# Aff answers

### Ukraine Thumper + Not Zero-Sum

#### Ukraine thumps the Asia pivot AND it’s not zero-sum

Madhani and Megerian 22 (Aamer Madhani and Chris Megerian, “Biden’s China ‘pivot’ complicated by Russia’s war in Ukraine,” AP News, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-biden-business-china-d47d4b2215de708b55a12bc4b648818d)>

President Joe Biden set out to finally complete the “pivot to Asia,” a long-sought adjustment of U.S. foreign policy to better reflect the rise of America’s most significant military and economic competitor: China. But Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine has made that vexing move even more complicated. China’s government has vacillated between full embrace and more measured responses as Russian President Vladimir Putin prosecutes his war, making the decisions for Biden far more layered. Biden and China’s Xi Jinping are scheduled to speak by phone on Friday, a conversation that the White House says will center on “managing the competition between our two countries as well as Russia’s war against Ukraine and other issues of mutual concern.” The Biden administration is left needing to focus east and west at the same time, balancing not simply economic imperatives but military ones as well. “It’s difficult. It’s expensive,” Kurt Campbell, the coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs on the White House National Security Council, said during a recent forum of maintaining a high-level U.S. focus in two regions. “But it’s also essential, and I believe we’re entering a period where that’s what will be required of the United States and of this generation of Americans.” Biden has been deeply invested in rallying NATO and Western allies to respond to Russia with crippling sanctions, supplying an overmatched Ukraine military with $2 billion in military assistance — including $800 million in new aid announced Wednesday — and addressing a growing humanitarian crisis. Eastern flank NATO allies, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, have made clear to the Biden administration that they want the U.S. to increase its military presence in the region and do more to address the worst humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II. More than 3 million Ukrainian refugees have fled their country in recent weeks. Though the war in Ukraine has dominated Biden’s focus of late, White House officials insist they haven’t lost sight of China — and are watching intently to see how Xi decides to play his hand.

#### Distraction now AND the military is unprepared in Asia

Montgomery and Bowman 22 (Mark Montgomery, senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. Bradley Bowman, senior director of the Center on Military and Political Power at FDD, “Apply the lessons from Ukraine in the Taiwan Strait,” Defense News, 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/03/08/nine-lessons-from-ukraine-to-apply-in-the-taiwan-strait/)>

With the world’s attention fixed on the national security and humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine caused by Russian President Vladimir Putin’s unprovoked invasion, a similar disaster is brewing in the Pacific. Taking a page from Putin’s playbook, the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, is methodically assembling combat power to coerce or conquer the free people of Taiwan. Preventing that from happening will require Washington to learn the right lessons from the disaster in Ukraine. Among them is the need for Washington to spend less time worrying about provoking authoritarian bullies and more time working to defend threatened democracies before the invasion starts. This is especially critical as U.S. forces are much more likely to be directly involved in a response to coercion against Taiwan. For 25 years, Beijing has pursued a determined strategy featuring military modernization, technological advancements, economic infiltration, cyberattacks and persistent disinformation campaigns. These efforts have focused on building a world-class military, erasing American military supremacy in the seas and skies around Taiwan, and preparing for a potential attack designed to establish CCP dominion over Taiwan. Meanwhile, the United States has been distracted elsewhere, unable to focus its strategic and fiscal efforts on the rising power in China. This has been compounded by consistent congressional failures to provide the Pentagon with the timely, sufficient and predictable funding necessary to modernize U.S. forces and maintain sufficient readiness and capacity. Indeed, the Department of Defense has received on-time funding only once in the last 13 fiscal years. Exacerbating these dynamics, Washington has been slow in addressing serious concerns and specific requests for resources identified by Indo-Pacific Command in successive reports to Congress. Just last year, the command again warned that the military balance of power in the region continues to become “more unfavorable” for America and its allies.

### ---xt: Ukraine Thumper

#### Security Cooperation with Ukraine is high now

DoS 22 (US Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation with Ukraine,” , 5-6-2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/)>

The United States, our allies, and our partners worldwide are united in support of Ukraine in response to Russia’s premeditated, unprovoked, and unjustified war against Ukraine. We have not forgotten Russia’s earlier aggression in eastern Ukraine and occupation following its unlawful seizure of Crimea in 2014. The United States reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. Ukraine is a key regional strategic partner that has undertaken significant efforts to modernize its military and increase its interoperability with NATO. It remains an urgent security assistance priority to provide Ukraine the equipment it needs to defend itself against Russia’s war against Ukraine. Since January 2021, the United States has invested more than $4.5 billion in security assistance to demonstrate our enduring and steadfast commitment to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. This includes more than $3.8 billion since Russia’s launched its premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal war against Ukraine on February 24. Since 2014, the United States has provided more than $6.5 billion in security assistance for training and equipment to help Ukraine preserve its territorial integrity, secure its borders, and improve interoperability with NATO.

United States security assistance committed to Ukraine includes:

Over 1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft systems;

Over 5,500 Javelin anti-armor systems;

Over 14,000 other anti-armor systems;

Over 700 Switchblade Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems;

90 155mm Howitzers and 184,000 155mm artillery rounds;

72 Tactical Vehicles to tow 155mm Howitzers;

16 Mi-17 helicopters;

Hundreds of Armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles;

200 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers;

Over 7,000 small arms;

Over 50,000,000 rounds of ammunition;

75,000 sets of body armor and helmets;

Laser-guided rocket systems;

Puma Unmanned Aerial Systems;

Phoenix Ghost Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems;

Unmanned Coastal Defense Vessels;

17 counter-artillery radars;

Four counter-mortar radars;

Two air surveillance radars;

M18A1 Claymore anti-personnel munitions;

C-4 explosives and demolition equipment for obstacle clearing;

Tactical secure communications systems;

Night vision devices, thermal imagery systems, optics, and laser rangefinders;

Commercial satellite imagery services;

Explosive ordnance disposal protective gear;

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear protective equipment;

Medical supplies to include first aid kits;

Electronic jamming equipment;

Field equipment and spare parts.

Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA)

Pursuant to a delegation by the President, we have used the emergency Presidential Drawdown Authority on eight occasions since September 2021 to provide Ukraine $3.4 billion in military assistance directly from DoD stockpiles.

### ---xt: Not Zero-Sum

#### The US can focus on both regions at once

Kroenig 22 (Matthew Security, deputy director of the Atlantic Council’s Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security and a professor in the Department of Government and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, “Washington Must Prepare for War With Both Russia and China,” *Foreign Policy*, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/18/us-russia-china-war-nato-quadrilateral-security-dialogue/)>

As Russia threatens the largest land invasion in Europe since World War II, the most consequential strategic question of the 21st century is becoming clear: How can the United States manage two revisionist, autocratic, nuclear-armed great powers (Russia and China) simultaneously? The answer, according to many politicians and defense experts, is that Washington must moderate its response to Russia in Europe to focus on the greater threat posed by China in the Indo-Pacific. This would be a mistake. The United States remains the world’s leading power with global interests, and it cannot afford to choose between Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Instead, Washington and its allies should develop a defense strategy capable of deterring and, if necessary, defeating Russia and China at the same time. In recent weeks, Biden has sent several thousand U.S. troops to reinforce NATO’s eastern flank—and for good reason. A major war in Ukraine could spill across international boundaries and threaten the seven NATO allies that border Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Moreover, if Russian President Vladimir Putin succeeds in Ukraine, why would he stop there? Putin has shown a clear interest in resurrecting the former Russian Empire, and other vulnerable Eastern European countries—Poland, Romania, or the Baltic states—might be next. A successful Russian incursion into a NATO ally’s territory could mean the end of the Western alliance and the credibility of U.S. security commitments globally. The threat posed by China is also serious. Adm. Philip Davidson, former commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, predicted China could invade Taiwan within the next six years. This is a war the United States might lose. If China succeeds in taking Taiwan, it would be well on its way to disrupting the U.S.-led order in Asia, with an eye to doing the same globally. Moreover, Russia and China are increasingly working together. As this month’s summit between Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping shows, Moscow and Beijing are forging a closer strategic partnership, including on military matters. These dictators could coordinate dual attacks on the U.S. alliance structure or opportunistically seize on the distraction provided by the other’s aggression. In other words, there is a serious risk of simultaneous major-power wars in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific. To address this problem, many have proposed answers that simply will not work. The Biden administration initially hoped to put relations with Russia on a “stable and predictable” footing to focus on China, but Putin had other ideas, as the world is now seeing in Ukraine. Unfortunately, Washington does not get to decide how its adversaries sequence their aggression. Others have expressed hope that Washington can peel these powers apart or even align with Russia against China, but these are not realistic solutions. The misguided view gaining the most recent acceptance, however, is that Washington should simply choose the Indo-Pacific over Europe. Politicians and experts argue that the United States lacks the resources to take on both Russia and China. They point to China’s power and Asia’s wealth and argue that Asia should be the priority. While Washington pivots to Asia, wealthy European countries, such as Germany, should step up to provide for NATO’s defense. Indeed, the Biden administration’s National Defense Strategy, which has been delayed due to the Ukraine crisis, is expected to focus on China without offering a clear solution to the two-front-war problem. A good strategy starts with clear goals—and Washington’s objectives are to maintain peace and stability in both Europe and Asia. A good strategy, however, starts with clear goals, and Washington’s objectives are to maintain peace and stability in both Europe and Asia. U.S. interests in Europe are too significant to let them be worked out solely between Putin and the United States’ European allies. Indeed, the European Union, not Asia, is the United States’ largest trade and investment partner, and this imbalance is much starker when China (which the United States seeks greater economic decoupling from), is removed from the equation. Furthermore, China has conducted military exercises in Europe and the Middle East. Competing with China militarily means competing globally, not just in Asia. In addition, Xi is gauging U.S. resolve, and a weak response in Ukraine might make a Chinese move on Taiwan more likely. Moreover, the United States is not France; it is not compelled to make gut-wrenching strategic choices about its national security due to constrained resources. In short, publishing a defense strategy that can only handle one of the United States’ great-power rivals (which is what is expected from the forthcoming national defense strategy) is planning to fail.

### No Link

#### It's cheap

Kelly et al 10 (Terrence Kelly, principal mathematician at the RAND Corporation, “Security Cooperation Organizations in the Country Team: Options for Success,” RAND, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA517323.pdf)>

The United States conducts a wide range of security cooperation missions and initiatives that can serve as key enablers of U.S. foreign policy efforts to assist and influence other countries. For a relatively small investment, security cooperation programs can play an important role by shaping the security environment and laying the groundwork for future stability operations with allies and partners. Security cooperation,1 in the form of noncombat military-to-military activities, includes “normal” peacetime activities, such as building the long-term institutional and operational capabilities and capacity of key partners and allies, establishing and deepening relationships between the United States and partner militaries, and securing access to critical areas overseas. Security cooperation also can include conducting quasi-operational efforts, such as helping U.S. partners and allies manage their own internal defense.

### Asia Pivot Bad

#### Pivot to Europe solves Russia war, pivot to Asia causes it

McKinley 22 (Michael McKinley, non-resident senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, “It’s Time to Pivot Back to Europe,” *Politico*, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/02/24/its-time-to-pivot-back-to-europe-00011324>)

President Vladimir Putin’s recognition of the separatist republics of Luhansk and Donetsk, which opened the door to the wider assault on Ukraine that is now underway, is a game-changer on a historic scale. It underscores, like nothing else, that the drift away from Europe by the United States over the past 20 years in pursuit of wars and priorities elsewhere has been short-sighted. Like 1949, the year in which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization came into being, America and its European allies are facing a moment requiring a profound redefinition of their security, political and economic ties. Going forward, a strategic, not tactical, pivot back to Europe should be the driving imperative of American foreign policy. In doing so, it is important to accept reality: Putin called the bluff of the not-very-collected West, which was equivocating by placing only selective sanctions on Russia for its virtual annexation of part of Ukraine. Putin is unlikely to be deterred by a staggered escalation of these measures meant to allow room for him to change course: He is dead set on achieving at least a partial reconstitution of the Russian empire as he sees it and forcing the creation of a new security architecture for Europe. Putin’s words need to be taken seriously instead of being dismissed as ramblings or misleading. For all the lingering suggestions that there is still time for diplomacy, Putin could not have been clearer this week that he was also setting the stage for more aggressive steps in the very near future. He even raised a non-existent nuclear threat to Russia from a NATO-dominated Ukraine and again dismissed Ukrainian national identity as a fiction. Arriving at this point, too many commentators and politicians spent months resorting to dismissive rhetoric about Putin even as he outmaneuvered Western leaders. They belittled Russia — as a declining power, a declining economy and as a nation fearful of democratization on its borders. They argued that the United States and NATO allies could force Putin to rethink his actions — even though there has been no sign of him reconsidering course. Some argued that Putin would not risk war given the likely costs. It is now possible to see the limits of their world view. The inviolability of a nation’s sovereignty and its right to decide its own security alliances have also been presented as self-evident truths. In the case of Ukraine, however, many of us side-stepped uncomfortable questions about why NATO did not invite the country to join, and about the precedents set for Finland and Austria after World War II to ensure their neutrality. A now prophetic article by Henry Kissinger in 2014 makes it clear that something like the neutrality option would have been a more desirable outcome for Ukraine and reflected the reality of Ukraine’s situation. The West will find it difficult to break the momentum that Russia is building, or to reverse the new realities Putin is creating. Russia may not be a colossus, but it remains one of the most powerful countries in the world, with a nuclear arsenal, a modernized military and a serious player in international oil and gas markets. It cannot, in other words, be dismissed only as a “regional power threatening its neighbors out of weakness,” and while it is becoming an outright dictatorship by smothering democracy at home, that is not a central concern in the current crisis. Russia can project its military globally — as its interventions in Syria and elsewhere have shown. It can wage cyberattacks on Europe and the United States with relative impunity. Putin has triumphed in political showdowns with leaders like Turkey’s President Erdogan and, even as Russia’s relationship with Europe in general turns adversarial, the likes of Serbia and NATO member Hungary appear more sympathetic to Putin. World leaders until last week came to Putin as he limited his own international travel — and gave little away. Russia’s diplomatic fortunes are hardly crumbling elsewhere, as evidenced by a rising entente between China and Russia — aligned in their security interests against perceived Western encroachment. There is another factor at work, and that is that Putin’s view of history, often seen as opportunistic, does appear to be a primary driver of his actions. And it is not his worldview alone. The incorporation of Russian-speaking populations inside neighboring borders after 1991 remains an issue for nationalists in Moscow; and the West has systematically downplayed how NATO expansion since 1997 has looked to a generation of Russian leaders, and not just President Putin. It is not dovish, as a recent New Yorker article suggested, or appeasement as a British defense minister stated, to take these perceptions into account in the current crisis. The deep undercurrents of historical myth drive almost every nation into destructive paths. It is in this context that the United States and its allies have chosen to draw a line in the sand over a further Russian military intervention in Ukraine which has now materialized on a major scale. The relative success of President Joe Biden in preserving a united front with European allies on a gradual escalation of sanctions masks the lingering challenges of fully cohering on strategy. There have been differences between the responses by the United States and Britain on the one hand; the French and the Germans on another; and disparate governments like Italy (opposed to energy sanctions as late as this past weekend) and Hungary (offering veiled sympathy to Russia’s demands). French President Emmanuel Macron until recently was openly discussing the need for a new security architecture for Europe. Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany told national reporters on his return from Moscow that “we just can’t have a possible military conflict over a question that is not on the agenda” regarding Ukraine’s future membership in NATO. As EU foreign ministers met in Brussels this week, there were continued differences between those arguing for “incrementalism” on sanctions like Germany and Italy, and those wanting a more forceful response. There may be greater unity now as the scale of the Russian invasion becomes clear, but the proof will only be evident in the coming days. The allies’ caution in recent days contrasted with President Zelensky’s increasing concern as options close around him. The gathering of senior NATO and EU ministers at the Munich Security Conference on Feb. 18-20, as well as the presence of a U.S. delegation led by Vice President Kamala Harris, did not convey the strongest confidence on an agreed approach to Russian aggression. President Zelensky’s speech at the gathering was a searing indictment of the lack of decisiveness of Western nations over the last many years, and Ukrainian ministers were publicly critical of the slow pace of the imposition of sanctions since the recognition of the separatist republics by Russia. Western governments are now at a real, not hypothetical crossroads. The invasion is underway, and Putin would appear to be achieving his long-stated objectives, some of which he began to make clear 15 years ago in a speech to the 2007 Munich Security Conference. He has torn up the 2015 Minsk agreement which was meant to be the foundation for talks between Ukraine and Russia regarding the future of the Donbas. Putin is calculating he can survive sanctions for an indefinite period as he builds a significant war chest of foreign reserves. He is also betting on a swifter and easier military victory in Ukraine than Western analysts are predicting. If either of these scenarios were to hold, NATO, EU and American threats or actions would end up ringing hollow to most of the rest of the world. Putin, in short, means to complete what he has started, and more. As Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis suggested, Ukraine may not be the end of the story, and Belarus’ renewed and total subservience to Moscow can, in retrospect, be seen as prelude to Putin’s attempt to do the same to Ukraine. In responding to Russia’s expanding aggression in Ukraine, Western nations will build towards ever more severe sanctions. There will be United Nations resolutions and condemnations. Russian oligarchs may lose their right to residence and investment in London and Paris. Nord Stream 2 is being suspended and may be canceled. NATO may be strengthened; European members may finally spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense. NATO may accelerate military assistance to Ukraine or arm an insurgency in Ukraine in the future. The broader international community may be galvanized into supporting harsher measures to punish Russia depending on the scale of the conflict. Longer-term, however, the latest developments suggest it is time to rethink the West’s approach to the next phase of dealing with Putin. That will entail recognizing that the security landscape of Europe is being changed as we watch, in real time, and is unlikely to be turned back to what it was any time soon. The response must stop Russia from destroying the post-World War II architecture that has largely preserved peace for 70 years. Doing so will require another historic decision and response. We need to revitalize NATO and the transatlantic economic and political relations which have been weakened for two decades as the United States prioritized Asia, abandoned trade agreements, diverted NATO to fight wars farther afield and allowed allies to take for granted the alliance’s centrality to their own collective defense. In the process, we may rediscover that the future of the United States is still most fundamentally impacted by what happens in Europe.

#### Asia pivot causes Russian aggression and solve focus on Asia can’t solve Chinese aggression

Gerecht and Takeyh 22 (Reuel Marc Gerecht, a former Middle Eastern targets officer in the Central Intelligence Agency, is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. Ray Takeyh, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, “The Folly of the ‘Pivot to Asia’: China is a rising challenge, but neglecting Europe and the Middle East won’t help America confront it.,” *Wall Street Journal*, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-folly-of-the-pivot-to-asia-pacific-china-russia-global-power-nato-11647981737)>

Seldom has a diplomatic phrase been more reckless than the Obama administration’s “pivot to Asia.” The U.S. has never been able to disentangle itself from key regions of the world, as the war in Ukraine demonstrates. But the notion that a new “Pacific century” should become the nation’s defining priority surely has emboldened adversaries elsewhere and called into question other alliances, including the most indispensable, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The question that ought to haunt the White House today is whether its ignominious retreat from Afghanistan in the name of ending so-called forever wars, and its stream of press releases insisting that China is the only rival worthy of attention, prompted an impetuous Vladimir Putin to undertake the largest land invasion in Europe since World War II. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave a speech placing Korea outside America’s defense perimeter, thus inviting aggression from North Korea. Often overlooked in that speech is Mr. Acheson’s insistence that “it is a mistake . . . to become obsessed with military invasions” when thinking strategically about Asia and the Pacific. Acheson seemed to assume that the dilemmas of newly independent Asian states came from internal subversion stemming from economic stagnation. To be fair, the Truman administration didn’t shrink from its responsibilities in Europe when war broke out in the Korean Peninsula. The U.S. has been a global power for a century and has always given some regions and countries priority over others. Early in the Cold War, Europe’s economic rehabilitation and its military defense preoccupied America’s politicians and strategists. In the 1960s, as the Cold War stabilized in Europe, the U.S. turned its gaze toward Asia, where a truculent China and an eastward-looking Soviet Union were both bent on exporting revolution. With 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam, the Far East became a priority. And in the aftermath of 9/11, the Middle East took on importance as Washington hunted down terrorists and sought, however haphazardly, to refashion a political culture that had generated so much hate. Before Barack Obama, no president had insisted that the exigencies of one region mandated ignoring others. The U.S. fought prolonged wars in East Asia, yet Washington didn’t claim that these conflicts meant that it had to pivot from Europe or Latin America. Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon were beset by Vietnam; they didn’t complain about “forever wars” and the need to leave the Far East. When George W. Bush found himself mired in Iraq, he didn’t proclaim that Europe and Asia no longer mattered. Burden sharing has been an objective of all U.S. presidents. The strategic neglect of Asia-firsters is new. Joe Biden must be considered the least authentic of China hawks. Much more than Mr. Obama, he has brandished the China threat as cover for isolationism. Even the hasty departure from Afghanistan was in part justified as a means of focusing on China. Leaving Afghanistan would somehow, Secretary of State Antony Blinken told us, make the U.S. stronger vis-à-vis Xi Jinping. At home Democrats partly justified exorbitant domestic spending as a means of rebuilding an America better able to resist China. Yet Mr. Biden hasn’t taken any serious military measures, or reinitiated a free-trading alliance, to confront Beijing. This disconnect between words and deeds might have been starkest when, soon after his inauguration, Mr. Biden held a summit meeting with Mr. Putin—whom Democrats had denounced throughout Donald Trump’s presidency as a threat to democracy—where he pressed for a “stable and predictable” relationship with Moscow. Much of the cheap talk about pivoting stems from U.S. frustrations in the Middle East. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan caused the political class to question its assumptions about American power. Yet the Middle East remains. Energy markets are still global. Fracking hasn’t made Persian Gulf oil less important to America’s national security. The perverse interplay between Arab authoritarian states and Islamic radicalism (the former feeds the latter) continues. Iran’s nuclear ambitions, unimpeded by arms-control diplomacy, will soon confront the international community. As Mr. Putin has shown, a revisionist leader, armed with nuclear weapons and nursing grievances, can easily rattle, if not upend, financial markets and cherished assumptions. For the foreseeable future, the Far East will have a prominent place in America’s strategic imagination. China’s conversion from a communist laggard to a rich and militarily powerful fascist state has Western leaders in a bind, given that they literally bet the bank on the hope that investment and trade would somehow pacify Beijing’s ambitions. But China’s rise doesn’t mean that Europe matters little or that the Middle East can be ignored. The U.S. isn’t Sweden. When America retreats, everyone suffers.

### US-Europe Relations Solve China War

#### US-Europe relations are a force-multiplier that solve Chinese aggression

Sukin 21 (Lauren Sukin, MacArthur Nuclear Security Postdoctoral Fellow at Stanford University’s Center for International Security and Cooperation, “How Biden can improve European relations while pivoting to Asia,” The Bulletin, <https://thebulletin.org/2021/11/how-biden-can-patch-european-relations-while-pivoting-to-asia/)>

France’s fretting should serve as a warning to the Biden administration. The US focus on East Asia continues to rock relations between Washington and its European allies. In transitioning its strategic priorities towards the Pacific, the United States cannot succeed alone. Incorporating allies and partners—including those in Europe—in the planning, negotiating, and implementation stages of its efforts to manage threats from China will be critical. The effort should also pay dividends. By restoring and reinvigorating damaged European alliances, the United States will be better positioned to manage threats in East Asia and elsewhere.

#### Europe is a key counterbalance against Chinese leadership

Khatiri 21 (Shay Khatiri, studied Strategic Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, “Why Has America Forsaken Europe?,” *The Bulwark,* <https://www.thebulwark.com/why-america-forsaken-europe/)>

The United States needs Europe to be peaceful because it needs NATO and the EU to be productive. The size of Europe’s economy makes it an important counterbalance to China’s growth. British, French, and Spanish ties with Africa are important in pushing back against China’s growing influence in the continent. European universities still produce stellar research which is crucial in the technological competition with China. Each of Europe’s strengths in a competition with China also makes it an important region in its own right. With three-quarters of a billion people, it is an important trade partner and plays a key role in the American economy. It is home to many U.S. military bases used for important missions, most recently during the evacuation from Afghanistan. Its scientific and technological achievements contribute to American prosperity—the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine that the president of the United States and millions of others recieved would not have been made without German partnership. America can’t afford to take Europe for granted anymore. They need us and we need them. The hard part of alliance management is supposed to be responding to the needs, wants, and objectives, and insecurities of the other side. But lately, the United States has had more trouble figuring out what its own needs, wants, and objectives in Europe are—or if it has any at all.

### China Not a Threat

#### The US has the overwhelming military advantage

Sawant 21 (Mangesh Sawant, a master’s in international affairs from Columbia University, where he concentrated in international security policy, “Why China Cannot Challenge the US Military Primacy,” *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 2021, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2870650/why-china-cannot-challenge-the-us-military-primacy/)>

The US military dominates the strategic, tactical, and operational levels of warfare across the spectrum. The Pentagon is implementing sophisticated network warfare programs such as the Advanced Battle Management System, Project Convergence, and Joint All Domain Command and Control. China is concerned about the lethal and distributed US military, equipped with a potent combination of quantity and quality of weapon systems. The USN surpasses the PLAN in rapid deployment, maneuverability, and expeditionary warfare capabilities. The overwhelming display of US military power since 1945 is a credible deterrent for Beijing. Since the First Gulf War, the United States has demonstrated its capability of destroying the adversary through preemptive strikes consisting of long-range weapon systems such as cruise missiles in the first few days of the war, giving no time for the adversary to retaliate.75 According to Taylor Fravel, China is not a military superpower.76 There is not much evidence about China’s plans for global military capabilities on par with the United States. China’s military power is miniscule as compared to United States’ former adversary the Soviet Union. China’s military will be thinly stretched defending the third-largest country in the world. The top echelons of the CCP and PLA acknowledge US military advantages. Chinese scholars like Xu Ruike and Sun Degang admit that China is an economic heavyweight but is a military featherweight and will remain so for the coming decades.77 US primacy in the post–Cold War world has prevented World War III. The two most likely contenders for expansion, North Korea and China, have restricted their militaries within their borders. The United States retains unrivaled military power, and China is not in a position to challenge it.

#### The US leads across all military spectrums

Sawant 21 (Mangesh Sawant, a master’s in international affairs from Columbia University, where he concentrated in international security policy, “Why China Cannot Challenge the US Military Primacy,” *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 2021, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2870650/why-china-cannot-challenge-the-us-military-primacy/)>

Why China Cannot Challenge the United States

People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Major General Zhang Shaozhong ranked Chinese military power in 2020 in the fifth place behind the United States, Russia, Britain, and France, while PLAN surface power was ranked in the eighth place behind Japan and India. The Peoples Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) was ranked seventh in the world, due to its lack of fourth-generation fighter planes and high-end drones. In General Shaozhong’s view, China will become the second-largest military power in the world only in 2049, when it celebrates its centennial anniversary.27 The US Military as an Economic Deterrent The US military plays the central role of economic deterrence. The Communist Party of China (CCP) gains its legitimacy from economic development. It is possible that China could target Guam with its small fleet of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). However, the use of ICBMs will lead to massive retaliatory strikes by the United States leading to total annihilation of China’s military and economic centers of gravity.28 The USN Maritime Strike Tomahawk Cruise Missile Block V will destroy coastal cities like Shanghai, obliterating China’s hi-tech industries in a matter of hours. The CCP leadership is inexperienced in nuclear matters as it lacks exposure to a nuclear warfare strategy as practiced by the United States and Russia. China’s nuclear policy is based on low-level deterrence, “minimum deterrence,” and its nuclear arsenal remains small and vulnerable.29 Threatening the United States with 200 nuclear weapons is not an option. Geographically, the United States and China are similar in size. However, China’s economy will be decimated by a few US nuclear weapons, as its critical infrastructure is concentrated on the coastlines and not dispersed like the US infrastructure. A war will lead to a loss of China’s exports to the United States worth USD 310 billion. The war will result in a decline in industrial production, unemployment, and inflation, causing an economic crash and a people’s revolution. As seen from World War II, the United States will experience reverse economic gains and benefit from the war, resulting in high employment and industrial growth. It is expensive to be a superpower. Sun Tzu wrote in The Art of War two and a half millennia ago, “first count the cost.”30 China’s defense budget cannot compete with the combined power of United States, India, Japan, and Australia. The United States alone spends more on national defense than China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, and Brazil combined.31 Can China afford it? An arms race will lead to an increase in China’s military spending, affecting its development goals. The Absence of War-fighting Experience The United States has an analytical learning process in place—China does not.32 Lessons learned have been well documented by the US military in the form of doctrines, tactics, techniques, and procedures. The US military has been documenting lessons learned since as early as the Boxer Revolution during the China campaign.33 The US military has been led by outstanding military generals like George Marshall, Dwight Eisenhower, George Patton, and David Petraeus, while China always lacked great generals. The world sends its military officers to US military institutions and not China’s military colleges. The PLA strategy is based on Mao’s theory of the weak contender fighting a stronger adversary through deceit and deception. China’s only option is an asymmetric strategy due to its incapability to fight symmetric wars. Chinese scholars have authored books like Science of Military Campaigns, Science of Military Strategy, and Unrestricted Warfare.34 However, China is unable to convert the strategies and tactics mentioned in these books into an executable doctrine. The Lack of Power Projection Power projection capabilities set a superpower apart. From its Charm Offensive to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has been wielding its economic power to compel US allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region to align with China, which has not been greatly successful.35 China lacks global reach, as it does not have foreign defense treaties or logistical bases abroad equipped with military stockpiles.36 During a war with the United States, soliciting Pakistan’s military support looks difficult, as China’s all-weather friend has been hesitant to cut its military ties with the United States. China is constrained to operate beyond the unrefueled range of its aircraft, warships, and submarines. US nuclear-powered carriers can rule the seas for four years before being refueled. China’s nonnuclear-powered AC can barely operate beyond its green waters. The Type 903 replenishment ship can only support two to three ships for approximately two weeks.37 The USN’s 68 nuclear-powered submarines have been prowling the world’s oceans displaying naval power, while the PLAN’s nuclear-powered submarines are unable to do so. Fighter aircraft operating without a package of air-refueling tankers, Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft, or a network of expeditionary airfields cannot travel very far. The PLAAF’s capability to target US bases in the Pacific is hindered by a lack of air-refueling capacity. A flight group of eight J-11B Flankers will have to be simultaneously refueled twice by two air-refueling tankers for a seven-hour flight.38 The PLAAF will have to deploy 20 percent of its tanker fleet to refuel the Flankers. The PLAAF has 10 tankers for more than a thousand fighter aircraft, while the USAF has 625 tankers for 1,956 fighter aircraft.39 The tankers will be the prime targets for the USN potentially putting the Flankers at risk. China’s only existing bomber, the H-6K, is reverse engineered from the 1950s Soviet-designed Tu-16 bomber. The bomber is incapable of attacking Hawaii—even when equipped with CJ-10 cruise missiles. The H-6K has a range of 3,800 miles, while Hawaii is 5,157 miles from the closest H-6K base. The H-6K cannot attack nearby US bases, as the bomber will be detected on open seas by the US C4ISR systems. PLAAF fighters are unable to escort the bombers, as they cannot match its range.40 An Archaic Military Less than 30 percent of China’s surface forces, air force, and air defense forces and 55 percent of its submarine fleet were modern in 2011.41. Subsequently, nothing much has changed, as a substantial percentage of China’s military remains obsolete.42 China’s military faces institutional shortcomings arising from obsolete command structures, low quality of personnel, and corruption.43 The military has weaknesses centering on supporting capabilities such as logistics, inadequate airlift, and deficient air defense and antisubmarine warfare.44 The PLA’s loyalty to the CCP has hampered its competence.45 China’s military training and operational capabilities and competences do not match US standards.46 PLAAF pilots fall short on the requirement of executing sophisticated aerial maneuvers during unplanned operations.47 China’s military structure presents significant cultural challenges,48 as it emphasizes control above command.49 A culture of risk aversion and low levels of trust in subordinates impacts the PLA effectiveness.50 A highly centralized structure does not allow the PLAN to operate autonomously during a war. Therefore, a political commissar is positioned on PLAN warships and submarines.51 The USN values autonomy from the individual to the institution, which reflects its emphasis on commanding at sea.52 Nation states cannot project power globally through a rigid command-and-control system.53 PLAN submarines have the worst safety record in the world.54 The PLAN’s rudimentary nuclear missile submarine fleet carries a limited number of missiles.55 The PLAN cannot threaten the US mainland, as its submarines will have to sail through chokepoints such as the Kuriles and the Ryukyus islands, Luzon Strait, Taiwan Strait, and the Philippine archipelago—all of which are controlled by the USN.56 These chokepoints, forming a crescent-shaped chain, are also a defensive line for US containment policy; and the United States is involved in monitoring them. The PLAN submarine power is outdated, compared to the overwhelming USN undersea warfare capabilities. The US submarine arm brings strategic deterrence to the Indo-Pacific through a wide array of capabilities such as antisubmarine warfare antisurface warfare precision land strike; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and special warfare capabilities. Soviet weapon systems were much sought after by the United States to learn their strengths and weaknesses. Numerous Soviet-made fighter aircraft defected during the Cold War. An Iraqi MiG 21 defected to Israel, while a Soviet MiG 25 landed in Japan. The aircraft were later handed over to the United States to decipher the technical details. However, US intelligence is not similarly orchestrating any defections of PLAAF fighter aircraft, as the United States is not interested in obsolete Chinese technology. Instead, China is stealing weapon data or reverse engineering US weapon systems.57 The CCP-controlled military press described the Shenyang J-15 Flying Shark fighter aircraft as a “flopping fish” and criticized it for lacking the stealth capabilities of the F-35 Lightning.58 The US F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter entered service in 1983 and saw combat during the First Gulf War, while the fifth-generation F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning fighter aircraft have been deployed in conflict zones. However, the PLAAF has not operationally inducted the J-31 fighter aircraft while the J-20 fighter aircraft has not yet proven its capabilities in any bilateral or multilateral military exercise. The much-hyped Chengdu J-20 is a heavy fighter aircraft comparable to the MiG 31, which is essentially an interceptor and not a multirole or an air superiority aircraft. China’s Vulnerable A2/AD Zones A study of modern wars suggests that the United States will decimate China’s military without entering the A2/AD zone. This is how the United States devastated Iraqi defenses in 1990. US strategic depth in Asia will allow military planners to concentrate the military at different locations. The United States has a devastating array of lethal weapon systems, such as submarines, for countering China’s A2/AD strategies. During the First Gulf War, the United States launched 297 Tomahawks, which destroyed the Iraqi military.59 Ohio-class submarines can operate unhindered in the adversary’s A2/AD zone closer to the shore; thus, striking targets far inland. Collectively, four Ohio-class submarines installed with 616 BGM-109 Tomahawk cruise missiles would obliterate China’s military. The inexperienced PLAN AC group will be destroyed by long-range antiship missiles (LRASM), Tomahawks, and Mark 48-Mod 7 torpedoes launched from USS Key West, USS Oklahoma City, USS Topeka, and USS Asheville submarines based in Guam. The USN and USAF have signed a USD 414 million contract for autonomously guided with onboard sensors, jam-resistant, and difficult to detect antiship LRASM.60 The stealthy Zumwalt-class warship—equipped with emerging technologies—can sail undetected in littoral waters and contested territories to launch LRASM and Tomahawk cruise missiles. China is constructing military bases on islands in the South China Sea; however, this military infrastructure is vulnerable to US weapon systems, as the islands lack natural defenses and camouflage.61 During a war, the bases will be annihilated by the USN as the PLA cannot hide behind hills and forests. Once destroyed, these facilities cannot be supported from the mainland, as the logistical supplies will be demolished by the USN. China’s military modernization may enhance A2/AD zones, but it does not contribute to a blue-water, sea-control capability.62 China’s Hyped DF-21 Missile The antiship DF-21 missile, carried by colossal transporter erector launchers, has a range of 1,400 miles. The missile regiments are based in the barren Gobi Desert, which makes it an easy target for the US military. The DF-21 has been tested on a stationary ship, but it has not yet been successfully tested against a moving target.63 A system of systems is required to track the AC,64 acquire the precise location, keep the missile locked on the target, penetrate the carrier’s multilayered defenses, and provide mid-course updates as within one hour the ship will have moved 30 miles. China does not know about the DF-21 performance against the US CSG countermeasures.65 The United States and Russia have not yet developed a missile equivalent to the DF-21. However, China lacks the C4ISR systems to strike targets at that range. China does not release the missile testing data, leading to many questions, including whether it can hit moving targets. Does it have precision targeting technologies?66 Until proven otherwise, the functionality of the missile is based on nothing but circumstantial inference and speculation.

### No China War

#### **No US-China war**

Lei 20 (Cui Lei, PhD and MA in International Politics, associate research fellow with the China Institute of International Studies, 7-24-2020, "Despite heated talk, risk of a US-China hot war is small", *South China Morning Post*, <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3094121/why-risk-us-china-hot-war-small-despite-heated-talk>)

Many observers are pessimistic about deteriorating US-China relations and believe the two countries are heading towards a cold war. Even worse, some argue that the situation might be more dangerous than the US-Soviet Union Cold War, and that a hot war might break out between the two. This argument is unconvincing. First of all, deterrents to a flare-up are much stronger in US-China relations than in US-Soviet relations. Although economic and people-to-people ties between China and the US are declining, they are still close compared to US-Soviet ties. It is hard to decouple two closely intertwined economies and societies. Take two examples. China is expected to become the world's largest consumer market, a temptation hard to resist for exporters, including those from the US. And in education, more than 300,000 Chinese students study in the US, bringing in huge revenues for the US education industry. Many universities go to great lengths to woo international students. Recently Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology even sued the government over its new visa restrictions, now aborted, on international students. Second, even if there is decoupling, the pain would not be too great and can be kept out of the national security sphere if properly handled. In fact, for national security reasons, a modest degree of isolation will make both sides more secure and comfortable. For instance, if China’s information technology equipment cannot capture Western markets, the US will be more relaxed. If China cannot get advanced technologies from the US and its technological progress slows down, the US will be less anxious. In the same vein, China feels assured knowing that if the Trump administration does impose a travel ban on Communist Party members, it would be abandoning one of the tools available to the US to promote “peaceful evolution” in China. Economic decoupling is undeniably more painful for China than for the US. But unlike Japan during WWII, which was hit hard by the US oil embargo because of its lack of natural resources, China has no such problems. Given its large domestic market, losing the US as a major customer is not a disaster for China, and can be compensated through more dynamic economic activities at home. China can also make up for being freezed out of technological exchanges by turning to indigenous innovation. As for the US, it can import goods from other developing countries, albeit less cheaply. The relative loss is acceptable when weighed against the heightened perception of economic independence and security. Third, the ideological confrontation between China and the US is less intense than that during the Cold War. Unlike the obsession with ideology in those days, the line between capitalism and socialism is blurred today. The market economy has become universally recognised as the best way to promote economic growth and, politically, many countries have embraced democracy. Even North Korea calls itself the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Although ideological hawks in the US still long for the day when the beacon of freedom will light up the world, after many years of fighting bloody wars overseas, most American people are not interested in promoting democracy abroad. Meanwhile, China just wants to preserve its political system and has no interest in exporting it to other countries, as the Soviet Union did. Thus, ideological antagonism in China-US relations can easily be eased by calculations of realistic interests, which create conditions for compromise and cooperation. Fourth, both China and the US have many options other than war to achieve their policy goals. While they have no allies to serve as a buffer, given the nature of the potential conflict in the South China Sea or Taiwan Strait, both countries are adept at operating in grey zones and fighting psychological, public opinion or diplomatic warfare below the threshold of war. The forced closure of the Chinese consulate in Houston by the US government is just the latest act of brinkmanship. In addition, given China’s huge economic and financial interests in the US, the latter can wield the stick of sanctions when use of force is highly risky or not worth it. When both sides have many tools and options, why would they rush to war to achieve their goals? Last but not least, the imbalance of power will act as a deterrent. Some say the US and Soviet Union did not fight a hot war because they were evenly matched. It was not the case, actually. At the beginning of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was at a relative military disadvantage. Moreover, a country needs the will to fight before going to war, even if it is stronger militarily than its adversary. Having fought years of meaningless wars, the US is weary of war. China, too, abhors war. Having a clear understanding of US strength, especially when its own economy is slowing down and it is facing various domestic challenges, China would not wish to recklessly start a war with the US. In summary, the possibility of a hot war between China and the US is very small. The greatest danger for China is not a cold or hot confrontation with the US, but policymakers’ interpretation of the momentary hostility towards Beijing of a portion of the American population and the larger world. An erroneous interpretation could end China’s march to further opening up, and see it turn instead towards self-isolation.

#### No SCS escalation – China is taking calculated risks to avoid conflict

Nielsen 19 (Nicolai Fogth Gjøde Nielsen, holds a master’s degree in International Relations - European Studies and a bachelor’s degree in Language and International Studies, both of which were obtained from Aalborg University in Denmark. “How China Avoids War in the South China Sea.” The National Interest, The Center for the National Interest, 15 Jan. 2019, nationalinterest.org/feature/how-china-avoids-war-south-china-sea-41677, WC)

China has been able to avoid an all-out conflict in the region by taking only small bursts of actions that are unlikely to cause any detrimental fallout from neighboring countries. This strategy of below-the-threshold expansion allows China to acquire strategic territories, since Chinese actions are calibrated to avoid full-on war, despite very negative responses from its neighbors. Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, as an exception, has expressed his support for China’s territorial claims, stating that Russia does not recognize the fact that the Court of Arbitration ruled against the Chinese claim of the Spratly Islands, nor that China has violated the sovereign rights of the Philippines by intervention.

Despite the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the outcome ultimately is in China’s favor, as a bilateral agreement between China and the Philippines enables China to retain the artificially built islands. This is just one example of a case that highlights China’s growing confidence and influence in the region. This is arguably a long-term gain for Beijing since China has built artificial islands in the disputed areas and restricted access for Filipino fishermen and oil exploration vessels even inside the Philippines’ own exclusive economic zone.

China is likely trying to gain enough influence in the region to challenge and push out the United States completely from the South China Sea. Beijing does not try to provoke a war with its neighbors as it would be too costly and counterproductive. This is especially because the cost of a war with America and its East Asian allies would not be worth the potential territorial gains. Instead, China is operating from a rational standpoint and conducts its actions based on calculated consideration of the consequences. At the same time, it is increasingly evident that China is not interested in maintaining the pro-American current status quo in the regional balance of power.

### China Not Revisionist

#### China isn’t revisionist

McKinney and Butts 19 (Jared Morgan McKinney, PhD candidate at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (Singapore). Nicholas Butts, Center for Strategic and International Studies Pacific Forum Young Leader, “Bringing Balance to the Strategic Discourse on China’s Rise”, *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, pg. 75-76, 2019, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/JIPA/journals/Volume-02_Issue-4/McKinney.pdf>)

In the abstract, such claims are alarming—in context, and in balance, rather humdrum. In fact, the evidence of any Chinese intention to destroy, or even merely undermine and exploit, the current order is slight. China is certainly using its growing military power to defend its claims in the SCS and even—on occasion— to coerce its neighbors. It uses protectionist economic policies to boost the prospects of Chinese companies and reduce competition. It employs economic statecraft to serve its interests abroad. And it certainly is opposed to America’s policy of global democracy promotion. However, none of these positions fundamentally challenge the existing order, none of them radically depart from America’s own actions when it was a rising power in the nineteenth century, and none of them obviously surpass America’s own contemporary record of order subversion.

When the United States was a rising power, it took half of Mexico and considered taking the rest, it colonized the Philippines and Hawaii, and it unilaterally seized the maritime choke points of the Caribbean (Puerto Rico and Cuba).21 The United States used tariffs—which by 1857 averaged 20 percent22 and by the end of the nineteenth century were “the highest import duties in the industrial world”23—to protect its industries. It stole intellectual property,24 and it ideologically challenged the governments of the “Old World.” Today, despite no longer being a rising power, the United States has launched two disastrous invasions, tortured prisoners, and dispatches drone strikes at a whim with little international legal authority.25 The point is not that two wrongs make a right; it is that international order is much more resilient than critics seem to realize,26 and it is utopian to expect any rising Great Power to act in a way that uniformly satisfies one’s moral scruples, evolving, in Friedberg’s words, “into a mellow, satisfied, ‘responsible’ status quo power.”27

Friedberg or Harris might object that America’s rise took place in the context of a different order. This is perfectly true, but the more important point is that the long nineteenth century (1815–1914)—the era of America’s rise—was the first iteration of the New Peace.28 The implication is that relative peace can and has coexisted with limited wars, property and territorial thefts, acts of coercion, and aggressive assertions of status. This does not mean any of these are desirable— they are not—but it shows that they need not be fatal to the system. Insofar as there is a lesson from that first period of relative peace, it is that Great Power confrontation is the one thing that is fatal. Accepting this does not mean capitulating in every instance, as implied by some,29 but it does mean rediscovering the rules of Great Power competition30 alongside the art of strategy.31

Focusing only on areas that China’s rise violates the scruples of the established powers, moreover, downplays the extent to which China, has, in fact, conformed to the existing order. As a RAND Corporation report published in 2018 concludes, China has been a supporter—albeit a conditional one—of the international order: “Since China undertook a policy of international engagement in the 1980s … the level and quality of its participation in the order rivals that of most other states.”32 The way in which Xi Jinping, following his 2017 Davos speech in defense of globalization, has been heralded as the most prominent champion of international order and defender of globalization underscores the fact that there are different elements of this order, and that China supports many, if not most, of them. Even in places where China is supposedly “altering” the current order, Beijing tends to simultaneously affirm that order. China’s Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, for instance, actually mirrors existing structures, and China has intentionally copied elements and “best practices” of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. China is playing the same game, even if it is seeking a bigger role within it.33

### War Turns DA

#### War turns the DA---a new conflict is a significant drain on all military resources

Magsamen 19 (Kelly Magsamen, vice president for National Security and International Policy at the Center for American Progress and Michael Fuchs, senior fellow, “The Case for a New U.S. Relationship with Afghanistan,” *Center for American Progress*, <https://americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/New-Relationship-w-Afghanistan-final.pdf)>

Opportunity cost #4: Managing a war saps U.S. focus and diplomatic energy. While the United States is a global power, it does not have endless capacity. Inevitably, the attention of high-level policymakers is focused on the highest-priority concerns— and as long as the war in Afghanistan continues, it will rightly garner significant attention and resources from all sectors of the U.S. government. When it comes foreign policy priorities, urgency outweighs importance, so regular decisions about the war require the highest-level attention at the White House, the State Department, and the DOD. For the senior-most national security officials, time is precious, and dedicating enough time to issues such as climate change or China can be crowded out by the need for regular, high-level engagement on life-or-death decisions in Afghanistan.

#### Specifically, undermines Asian deterrence

Magsamen 19 (Kelly Magsamen, vice president for National Security and International Policy at the Center for American Progress and Michael Fuchs, senior fellow, “The Case for a New U.S. Relationship with Afghanistan,” *Center for American Progress*, <https://americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/New-Relationship-w-Afghanistan-final.pdf)>

• Opportunity cost #5: Two decades of military conflict have eroded U.S. military readiness. While the U.S. military has global responsibilities, it has finite resources, and nothing drains U.S. military readiness like an active war, as made clear by the 2017 report of a Task Force on Defense Personnel co-chaired by former U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and former National Security Adviser James Jones.39 For the Pentagon, prosecuting the war in Afghanistan is a top-level priority that requires significant time from its top officials as well as tremendous resources—from regular rotations of thousands of personnel to equipment to budget expenditures. With pressing needs to bolster U.S. force posture in Asia and Europe to deter threats from Russia and China and adapt the military to emerging threats such as cybersecurity, the U.S. military will have a difficult time dedicating the necessary attention and resources to these threats while fighting an indefinite war with roughly 14,000 troops in Afghanistan.