiority, many have come to believe that because China is closer to Taiwan and cares about it more, the local balance of power tips in Beijing’s favor.

As U.S.-Chinese tensions have risen, China’s state-sponsored media outlets have grown more vocal in their praise for the country’s military capabilities. In April, the Global Times described an unnamed military expert saying that “the PLA exercises are not only warnings, but also show real capabilities and pragmatically practicing reunifying the island if it comes to that.” If China chooses to invade, the analyst added, the Taiwanese military “won’t stand a chance.”

GO FAST, GO SLOW

Once China has the military capabilities to finally solve its Taiwan problem, Xi could find it politically untenable not to do so, given the heightened nationalism of both the CCP and the public. At this point, Beijing will likely work its way up to a large-scale military campaign, beginning with “gray zone” tactics, such as increased air and naval patrols, and continuing on to coercive diplomacy aimed at forcing Taipei to negotiate a political resolution.

Psychological warfare will also be part of Beijing’s playbook. Chinese exercises around Taiwan not only help train the PLA but also wear down Taiwan’s military and demonstrate to the world that the United States cannot protect the island. The PLA wants to make its presence in the Taiwan Strait routine. The more common its activities there become, the harder it will be for the United States to determine when a Chinese attack is imminent, making it easier for the PLA to present the world with a fait accompli.

At the same time that it ramps up its military activities in the strait, China will continue its broader diplomatic campaign to eliminate international constraints on its ability to use force, privileging economic rights over political ones in its relations with other countries and within international bodies, downplaying human rights, and, above all, promoting the norms of sovereignty and noninterference in internal affairs. Its goal is to create the narrative that any use of force against Taiwan would be defensive and justified given Taipei’s and Washington’s provocations. All these coercive and diplomatic efforts will move China closer to unification, but they won’t get it all the way there. Taiwan is not some unoccupied atoll in the South China Sea that China can successfully claim so long as other countries do not respond militarily. China needs Taiwan’s complete capitulation, and that will likely require a significant show of force.

If Beijing decides to initiate a campaign to forcibly bring Taiwan under Chinese sovereignty, it will try to calibrate its actions to discourage U.S. intervention. It might, for example, begin with low-cost military options, such as joint missile and airstrikes, and only escalate to a blockade, a seizure of offshore islands, and, finally, a full-blown invasion if its earlier actions fail to compel Taiwan to capitulate. Conducted slowly over the course of many months, such a gradual approach to armed unification would make it difficult for the United States to mount a strong response, especially if U.S. allies and partners in the region wish to avoid a war at all costs. A gradual, coercive approach would also force Washington to initiate direct hostilities between the two powers. And if China has not fired a shot at U.S. forces, the United States would find it harder to make the case at home and in Asian capitals for a U.S. military intervention to turn back a slow-motion Chinese invasion. An incremental approach would have domestic political benefits for Beijing, as well. If China received more international pushback than expected or became embroiled in a campaign against the United States that started to go badly, it would have more opportunities to pull back and claim “mission accomplished.”

But China could decide to escalate much more rapidly if it concluded that the United States was likely to intervene militarily regardless of whether Beijing moved swiftly or gradually. Chinese military strategists believe that if they give the United States time to mobilize and amass firepower in the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait, China’s chances of victory will decrease substantially. As a result, they could decide to preemptively hit U.S. bases in the region, crippling Washington’s ability to respond.

In other words, **U.S. deterrence**—to the extent that it is based on a credible threat to intervene militarily to protect Taiwan—could actually **incentivize an attack on U.S. forces** once Beijing has decided to act. The more credible the American threat to intervene, the more likely China would be to hit U.S. forces in the region in its opening salvo. But if China thought the United States might stay out of the conflict, it would decline to attack U.S. forces in the region, since doing so would inevitably bring the United States into the war.

#### Taiwan war is definite – assumes possibilities of economic isolationism

Mastro 21 – *Center Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University and a Senior Nonresident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute*. (Oriana Skylar, July/August 2021, "The Taiwan Temptation," Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-06-03/china-taiwan-war-temptation>//KH

WISHFUL THINKING

What might dissuade Xi from pursuing armed unification, if not U.S. military might? Most Western analysts believe that Xi’s devotion to his signature plan to achieve the “Chinese dream” of “national rejuvenation,” which requires him to maintain economic growth and improve China’s international standing, will deter him from using military force and risking derailing his agenda. They argue that the economic costs of a military campaign against Taiwan would be too high, that China would be left completely isolated internationally, and that Chinese occupation of the island would tie up Beijing for decades to come.

But these arguments about the cost of armed unification are based more on American projections and wishful thinking than on fact. A protracted, high-intensity conflict would indeed be costly for China, but Chinese war planners have set out to avoid this scenario; China is unlikely to attack Taiwan unless it is confident that it can achieve a quick victory, ideally before the United States can even respond.

Even if China found itself in a protracted war with the United States, however, Chinese leaders may believe they have social and economic advantages that would enable them to outlast the Americans. They see the Chinese people as more willing to make sacrifices for the cause of Taiwan than the American people. Some argue, too, that China’s large domestic market makes it less reliant on international trade than many other countries. (The more China economically decouples from the United States and the closer it gets to technological self-sufficiency, the greater this advantage will be.) Chinese leaders could also take comfort in their ability to quickly transition to an industrial wartime footing. The United States has no such ability to rapidly produce military equipment.

International isolation and coordinated punishment of Beijing might seem like a greater threat to Xi’s great Chinese experiment. Eight of China’s top ten trading partners are democracies, and nearly 60 percent of China’s exports go to the United States and its allies. If these countries responded to a Chinese assault on Taiwan by severing trade ties with China, the economic costs could threaten the developmental components of Xi’s rejuvenation plan.

Once China has the military capabilities to solve its Taiwan problem, Xi could find it politically untenable not to do so.

But Chinese leaders have good reason to suspect that international isolation and opprobrium would be relatively mild. When China began to cultivate strategic partnerships in the mid-1990s, it required other countries and organizations, including the European Union, to sign long-term agreements to prioritize these relationships and proactively manage any tensions or disruptions. All these agreements mention trade, investment, economic cooperation, and working together in the United Nations. Most include provisions in support of Beijing’s position on Taiwan. (Since 1996, China has convinced more than a dozen countries to switch their diplomatic recognition to Beijing, leaving Taiwan with only 15 remaining allies.) In other words, many of China’s most important trading partners have already sent a strong signal that they will not let Taiwan derail their relationships with Beijing.

Whether compelling airlines to take Taiwan off their maps or pressuring Paramount Pictures to remove the Taiwanese flag from the Top Gun hero Maverick’s jacket, China has largely succeeded in convincing many countries that Taiwan is an internal matter that they should stay out of. Australia has been cautious about expanding its military cooperation with the United States and reluctant even to consider joint contingency planning over Taiwan (although the tide seems to be shifting in Canberra). Opinion polls show that most Europeans value their economic ties with China and the United States roughly the same and don’t want to be caught in the middle. Southeast Asia feels similarly, with polls showing that the majority of policymakers and thought leaders from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations believe the best approach to U.S.-Chinese sparring is for the association to “enhance its own resilience and unity to fend off their pressures.” One South Korean official put it more memorably in an interview with The Atlantic, comparing the need to pick sides in the U.S.-Chinese dispute to “asking a child whether you like your dad or your mom.” Such attitudes suggest that the United States would struggle to convince its allies to isolate China. And if the international reaction to Beijing’s crackdowns in Hong Kong and Xinjiang is any indication, the most China can expect after an invasion of Taiwan are some symbolic sanctions and words of criticism.

The risk that a bloody insurgency in Taiwan will drag on for years and drain Beijing of resources is no more of a deterrent—and the idea that it would be says more about the United States’ scars from Afghanistan and Iraq than about likely scenarios for Taiwan. The PLA’s military textbooks assume the need for a significant campaign to consolidate power after its troops have landed and broken through Taiwan’s coastal defenses, but they do not express much concern about it. This may be because although the PLA has not fought a war since 1979, China has ample experience with internal repression and dedicates more resources to that mission than to its military. The People’s Armed Police boasts at least 1.5 million members, whose primary mission is suppressing opposition. Compared with the military task of invading and seizing Taiwan in the first place, occupying it probably looks like a piece of cake.

For all these reasons, Xi may believe he can regain control of Taiwan without jeopardizing his Chinese dream. It is telling that in the flood of commentary on Taiwan that has come out of China in recent months, few articles have mentioned the costs of war or the potential reaction from the international community. As one retired high-level military officer explained to me recently, China’s main concern isn’t the costs; it’s sovereignty. Chinese leaders will always fight for what is theirs. And if China defeats the United States along the way, it will become the new dominant power in the Asia-Pacific. The prospects are tantalizing. The worst-case scenario, moreover, is that the United States reacts more quickly and effectively than expected, forcing China to declare victory after limited gains and go home. Beijing would live to capture Taiwan another day.

#### Taiwan – half cut because I am not sure what its use is

Green and Talmadge – *\*Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati; \*\*Associate Professor of Security Studies at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.* (Brendan Rittenhouse\* and Caitlin\*\*, July/August 2022, "The Consequences of Conquest," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-06-16/consequences-conquest-taiwan-)//KH

Of all the intractable issues that could spark a hot war between the United States and China, **Taiwan is at the very top of the lis**t. And the potential geopolitical consequences of such a war would be profound. Taiwan—“an unsinkable aircraft carrier and submarine tender,” as U.S. Army General Douglas MacArthur once described it—has important, often underappreciated military value as a gateway to the Philippine Sea, a vital theater for defending Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea from possible Chinese coercion or attack. There is no guarantee that China would win a war for the island—or that such a conflict wouldn’t drag on for years and weaken China. But if Beijing gained control of Taiwan and based military assets there, China’s military position would improve markedly.

Beijing’s ocean surveillance assets and submarines, in particular, could make control of Taiwan a substantial boon to Chinese military power. Even without any major technological or military leaps, possession of the island would improve China’s ability to impede U.S. naval and air operations in the Philippine Sea and thereby limit the United States’ ability to defend its Asian allies. And if, in the future, Beijing were to develop a large fleet of quiet nuclear attack submarines and ballistic missile submarines, basing them on Taiwan would enable China to threaten Northeast Asian shipping lanes and strengthen its sea-based nuclear forces.

Clearly, the island’s military value bolsters the argument for keeping Taiwan out of China’s grasp. The strength of that case, however, depends on several factors, including whether one assumes that China would pursue additional territorial expansion after occupying Taiwan and make the long-term military and technological investments needed to take full advantage of the island. It also depends on the broader course of U.S. China policy. Washington could remain committed to its current approach of containing the expansion of Chinese power through a combination of political commitments to U.S. partners and allies in Asia and a significant forward military presence. Or it might adopt a more flexible policy that retains commitments only to core treaty allies and reduces forward deployed forces. Or it might reduce all such commitments as part of a more restrained approach. Regardless of which of these three strategies the United States pursues, however, Chinese control of Taiwan would limit the U.S. military’s ability to operate in the Pacific and would potentially threaten U.S. interests there.

But the issue is not just that Taiwan’s tremendous military value poses problems for any U.S. grand strategy. It is that no matter what Washington does—whether it attempts to keep Taiwan out of Chinese hands or not—it will be forced to run risks and incur costs in its standoff with Beijing. As the place where all the dilemmas of U.S. policy toward China collide, Taiwan presents one of the toughest and most dangerous problems in the world. Simply put, Washington has few good options there and a great many bad ones that could court calamity.

TAIWAN IN THE BALANCE

A Chinese assault on Taiwan could shift the military balance of power in Asia in any number of ways. If China were to take the island swiftly and easily, many of its military assets geared toward a Taiwan campaign might be freed up to pursue other military objectives. China might also be able to assimilate Taiwan’s strategic resources, such as its military equipment, personnel, and semiconductor industry, all of which would bolster Beijing’s military power. But if China were to find itself bogged down in a prolonged conquest or occupation of Taiwan, the attempt at forced unification might become a significant drag on Beijing’s might.

Any campaign that delivers Taiwan to China, however, would allow Beijing to base important military hardware there—in particular, underwater surveillance devices and submarines, along with associated air and coastal defense assets. Stationed in Taiwan, these assets would do more than simply extend China’s reach eastward by the length of the Taiwan Strait, as would be the case if China based missiles, aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, or other weapons systems on the island. Underwater surveillance and submarines, by contrast, would improve Beijing’s ability to impede U.S. operations in the Philippine Sea, an area that would be of vital importance in many possible future conflict scenarios involving China.

The most likely scenarios revolve around the United States defending its allies along the so-called first island chain off the Asian mainland, which starts north of Japan and runs southwest through Taiwan and the Philippines before curling up toward Vietnam. For example, U.S. naval operations in these waters would be essential to protecting Japan against potential Chinese threats in the East China Sea and at the southern end of the Ryukyu Islands. Such U.S. operations would also be important in most scenarios for defending the Philippines, and for any scenario that might lead to U.S. strikes on the Chinese mainland, such as a major conflagration on the Korean Peninsula. U.S. naval operations in the Philippine Sea will become even more important as China’s growing missile capabilities render land-based aircraft and their regional bases increasingly vulnerable, forcing the United States to rely more heavily on aircraft and missiles launched from ships.

If a war in the Pacific were to break out today, China’s ability to conduct effective over-the-horizon attacks—that is, attacks targeting U.S. ships at distances that exceed the line of sight to the horizon—would be more limited than commonly supposed. China might be able to target forward-deployed U.S. aircraft carriers and other ships in a first strike that commences a war. But once a conflict is underway, China’s best surveillance assets—large radars located on the mainland that allow China to “see” over the horizon—are likely to be quickly destroyed. The same is true of Chinese surveillance aircraft or ships in the vicinity of U.S. naval forces.

Chinese satellites would be unlikely to make up for these losses. Using techniques the United States honed during the Cold War, U.S. naval forces would probably be able to control their own radar and communications signatures and thereby avoid detection by Chinese satellites that listen for electronic emissions. Without intelligence from these specialized signal-collecting assets, China’s imaging satellites would be left to randomly search vast swaths of ocean for U.S. forces. Under these conditions, U.S. forces operating in the Philippine Sea would face real but tolerable risks of long-range attacks, and U.S. leaders probably would not feel immediate pressure to escalate the conflict by attacking Chinese satellites.

If China were to wrest control of Taiwan, however, the situation would look quite different. China could place underwater microphones called hydrophones in the waters off the island’s east coast, which are much deeper than the waters Beijing currently controls inside the first island chain. Placed at the appropriate depth, these specialized sensors could listen outward and detect the low-frequency sounds of U.S. surface ships thousands of miles away, enabling China to more precisely locate them with satellites and target them with missiles. (U.S. submarines are too quiet for these hydrophones to detect.) Such capabilities could force the United States to restrict its surface ships to areas outside the range of the hydrophones—or else carry out risky and **escalatory attacks** on Chinese satellites. Neither of these options is appealing.

Washington has few good options on Taiwan and a great many bad ones that could court calamity.

Chinese hydrophones off Taiwan would be difficult for the United States to destroy. Only highly specialized submarines or unmanned underwater vehicles could disable them, and China would be able to defend them with a variety of means, including mines. Even if the United States did manage to damage China’s hydrophone cables, Chinese repair ships could mend them under the cover of air defenses China could deploy on the island.

The best hope for disrupting Chinese hydrophone surveillance would be to attack the vulnerable processing stations where the data comes ashore via fiber-optic cables. But those stations could prove hard to find. The cables can be buried on land as well as under the sea, and nothing distinguishes the buildings where data processing is done from similar nondescript military buildings. The range of possible U.S. targets could include hundreds of individual structures inside multiple well-defended military locations across Taiwan.

Control of Taiwan would do more than enhance Chinese ocean surveillance capabilities, however. It would also give China an advantage in submarine warfare. With Taiwan in friendly hands, the United States can defend against Chinese attack submarines by placing underwater sensors in key locations to pick up the sounds the submarines emit. The United States likely deploys such upward-facing hydrophones—for listening at shorter distances—along the bottom of narrow chokepoints at the entrances to the Philippine Sea, including in the gaps between the Philippines, the Ryukyu Islands, and Taiwan. At such close ranges, these instruments can briefly detect even the quietest submarines, allowing U.S. air and surface assets to trail them. During a crisis, that could prevent Chinese submarines from getting a “free shot” at U.S. ships in the early stages of a war, when forward-deployed U.S. naval assets would be at their most vulnerable.

If China were to gain control of Taiwan, however, it would be able to base submarines and supporting air and coastal defenses on the island. Chinese submarines would then be able to slip from their pens in Taiwan’s eastern deep-water ports directly into the Philippine Sea, bypassing the chokepoints where U.S. hydrophones would be listening. Chinese defenses on Taiwan would also prevent the United States and its allies from using their best tools for trailing submarines—maritime patrol aircraft and helicopter-equipped ships—near the island, making it much easier for Chinese submarines to strike first in a crisis and reducing their attrition rate in a war. Control of Taiwan would have the added advantage of reducing the distance between Chinese submarine bases and their patrol areas from an average of 670 nautical miles to zero, enabling China to operate more submarines at any given time and carry out more attacks against U.S. forces. Chinese submarines could also make use of the more precise targeting data collected by hydrophones and satellites, dramatically improving their effectiveness against U.S. surface ships.

UNDER THE SEA

Over time, unification with Taiwan could offer China even greater military advantages if it were to invest in a fleet of much quieter advanced nuclear attack and ballistic missile submarines. Operated from Taiwan’s east coast, these submarines would strengthen China’s nuclear deterrent and allow it to threaten Northeast Asian shipping and naval routes in the event of a war.

Currently, China’s submarine force is poorly equipped for a campaign against the oil and maritime trade of U.S. allies. Global shipping has traditionally proved resilient in the face of such threats because it is possible to reroute vessels outside the range of hostile forces. Even the closure of the Suez Canal between 1967 and 1975 did not paralyze global trade, since ships were instead able to go around the Cape of Good Hope, albeit at some additional cost. This resiliency means that Beijing would have to target shipping routes as they migrated north or west across the Pacific Ocean, likely near ports in Northeast Asia. But most of China’s current attack submarines are low-endurance diesel-electric boats that would struggle to operate at such distances, while its few longer-endurance nuclear-powered submarines are noisy and thus vulnerable to detection by U.S. outward-facing hydrophones that could be deployed along the so-called second island chain, which stretches southeast from Japan through the Northern Mariana Islands and past Guam.

Similarly, China’s current crop of ballistic missile submarines do little to strengthen China’s nuclear deterrent. The ballistic missiles they carry can at best target Alaska and the northwest corner of the United States when launched within the first island chain. And because the submarines are vulnerable to detection, they would struggle to reach open ocean areas where they could threaten the rest of the United States.

Seizing Taiwan would offer Beijing the kind of military option that previous great powers found very useful.

Even a future Chinese fleet of much quieter advanced nuclear attack or ballistic missile submarines capable of evading outward-facing hydrophones along the second island chain would still have to pass over U.S. upward-facing hydrophones nestled at the exits to the first island chain. These barriers would enable the United States to impose substantial losses on Chinese advanced nuclear attack submarines going to and from Northeast Asian shipping lanes and greatly impede the missions of Chinese ballistic missile submarines, of which there would almost certainly be fewer.

But if it were to acquire Taiwan, China would be able to avoid U.S. hydrophones along the first island chain, unlocking the military potential of quieter submarines. These vessels would have direct access to the Philippine Sea and the protection of Chinese air and coastal defenses, which would keep trailing U.S. ships and aircraft at bay. A fleet of quiet nuclear attack submarines deployed from Taiwan would also have the endurance for a campaign against Northeast Asian shipping lanes. And a fleet of quiet ballistic missile submarines with access to the open ocean would enable China to more credibly threaten the continental United States with a sea-launched nuclear attack.

Of course, it remains to be seen whether China can master more advanced quieting techniques or solve a number of problems that have plagued its nuclear-powered submarines. And the importance of the anti-shipping and sea-based nuclear capabilities is open for debate, since their relative impact will depend on what other capabilities China does or doesn’t develop and on what strategic goals China pursues in the future. Still, the behavior of past great powers is instructive. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union both invested heavily in attack submarines, and the latter made a similar investment in ballistic missile submarines. The democratic adversaries of those countries felt deeply threatened by these undersea capabilities and mounted enormous efforts to neutralize them. A Chinese seizure of Taiwan would thus offer Beijing the kind of military option that previous great powers found very useful.

NO GOOD OPTIONS

A fuller understanding of Taiwan’s military value clearly bolsters the argument in favor of keeping the island in friendly hands. Yet just how decisive that argument should be depends, in part, on what overall strategy the United States pursues in Asia. And whatever approach Washington adopts, it will have to contend with challenges and dilemmas stemming from the military advantages that Taiwan has the potential to confer on whoever controls it.

If the United States maintains its current strategy of containing China, retaining its network of alliances and forward military presence in Asia, defending Taiwan could be extremely costly. After all, the island’s military value gives China a strong motive for seeking unification, beyond the nationalist impulses most commonly cited. Deterring Beijing would therefore probably require abandoning the long-standing U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity about whether Washington would come to the island’s defense in favor of a crystal-clear commitment of military support.

But ending strategic ambiguity could provoke the very crisis the policy is designed to prevent. It would almost certainly heighten pressures for an arms race between the United States and China in anticipation of a conflict, intensifying the already dangerous competition between the two powers. And even if a policy of strategic clarity were successful in deterring a Chinese attempt to take Taiwan, it would likely spur China to compensate for its military disadvantages in some other way, further heightening tensions.

Alternatively, the United States might pursue a more flexible security perimeter that eliminates its commitment to Taiwan while still retaining its treaty alliances and some forward-deployed military forces in Asia. Such an approach would reduce the chance of a conflict over Taiwan, but it would carry other military costs, again owing to the island’s military value. U.S. forces would need to conduct their missions in an arena made much more dangerous by Chinese submarines and hydrophones deployed off the east coast of Taiwan. As a result, the United States might need to develop decoys to deceive Chinese sensors, devise ways to operate outside their normal range, or prepare to cut the cables that connect these sensors to onshore processing centers in the event of war. Washington would almost certainly want to ramp up its efforts to disrupt Chinese satellites.

Should the United States take this approach, reassuring U.S. allies would become a much more arduous task. Precisely because control of Taiwan would grant Beijing significant military advantages, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea would likely demand strong demonstrations of a continuing U.S. commitment. Japan, in particular, would be inclined to worry that a diminished U.S. ability to operate on the surface of the Philippine Sea would translate into enhanced Chinese coercion or attack capability, especially given the proximity of Japan’s southernmost islands to Taiwan.

Over the longer term, U.S. allies in the region would also likely fear the growing Chinese threat to shipping routes and worry that a stronger sea-based Chinese nuclear deterrent would reduce the credibility of U.S. commitments to defend them from attack. Anticipation of these dangers would almost certainly drive U.S. allies to seek greater reassurance from the United States in the form of tighter defense pacts, additional military aid, and more visible U.S. force deployments in the region, including of nuclear forces on or near allies’ territory and perhaps collaborating with their governments on nuclear planning. East Asia could come to look much like Europe did in the later stages of the Cold War, with U.S. allies demanding demonstrations of their U.S. patron’s commitment in the face of doubts about the military balance of power. If the Cold War is any guide, such steps could themselves heighten the risks of nuclear escalation in a crisis or a war.

Finally, the United States might pursue a strategy that ends its commitment to Taiwan and also reduces its military presence in Asia and other alliance commitments in the region. Such a policy might limit direct U.S. military support to the defense of Japan or even wind down all U.S. commitments in East Asia. But even in this case, Taiwan’s potential military value to China would still have the potential to create dangerous regional dynamics. Worried that some of its islands might be next, Japan might fight to defend Taiwan, even if the United States did not. The result might be a major-power war in Asia that could draw in the United States, willingly or not. Such a war would be devastating. Yet upsetting the current delicate equilibrium by ceding this militarily valuable island could make such a war more likely, reinforcing a core argument in favor of current U.S. grand strategy: that U.S. alliance commitments and forward military presence exert a deterring and constraining effect on conflict in the region.

Ultimately, however, Taiwan’s unique military value poses problems for all three U.S. grand strategies. Whether the United States solidifies its commitment to Taiwan and its allies in Asia or walks them back, in full or in part, the island’s potential to alter the region’s military balance will force Washington to confront difficult tradeoffs, ceding military maneuverability in the region or else risking an arms race or even an open conflict with China. Such is the wicked nature of the problem posed by Taiwan, which sits at the nexus of U.S.-Chinese relations, geopolitics, and the military balance in Asia. Regardless of what grand strategy Washington pursues, the island’s military value will present some hazard or exact some price.

### No Taiwan war

#### Beckley and Brands are wrong – Ukraine reinforces Xi’s commitment to the long game which prevents Taiwan war!

Nathan 22 – *professor at Columbia polisci, Ph.D., Harvard, MA, Harvard, BA, Harvard* (Andrew J. Nathan, 6-23-2022, "Beijing Is Still Playing the Long Game on Taiwan," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-06-23/beijing-still-playing-long-game-taiwan)//KH

Concern is growing in Taiwan, in the United States, and among U.S. allies in Asia that China is preparing to attack Taiwan in the near future. Testifying before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee last year, Admiral Philip Davidson, then the commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, warned that Beijing might attempt to seize the island in the next six years. Unifying Taiwan with mainland China is a key element of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s “Chinese dream.” And as the political scientist Oriana Skylar Mastro has argued in these pages, Xi wants “unification with Taiwan to be part of his personal legacy,” suggesting that an armed invasion could come before the end of his third term as secretary-general of the Chinese Communist Party in 2027 and almost certainly before the end of his probable fourth term in 2032.

Putin’s war in Ukraine has intensified these concerns. Xi’s announcement just before the Russian invasion of a “no limits” partnership with Moscow, coupled with his failure to condemn Putin’s actions and the Chinese media’s endorsement of Russian propaganda, seem to signal Beijing’s support for Russia’s territorial aggression. Beijing may see a strategic opening now that U.S. political and military resources are tied up in Europe. Moreover, Chinese leaders may have interpreted the West’s response to the Russian attack as an indication that the United States will not intervene militarily to defend a country to which it is not bound by a defense treaty, especially against a nuclear-armed adversary. As David Sacks of the Council on Foreign Relations has argued, “Chinese policymakers may conclude that Russia’s nuclear arsenal effectively deterred the United States, which would be unwilling to go to war with a nuclear power over Taiwan.”

But fears of an imminent Chinese attack are misplaced. For decades, China’s policy toward Taiwan has been characterized by strategic patience, as has its approach to other territorial claims and disputes—from India to the South China Sea. Far from spurring China to jettison this approach in favor of an imminent military assault on Taiwan, the war in Ukraine will reinforce Beijing’s commitment to playing the long game. The price Moscow has paid, both militarily and in the form of international isolation, is but a fraction of what China could expect if it were to attempt to take Taiwan by force. Better to wait patiently for Taiwan’s eventual surrender, as Beijing sees it, than to strike now and risk winning the island at too high a cost—or losing it forever.

IMPENDING ATTACK?

Fear that China will attack Taiwan had been growing well before Putin invaded Ukraine. As Robert Blackwill and Philip Zelikow observed in a 2021 report published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Taiwan is “becoming the most dangerous flash point in the world for a possible war that would involve the United States of America, China, and probably other major powers.” In addition to its historical and economic motives for controlling Taiwan, Beijing feels the need to prevent other powers from using the island as a base to pressure China militarily or subvert it politically. For its part, the United States has strong motives for insisting on what Washington has referred to since 1972 as the “peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue”—which, given the anti-unification sentiments of the Taiwanese people, means an open-ended and perhaps permanent state of de facto autonomy for the island. Although there is much emotion on both sides—for China, nationalism; for the United States, commitment to democracy—what makes the Taiwan issue truly nonnegotiable are the two countries’ security interests.

In 1979, when the United States broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan to normalize relations with China, Beijing had a reasonable chance of winning over Taiwan without using force. Taiwan was diplomatically isolated, militarily weak, and increasingly economically dependent on the mainland. China encouraged this dependence by establishing a host of incentives for Taiwanese enterprises to do business on the mainland, by purchasing Taiwanese exports, and by sending Chinese tourists to the island. Beijing also invested in Taiwanese media with the aim of generating favorable news coverage and held exchanges with leaders of the anti-independence Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party.

But these efforts proved insufficient to stem the tide against unification in Taiwanese public opinion and politics. According to opinion polls, the share of Taiwanese voters favoring unification fell from 28 percent in 1999 to less than two percent in 2022. An overwhelming majority favor “maintaining the status quo,” which in the language of Taiwanese politics means sustaining autonomy without formally declaring independence. Since 2016, the anti-unification Democratic Progressive Party has controlled both the presidency and the legislature, and it looks well positioned to win the next set of national elections in 2024.

Fears of an imminent Chinese attack are misplaced.

These trends have prompted China to adopt a more threatening posture toward Taiwan. Beijing has stepped up measures to isolate the island diplomatically, slowed imports and the tourist trade, trained the Chinese military to conduct the complicated joint operations necessary for a cross-strait invasion, and conducted frequent probes of Taiwan’s air defense identification zone. China has also developed what the Pentagon calls “anti-access/area denial” capabilities—including long-range precision missiles, submarine-launched torpedoes, antiship ballistic missiles, cybertools, and space capabilities—designed to hold at bay a U.S. defense of Taiwan.

These moves have fed speculation that China is building up to a full-scale attack. In addition to Xi’s desire to secure his legacy, the shifting balance of power between China and the United States is often cited by U.S. analysts as a possible motivation for Xi. The scholars Michael **Beckley and** Hal **Brands**, for instance, have suggested that China may attack in the near term because it has reached the peak of its national strength—and China’s leaders know it. China is looking at a period of decline caused by a combination of unsustainable debt, rising labor costs, an aging population, declining productivity, and a critical water shortage. Meanwhile, the United States and Taiwan have recently started to readjust their military postures to counter the asymmetric threat China poses. The Biden administration is pulling Japan and South Korea together around a commitment to “stability in the Taiwan Strait,” and Western businesses are gradually moving their production sites out of China because of rising labor costs, lack of a level playing field in the Chinese market, and COVID-19 restrictions. As this reorientation gathers steam, the West’s economic incentives to avoid war with China will diminish. By this logic, Beijing has reason to strike before its adversaries are ready.

WAITING GAME

The facts on which such forecasts are based are not wrong, but they are incomplete. A fuller set of facts suggests that China is still pursuing a strategy of strategic patience when it comes to Taiwan. First, Chinese leaders—rightly or wrongly—seem confident that they can handle their own problems better than the West can handle its problems. They don’t deny the challenges that Beckley and Brands highlight, but they believe the West is in decline, hobbled by ill-managed and slow-growing economies, social divisions, and weak political leaders. However, Chinese strategists do not seem to believe that China has yet reached a favorable power balance with the West. As Yan Xuetong, dean of the Institute of International Relations at Tsinghua University, has argued, “China’s global reach still has its limits. Despite being a major power, China also thinks of itself as a developing country—and rightly so, considering that its GDP per capita remains far behind those of advanced economies.”

Beijing can afford to wait for power in the Western Pacific to tip decisively in its favor. When Washington comes to understand that the cost of defending Taiwan is beyond its means, and Taiwanese officials realize that Washington no longer has the appetite for a clash with China, Taiwan will pragmatically negotiate an arrangement that Beijing can accept. In the meantime, China needs only to deter Taipei and Washington from attempting to lock in formal Taiwanese independence. Beijing’s shows of force are not precursors of an imminent attack, therefore, but measures intended to buy time for history to take its course.

Second, contrary to the common portrayal of China as itching for war, Beijing has demonstrated strategic patience in pursuit of its other goals. A good example is Beijing’s behavior in the South China Sea, where China has built and militarized seven sand islands without triggering a war with the United States or rival territorial claimants. It did so by building only on landforms it already controlled, claiming all along that it wasn’t doing what it was doing. The rival territorial claimants were too weak to confront China, while the United States lacked a justification for doing so because it has no territorial claims where China was building. Beijing restricted access to but refrained from seizing a landform it contests with the sole U.S. treaty ally involved in these disputes—the Philippines—which in any case lacked an appetite to invoke its alliance with Washington by moving militarily to defend itself.

The conflict in Ukraine is reminding Xi that war is unpredictable and rule over a resisting population is costly.

China likewise changed the strategic status quo without triggering an armed conflict over the contested Senkaku Islands, known in China as the Diaoyu Islands, by escalating from an occasional maritime presence in Japanese waters to a permanent one, supplementing its naval forces with less confrontational coast guard, maritime militia, and fishing vessels. Beijing followed a similar playbook in the contested Ladakh region of India, where Chinese troops gradually advanced their positions and established a series of new lines of control with only one confirmed outbreak of shooting that was quickly contained.

China has invested in ostensibly civilian port projects across the Indian Ocean and beyond that could serve as foundations for future naval operations, raising some alarm but no counteraction. Beijing has also used its economic and diplomatic influence in Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Oceania and its norm-setting power in international institutions to incentivize governments to align with China’s interests, again generating some alarm but no effective resistance. Such diplomatic, economic, and military “**gray zone tactics”** illustrate that China’s strategic behavior is geared toward the long term rather than the short term, moving from no presence to sustained presence in a host of arenas without generating substantial pushback, much less armed conflict (with the exception of the fighting in Ladakh). That same strategic caution has so far been evident in China’s policy toward Taiwan, where Beijing has dialed up tension and deterred a Taiwanese drive for independence without precipitating a crisis.

Finally, the lesson Xi is likely drawing from Putin’s war in Ukraine is not that territorial aggression would go unpunished militarily by the West but that it would be both difficult and costly. There is no reason to believe that Xi is surrounded, as Putin seems to be, by yes men who will tell him that a war over Taiwan can be easily won. Even if he is, however, the grinding conflict in Ukraine is reminding him that war is unpredictable and rule over a resisting population is costly. The amphibious operation China would need to undertake to seize Taiwan would be far more difficult than the land invasion Russia has carried out in Ukraine. Xi has been reforming the Chinese military’s command structure and ramping up training for such an operation, but Chinese forces remain untested in actual combat operations. Meanwhile, the chances that the United States would intervene to defend Taiwan have increased as anti-Chinese sentiment has risen in the United States and Europe—and after U.S. President Joe Biden remarked last month that defending Taiwan is “the commitment we made.”

Even if Beijing could win a war over Taiwan, it is unclear that it could win what would come next. As painful as Russia’s isolation from Western economies has been for Moscow, the postwar scenario for the Chinese economy would be even more damaging. China imports 70 percent of its oil and 31 percent of its natural gas; it is the world’s largest coal producer but still needs to import more. Although it is striving for food self-sufficiency, China is the world’s largest importer of food, especially corn, meat, seafood, and soybeans. Some of these energy and food imports come from Russia, but many come from countries that would sanction China if it invaded Taiwan. And even if they did not, China’s navy doesn’t have the global reach to defend the shipping routes across which these and many other vital commodities flow. Any war over Taiwan, even a successful one for Beijing, would deal a devastating blow to the Chinese economy, creating conditions that would threaten domestic political stability and usher in the failure, not the realization, of the Chinese dream.

FIGHTING PATIENCE WITH PATIENCE

None of this is reason for American or Taiwanese complacency. China is following the dictum of the ancient strategist Sun-tzu: “To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.” If Beijing eventually succeeds in taking Taiwan, it will fatally undermine Washington’s credibility with its Asian—and even its European—allies, challenging Australia, Japan, South Korea, and other countries to either come to terms with China or prepare to defend themselves without American help.

The only way to defeat China’s Taiwan strategy of strategic patience is to exercise corresponding patience, continually adapting American and Taiwanese deterrence as Chinese arms and training present an ever-changing and ever-growing threat. This is a tall order for the United States at a time when its share of global GDP has declined to less than 25 percent (from 40 percent in 1960) and the U.S. Navy complains that it doesn’t have enough ships to perform all the missions it is charged with. It is an even taller order for an island that spends only 2.1 percent of its GDP on defense and that has only recently begun to move away from an unrealistic reliance on expensive advanced platforms to stave off a Chinese attack and toward a more realistic “porcupine strategy” involving mines, short-range missiles, civil defense, and guerrilla resistance. But if a prolonged standoff in the Taiwan Strait is the most likely prospect for the future, the side that that stays in the game the longest is the one that is likely to come out on top.

### No Russia Rise

#### Ukraine is a case study for Russian military incompetency – cannot threaten US heg

Freedman 22 - *Emeritus Professor of War Studies at King’s College London* (Lawrence, July/August 2022, "Why War Fails," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2022-06-14/ukraine-war-russia-why-fails)//KH

POWER WITHOUT PURPOSE

One must be careful when drawing large lessons from wars with their own special features, particularly from a war whose full consequences are not yet known. Analysts and military planners are certain to study the war in Ukraine for many years as an example of the limits to military power, looking for explanations as to why one of the strongest and largest armed forces in the world, with a formidable air force and navy and new equipment and with recent and successful combat experience, faltered so badly. Before the invasion, when Russia’s military was compared with Ukraine’s smaller and lesser-armed defense forces, few doubted which side would gain the upper hand. But actual war is determined by qualitative and human factors, and it was the Ukrainians who had sharper tactics, brought together by command structures, from the highest political level to the lowlier field commanders, that were fit for the purpose.

Putin’s war in Ukraine, then, is foremost a case study in a failure of supreme command. The way that objectives are set and wars launched by the commander in chief shapes what follows. Putin’s mistakes were not unique; they were typical of those made by autocratic leaders who come to believe their own propaganda. He did not test his optimistic assumptions about the ease with which he could achieve victory. He trusted his armed forces to deliver. He did not realize that Ukraine was a challenge on a completely different scale from earlier operations in Chechnya, Georgia, and Syria. But he also relied on a rigid and hierarchical command structure that was unable to absorb and adapt to information from the ground and, crucially, did not enable Russian units to respond rapidly to changing circumstances.

The value of delegated authority and local initiative will be one of the other key lessons from this war. But for these practices to be effective, the military in question must be able to satisfy four conditions. First, there must be mutual trust between those at the senior and most junior levels. Those at the highest level of command must have confidence that their subordinates have the intelligence and ability to do the right thing in demanding circumstances, while their subordinates must have confidence that the high command will provide what backing they can. Second, those doing the fighting must have access to the equipment and supplies they need to keep going. It helped the Ukrainians that they were using portable antitank and air-defense weapons and were fighting close to their home bases, but they still needed their logistical systems to work.

Third, those providing leadership at the most junior levels of command need to be of high quality. Under Western guidance, the Ukrainian army had been developing the sort of noncommissioned officer corps that can ensure that the basic demands of an army on the move will be met, from equipment maintenance to actual preparedness to fight. In practice, even more relevant was that many of those who returned to the ranks when Ukraine mobilized were experienced veterans and had a natural understanding of what needed to be done.

But this leads to the fourth condition. The ability to act effectively at any level of command requires a commitment to the mission and an understanding of its political purpose. These elements were lacking on the Russian side because of the way Putin launched his war: the enemy the Russian forces had been led to expect was not the one they faced, and the Ukrainian population was not, contrary to what they had been told, inclined to be liberated. The more futile the fight, the lower the morale and the weaker the discipline of those fighting. In these circumstances, local initiative can simply lead to desertion or looting. By contrast, the Ukrainians were defending their territory against an enemy intent on destroying their land. There was an asymmetry of motivation that influenced the fighting from the start. Which takes us back to the folly of Putin’s original decision. It is hard to command forces to act in support of a delusion.

### First strike solves/China war good

#### China’s second-strike capabilities fail

Green and Talmadge – *\*Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati; \*\*Associate Professor of Security Studies at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.* (Brendan Rittenhouse\* and Caitlin\*\*, July/August 2022, "The Consequences of Conquest," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-06-16/consequences-conquest-taiwan-)//KH

If a war in the Pacific were to break out today, China’s ability to conduct effective over-the-horizon attacks—that is, attacks targeting U.S. ships at distances that exceed the line of sight to the horizon—would be more limited than commonly supposed. China might be able to target forward-deployed U.S. aircraft carriers and other ships in a first strike that commences a war. But once a conflict is underway, China’s best surveillance assets—large radars located on the mainland that allow China to “see” over the horizon—are likely to be quickly destroyed. The same is true of Chinese surveillance aircraft or ships in the vicinity of U.S. naval forces.

Chinese satellites would be unlikely to make up for these losses. Using techniques the United States honed during the Cold War, U.S. naval forces would probably be able to control their own radar and communications signatures and thereby avoid detection by Chinese satellites that listen for electronic emissions. Without intelligence from these specialized signal-collecting assets, China’s imaging satellites would be left to randomly search vast swaths of ocean for U.S. forces. Under these conditions, U.S. forces operating in the Philippine Sea would face real but tolerable risks of long-range attacks, and U.S. leaders probably would not feel immediate pressure to escalate the conflict by attacking Chinese satellites.

### Multipolarity now

#### Oil price fluctuations prove that multipolarity explains a broader range of global power relations than hegemony

Lee 22 – *article is a summary of BU Global Development Policy Center representatives interviewing Professor Jeff Colgan, Associate Professor of Political Science at Brown University and Director of the Climate Solutions Lab at the Watson Institute of Public and International Affairs* (Yaechan, 3-17-2022, "Webinar Summary – Partial Hegemony: Oil Politics and International Order," Boston University, https://www.bu.edu/gdp/2022/03/23/webinar-summary-partial-hegemony-oil-politics-and-international-order/)//KH

On Thursday, March 17, 2022, the Boston University Global Development Policy Center hosted Professor Jeff Colgan, Associate Professor of Political Science at Brown University and Director of the Climate Solutions Lab at the Watson Institute of Public and International Affairs, to discuss his new book, ‘Partial Hegemony: Oil Politics and International Order’, as part of the 2022 Global Economic Governance Book Talk Series.

In his book, Colgan touches upon a core debate in the international relations literature on what constitutes international order and why or how that definition is informed by the distinct change of order in oil politics since the Oil Shock in 1973. Colgan finds the change was not driven by factors commonly considered to be major catalysts for change, such as existing dominant hegemons or a major global war. Rather, it was driven by a group of non-major powers, or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and this fundamentally changed the initial dominance that Western powers and their private companies (the so-called Seven Sisters) had over the oil industry. In this respect, the conventional perception of how politics works, that the hegemon sets up and sustains international order, particularly following war, doesn’t hold. In response to this apparent observational discrepancy between theory and reality, Colgan argues the international order should be perceived as a collection of multiple subsystems, where no single power dominates the entire system. Hence, change within subsystems may occur, hinging on the conditions and power relations unique to each subsystem.

Before discussing the details of the book, Colgan first underscored the book’s relevance to current affairs. To show the importance of the book’s focus on oil politics, Colgan addressed Russia’s war in Ukraine and how the presence of oil can explain why some states may be more inclined to wage war on others, based on his first book, ‘Petro-Aggression’. According to Colgan, petrostates are roughly 50 percent more likely to get into conflict than other nations, as the presence of oil provides oil money to buy off opposing factions or hire security services to suppress citizen opposition while funding military expansion, thereby facilitating the preparation needed for war. When such conditions are coupled with leadership that prefers aggressive foreign policies, the chances of the state becoming an ‘aggressive petrostate’ become higher. In light of the ongoing war, Colgan argued that this has been the case for Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin.

Beyond the political implications of oil, Colgan also noted oil production is still placed at the center of the energy industry, making it an all the more important topic. As energy is the bedrock of the modern economy, disruptions in oil supply chains could cause serious setbacks to general industry. Colgan argued it is imperative that the drivers of change are fully understood to dictate order in the oil industry for a more robust risk calculation and the establishment of a more desirable blueprint for the future development path of order within the oil sector. And through a detailed analysis in one sector, Colgan argued meaningful implications can be derived on how subsystems of the international order function and interact with each other. An accumulation of such research efforts would then serve as additional evidence of Colgan’s argument on international order and its subsystems.

Colgan then moved on to present empirical details to back the thesis of the book by first focusing on the oil price volatility before and after the Oil Shock. After World War II, the Seven Sisters controlled 85 percent of global oil production, and were so effective in controlling the oil price volatility that for nearly two decades after the war, there was no significant fluctuation in oil prices until OPEC countries turned the tables. Since then, oil prices have been highly volatile. Colgan argued that the international community must pay attention to how the Seven Sisters were able to exert such an effective influence in the market, why OPEC countries were able to overturn the situation and what implications this sequence of events has on the features of the oil industry as a subsystem. In other words, when is order effective and durable, and when does it change?

Colgan focused on two subsystems within the oil sector to answer these questions. The first was the oil production subsystem which determines how much oil is to be produced and where. As oil fields are distributed around the world, who has sovereignty over which oil fields may be a strong determinant of oil prices. Another more understudied subsystem, he argued, is the oil security subsystem which decides how oil field production may be distributed. The Seven Sisters, backed by the military support of the US and British governments, would provide protection for oil fields, occupy production rights for them and retaliate against those that acted out of the system. Hence, production and price volatility were kept extremely steady. Colgan argued such a level of control was possible due to the imperial legacy of Western economies in Africa and the Middle East, which significantly waned due to the wave of decolonization in the mid 20th century, culminating in the Oil Shock of 1973. In other words, decolonization brought about change in the oil security subsystem, causing the US to lose its hegemony in the oil sector. Although the legacies of such a past remain in the present day in looser form of oil-for-security deals, for instance, between Saudi Arabia and the US, Colgan maintained the link is much weaker than before.

Colgan argued these findings carry important theoretical implications to the study of international order. According to Colgan, in contrast to the ongoing debate on whether the US’s hegemony is waning, international order is governed by a ‘partial hegemony.’ The most influential state maintains dominance in the most fundamental subsystems of the order, such as currency or the military, but the hegemony is partial, as seen in the oil subsystems. Treating order as a monolith leaves scholars blind to this distinction, while seeing in subsystems allows for a more accurate analysis.

The Q&A portion of the webinar involved insightful discussions with the participants, especially regarding how the US can react to the oil supply chain disruptions in Europe due to the sanctions placed on Russia from its invasion of Ukraine, given that the US’s hegemony in the oil sector is not absolute under the subsystem perspective. Colgan noted the clear challenges that the European Union would face in overcoming energy shortages, as it has been overly reliant on Russian natural gas, while also noting the challenges the US and international institutions are facing in increasing production to account for the shortages. Questions on the carbon reduction trend and its effect on the oil sector were also asked. Colgan, however, saw that the oil industry will remain robust at least for the next ten to 20 years, but given the foreseeable reducing demand for oil, the most cost-efficient producers of oil will remain, bringing about a wave of change to the oil sector subsystems.

### Cap unsustainable

#### Global capitalism is unsustainable – energy transition is bunk, global health infrastructure is non-existent, and international economic systems are collapsing

Zelikow 22 - *Professor of History at the University of Virginia. A former U.S. diplomat and Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, he has worked for five presidential administrations* (Philip, July/August 2022, "The Hollow Order," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2022-06-21/hollow-order-international-system)//KH

TALK IS CHEAP

In the 30 years since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the problem of how countries can source, supply, and pay for energy has become a defining planetary challenge. The main international response has been a wide commitment to decarbonization, expressed in international pledges. But these pledges are a façade. As the International Energy Agency recently pointed out, most of them are not underpinned by substantive policies, and if they were, they would still not be nearly enough to stop climate change. (Even Europe, the loudest voice for a green transition, has spent the last decade becoming more dependent on fossil fuels, particularly from Russia.) The world’s response to climate change, then, has been the geopolitical equivalent of a masque: a form of sixteenth-century aristocratic court entertainment, a dramatic performance featuring poetry and dumb allegorical shows, usually culminating in a ceremonial dance joined by the spectators.

Even the energy transition will not, by itself, stabilize the planet. It will shift dependence from fossil fuels to an even more pronounced reliance on certain metals used in green technology. In the relevant geology, mining, and mineral processing, China and Russia are in paramount positions. In the absence of any concerted action, the world is therefore trending toward addiction, and financial flows, to those new sources—China above all—in its carbon-free dreams. The architects of this system have done little to prevent such addiction.

It might seem that international economic management is a bright spot, an arena where there has been real action, not just a masque. To some extent, that’s true. In the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, the main central banks jumped into action. Unlike in 1931, a financial panic that had earlier started in the United States and then spread to Europe did not lead to a world-crushing depression; instead, finance ministries and central banks coordinated to bail each other out. The G-20 was a genuinely useful forum to consider vital economic issues.

In the last ten years, however, the institutions for managing global capitalism have also become more stage than substance. The United States is unable to join new trade agreements because of domestic opposition. Countries across the planet have piled up debt, and the current international economic system cannot coordinate how to wind it down or provide necessary relief. The operation of the World Trade Organization is coming to a halt, both because it is unable to modernize its rules and because the United States has deliberately paralyzed the WTO’s dispute settlement system by refusing to confirm arbiters.

But nowhere has the hollowness of the current world order been more starkly revealed than in global health. After the SARS epidemic of 2003, amid concerns about China’s role in informing the rest of the planet about the outbreak, the nations of the world ceremoniously enacted a set of “international health regulations,” which defined the rights and duties of states to prevent and contain international public health dangers. The outbreak of COVID-19 revealed that the elaborate provisions for global surveillance and early warnings were a sham. The pandemic also showed that the planet’s main public health agency—the World Health Organization—was weak, and it demonstrated that the world’s major powers were far too self-interested to mount a truly global response. The most substantial investigation so far of the world’s reaction to COVID-19, by an independent panel with access to the WHO’s staff and documents, found it was “a preventable disaster.” As they wrote, “Global political leadership was absent.”

It’s a conclusion that is difficult to escape. China’s government has blocked proper investigations into the outbreak’s cause and continues to stonewall the WHO. In his own gesture of theatrical pretense, then U.S. President Donald Trump moved to pull his country out of the WHO during the spring of 2020, turning the crisis into a blame game focused on China, with the organization as an accomplice. Yet the Trump administration had no alternative agenda for meaningful global action. Its acclaimed vaccine development program encouraged an “every country for itself” approach to acquisition and bypassed the challenge of developing effective therapeutics.

The Biden administration has tried to correct Trump’s mistakes. In 2021,with due fanfare, the United States rejoined the WHO. It then focused on a rhetorically appealing G-20 health security agenda that called for spending more money on global readiness. But this agenda has turned out to be impractical in detail and ineffective in its results. At the October 2021 G-20 summit in Rome, the United States struggled to get the other countries to agree to even study its proposal.