# Treason NC

### 1NC – Entrapment DA

#### The risk of entrapment for a hegemon is very high – aff evidence will rely on Cold War data or flawed methodology that mis defines entrapment

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In this chapter, building on the foundational work of Jack Snyder and Thomas J. Christensen (Snyder 1984; Christensen and Snyder 1990), we contend that the risks of entrapment for the contemporary United States are significant. More specifically, we make two arguments. First, much of the entrapment debate thus far has been a game of shadow boxing. As elaborated below, current efforts to study the frequency and risks of entrapment have virtually defined the problem away by treating entrapment as solely occurring when one ally goes to war for the sake of a partner when the first ally would prefer to avoid conflict. Although this is indeed the most concerning form of entrapment, it misses that entrapment does not necessarily manifest in an either/ or choice in which a state clearly takes a step it avowedly prefers to avoid. Instead, entrapment can also manifest in critical decisions states make when confronting an adversary that involve the timing of confrontation, the relative resources contributed to the effort, and the objectives involved. These different decisions on the road to deterrence and reassurance - and war - are crucial, as they help explain why states can be entrapped even if they agree that confronting an opponent is generally in their "national interest."

Second, all forms of entrapment are more likely to occur in today's unipolar world, and to be especially prevalent if and when unipolarity begins to wane. This is significant because evidence that entrapment is uncommon - and thus current US grand strategy sustainable - has almost exclusively been drawn from the bipolar world of the Cold War. Yet, because the two great powers in bipolar systems do not need allies to establish a workable balance, the Cold War is among the least likely of all situations for entrapment to occur (Waltz 1979).

Instead, alliances in multipolar and unipolar systems are likely to carry greater entrapment risks. Multipolar entrapment is easily understood (and much studied) - needing allies for a workable balance of power, states are entrapped into costly foreign adventures out of fears of being isolated and left strategically vulnerable. Studies of Europe's pre-World War I system make this point (Snyder 1984: 471-483; Schroeder 1972; Van Evera 1984: 96--101). Unipolarity, on the other hand, is less determinant but, on balance, we argue that it generates entrapment risks falling between unipolar and bipolar systems. Here, and although unipolarity limits a great power's need for allies for balance-of-power reasons, it reifies the need for allies to forestall the emergence of new great powers. In the process, unipolar alliances make moral hazard - the tendency for allies to adopt progressively riskier policies in contravention of the formal or informal terms of an alliance with a Stronger actor- particularly likely (Kuperman 2008). Unipolar alliances thus carry real entrapment risks, as a hegemon may need to go to war for allies to sustain its current dominance in the international system. The net result, therefore, is a situation where the United States' large power advantages over allies and prospective rivals may make it especially vulnerable to entrapment.

Together, these dynamics bolster the case for a more restrained US grand strategy and help undercut a key prop used by those advocating for primacist or "deep engagement" strategies. Alliances are not a free lunch for the United States. Although the United States' alliances may be good for many things, helping the United States avoid conflicts is not one of them. Alliances carry greater entrapment risks than often appreciated. Ultimately, even if some crises are deterred or foreclosed, the process of doing so creates new potential conflicts.

#### Fear of lost credibility incentivizes US entrapment – it’s fueling aggression towards China which risks great power war in East Asia – direct negotiation or offshore balancing solves conflict

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Since its 2010- 2011 announcement, the pivot has inserted the United States into a host of Asian political and military disputes with China involving ownership of contested maritime space and islands in the South and East China Seas. Though there may be economic resources beneath the surface around some of these locales, neither the United States nor its allies have an intrinsic interest in ownership of contested areas. Instead, the contested maritime domains are worrisome to US allies for what they suggest about China's territorial ambitions. They are therefore important to the United States for the signal American actions send to allies over American credibility. Thus, the United States has moved to back its allies in their disputes with the PRC by rhetorically portraying China as the principal aggressor, clarifying that US commitments to the allies would cover the maritime areas under dispute, and - above all - has dispatched its own military forces to enforce what the US and its allies define as the "status quo" in contravention of China's own interests (Russell 2014; White House 2014; US Pacific Command 2015;Valencia 2016; LaGrone 2015; Panda 2016).Whatever the legitimacy of these actions, their effect is to create a self-perpetuating cycle: the more the United States stands by its allies in opposing potential Chinese ambitions, the nominally more credible the American resolve to defend its allies, the more the allies are inclined to act aggressively toward China, and the greater the likelihood of a direct US- Chinese confron\*tation. In other words, treating American support for its allies as a litmus test of the alliances themselves requires the United States to take steps on behalf of its allies that risk conflict with China.

This is entrapment of the purest sort. The United States could readily provide security to its friends in East Asia, maintain Asia's political status quo, or more generally limit the rise of China without involving itself in Asian maritime disputes. To the extent that the United States simply wants to preserve East Asian stability, it could negotiate directly with the P.R.C. to settle conflicts of interest on a bilateral basis. To the extent that the United States wants to prevent China from becoming an Asian hegemon or engaging in military action beyond its borders, it could simply surge forces to the region as crises develop or build up the military forces of its clients (Itzkowitz Shifrinson and Lalwani 2014; Glaser 2015; Mirski 2013). That these options are treated as insufficient suggests entrapment at play. Even if protecting Japan, South Korea, and other regional partners is in the United States' interest, only entrapment explains the timing and form of the American response.

### 1NC – Sino Russia DA

#### Pursuit of hegemony leads to Sino-Russia alliance and is unsustainable.

Porter, DPhil, 19

(Patrick, ModernHistory@Oxford, ProfInternationalSecurityAndStrategy@Birmingham, Advice for a Dark Age: Managing Great Power Competition, The Washington Quarterly, 42:1, 7-25)

Even the United States cannot prudently take on every adversary on multiple fronts. The costs of military campaigns against these adversaries in their backyards, whether in the Baltic States or Taiwan, would outstrip the losses that the U.S. military has sustained in decades. Short of all-out conflict, to mobilize for dominance and risk escalation on multiple such fronts would court several dangers. It would overstretch the country. The U.S. defense budget now approaches $800 billion annually, not including deficit-financed military operations. This is a time of ballooning deficits, where the Congressional Budget Office warns that “the prospect of large and growing debt poses substantial risks for the nation.”27 If in such conditions, current expenditure is not enough to buy unchallengeable military preponderance—and it may not be—then the failure lies not in the failure to spend even more. Neither is the answer to sacrifice the quality of civic life at home to service the cause of preponderance abroad. The old “two war standard,” a planning construct whereby the United States configures its forces to conduct two regional conflicts at once, would be unsustainably demanding against more than one peer competitor, or potentially with a roster of major and minor adversaries all at once.28 After all, the purpose of American military power is ultimately to secure a way of life as a constitutional republic. To impose ever-greater debts on civil society and strip back collective provision at home, on the basis that the quality of life is expendable for the cause of hegemony, is perversely to set up power-projection abroad as the end, when it should be the means. The problem lies, rather, in the inflexible pursuit of hegemony itself, and the failure to balance commitments with scarce resources. To attempt to suppress every adversary simultaneously would drive adversaries together, creating hostile coalitions. It also may not succeed. Counterproliferation in North Korea is difficult enough, for instance, but the task becomes more difficult still if U.S. enmity with China drives Beijing to refuse cooperation over enforcing sanctions on Pyongyang. Concurrent competitions would also split American resources, attention and time. Exacerbating the strain on scarce resources between defense, consumption and investment raises the polarizing question of whether preponderance is even worth it, which then undermines the domestic consensus needed to support it. At the same time, reduced investment in infrastructure and education would damage the economic foundations for conducting competition abroad in the first place. Taken together, indiscriminate competition risks creating the thing most feared in traditional U.S. grand strategy: a hostile Eurasian alliance leading to continuous U.S. mobilization against hostile coalitions, turning the U.S. republic into an illiberal garrison state. If the prospect for the United States as a great power faces a problem, it is not the size of the defense budget, or the material weight of resources at the U.S. disposal, or popular reluctance to exercise leadership. Rather, the problem lies in the scope of the policy that those capabilities are designed to serve. To make the problem smaller, Washington should take steps to make the pool of adversaries smaller.

#### A strong Sino-Russian alliance combined with expanded US military presence ensures joint retaliation — that escalates to the use of nuclear force

Klare 18 – Professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College. (Michael T., “The Pentagon Is Planning a Three-Front ‘Long War’ Against China and Russia,” April 4, 2018, https://fpif.org/the-pentagon-is-planning-a-three-front-long-war-against-china-and-russia/)//sy

In relatively swift fashion, American military leaders have followed up their claim that the U.S. is in a new long war by sketching the outlines of a containment line that would stretch from the Korean Peninsula around Asia across the Middle East into parts of the former Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and finally to the Scandinavian countries. Under their plan, American military forces — reinforced by the armies of trusted allies — should garrison every segment of this line, a grandiose scheme to block hypothetical advances of Chinese and Russian influence that, in its global reach, should stagger the imagination. Much of future history could be shaped by such an outsized effort. Questions for the future include whether this is either a sound strategic policy or truly sustainable. Attempting to contain China and Russia in such a manner will undoubtedly provoke countermoves, some undoubtedly difficult to resist, including cyber attacks and various kinds of economic warfare. And if you imagined that a war on terror across huge swaths of the planet represented a significant global overreach for a single power, just wait. Maintaining large and heavily-equipped forces on three extended fronts will also prove exceedingly costly and will certainly conflict with domestic spending priorities and possibly provoke a divisive debate over the reinstatement of the draft. However, the real question — unasked in Washington at the moment — is: Why pursue such a policy in the first place? Are there not other ways to manage the rise of China and Russia’s provocative behavior? What appears particularly worrisome about this three-front strategy is its immense capacity for confrontation, miscalculation, escalation, and finally actual war rather than simply grandiose war planning. At multiple points along this globe-spanning line — the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, Syria, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea, to name just a few — forces from the U.S. and China or Russia are already in significant contact, often jostling for position in a potentially hostile manner. At any moment, one of these encounters could provoke a firefight leading to unintended escalation and, in the end, possibly all-out combat. From there, almost anything could happen, even the use of nuclear weapons. Clearly, officials in Washington should be thinking hard before committing Americans to a strategy that will make this increasingly likely and could turn what is still long-war planning into an actual long war with deadly consequences.

### 1NC – Terrorism DA

#### Hegemony fails and propagates terrorism – it justifies intervention and empirically causes blowback.

Bandow 19 (Doug, senior fellow @ Cato Institute and JD Stanford, 6-2-2019, "Understanding the Failure of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Albright Doctrine," National Interest, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/skeptics/understanding-failure-us-foreign-policy-albright-doctrine-60477)> AG

Since 9/11, Washington has been extraordinarily active militarily—invading two nations, bombing and droning several others, deploying special operations forces in yet more countries, and applying sanctions against many. Tragically, **the threat of Islamist violence and terrorism only have metastasized**. Although Al Qaeda lost its effectiveness in directly plotting attacks, it continues to inspire national offshoots. Moreover, while losing its physical “caliphate” the Islamic State added further terrorism to its portfolio.

Three successive administrations have ever more deeply ensnared the United States in the Middle East. War with Iran appears to be frighteningly possible. Ever-wealthier allies are ever-more dependent on America. Russia is actively hostile to the United States and Europe. Washington and Beijing appear to be a collision course on far more than trade. Yet the current administration appears convinced that doing more of the same will achieve different results, the best definition of insanity.

Despite his sometimes abusive and incendiary rhetoric, the president has departed little from his predecessors’ policies. For instance, American forces remain deployed in Afghanistan and Syria. Moreover, the Trump administration has increased its military and materiel deployments to Europe. Also, Washington has intensified economic sanctions on Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Russia, and even penalized additional countries, namely Venezuela.

U.S. foreign policy suffers from systematic flaws in the thinking of the informal policy collective which former Obama aide Ben Rhodes dismissed as “The Blob.” Perhaps no official better articulated The Blob’s defective precepts than Madeleine Albright, United Nations ambassador and Secretary of State.

First is overweening hubris. In 1998 Secretary of State Albright declared that “If we have to use force, it is because we are America: **we are the indispensable nation**. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future, and we see the danger here to all of us.”

Even then her claim was implausible. America blundered into the Korean War and barely achieved a passable outcome. The Johnson administration infused Vietnam with dramatically outsize importance. For decades, Washington foolishly refused to engage the People’s Republic of China. Washington-backed dictators in Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, and elsewhere fell ingloriously. An economic embargo against Cuba that continues today helped turn Fidel Castro into a global folk hero. Washington veered dangerously close to nuclear war with Moscow during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and again two decades later during military exercises in Europe.

U.S. officials rarely were prepared for events that occurred in the next week or month, let alone years later. Americans did no better than the French in Vietnam. Americans managed events in Africa no better than the British, French, and Portuguese colonial overlords. Washington made more than its share of bad, even awful decisions in dealing with other nations around the globe.

Perhaps the worst failing of U.S. foreign policy was ignoring the inevitable impact of **foreign intervention**. Americans would never passively accept another nation bombing, invading, and occupying their nation, or interfering in their political system. Even if outgunned, they would resist. Yet Washington has undertaken all of these practices, with little consideration of the impact on those most affected—hence **the rise of terrorism** against the United States. Terrorism, horrid and awful though it is, became the weapon of choice of weaker peoples against intervention by the world’s industrialized national states.

The U.S. record since September 11 has been uniquely counterproductive. Rather than minimize hostility toward America, Washington adopted a policy—highlighted by launching new wars, killing more civilians, and ravaging additional societies—guaranteed to create enemies, exacerbate radicalism, and spread terrorism. **Blowback is everywhere**. Among the worst examples: Iraqi insurgents **mutated into ISIS**, which wreaked military havoc throughout the Middle East and turned to terrorism.

#### Unipolarity is specifically responsible for the globalization of extremism – that makes heg unsustainable.

Ibrahimi 18 (2/19/18; S. Yaqub Ibrahimi, [researcher and instructor of political science. PhD @ Carleton University] “Unipolar politics and global peace: a structural explanation of the globalizing jihad”; taylor and francis <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17467586.2018.1428763?needAccess=true)>

* JSG = Jihadi-Salafi Groups

Three conclusions can be drawn from this paper. First, the peacefulness of the contemporary unipolar system could be discussed beyond the interstate conflict and the likelihood of great powers competition debate. The new forms of asymmetric warfare, particularly the emergence of JSGs and their violent activities at different levels of the global order, could be assessed as another variable in debates on the peacefulness of the system. These actors DYNAMICS OF ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT 59 emerged and operate under the unipolarity conditions. Unipolarity, in this sense, has generated conflict-producing mechanisms and nonstate actors that drove sovereign states in lengthy wars against JSGs. This argument makes a significant contribution to the unipolarity-peace puzzle, which is conventionally addressed from the interstate conflict perspective. Second, unipolarity transformed Islamist-oriented terrorism from domestic to global. In addition to other conflict-generating conditions produced under unipolarity, the United States’ unipolar policies in Muslim regions transformed the traditional near-enemy-centric narrative of jihad into a far-enemy-centric ideology. As a result of the transformation of this doctrine, new forms of JSGs emerged that posed a threat to peace and security at all levels. Finally, because of the unipolarity of the system, global peace depends largely on the sole great power’s foreign and military policies. The US interventionism, due to the absence of a challenging great power, might not generate interstate conflict. However, it would engage the US in asymmetric warfare with nonstate actors that would emerge independently or on behalf of states to disrupt the US hegemony through insurgency, terrorism, and other forms of violence at different levels. These all might not challenge the durability of unipolarity, drastically, but they would disrupt peace and security at all domestic, regional, and global levels.

### 1NC – Iran War DA

#### Pursuit of heg ensures war with Iran.

Ghoreishi 6/8 Shahed Ghoreishi [a U.S. foreign policy analyst, focusing on U.S. grand strategy and the Middle East. He’s previously published pieces for the Huffington Post, the Atlantic, and CSIS’s cogitASIA program. He graduated from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies with concentrations in American foreign policy and Middle East studies], May 08, 2019, "Bolton, Iran, and Hegemonic Hubris," LobeLog, <https://lobelog.com/bolton-iran-and-hegemonic-hubris/> SM

Bolton, Iran, And Hegemonic Hubris MAY 8, 2019GUEST CONTRIBUTOR 7 COMMENTS John Bolton (Gage Skidmore via Flickr) by Shahed Ghoreishi On Sunday, National Security Advisor John Bolton announced that the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln and Air Force bombers were rerouted to the Persian Gulf because of “new threats” emanating from Iran and its Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria. U.S. officials have privately declared that the vague intelligence, which Israel apparently passed to the United States, is “completely blown out of proportion.” As Vali Nasr, dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, told The New York Times, “in the absence of some solid evidence about what triggered this action, it feels like the U.S. is picking and choosing what it considers a threat.” The threat inflation of Iran, a country with a far smaller defense budget than its neighbors, attracts the attention of hawks like Bolton for one specific reason. They want to prevent Iran from becoming a legitimate, independent power outside the U.S. orbit. In their view, this requires capitulation or regime change. It is the latest example of America’s hegemonic hubris. Bolton’s view of the world is a mix of what realist scholar Stephen Walt calls “hegemonic hubris” with a dash of hawkish unilateralism. According to Walt, the post-Cold War era was one of “hubristic fantasy,” leading the foreign policy elite to “believe they had the right, the responsibility, and the wisdom to shape political arrangements in every corner of the world.” Mix in Bolton’s hatred of multilateralism and it’s a recipe for strategic disaster. There’s a reason why Bolton framed the executive order President Trump signed that pulled United States out of the Iran nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA). It’s everything Bolton stands for. It’s also a complete refutation of President Obama’s foreign policy doctrine on the Middle East. Whereas the United States mostly accepted Russia and China as independent powers worthy of engagement, Iran had largely remained a pariah since its revolution in 1979. The Obama administration wanted to change that by pursuing diplomacy. The successful result, the JCPOA, could have become a diplomatic foundation to discuss other issues and might have led the United States to accept Iran’s role in its region. In such a case, the United States could have pursued offshore balancing in the Middle East and pivot away, allowing Saudi Arabia and Iran, in President Obama’s own words, to “share the region.” In other words, the JCPOA was an attempt to refocus U.S. foreign policy on more pressing issues, like the major role China is now playing on the global stage, while avoiding another costly Middle Eastern quagmire. Bolton, on the other hand, views the United States as a unilateral hegemon that can pressure any country, small or large, as desired. He has threatened not only Iran (“bomb Iran”), but also Venezuela, Cuba, and North Korea. However, this is an outdated and misplaced take on U.S. power. After Bolton rerouted the United States towards confronting Iran, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced reduced compliance with the JCPOA. This outcome is not in the interest of the United States. It undermines U.S. allies, handicaps global disarmament efforts, and limits U.S. strategic flexibility in the Middle East by locking in relations with intransigent allies. Meanwhile, regular Iranians are the real victims of this strategy. The Trump administration’s “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran has caused the country’s economy to shrink by 3.9 percent in 2018 and inflation to skyrocket to 31 percent. The costs of red meat and poultry, cheese and eggs, and vegetables increased by 57 percent, 37 percent, and 47 percent respectively. The economy is expected to shrink another 6 percent in 2019. If Iran’s human rights track record were an honest concern, then the Trump administration would realize that sanctions only make the situation worse for regular Iranians. By limiting the country’s access to foreign markets, for instance, the United States is strengthening the Revolutionary Guard’s influence over the economy. If Iran’s foreign policy were the main concern, then the Trump administration would have stayed in the JCPOA as a way to address outstanding concerns all while not undermining an agreement that prevents Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. Instead, the Trump administration’s foreign policy team demands regime change. As a senior Trump foreign policy official puts it: “we can collapse their economy – it’s not that difficult. But it’s up to the Iranian people.” This is not moral leadership. It’s not even a strategy. It’s economic torture. It also won’t work. As veteran diplomat William Burns explains in Foreign Policy, “false assumptions about how a muscular, unilateralist U.S. approach can produce the capitulation or implosion of this Iranian regime, which I think is an assumption untethered to history.”

#### Conflict escalates – heg creates a self-fulfilling prophecy that puts both countries on edge and means even small conflicts become deadly.

Giglio 19 Mike Giglio, 7-23-2019, "Iran Is Acting Like the International Villain of Trump’s Prophecy," Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/07/dangers-multiply-us-iran-standoff/594505/> SM

Iran Is Acting Like the International Villain of Trump’s Prophecy Any number of relatively mundane scenarios now have the potential to escalate U.S.-Iran tensions—from a fire at a militia base to the seizure of an oil tanker to the signal-jamming of a drone. MIKE GIGLIO JUL 23, 2019 2 more free articles this month Sign in Subscribe Now A military speedboat sails close to a tanker. A boat of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard sails close to Stena Impero, the British-flagged tanker recently seized by IranFARS NEWS AGENCY / WANA VIA REUTERS It was an explosion at an Iran-aligned Shiite militia base in an obscure corner of Iraq—at worst, it could have had global implications, by plunging the United States and Iran into a dangerous new round of escalation. The speculation on social media about the incident last week was rife: Perhaps it was a U.S. or Israeli air strike against Iranian weapons or proxies. On the heels of the U.S. downing of an Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz, either seemed possible, especially since Iraq’s militia already had the potential to become the next flashpoint in the U.S.-Iran crisis. The fevered conjecture even led the U.S. to issue a statement, saying Washington was not involved in the incident. The reports that emerged in the following hours and days suggested more mundane scenarios. The Iraqi military said the base had been hit by a grenade dropped from a drone—a relatively unsophisticated style of attack that ISIS often deploys and that anyone with a consumer drone and some mechanical skill could carry out. Then, on Monday, an Iraqi media report said the militia had launched its own investigation into the explosion and determined it was caused by a fire. The confusion over the explosion—and the fact that such an obscure event came into such intense focus in the first place—underlines the unease now gripping the region. A tangled web of actors and incidents, from Iranian proxies in Iraq to the seizure of oil tankers and destruction of military drones in the Persian Gulf, now holds the potential for the next escalation. It might even be sparked by an ISIS militant flying a drone overnight, the artificial intelligence running a drone-jamming system aboard a U.S. warship, or a random fire. Michael Pregent, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute who worked as a U.S. intelligence officer in Iraq, told me that Iran-linked militia members in the country are indeed “fearful of U.S. air strikes inside Iraq against their bases,” which would be an unprecedented escalation. (U.S. strikes in Iraq exclusively target ISIS). At the same time, bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq have occasionally been subject to murky rocket and mortar attacks in which the perpetrators haven’t been clearly identified. “These types of attacks can be attributed to whatever group the Iraqi government says committed the attack,” Pregent said. All of this is taking place against the backdrop of very real Iranian escalations. Iranian forces shot down a U.S. drone in June, nearly provoking a U.S. response that Trump reportedly canceled at the last minute. Iran then used its own drone to harass the USS Boxer in the Strait of Hormuz, prompting the U.S. to bring down the drone. Iran later broadcast footage of the Boxer, filmed either by that drone or another one, in an apparent taunt. (Keeping up its aggressive posture, Iran also claimed to have captured more than a dozen CIA spies and sentenced some to death, though Trump was quick to deny this.) Iran also seized a UAE-based tanker in the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday and a British-flagged tanker on Friday. MORE STORIES The Atlantic Politics Daily: This Was Not a Trump-Kim Summit SHAN WANG Kim Myong Gil stands on the steps of the North Korean embassy holding a paper. On North Korea, the Chickens Are Coming Home to Roost URI FRIEDMAN Trump Is Killing a Fatally Flawed Syria Policy KATHY GILSINAN A U.S. soldier watches Syrian Democratic Forces raise a flag in the background. The Danger of Abandoning Our Partners JOSEPH VOTEL ELIZABETH DENT Those incidents remind Tobias Schneider, a research fellow at the Global Public Policy Institute in Berlin, of the so-called Tanker Wars of the 1980s, in which, during the disastrous Iran-Iraq War, both sides began targeting the shipping interests of their rival and its allies, eventually drawing Gulf countries and then the U.S. Navy into the conflict. “There is historical precedent for Iranian brinkmanship,” he told me. “In the first Tanker Wars in the late ’80s, the [Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy] consistently escalated, even in the face of U.S.-led international convoys, up to the point where they went after the naval escorts.” Iran only backed down, Schneider added, after the U.S. military “heavily retaliated with Operation Praying Mantis,” sinking five Iranian vessels and killing more than 50 Iranians. (America’s downing of the civilian airliner Iran Air Flight 655 also factored into Iran’s decision to de-escalate, he noted.) The Iranian seizure of the U.K. vessel last week came after Britain’s seizure of an Iranian oil tanker near the Strait of Gibraltar earlier this month. That vessel, U.K. authorities said, was carrying crude to Syria in violation of EU sanctions against Bashar al-Assad’s regime. Yet Iranian leadership, Schneider told me, appears to view the U.K. seizure “not as enforcement of EU sanctions but as a British accession to the Trump administration’s ‘maximum pressure’ campaign.” Read: The woman at the center of Trump’s Iran policy Iran’s reaction points to a key development that might be easy to miss amid the day-to-day escalations: Washington’s campaign of maximum pressure appears to be succeeding in driving Iran’s leadership to act like the international deviants the Trump administration has long made them out to be. Ever since Secretary of State Mike Pompeo took his post in April 2018, he has insisted that the world’s problems with Iran extend beyond the nuclear issue to a wide range of global troublemaking. After Trump pulled out from the Obama administration’s nuclear deal with Iran, America’s European allies remained signatories—and European leaders tended to paint Iran as the victim of the Trump administration’s increasing confrontationalism. (To be sure, European leaders, like the Obama administration, recognized the problems of Iran’s support for proxy groups and missile development, but argued that they could be addressed outside the nuclear deal.) Yet now Iran is fulfilling the prophecy of itself as a villain on the world stage, planning attacks against regime opponents in Europe and harassing international vessels in clear violation of international law. After seizing the British tanker, Iran released footage of armed soldiers rappelling down from a helicopter to board it, along with a video of an Iranian flag flying over the ship. Iran’s calculation may be that such hostilities can create more daylight between the U.S. and its allies, but its aggression may end up having the opposite effect—U.K. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, an advocate of the nuclear deal, has condemned Iran’s seizure of the tanker and said yesterday that he would create a joint European maritime mission to address continued Iranian threats in the Persian Gulf. If Iran continues on that path, vows from Democratic presidential candidates to reenter the nuclear deal if elected in 2020 may be ever more unlikely. “Iran is not making it easier for European states to invest political capital in trying to uphold the [nuclear deal] and legitimate trade with Tehran,” Schneider told me. Read: The three myths of the Iran deal The issue, as ever with the Trump administration’s maximum-pressure campaign, is where it will lead. Now that the U.S. looks again like the grown-up in the room vis-à-vis Iran, will it use its new political capital to strengthen its hand and bring about concessions? Or will the hard-liners in Trump’s orbit see the end game as something else—perhaps getting Iran to one day take the kind of escalation that could justify a U.S. military strike and pull America down the road into an open-ended conflict?

#### War with Iran is devastating – new military tech, oil volatility, and great power drawn in.

Haltiwanger 19 John Haltiwanger [BA in History from St. Mary's College of Maryland and an MSc in International Relations from the University of Glasgow], 9-19-2019, "Trump and Iran may be on the brink of a war that would likely be devastating to both sides," Business Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-iran-near-brink-of-a-war-that-would-likely-devastate-both-sides-2019-5> SM

Trump and Iran may be on the brink of a war that would likely be devastating to both sides John Haltiwanger Sep 19, 2019, 6:53 AM rouhani donald trump iran us war conflict Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and US President Donald Trump. Sergei Chirikov/Pool via REUTERS; GOL/Capital Pictures/MediaPunch/AP Analysis banner The US could be near the brink of war with Iran again after months of rising tensions. An attack on two major oil fields in Saudi Arabia has top Trump administration officials and Republicans in Congress drumming up calls for a military response. As the US and Saudis consider retaliatory strikes, Iran's foreign minister warned that any attack could lead to "all-out war." A war with Iran would likely be geopolitically and economically disastrous while further destabilizing a region that has been consumed by conflict for years. Visit Insider's homepage for more stories. Tensions between the US and Iran have reached historic heights in recent months, prompting fears of a military confrontation that could escalate into all-out war. Here's a breakdown of what's going on, how we got here, and what the stakes are. What's going on with Iran? In May, the US deployed military assets to the Middle East to counter threats from Iran. This was around the same time US sanctions meant to choke out Iran's oil revenue went into full effect. Within weeks, oil tankers in the region were attacked, which the US blamed on Iran. The US said Iran used naval mines to sabotage the tankers. Iran also seized oil tankers, which further increased tensions. In late June, Iran shot down a US Navy drone, which nearly prompted a military response from President Donald Trump. Trump called off the retaliatory strike at the last minute, however, stating it would not have been proportionate to the downing of an unmanned aircraft. In the time since, the US has continued to issue economic sanctions as Trump has occasionally flirted with the idea of holding talks with Iran. Read more: Iran could be risking war over the Saudi oil fields because it deliberately wants to spike up the price of oil Meanwhile, Iran in recent months took several major steps away from the 2015 nuclear deal orchestrated by the Obama administration, raising concerns among European countries who were also signatories to the crumbling agreement. Iran has taken such actions in an effort to gain leverage and relief from US sanctions, but has not had much success. For a brief window, it seemed possible that Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani might meet to find a way to end the stalemate, but Iran has ruled out any talks unless the US lifts sanctions and returns to the 2015 nuclear deal. Trump pulled the US out of the deal in May 2018, and US-Iran relations have deteriorated ever since. The situation has escalated significantly in recent days following attacks on two major oil facilities in Saudi Arabia on September 14, which disrupted the global oil supply. Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed responsibility, but both the US and Saudi Arabia have implicated Tehran. Top Republicans in Congress and key US officials, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have described the incident as an act of war by Iran against Saudi Arabia. Former US officials and foreign policy experts say the signs point to Iran as the culprit, but neither Washington nor Riyadh have presented definitive evidence that Tehran is responsible for the oil field attacks. Shortly after the incident, Trump tweeted that the US was "locked and loaded," indicating that a US military response could be on the horizon. He's since walked back on that somewhat, and said he's not interested in going to war. Trump on Wednesday also announced a new wave of sanctions against Iran. But Trump is surrounded by advisers and politicians who are hawkish and fiercely anti-Iran, which is raising anxieties in Washington and beyond about the potential for conflict. Meanwhile, Iran's foreign minister Javad Zarif on Thursday warned that a US or Saudi military strike against his country would lead to "all-out war." "I make a very serious statement about defending our country. I am making a very serious statement that we don't want to engage in a military confrontation," Zarif told CNN. "We won't blink to defend our territory." How did we get here? The US and Iran have a complicated history and have been adversaries for decades, encapsulated in the oft-repeated "Death to America" chants from Iranian leaders. In many ways, the modern US-Iran relationship began via a CIA-orchestrated coup in the 1950s that placed a pro-American monarch — Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi — in charge of the Middle Eastern country. The shah was overthrown in the 1979 Islamic Revolution, an uprising that shook the foundations of the Muslim world and led to the infamous hostage crisis at the US embassy in Tehran that continues to be a touchy subject in Washington. SPONSORED BY MERRILL Bulletin: Market-Savvy Merrill Need a Weekly Dose of Finance-Savvy? Check Out The Bulletin VISIT SITE Advertisement Read more: CIA predicted the Iran crisis that spiraled out of Trump pulling the US from the 2015 nuclear deal After years of animosity, former President Barack Obama sought to improve relations with Iran via diplomacy. Obama's administration orchestrated the landmark pact known as the Iran nuclear deal, which was finalized in July 2015 and hoped to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons in exchange for the easing of economic sanctions. Critics of the deal said it didn't go far enough to bar Iran from building nuclear weapons and that Tehran could not be trusted. Along these lines, Trump withdrew the US from the deal in May 2018 despite having no evidence Iran was violating its terms. This move put Washington at odds with key allies, and the already contentious US-Iran relationship took a turn for the worse. The situation was hardly improved after Trump in April designated Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terror organization. This prompted Iranian leaders to warn that any action taken against the country would lead to "a reciprocal action." The Trump administration in April also announced it would move to block all countries from buying Iran's oil on top of the sanctions already crippling the Iranian economy. ADVERTISING inRead invented by Teads The US and Iran have also been working against one another in the ongoing war in Yemen, where the US-backed Saudi-led coalition is fighting against the Iran-backed Houthi rebels. And in the ongoing Syria conflict, Iran and its proxies have supported Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose forces Trump has launched military strikes against. What are the stakes? A war with Iran would potentially be more calamitous than the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, which led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, bogged the US down in a costly and lengthy war, and helped catalyze the rise of the Islamic State group. Iran has a population of about 82 million people, and its military is ranked as the 14th most powerful. According to recent estimates, Iran has 523,000 active military personnel in addition to 250,000 reserve personnel. Comparatively, Iraq had a population of about 25 million people, and the Iraqi military had fewer than 450,000 personnel when the US invaded over a decade ago. Iran is also much bigger than Iraq geographically. It has 591,000 square miles of land versus Iraq's 168,000 square miles, and its influence has grown as the power of its rival Iraq collapsed in the wake of the US war there. If the US launched an attack against Iran, it would also reverberate across the Middle East. Iran has proxies throughout the region and is allied with militant groups, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon. A revised Pentagon estimate released in April found Iranian proxy forces killed at least 608 US troops in Iraq between 2003 and 2011. Read more: How the Trump administration got into a showdown with Iran that could lead to war Moreover, Iran shares a border with a number of countries the US considers allies and has a military presence in — including Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan. None of these countries are especially stable at the moment, as they all continue to deal with ongoing conflicts and their consequences (including millions of displaced people). In terms of other geopolitical blowback, Iran is allied with Russia and China, and it's unclear how these major powers might react if conflict breaks out. Key US allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, which are adversaries of Iran and just a stone's throw away from it, would also likely get sucked into a US-Iran war. A war with Iran could also be extraordinarily disruptive economically, given it borders the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow route that roughly one-third of the world's oil-tanker traffic travels through. Experts have predicted that if the route were blocked, it would quickly lead to a 30% drop in daily global oil exports, and prices would rapidly go up, The Washington Post reported. Iran's forces would likely be defeated by the US but could exact a heavy toll with cruise missiles, naval mines, and fighter jets. Any troops that survive could blend into the population and lead a brutal insurgency against the US occupation force. That was the scenario that unfolded for the US in Iraq, a country one-third the size of Iran, and proved to be an insurmountable challenge. In short, though the US has a military that is consistently ranked the most powerful, evidence suggests a war with Iran would be devastating in myriad ways.

### 1NC – Prolif DA

#### Hegemony destroys non-proliferation regimes and causes global nuclear cascades – throw out any ev that isn’t specific to Trumpian anti-diplomacy.

Heer 17 (Jeet, staff writer at *The New Republic*, awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and award-winning author, “The Real Danger of Trump’s Nuclear Policy Isn’t Armageddon,” The New Republic, 10-24-17, <https://newrepublic.com/article/145479/real-danger-trumps-nuclear-policy-isnt-armageddon)> AG

But the danger comes not just from Dr. Strangelove-style scenarios in which Trump lurches into the apocalypse, with his hapless military staff in tow. It also comes from a degradation of America’s nuclear policy, caused by a combination of **Pentagon hubris** and **Trump’s punch-drunk diplomacy**, which taken together would cause the other nations of the world to abandon diplomacy and put their faith in their own nuclear stockpiles. The longer-term danger isn’t that Trump blows up the world, but that he pushes the international system towards a world with **many more nukes in many more hands**.

The dangers of America undermining nuclear non-proliferation predate Trump. As the world’s sole superpower, the United States has been **torn between** pushing for **international agreements on nuclear issues** and trying to **maintain its hegemony** at all cost. George W. Bush’s enthusiasm for missile defense led to a fraying of the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, which [America withdrew from in 2002](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002_07-08/abmjul_aug02). Barack Obama’s nuclear modernization program, sold to the public on the promise of greater safety, [intensified America’s ability to launch a successful first strike that could disarm a rival power](https://thebulletin.org/how-us-nuclear-force-modernization-undermining-strategic-stability-burst-height-compensating-super10578).

Obama’s modernization program did not end up creating a new era of nuclear competition, in part because it was coupled with the pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation in other areas, notably with Iran. Obama was able to argue to the Chinese and Russian governments that their main concern should be limiting the size of the nuclear club, not competing with other members of the club.

But with Trump, **we’re entering a very different era**, where calls for modernization are coupled with a disregard for the diplomacy needed for non-proliferation. This is why Trump’s **hostility toward the Iran nuclear deal**, combined with his blustery **threats against North Korea**, present such a danger. Trump is in effect saying that America is pushing ahead with a new generation of more powerful nuclear weapons while also abandoning global leadership on non-proliferation. Given this toxic mix, there’s **little reason for other nations**, whether great or small, **to abide by existing treaties**.

Trump’s intemperate handling of the nuclear portfolio is entirely predictable. He has been talking about nuclear non-proliferation since the 1980s, when he offered himself unbidden as the man who should settle the standoff with the Soviet Union. But as analyst Cheryl Rofer [rightly](https://nucleardiner.wordpress.com/2017/06/04/donald-trump-nuclear-negotiator/) [notes](https://nucleardiner.wordpress.com/2017/06/12/trump-and-putin-some-1980s-background/), Trump’s approach to nuclear issues has been consistently crude, with a few key themes persisting over the decades: that Trump is a great deal-maker, that other people make bad deals, and that America and Russia should team up against the lesser powers. These are not points that are likely to persuade other foreign powers, possibly not even Russia, to put their faith in the United States. (Putin’s Russia, after all, [sees the value](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-russia/russia-to-the-united-states-stay-in-iran-nuclear-deal-idUSKCN1BQ2UK)of the Iran deal Trump wants to jettison).

Trump’s approach to nuclear issues is to make big threats that he can’t necessarily carry out. This is already encouraging other nations to think about **acquiring their own nuclear weapons**. Writing in The Washington Post, Singaporean diplomat Bilahari Kausikan [argued](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2017/10/10/to-deter-north-korea-japan-and-south-korea-should-go-nuclear/?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.b2c596a60341) that, since the U.S. won’t be willing to sacrifice its own cities to protect South Korea, **South Korea and Japan** should acquire their own nuclear arsenals. In a similar vein, former CIA Director John Brennan [has warned](https://www.circa.com/story/2016/12/20/world/cia-director-john-brennan-says-the-iran-nuclear-deal-isnt-perfect-but-still-works) that scuttling the Iran deal could lead to a **nuclear arms race** in the Middle East.

One area where Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump find themselves in agreement is in believing that their countries are being held back by nuclear arms treaties. As Adam Taylor [noted](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/10/12/trump-may-be-kicking-off-a-new-age-of-nuclear-weapons/?utm_term=.1fcc3d47f020) in The Washington Post, “Putin has spoken [recently of the need](https://www.yahoo.com/news/putin-calls-strengthening-russias-military-nuclear-potential-101800687.html) to ‘strengthen the military potential of strategic nuclear forces,’ while Trump reportedly [denounced an Obama-era treaty](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-putin/exclusive-in-call-with-putin-trump-denounced-obama-era-nuclear-arms-treaty-sources-idUSKBN15O2A5) that capped the number of nuclear weapons fielded by the two nations during a February call with Putin. Some people, including [former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/mikhail-gorbachev-my-plea-to-the-presidents-of-russia-and-the-united-states/2017/10/10/36225a60-ade2-11e7-a908-a3470754bbb9_story.html?utm_term=.e3c4afbb9db9), worry that Washington and Moscow may ultimately end up scrapping these agreements.”

We’re used to worrying about the nuclear era leading to a sudden apocalypse: the mushroom cloud that ends the world. But there is a slower path to destruction: a world where international agreements are scorned, so the great powers push ahead with deadlier weapons while the smaller nations also acquire nuclear weapons since there is no reward for restraint. It is a world where **so many more conflicts could end in nuclear war.**

#### Proliferation emboldens leaders and causes nuclear war – psychological pressures and decision-making biases make escalation resulting from regional revisionism inevitable.

Cohen, PhD, ‘18

(Michael D., PoliSci@BritishColumbia, SeniorLecturerSecurityStudies@Macquarie, “Fear and Loathing: When Nuclear Proliferation Emboldens,” Journal of Global Security Studies, Volume 3, Issue 1, p. 56-71) BW

Previous attempts to assess the emboldenment hypothesis fail to come to terms with the systematic effect of a leader’s experience with nuclear crisis. While new nuclear powers tend to authorize assertive foreign policies and/or find themselves in nuclear crises and wars, experienced nuclear powers tend not to (Horowitz 2009). During the Cold War, Nikita Khrushchev developed a nuclear missile capability in 1959 and concurrently instigated the 1959–1961 Berlin crises (Uhl and Ivkin 2001; Podvog 2001; Zaloga 2002). The 1962 Cuban Missile crisis served as a turning point for Khrushchev; after 1963 the Cold War exhibited fewer and less dangerous crises. China developed nuclear weapons in 1964 and, in 1969, found itself in armed conflict with Soviet troops on the disputed Zhenbao Island in the Ussuri River that caused hundreds of fatalities. Chinese forces have not engaged in conflict with Soviet troops since 1970, when those border skirmishes escalated to conventional attacks and nuclear threats. By 1991 most lingering territorial disputes with Moscow were resolved. Pakistan, after developing nuclear weapons in 1990, increased its sponsorship of the Kashmir insurgency throughout the 1990s and, in 1999, intruded deeply into Indian-held Kashmir, provoking the 1999 Kargil War. Pakistani-sponsored militants daringly attacked the Kashmir and Indian Parliaments in October and December 2001 and killed thirty-two unarmed civilians in May 2002. However, the 2008 Mumbai attacks notwithstanding, Pakistani policy in Kashmir since the May 2002 nuclear crisis has progressively resulted in fewer fatalities (Ganguly 2008). India has faced a similar conflict pattern following its acquisition of nuclear weapons in 1990. Britain (in Egypt) and France (in Algeria and with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]) both found themselves in more crises and conflicts when their leaders were inexperienced with nuclear crisis during the early part of the Cold War than thereafter. Israel fought one war every two years with its Arab adversaries immediately after developing nuclear weapons in 1967. However, in the forty years after the 1973 Yom Kippur War (when Israel seriously considered using nuclear weapons), it fought a war only once every eight years. Inexperience with nuclear crisis seems to matter deeply for the question of nuclear emboldenment and international security, but theoretical precision remains elusive. How does experience with nuclear crisis matter for international conflict?

Existing arguments fail to develop causal mechanisms sensitive to the temporal variation in the conflict propensity of nuclear powers. Scholars tend to cherry-pick time periods supportive of their analyses while neglecting other times that are anomalous to their theory and temporal variation across cases (Ganguly 2008; Kapur 2008). For example, Kapur (2008) shows that nuclear weapons emboldened Pakistan to pursue territorial revisionism due to the belief that its nuclear weapons would deter retaliation. Yet, he does not explain why Pakistani revisionism in Kashmir progressively declined after 2002. According to Kapur (2009, 201; 2008), US pressure on Pakistan to join American antiterror efforts after September 11, 2001, caused this foreign policy turnaround. But this is an ad hoc revision to the theory and does not explain the pacifying effect of Pakistan’s past experience with nuclear crisis. If Kapur’s theoretical model is the last word on the consequences of nuclear proliferation on state foreign policy, experienced nuclear powers should behave like new nuclear powers until they have realized their revisionist ambitions or are prevented from doing so. But they do not.

Waltz (1990) and others argue that experienced nuclear powers tend to avoid assertive foreign policies, but they cannot explain why new leaders of new nuclear powers behave differently. The quantitative literature has not identified the experience effect because it washes out in regressions that do not model time. Indeed, over the past two decades, scholars note the conspicuous absence of empirically supported theoretical models that explain the behavior of new nuclear powers (Karl 1997, 118–19; Montgomery and Sagan 2009, 321). One partial exception is Narang’s (2014) recent research on the sources and deterrent effects of different nuclear postures. But the same postures can correspond with very different foreign policies. Narang (2014, 76–91) does not explain why Pakistan’s “asymmetric escalation” posture gave rise to assertive policies in Kashmir between 1998 and 2002 but less dangerous policies after Musharraf’s time at the nuclear brink.

A Psychological Theory of Nuclear Emboldenment

Leaders of new nuclear powers may lack sufficient conventional military power to pursue revisions to an undesirable status quo. The acquisition of nuclear weapons, however, can embolden such countries to attempt revision through land grabs, coercive threats, support for insurgencies in other countries, displays and uses of force, and most importantly, threats to respond to conventional or nuclear affronts with challenges that risk nuclear war. I term the resort to threats based on one’s nuclear power as nuclear assertion. The problem for these new nuclear powers, however, is that their nuclear adversaries can react in similar ways that substantially increase the probability of nuclear war. Leaders could avoid this by restricting the role of nuclear weapons to deterrence and pursuing security goals through confidence-building measures and diplomacy. I term this foreign policy nuclear restraint. While this reduces the risk of nuclear war, nuclear restraint relies on tools to address menacing security threats that permitted the establishment of the undesirable status quo in the first place (diplomacy and the pursuit of collective security). This dilemma is the fundamental strategic question facing new nuclear powers: leverage nuclear weapons to revise the status quo but risk war, or use nuclear weapons as a safer deterrent measure, but accept an undesirable status quo. Assertive or restrained foreign policies are the only choices, and the one that leaders select will have strong implications for posture and related policy choices. Rivals of the new nuclear power also face a fundamental dilemma. Rhetoric and defensive military mobilizations suited to maintain the status quo—restraint—may fail to deter a sufficiently emboldened new nuclear power (Fearon 2002). More serious military mobilizations and offensive threats—nuclear assertion—may be necessary to stop the new nuclear power’s assertiveness but increase the risk of nuclear escalation.

In the argument that follows, my unit of analysis is the leader, and I assume recurring crises to be interdependent rather than discrete; lessons learned from one crisis can influence behavior in successive crises. I define nuclear powers to be those states that have developed what their leaders believe to be survivable second-strike nuclear deterrents. It is at this point, and only this point, when the strongest effects of emboldenment against a primary and usually nuclear weapon-equipped adversary kick in. Leaders may be emboldened before this to either challenge other perhaps nonnuclear states or issue lesser challenges to their primary adversary. The effects outlined here are restricted to those directed at primary nuclear weapon-equipped adversaries as these likely pose the greatest threat to the new nuclear power and should thus receive the greatest attention.2 They are also most likely to afflict leaders in states that have newly developed nuclear deterrents—‘new leaders of nuclear powers.’ Finally, by new nuclear power leaders I refer to inexperience with nuclear crises rather than nuclear weapons.

I first briefly address the effects of leadership turnover and make three points. First, while higher leadership turnover in democracies will increase the probability that leaders in experienced democratic powers will authorize nuclear assertion, autocracies exhibit less leadership turnover. Moreover, successors to autocratic leaders will tend to have experienced the same pathologies of availability and fear in the nuclear crisis and therefore refrain from nuclear assertion. Second, unless leaders in experienced nuclear powers confront assertive new nuclear powers, like President Trump and Kim Jong Un today, nuclear assertion should be mostly restricted to new leaders of new nuclear powers because their experiences at the nuclear brink tend to encourage them to authorize confidence-building measures and other diplomatic concessions (like the hotline and nuclear-testing agreements after the Cuban Missile Crisis) that raise the international and domestic costs of assertion for both and largely restrict successors to nuclear moderation. I argue that nuclear proliferation is dangerous when leaders perceive nuclear assertion as a safe strategy to achieve their foreign policy objectives—that is, they do not believe their nuclear threats will actually lead to nuclear war because they can control escalation. In contrast, possessing nuclear weapons becomes safe only when new nuclear powers view nuclear assertion as dangerous. As I outline below, the affect heuristic will make new nuclear programs generate strong psychological pressures for leaders to overestimate their geopolitical possibilities and neglect the limitations, leading to assertive policies. Leaders will then overlearn about nuclear coercion from these apparent victories and persist with it. Research has found that availability biases lead people to learn more from their own policies, primarily those that they have been involved with or exposed to for a long time. Leaders in new nuclear powers will, therefore, tend to act based on their own experiences with their own nuclear program rather than the experiences of others or the historical record. This dangerous cocktail of availability and effect will cause leaders to authorize assertive policies and learn that they work. A second important variable explaining nuclear assertion is fear. Though rational deterrence arguments would expect a new nuclear power to back down upon encountering costly signals from an adversary, I argue that the logic of availability will cause leaders to not respond to costly signals in a rational way. Rather, fear of imminent nuclear war, I contend, is what causes risk aversion even when the subjective probability and cost of nuclear escalation remain constant. Only those costly signals that cause leaders to personally experience the fear of imminent nuclear escalation will cause them to authorize restrained foreign policies.

### 1NC – China DA

#### Framing issue – no you.

Fettweis ‘17 (Christopher J, \*Associate Professor of Political Science at Tulane University, Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park, “Unipolarity, Hegemony, and the New Peace,” Security Studies 26:3, 423-451)//cmr

The Political Psychology of Unipolarity Evidence supporting the notion that US power is primarily responsible for the New Peace is slim, but belief in the connection is quite strong, especially in policy circles. The best arena to examine the proposition is therefore not the world of measurable rationality, but rather that of the human mind. Political psychology can shed more light on unipolarity than can any collection of data or evidence. Just because an outcome is primarily psychological does not mean that it is less real; perception quickly becomes reality for both the unipolar state and those in the periphery. If all actors believe that the United States provides security and stability for the system, then behavior can be affected. Beliefs have deep explanatory power in international politics whether they have a firm foundation in empirical reality or not. Like all beliefs, faith in the stability provided by hegemony is rarely subjected to much analysis.79 Although they almost always have some basis in reality, beliefs need not pass rigorous tests to prove that they match it. No amount of evidence has been able to convince some people that vaccines do not cause autism, for example, or that the world is more peaceful than at any time before, or that the climate is changing due to human activity. Ultimately, as Robert Jervis explains, “we often believe as much in the face of evidence as because of it.”80 Facts may change, but beliefs remain the same. When leaders are motivated to act based on unjustified, inaccurate beliefs, folly often follows. The person who decides to take a big risk because of astrological advice in the morning’s horoscope can benefit from baseless superstition if the risk pays off. Probability and luck suggest that successful policy choices can sometimes flow from incorrect beliefs. Far more often, however, poor intellectual foundations lead to suboptimal or even disastrous outcomes. It is worthwhile to analyze the foundations of even our most deeply held beliefs to determine which ones are good candidates to inspire poor policy choices in those who hold them. People are wonderful rationalizers. There is much to be said for being the strongest country in the world; their status provides Americans both security and psychological rewards, as well as strong incentives to construct a rationale for preserving the unipolar moment that goes beyond mere selfishness. Since people enjoy being “number one,” they are susceptible to perceiving reality in ways that brings the data in line with their desires. It is no coincidence that most hegemonic stability theorists are American. 81 Perhaps the satisfaction that comes with being the unipolar power has inspired Americans to misperceive the positive role that their status plays in the world. Three findings from political psychology can shed light on perceptions of hegemonic stability. They are mutually supportive, and, when taken together, suggest that it is likely that US policymakers overestimate the extent to which their actions are responsible for the choices of others. The belief in the major US contribution to world peace is probably unjustified. The Illusion of Control Could 5 percent of the world’s population hope to enforce rules upon the rest? Would even an internationally hegemonic United States be capable of producing the New Peace? Perhaps, but it also may be true that believers in hegemonic stability may be affected by the very common tendency of people to overestimate their ability to control events. A variety of evidence has accumulated over the past forty years to support Ellen J. Langer’s original observations about the “illusion of control” that routinely distorts perception.82 Even in situations where outcomes are clearly generated by pure chance, people tend to believe that they can exert control over events.83 There is little reason to believe that leaders are somehow less susceptible to such illusions than subjects in controlled experiments. The extensive research on the illusion of control has revealed two further findings that suggest US illusions might be even stronger than average. First, misperceptions of control appear to be correlated with power: individuals with higher socioeconomic status, as well as those who are members of dominant groups, are more likely to overestimate their ability to control events.84 Powerful people tend to be far more confident than others, often overly so, and that confidence leads them to inflate their own importance.85 Leaders of superpowers are thus particularly vulnerable to distorted perceptions regarding their ability to affect the course of events. US observers had a greater structural predisposition than others, for example, to believe that they would have been able to control events in the Persian Gulf following an injection of creative instability in 2003. The skepticism of less powerful allies was easily discounted. Second, there is reason to believe that culture matters as well as power. People from societies that value individualism are more likely to harbor illusions of control than those from collectivist societies, where assumptions of group agency are more common. When compared to people from other parts of the world, Westerners tend to view the world as “highly subject to personal control,” in the words of Richard Nisbett.86 North Americans appear particularly vulnerable in this regard.87 Those who come from relatively powerful countries with individualistic societies are therefore at high risk for misperceiving their ability to influence events. For the United States, the illusion of control extends beyond the water’s edge. An oft-discussed public good supposedly conferred by US hegemony is order in those parts of the world uncontrolled by sovereign states, or the “global commons.” 88 One such common area is the sea, where the United States maintains the only true blue-water navy in the world. That the United States has brought this peace to the high seas is a central belief of hegemonic-stability theorists, one rarely examined in any serious way. Indeed the maritime environment has been unusually peaceful for decades; the biggest naval battles since Okinawa took place during the Falklands conflict in 1982, and they were fairly minor.89 If hegemony is the key variable explaining stability at sea, maritime security would have to be far more chaotic without the US Navy. It is equally if not more plausible to suggest, however, that the reason other states are not building blue-water navies is not because the United States dissuades them from doing so but rather because none feels that trade is imperiled.90 In earlier times, and certainly during the age of mercantilism, zero-sum economics inspired efforts to cut off the trade of opponents on occasion, making control the sea extremely important. Today the free flow of goods is vital to all economies, and it would be in the interest of no state to interrupt it.91 Free trade at sea may no longer need protection, in other words, because it essentially has no enemies; the sheriff may be patrolling a crime-free neighborhood. The threat from the few remaining pirates hardly requires a robust naval presence, and is certainly not what hegemonic-stability advocates mean when they compare the role played by the US Navy in 2016 to that of the Royal Navy in 1816. It is at least possible that shared interest in open, free commons keeps the peace at sea rather than the United States. Oceans unpatrolled by the US Navy may be about as stable as they are with the presence of its carriers. The degree to which 273 active-duty ships exert control over vast common parts is not at all clear. People overestimate the degree to which they control events in their lives. Furthermore, if these observations from political psychology are right about the factors that influence the growth of illusions of power, then US leaders and analysts are particularly susceptible to misperception. They may well be overestimating the degree to which the United States can affect the behavior of others. The rest of the world may be able to get along just fine, on land and at sea, without US attempts to control it. Ego-Centric and Self-Serving Biases in Attribution It is natural for people, whether presidents or commoners, to misperceive the role they play in the thinking process of others. Jervis was the first to discuss this phenomenon, now known as the “ego-centric bias,” which has been put to the test many times since he wrote four decades ago. Building on what was known as “attribution theory,” Jervis observed that actors tend to overestimate their importance in the decisions of others. Rarely are our actions as consequential upon their behavior as we believe them to be.92 This is not merely ego gratification, though that plays a role; actors are simply more conscious of their own actions than the other factors central to the internal deliberations in other capitals. Because people are more likely to remember their contributions to an outcome, they naturally grant themselves more causal weight.93 Two further aspects of the ego-centric bias make US analysts even more susceptible to its effects. First, the bias is magnified when the behavior of others is desirable. People generally take credit for positive outcomes and deflect responsibility for negative ones. This “self-serving bias” is one of the best-established findings in modern psychology, supported by many hundreds of studies.94 Supporters of Ronald Reagan are happy to give him credit for ending the Cold War, for instance, even though evidence that the United States had much influence on Premier Gorbachev’s decision making is scant at best.95 Today, since few outcomes are more desirable than global stability, it stands to reason that perceptions of the New Peace are prime candidates for distortion by ego-centric, self-serving biases. When war breaks out, it is not the fault of US leaders; when peace comes to a region, Washington is happy to take credit. There was for some time a debate among psychologists over just how universal self-serving biases were, or whether their effects varied across cultures. Extensive research has essentially settled the matter, to the extent that academic questions can ever be settled: a direct relationship appears to exist between cultural individualism and susceptibility to the bias, perhaps because of the value individualistic societies place on self-enhancement (as opposed to self-effacement).96 Actors from more collectivist societies tend to have their egos rewarded in different ways, such as through contributions to the community and connections to others. People from Western countries are far more likely to take credit for positive outcomes than those from Eastern, in other words, and subjects in the United States tower over the rest of the West. US leaders are therefore more culturally predisposed to believe that their actions are responsible for positive outcomes like peace. Second, self-perception is directly related to egocentric attributions. Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to believe that they are at the center of the decision-making process of others than those who think somewhat more modestly. 97 Leaders of any unipolar state may well be more likely to hold their country in high regard, and therefore are more vulnerable to exaggerated egocentric perceptions, than their contemporaries in smaller states. It might not occur to the lead diplomat of other counties to claim, as did Madeleine Albright, that “if we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future.”98 It is not unreasonable to suspect that the US security community may be even more vulnerable to this misperception than the average group of people. For example, many in that community believed that the United States played a decisive role in Vladimir Putin’s decisions regarding Crimea and eastern Ukraine. President Obama’s various critics argued that perceptions of American weakness inspired or even invited Russian aggression. The refusal to act in Syria in particular emboldened Moscow (despite the fact that in 2008, in the face of ample displays of US action in the Middle East, Moscow had proven sufficiently bold to invade Georgia). Other critics suggested that a variety of provocative US behaviors since the end of the Cold War, especially the expansion of NATO and dissolution of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, poisoned US–Russian relations and led to an increase in Kremlin paranoia and eventually to the invasion.99 So, either through provocative weakness or bullying, we were responsible for their actions. Egocentric misperceptions are so ubiquitous and pervasive that they generate something of a law of political psychology: we are probably less influential in others’ decision making than we think we are. This extends to their decisions to resolve contentious issues peacefully. While it may be natural for US policymakers to interpret their role as crucial in the maintenance of world peace, it is very likely that Washington exaggerates its importance in the decision making of others, and in the maintenance of international stability. The effect of the ego-centric bias may be especially difficult for the unipolar United States to resist, because other countries do regularly take Washington’s position into account before acting. But US leaders—and the people who analyze them—should keep in mind that they are still probably less important to calculations made in other capitals than they believe. They may well be especially unlikely to recognize the possibility that hegemony is epiphenomenal, that it exists alongside, but does not affect, global stability and the New Peace. Overestimated Benevolence After three years in the White House, Ronald Reagan had learned something surprising: “Many people at the top of the Soviet hierarchy were genuinely afraid of America and Americans,” he wrote in his autobiography. He continued: “Perhaps this shouldn’t have surprised me, but it did…I’d always felt that from our deeds it must be clear to anyone that Americans were a moral people who starting at the birth of our nation had always used our power only as a force for good in the world…. During my first years in Washington, I think many of us took it for granted that the Russians, like ourselves, considered it unthinkable that the United States would launch a first strike against them.”100 Reagan is certainly not alone in believing in the essential benevolent image of his nation. While it is common for actors to attribute negative motivations to the behavior of others, it is exceedingly difficult for them to accept that anyone could interpret their actions in negative ways. Leaders are well aware of their own motives and tend to assume that their peaceful intentions are obvious and transparent. Both strains of the hegemonic-stability explanation assume not only that US power is benevolent, but that others perceive it that way. Hegemonic stability depends on the perceptions of other states to be successful; it has no hope to succeed if it encounters resistance from the less powerful members of the system, or even if they simply refuse to follow the rules. Relatively small police forces require the general cooperation of large communities to have any chance of establishing order. They must perceive the sheriff as just, rational, and essentially nonthreatening. The lack of balancing behavior in the system, which has been puzzling to many realists, seems to support the notion of widespread perceptions of benevolent hegemony.101 Were they threatened by the order constructed by the United States, the argument goes, smaller states would react in ways that reflected their fears. Since internal and external balancing accompanied previous attempts to achieve hegemony, the absence of such behavior today suggests that something is different about the US version. Hegemonic-stability theorists purport to understand the perceptions of others, at times better than those others understand themselves. Complain as they may at times, other countries know that the United States is acting in the common interest. Objections to unipolarity, though widespread, are not “very seriously intended,” wrote Kagan, since “the truth about America’s dominant role in the world is known to most observers. And the truth is that the benevolent hegemony exercised by the United States is good for a vast portion of the world’s population.” 102 In the 1990s, Russian protests regarding NATO expansion—though nearly universal—were not taken seriously, since US planners believed the alliance’s benevolent intentions were apparent to all. Sagacious Russians understood that expansion would actually be beneficial, since it would bring stability to their western border.103 President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher were caught off guard by the hostility of their counterparts regarding the issue at a summit in Budapest in December 1994.104 Despite warnings from the vast majority of academic and policy experts about the likely Russian reaction and overall wisdom of expansion itself, the administration failed to anticipate Moscow’s position. 105 The Russians did not seem to believe American assurances that expansion would actually be good for them. The United States overestimated the degree to which others saw it as benevolent. Once again, the culture of the United States might make its leaders more vulnerable to this misperception. The need for positive self-regard appears to be particularly strong in North American societies compared to elsewhere.106 Western egos tend to be gratified through self-promotion rather than humility, and independence rather than interdependence. Americans are more likely to feel good if they are unique rather than a good cog in society’s wheel, and uniquely good. The need to be perceived as benevolent, though universal, may well exert stronger encouragement for US observers to project their perceptions onto others. The United States almost certainly frightens others more than its leaders perceive. A quarter of the 68,000 respondents to a 2013 Gallup poll in sixty-five countries identified the United States as the “greatest threat to world peace,” which was more than three times the total for the second-place country (Pakistan).107 The international community always has to worry about the potential for police brutality, even if it occurs rarely. Such ungratefulness tends to come as a surprise to US leaders. In 2003, Condoleezza Rice was dismayed to discover resistance to US initiatives in Iraq: “There were times,” she said later, “that it appeared that American power was seen to be more dangerous than, perhaps, Saddam Hussein.”108 Both liberals and neoconservatives probably exaggerate the extent to which US hegemony is everywhere secretly welcomed; it is not just petulant resentment, but understandable disagreement with US policies, that motivates counterhegemonic beliefs and behavior. To review, assuming for a moment that US leaders are subject to the same forces that affect every human being, they overestimate the amount of control they have over other actors, and are not as important to decisions made elsewhere as they believe themselves to be. And they probably perceive their own benevolence to be much greater than do others. These common phenomena all influence US beliefs in the same direction, and may well increase the apparent explanatory power of hegemony beyond what the facts would otherwise support. The United States is probably not as central to the New Peace as either liberals or neoconservatives believe.

#### Empirics go neg – most qualified studies disprove hegemonic stability theories.

Fettweis 17 –Christopher J. Fettweis is an American political scientist and the Associate Professor of Political Science at Tulane University. “Unipolarity, Hegemony, and the New Peace, Security Studies” 26:3, 423-451; EG)

Even the most ardent supporters of the hegemonic-stability explanation do not contend that US influence extends equally to all corners of the globe. The United States has concentrated its policing in what George Kennan used to call “strong points,” or the most important parts of the world: Western Europe, the Pacific Rim, and Persian Gulf.64 By doing so, Washington may well have contributed more to great power peace than the overall global decline in warfare. If the former phenomenon contributed to the latter, by essentially providing a behavioral model for weaker states to emulate, then perhaps this lends some support to the hegemonic-stability case.65 During the Cold War, the United States played referee to a few intra-West squabbles, especially between Greece and Turkey, and provided Hobbesian reassurance to Germany’s nervous neighbors. Other, equally plausible explanations exist for stability in the first world, including the presence of a common enemy, democracy, economic interdependence, general war aversion, etc. The looming presence of the leviathan is certainly among these plausible explanations, but only inside the US sphere of influence. Bipolarity was bad for the nonaligned world, where Soviet and Western intervention routinely exacerbated local conflicts. Unipolarity has generally been much better, **but whether or not this was due to US action is again unclear.** Overall US interest in the affairs of the Global South has dropped markedly since the end of the Cold War, as has the level of violence in almost all regions. There is less US intervention in the political and military affairs of Latin America compared to any time in the twentieth century, for instance, and also less conflict. Warfare in Africa is at an all-time low, as is relative US interest outside of counterterrorism and security assistance.66 **Regional peace and stability exist where there is US active intervention, as well as where there is not**. No direct relationship seems to exist across regions. If intervention can be considered a function of direct and indirect activity, of both political and military action, a regional picture might look like what is outlined in Table 1. These assessments of conflict are by necessity relative, because there has not been a “high” level of conflict in any region outside the Middle East during the period of the New Peace. Putting aside for the moment that important caveat, some points become clear. The great powers of the world are clustered in the upper right quadrant, where US intervention has been high, but conflict levels low. **US intervention is imperfectly correlated with stability, however. Indeed, it is conceivable that the relatively high level of US interest and activity has made the security situation in the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East worse.** In recent years, substantial hard power investments (Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq), moderate intervention (Libya), and reliance on diplomacy (Syria) have been equally ineffective in stabilizing states torn by conflict. While it is possible that the region is essentially unpacifiable and no amount of police work would bring peace to its people, it remains hard to make the case that the US presence has improved matters. **In this “strong point,” at least, US hegemony has failed to bring peace.** In much of the rest of the world, the United States has not been especially eager to enforce any particular rules. Even rather incontrovertible evidence of genocide has not been enough to inspire action. Washington’s intervention choices have at best been erratic; Libya and Kosovo brought about action, but much more blood flowed uninterrupted in Rwanda, Darfur, Congo, Sri Lanka, and Syria. The US record of peacemaking is not exactly a long uninterrupted string of successes. During the turn-of-the-century conventional war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a highlevel US delegation containing former and future National Security Advisors (Anthony Lake and Susan Rice) made a half-dozen trips to the region, but was unable to prevent either the outbreak or recurrence of the conflict. Lake and his team shuttled back and forth between the capitals with some frequency, and President Clinton made repeated phone calls to the leaders of the respective countries, offering to hold peace talks in the United States, all to no avail.67 The war ended Table 1. Post-Cold War US intervention and violence by region. High Violence Low Violence High US Intervention Middle East Europe South and Central Asia Pacific Rim North America Low US Intervention Africa South America Former Soviet Union in late 2000 when Ethiopia essentially won, and it controls the disputed territory to this day. The Horn of Africa is hardly the only region where states are free to fight one another today without fear of serious US involvement. Since they are choosing not to do so with increasing frequency, something else is probably affecting their calculations. Stability exists even in those places where the potential for intervention by the sheriff is minimal. Hegemonic stability can only take credit for influencing those decisions that would have ended in war without the presence, whether physical or psychological, of the United States. It seems hard to make the case that the relative peace that has descended on so many regions is primarily due to the kind of heavy hand of the neoconservative leviathan, or its lighter, more liberal cousin. Something else appears to be at work.

#### China’s not evil

Ambrosio et al. 19 -\*professor of political science in the Criminal Justice and Political Science Department at North Dakota State University, [Thomas Ambrosio, Carson Schram, Professor of Political Science at North Dakota State University and teaches courts on international politics and international law & Preston Heopfne, Department of Political Science, North Dakota State University, The American securitization of China and Russia: U.S. geopolitical culture and declining unipolarity, 2019, Eurasian Geography and Economics, DOI: 10.1080/15387216.2019.1702566, DKP]

China

America’s post-Cold War China threat narrative has evolved significantly into one in which China’s growing capabilities have complemented its ambition to establish itself both as a great power with regional dominance and as a global actor – all in the service of transforming the current world order. As seen in Figure 1, 9 which illustrates the overall percentages of references in terms of source of threat, the China threat has been defined in aggregate by capabilities, either by itself or in combination with another source. Indeed, 44.6% of all references to the China threat defined it exclusively in terms of capabilities – i.e. not combined with any other source. One reason is that nearly 39% of all references were about China’s nuclear weapons or growing conventional assets. However, the aggregate view can be misleading, as seen in Figure 2, which details the data from Figure 1 annually. It shows that there were five distinct periods in which references to intentions spiked: 1996-1998, 2001, 2010, 2012, and 2018–2019.10 These corresponded to points of punctuation in which the

A picture containing timeline

Description automatically generated

threat narrative notably intensified, indicating that Chinese actions helped to significantly drive it.

Fueled by its rapid economic growth, strategic geographic location, and large population, China was recognized early as being well-placed to have a greater impact on the regional and world stages. The primary theme of the initial narrative was about China’s potential power. However, whether it would constitute a threat to U.S. interests and the region was placed primarily on the Chinese government and how it would employ its newfound power – that is, whether it would actively seek to undermine American regional dominance. In 1995, for example, China was noted as the chief exception to the global trend of declining military budgets, but special emphasis was placed on how it “might use its military forces” (S.Hrg.104-15 1995, 33). Specifically, “the rapid growth in China’s material strength has raised the importance of China in the Asian security equation” and the “peace, stability, and economic growth in the AsiaPacific region” was, in large part, dependent upon whether China sought friendly relations with its neighbors (S.Hrg.104-15 1995, 43). At this point, the notion that China could threaten American global position and the world order was not discussed. Instead, the possibility only was that China could use its rising power to challenge the regional order.

A significant intensification of the China threat narrative accompanied the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995–1996, in which China conducted a series of missile tests in waters surrounding Taiwan and mobilized its military across the strait. As seen in Figure 3, which illustrates China’s role in triggering regional instability within East-Asia as a percentage of annual references, there was a significant increase in this issue during the 1996 and 1997 hearings. This crisis was generated in response to a visit to the U.S. by Taiwan’s president, which the Chinese government considered an unacceptable symbolic act of American support for the more independence-leaning leader, and in the context of Taiwan’s 1996 election, in which he was standing for reelection. The U.S. eventually responded by sending two carrier battle groups to the area. The consequences of this crisis were still unfolding when the 1996 threat hearing was held, and it was the first time in which China was described as actually “threatening” and “serious questions” were raised “about Beijing’s intentions” and regional goals (S.Hrg.104- 510 1996, 5). Chinese “saber-rattling” was placed in the context of its preparations for “local and limited conflicts,” which ran counter to China’s claims that it sought constructive relations with its neighbors (S.Hrg.104-510 1996, 47). The reasons for its actions were not provided in the testimony nor were its concerns over Taiwan given any legitimacy. This narrative direction continued in 1997, with greater attention paid to China’s potential, and negative, impact in Asia-Pacific should it choose to become “more assertive and aggressive” (S.Hrg.105-201 1997, 16). The implication of this testimony was that the success of America’s policy of engagement with China was ultimately dependent upon Chinese intentions and not American policy.

Given China’s policies vis-à-vis Taiwan, it is perhaps not surprising that its great power ambitions and revisionist goals were first introduced in 1996 and became recurring themes in American depictions of China over the next several years. By 2001, Chinese ambitions were described as having “come sharply into focus” and “one of the toughest challenges we face” (S.Hrg.107-2 2001, 10). As seen in Figure 3, over 11% of these reports, on average, referenced China’s great power

Chart

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

ambitions in the decade following 1996. Significantly, this impulse stemmed from internal sources: a nationalist impulse to “[redress] what it often proclaims as a hundred years of humiliation at the hands of Western powers” (S.Hrg.106-580 2000, 18);“a centuries-old quest for national wealth and power” (S.Hrg.107-2 2001, 28); and, domestic politics amongst Communist Party elites who feel “obliged to avoid any hint of being soft on the United States” (S.Hrg.107-597 2002, 134).11 This desire ultimately manifested itself in China’s goal to establish itself as the dominant power in East Asia (S.Hrg.107-2 2001, 28). U.S. officials framed China’s economic growth, military spending, and desire for a sphere of influence as connected to, and in many ways a direct consequence of, its great power ambitions, which largely emerged from internal Chinese dynamics.

This narrative was also connected to one which described China as a revisionist power, with a commitment to a “multipolar world” – a phrase which was first used in regard to China in 2000 (S.Hrg.106-580 2000, 7). This goal rejected the U.S.-led unipolar international system and sought to establish a new geopolitical architecture. This assessment of Chinese goals can, in large part, explain why the China threat narrative again spiked in 2001: China was expected to consistently “attempt to limit or forestall American unilateral or US led actions judged adverse to China’s own interests because they seem to strengthen and perpetuate a unipolar world” (S.Hrg.107-2 2001, 28). This new narrative was important because it rearticulated the China threat as directly inimical to America’s global position. While officials recognized that China saw the U.S. as its primary impediment to achieving regional goals, there was no acknowledgment from the U.S. side that its policies were in any way responsible. Furthermore, there was no sense that China had a legitimate concern regarding American unilateralism or its forward military positioning along China’s periphery. Rather, the implication was that Beijing’s perceptions were simply incorrect.

While these themes were repeated during hearings over the first decade of the 2000s, there was a lull in the amount of attention paid to China at this time associated with America’s preoccupation with the Global War on Terrorism. For example, there were only a few score references to China across all reports submitted in 2007, and these were almost entirely focused on recounting China’s conventional and nuclear capabilities. But, after China became far more active in the South China Sea around 2008 and as the U.S. moved further away from 9/11, there was a meaningful intensification in the China threat narrative. The Obama administration’s intention to refocus U.S. foreign policy away from the Middle East and toward the Asia-Pacific region through the so called “pivot” also played a key role in this narrative shift as a means to justify it (Ambrosio et al. 2018).

Thus, the China threat narrative which developed around this time depicted China as a far more active, confident threat, which was willing to assert its great power ambitions regionally and even extra-regionally – the latter reflected its growing engagement with Africa and Latin America (S.Hrg.110-634 2008, 28). Accordingly, China was characterized as dedicated to “assertive . . . behavior” and becoming “a more imposing and potentially difficult international actor” in the future (S.Hrg.112-159 2011, 16). This wider focus was backed by a military which (a)energetically sought to counter America’s military advantages in the region, to the point that it was beginning to emerge as a peer competitor, at least regionally; (b)adopted “an offensive operational [military] doctrine” and “possible preemptive action;” and, (c)was building the capacity to act extraregionally in support of its broader great power interests, such as establishing naval facilities in the Indian Ocean (S.Hrg.110-634 2008, 43). These actions were portrayed as ultimately connected to overturning America’s global position.

This increased threat narrative was evidenced by the 2010 spike in references to China’s great power ambitions, as seen in Figure 3, where nearly a third of all references to China mentioned these designs. This overall characterization was reinforced by an increased focus on Chinese actions in the South China Sea, with references to intentions reaching a high-point in 2012 (see Figure 2). Furthermore, China was depicted as a multifaceted threat dedicated to expanding its geographic profile, with an increased willingness to undertake cyberspace and foreign intelligence operations against the U.S., and prepared for conflicts in which space/counterspace capabilities would prove crucial. Over the next decade, each of these themes continued, becoming significantly more serious as U.S. perceptions of great power threat became central to the American narrative in the latter half of the 2010

#### US hegemony is dead and gone with Trump – treaty exits, Trump foreign policy, and rising power prove

* Russia and China emergence
* Treaty exits
* Response to 9/11 and Iraq War
* Trump FP

Fareed Zakaria 06/11/19 (Host of CNN’s GPS, Harvard Ph. D in Government, served on Council on Foreign Relations Board) "The Self-Destruction of American Power," https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-06-11/self-destruction-american-power EE

Sometime in the last two years, American hegemony died. The age of U.S. dominance was a brief, heady era, about three decades marked by two moments, each a breakdown of sorts. It was born amid the collapse of the Berlin Wall, in 1989. The end, or really the beginning of the end, was another collapse, that of Iraq in 2003, and the slow unraveling since. But was the death of the United States’ extraordinary status a result of external causes, or did Washington accelerate its own demise through bad habits and bad behavior? That is a question that will be debated by historians for years to come. But at this point, we have enough time and perspective to make some preliminary observations.

As with most deaths, many factors contributed to this one. There were deep structural forces in the international system that inexorably worked against any one nation that accumulated so much power. In the American case, however, one is struck by the ways in which Washington—from an unprecedented position—mishandled its hegemony and abused its power, losing allies and emboldening enemies. And now, under the Trump administration, the United States seems to have lost interest, indeed lost faith, in the ideas and purpose that animated its international presence for three-quarters of a century.

U.S. hegemony in the post–Cold War era was like nothing the world had seen since the Roman Empire. Writers are fond of dating the dawn of “the American century” to 1945, not long after the publisher Henry Luce coined the term. But the post–World War II era was quite different from the post-1989 one. Even after 1945, in large stretches of the globe, France and the United Kingdom still had formal empires and thus deep influence. Soon, the Soviet Union presented itself as a superpower rival, contesting Washington’s influence in every corner of the planet. Remember that the phrase “Third World” derived from the tripartite division of the globe, the First World being the United States and Western Europe, and the Second World, the communist countries. The Third World was everywhere else, where each country was choosing between U.S. and Soviet influence. For much of the world’s population, from Poland to China, the century hardly looked American.

The United States’ post–Cold War supremacy was initially hard to detect. As I pointed out in The New Yorker in 2002, most participants missed it. In 1990, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher argued that the world was dividing into three political spheres, dominated by the dollar, the yen, and the deutsche mark. Henry Kissinger’s 1994 book, Diplomacy, predicted the dawn of a new multipolar age. Certainly in the United States, there was little triumphalism. The 1992 presidential campaign was marked by a sense of weakness and weariness. “The Cold War is over; Japan and Germany won,” the Democratic hopeful Paul Tsongas said again and again. Asia hands had already begun to speak of “the Pacific century.”

U.S. hegemony in the post–Cold War era was like nothing the world had seen since the Roman Empire.

There was one exception to this analysis, a prescient essay in the pages of this magazine by the conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer: “The Unipolar Moment,” which was published in 1990. But even this triumphalist take was limited in its expansiveness, as its title suggests. “The unipolar moment will be brief,” Krauthammer admitted, predicting in a Washington Post column that within a very short time, Germany and Japan, the two emerging “regional superpowers,” would be pursuing foreign policies independent of the United States.

Policymakers welcomed the waning of unipolarity, which they assumed was imminent. In 1991, as the Balkan wars began, Jacques Poos, the president of the Council of the European Union, declared, “This is the hour of Europe.” He explained: “If one problem can be solved by Europeans, it is the Yugoslav problem. This is a European country, and it is not up to the Americans.” But it turned out that only the United States had the combined power and influence to intervene effectively and tackle the crisis.

Similarly, toward the end of the 1990s, when a series of economic panics sent East Asian economies into tailspins, only the United States could stabilize the global financial system. It organized a $120 billion international bailout for the worst-hit countries, resolving the crisis. Time magazine put three Americans, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan, and Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, on its cover with the headline “The Committee to Save the World.”

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Just as American hegemony grew in the early 1990s while no one was noticing, so in the late 1990s did the forces that would undermine it, even as people had begun to speak of the United States as “the indispensable nation” and “the world’s sole superpower.” First and foremost, there was the rise of China. It is easy to see in retrospect that Beijing would become the only serious rival to Washington, but it was not as apparent a quarter century ago. Although China had grown speedily since the 1980s, it had done so from a very low base. Few countries had been able to continue that process for more than a couple of decades. China’s strange mixture of capitalism and Leninism seemed fragile, as the Tiananmen Square uprising had revealed.

But China’s rise persisted, and the country became the new great power on the block, one with the might and the ambition to match the United States. Russia, for its part, went from being both weak and quiescent in the early 1990s to being a revanchist power, a spoiler with enough capability and cunning to be disruptive. With two major global players outside the U.S.-constructed international system, the world had entered a post-American phase. Today, the United States is still the most powerful country on the planet, but it exists in a world of global and regional powers that can—and frequently do—push back.

The 9/11 attacks and the rise of Islamic terrorism played a dual role in the decline of U.S. hegemony. At first, the attacks seemed to galvanize Washington and mobilize its power. In 2001, the United States, still larger economically than the next five countries put together, chose to ramp up its annual defense spending by an amount—almost $50 billion—that was larger than the United Kingdom’s entire yearly defense budget. When Washington intervened in Afghanistan, it was able to get overwhelming support for the campaign, including from Russia. Two years later, despite many objections, it was still able to put together a large international coalition for an invasion of Iraq. The early years of this century marked the high point of the American imperium, as Washington tried to remake wholly alien nations—Afghanistan and Iraq—thousands of miles away, despite the rest of the world’s reluctant acquiescence or active opposition.

Iraq in particular marked a turning point. The United States embarked on a war of choice despite misgivings expressed in the rest of world. It tried to get the UN to rubber-stamp its mission, and when that proved arduous, it dispensed with the organization altogether. It ignored the Powell Doctrine—the idea, promulgated by General Colin Powell while he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War, that a war was worth entering only if vital national interests were at stake and overwhelming victory assured. The Bush administration insisted that the vast challenge of occupying Iraq could be undertaken with a small number of troops and a light touch. Iraq, it was said, would pay for itself. And once in Baghdad, Washington decided to destroy the Iraqi state, disbanding the army and purging the bureaucracy, which produced chaos and helped fuel an insurgency. Any one of these mistakes might have been overcome. But together they ensured that Iraq became a costly fiasco.

After 9/11, Washington made major, consequential decisions that continue to haunt it, but it made all of them hastily and in fear. It saw itself as in mortal danger, needing to do whatever it took to defend itself—from invading Iraq to spending untold sums on homeland security to employing torture. The rest of the world saw a country that was experiencing a kind of terrorism that many had lived with for years and yet was thrashing around like a wounded lion, tearing down international alliances and norms. In its first two years, the George W. Bush administration walked away from more international agreements than any previous administration had. (Undoubtedly, that record has now been surpassed under President Donald Trump.) American behavior abroad during the Bush administration shattered the moral and political authority of the United States, as long-standing allies such as Canada and France found themselves at odds with it on the substance, morality, and style of its foreign policy.

So which was it that eroded American hegemony—the rise of new challengers or imperial overreach? As with any large and complex historical phenomenon, it was probably all of the above. China’s rise was one of those tectonic shifts in international life that would have eroded any hegemon’s unrivaled power, no matter how skillful its diplomacy. The return of Russia, however, was a more complex affair. It’s easy to forget now, but in the early 1990s, leaders in Moscow were determined to turn their country into a liberal democracy, a European nation, and an ally of sorts of the West. Eduard Shevardnadze, who was foreign minister during the final years of the Soviet Union, supported the United States’ 1990–91 war against Iraq. And after the Soviet Union’s collapse, Russia’s first foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, was an even more ardent liberal, an internationalist, and a vigorous supporter of human rights.

The greatest error the United States committed during its unipolar moment was to simply stop paying attention.

Who lost Russia is a question for another article. But it is worth noting that although Washington gave Moscow some status and respect—expanding the G-7 into the G-8, for example—it never truly took Russia’s security concerns seriously. It enlarged NATO fast and furiously, a process that might have been necessary for countries such as Poland, historically insecure and threatened by Russia, but one that has continued on unthinkingly, with little concern for Russian sensitivities, and now even extends to Macedonia. Today, Russian President Vladimir Putin’s aggressive behavior makes every action taken against his country seem justified, but it’s worth asking, What forces produced the rise of Putin and his foreign policy in the first place? Undoubtedly, they were mostly internal to Russia, but to the extent that U.S. actions had an effect, they appear to have been damaging, helping stoke the forces of revenge and revanchism in Russia.

The greatest error the United States committed during its unipolar moment, with Russia and more generally, was to simply stop paying attention. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Americans wanted to go home, and they did. During the Cold War, the United States had stayed deeply interested in events in Central America, Southeast Asia, the Taiwan Strait, and even Angola and Namibia. By the mid-1990s, it had lost all interest in the world. Foreign-bureau broadcasts by NBC fell from 1,013 minutes in 1988 to 327 minutes in 1996. (Today, the three main networks combined devote roughly the same amount of time to foreign-bureau stories as each individual network did in 1988.) Both the White House and Congress during the George H. W. Bush administration had no appetite for an ambitious effort to transform Russia, no interest in rolling out a new version of the Marshall Plan or becoming deeply engaged in the country. Even amid the foreign economic crises that hit during the Clinton administration, U.S. policymakers had to scramble and improvise, knowing that Congress would appropriate no funds to rescue Mexico or Thailand or Indonesia. They offered advice, most of it designed to require little assistance from Washington, but their attitude was one of a distant well-wisher, not an engaged superpower.

Ever since the end of World War I, the United States has wanted to transform the world. In the 1990s, that seemed more possible than ever before. Countries across the planet were moving toward the American way. The Gulf War seemed to mark a new milestone for world order, in that it was prosecuted to uphold a norm, limited in its scope, endorsed by major powers and legitimized by international law. But right at the time of all these positive developments, the United States lost interest. U.S. policymakers still wanted to transform the world in the 1990s, but on the cheap. They did not have the political capital or resources to throw themselves into the effort. That was one reason Washington’s advice to foreign countries was always the same: economic shock therapy and instant democracy. Anything slower or more complex—anything, in other words, that resembled the manner in which the West itself had liberalized its economy and democratized its politics—was unacceptable. Before 9/11, when confronting challenges, the American tactic was mostly to attack from afar, hence the twin approaches of economic sanctions and precision air strikes. Both of these, as the political scientist Eliot Cohen wrote of airpower, had the characteristics of modern courtship: “gratification without commitment.”

Of course, these limits on the United States’ willingness to pay prices and bear burdens never changed its rhetoric, which is why, in an essay for The New York Times Magazine in 1998, I pointed out that U.S. foreign policy was defined by “the rhetoric of transformation but the reality of accommodation.” The result, I said, was “a hollow hegemony.” That hollowness has persisted ever since.

THE FINAL BLOW

The Trump administration has hollowed out U.S. foreign policy even further. Trump’s instincts are Jacksonian, in that he is largely uninterested in the world except insofar as he believes that most countries are screwing the United States. He is a nationalist, a protectionist, and a populist, determined to put “America first.” But truthfully, more than anything else, he has abandoned the field. Under Trump, the United States has withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and from engaging with Asia more generally. It is uncoupling itself from its 70-year partnership with Europe. It has dealt with Latin America through the prism of either keeping immigrants out or winning votes in Florida. It has even managed to alienate Canadians (no mean feat). And it has subcontracted Middle East policy to Israel and Saudi Arabia. With a few impulsive exceptions—such as the narcissistic desire to win a Nobel Prize by trying to make peace with North Korea—what is most notable about Trump’s foreign policy is its absence.

When the United Kingdom was the superpower of its day, its hegemony eroded because of many large structural forces—the rise of Germany, the United States, and the Soviet Union. But it also lost control of its empire through overreach and hubris. In 1900, with a quarter of the world’s population under British rule, most of the United Kingdom’s major colonies were asking only for limited autonomy—“dominion status” or “home rule,” in the terms of the day. Had the country quickly granted that to all its colonies, who knows whether it would have been able to extend its imperial life for decades? But it didn’t, insisting on its narrow, selfish interests rather than accommodating itself to the interests of the broader empire.

There is an analogy here with the United States. Had the country acted more consistently in the pursuit of broader interests and ideas, it could have continued its influence for decades (albeit in a different form). The rule for extending liberal hegemony seems simple: be more liberal and less hegemonic. But too often and too obviously, Washington pursued its narrow self-interests, alienating its allies and emboldening its foes. Unlike the United Kingdom at the end of its reign, the United States is not bankrupt or imperially overextended. It remains the single most powerful country on the planet. It will continue to wield immense influence, more than any other nation. But it will no longer define and dominate the international system the way it did for almost three decades.

What remains, then, are American ideas. The United States has been a unique hegemon in that it expanded its influence to establish a new world order, one dreamed of by President Woodrow Wilson and most fully conceived of by President Franklin Roosevelt. It is the world that was half-created after 1945, sometimes called “the liberal international order,” from which the Soviet Union soon defected to build its own sphere. But the free world persisted through the Cold War, and after 1991, it expanded to encompass much of the globe. The ideas behind it have produced stability and prosperity over the last three-quarters of a century. The question now is whether, as American power wanes, the international system it sponsored—the rules, norms, and values—will survive. Or will America also watch the decline of its empire of ideas?

### 1NC – ILO SHIFT DA

#### Decline has popularized restraint – a bipartisan coalition formed to avoid the failures of liberal hegemony

Ashford 21 Emma Ashford is a Senior Fellow at the New American Engagement Initiative at the Atlantic Council’s Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, September/October 2021, "Strategies of Restraint," Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-08-24/strategies-restraint> mvp

For nearly three decades after the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy was characterized by a bipartisan consensus: that as the world’s “indispensable nation” and with no competitor, the United States had little choice but to pursue a transformational agenda on the world stage. Over the last few years, however, that consensus has collapsed. A growing chorus of voices are advocating a strategy of restraint—a less activist approach that focuses on diplomatic and economic engagement over military intervention. And they have found a receptive audience.

In that, they have undoubtedly been helped by circumstance: the United States’ failed “war on terror,” the rise of China, and growing partisan polarization at home have all made it clear that U.S. foreign policy cannot simply remain on autopilot. Even those who continue to argue for an interventionist approach to the world typically acknowledge that their strategy must be shorn of its worst excesses. Where restraint was once excluded from the halls of power and confined largely to academic journals, now some of its positions have become official policy.

Although President Donald Trump’s record was defined by dysfunction more than any coherent strategy, he did wind down the war in Afghanistan, raise doubts about the value of U.S. alliances in Europe and Asia, and question the wisdom of military intervention and democracy promotion. President Joe Biden, for his part, has begun withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, has initiated a review of the United States’ global military posture, and has taken steps to stabilize the U.S.-Russian relationship. In 2019, Jake Sullivan, now Biden’s national security adviser, wrote, “The U.S. must get better at seeing both the possibilities and the limits of American power.” That this sentiment is now openly embraced at the highest levels of government is nothing short of a win for those who have long called for a more restrained U.S. foreign policy.

Yet victory also raises a question: Where do restrainers go from here? With Washington having dialed down the war on terrorism, the most politically popular of their demands has been achieved. Now, they are liable to face an uphill battle over the rest of U.S. foreign policy, such as how to treat allies or what to do about China—issues that have little public salience or on which the restrainers are divided. Although often bundled together by Washington’s foreign policy elites and derided as isolationists, the members of the restraint community include a diversity of voices, running the gamut from left-wing antiwar activists to hard-nosed conservative realists. It should not be surprising that they disagree on much.

If the restraint camp focuses on what divides them rather than what unites them, then it will find itself consumed with internecine battles and excluded from decision-making at the very moment its influence could be at its height. But there is a viable consensus, a path forward for restraint that can achieve the most important goals, alienate the fewest members of the coalition, and win new converts. This more pragmatic strategy, which would entail the gradual lessening of U.S. military commitments, would not achieve the most ambitious of the restrainers’ goals. But it has the best chance of moving U.S. foreign policy in a more secure and more popular direction.

A DEBATE REBORN

The idea that the United States is uniquely qualified to reshape the world has manifested itself in different ways in the 30 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of a bipolar world. Humanitarian intervention, democracy promotion, and counterterrorism—all were attempts to mold the world according to American preferences. Yet the unipolar moment has largely failed to live up to expectations. Today, democracy is in decline, there are more state-level conflicts than at any time since 1990, the war on terrorism has largely failed, and China’s rise has given the lie to the notion that the United States can prevent the emergence of peer competitors. Washington’s foreign policy community now appears to accept the need for a course correction, although it remains divided on the specifics.

Today, opinion is increasingly coalescing around three distinct views. The first of these is a modified form of liberal internationalism, the school of thought that believes that U.S. leadership is a stabilizing force in the world, emphasizes militarized deterrence, and has faith in a liberal, rules-based international order. Proponents of this approach often frame threats from China and Russia as threats to this order rather than as threats to concrete U.S. security interests. Yet the strain of this view dominant today is also, at least in theory, a softer, reformed version of the post–Cold War consensus, one that takes into account critiques of recent U.S. foreign policy and rejects parts of the war on terrorism.

Because they are more aware of the limits of American power than their predecessors, advocates of this view are best described as liberal internationalists, rather than liberal interventionists. The scholars Mira Rapp-Hooper and Rebecca Lissner—both of whom now serve on the National Security Council—belong to this camp. As they wrote in these pages in 2019, “Rather than wasting its still considerable power on quixotic bids to restore the liberal order or remake the world in its own image, the United States should focus on what it can realistically achieve.”

Restrainers have not offered a coherent alternative to today’s foreign policy.

Another alternative has percolated out of the synthesis of the Republican foreign policy establishment and the Trump administration: a form of belligerent unilateralism that prioritizes maintaining U.S. military primacy. This “America first” approach to the world is also a clear successor to the old consensus, but one that privileges power over diplomacy and U.S. interests over a liberal order. Like their liberal internationalist counterparts, the America firsters—both Trump administration alumni and more mainstream Republican foreign policy hands—have absorbed the notion that U.S. foreign policy has become unpopular, particularly among the GOP base. They have therefore shifted from democracy promotion and nation building toward a militarized global presence more akin to classic imperial policing.

They also reject some of the core liberal components of the old consensus, spurning diplomacy and arms control, fetishizing sovereignty, and preferring American solutions to global problems over multilateral solutions. For them, the liberal order is a mirage. As Nadia Schadlow, a veteran of the Trump White House, wrote in these pages in 2020, “Washington must let go of old illusions, move past the myths of liberal internationalism, and reconsider its views about the nature of the world order.”

Both approaches to the world are still problematic. A rebooted liberal internationalism may succeed at rehabilitating the United States’ image, but it is unlikely to advance democracy or build a unified liberal order through nonmilitary means when military ones have failed. And as the global balance of power shifts, liberal internationalism simultaneously overestimates the contributions that U.S. allies can make to collective defense and underestimates the differences they have with Washington. The “America first” approach, for its part, may yield short-term dividends—Trump, after all, was able to force U.S. allies to abide by sanctions on Iran and renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement—but it has diminishing returns. The more the United States uses coercive tools against other countries, the more they will look for ways to blunt those tools. And both approaches lean heavily on a forward U.S. military presence in ways that could all too easily trigger an unplanned conflict, particularly in Asia.

The remaining alternative, restraint, comes from outside the Washington policymaking world and is largely focused on these flaws. It is far more ideologically diverse than the other two, but most restrainers agree on several core principles. They share a conviction that the United States is a remarkably secure nation, that unlike many great powers in history, it faces no real threat of invasion, thanks to geography and nuclear weapons. They argue that U.S. foreign policy has been characterized in recent years by overreach and hubris, with predictably abysmal results. And they think U.S. foreign policy is overmilitarized, with policymakers spending too much on defense and too quickly resorting to force. Most important, advocates of restraint strike directly at the notion of the United States as the indispensable nation, considering it instead as but one among many global powers.

RESTRAINT’S MOMENT

The most common slap at restrainers is that they focus too much on criticism without offering plausible policy alternatives. That is not an entirely accurate evaluation; individual proponents of restraint have offered detailed prescriptions for everything from the war in Afghanistan to U.S.-Russian relations. But it is true that restrainers have often focused on what draws them together—namely, their shared criticisms of the status quo—rather than what would pull them apart: the question of which specific policies to implement instead. As restraint enters the mainstream conversation, the distinctions within this group are coming to the surface.

Restraint contains several different overlapping ideas. The first (and best defined) of these is an academic theory of grand strategy formulated by the political scientist Barry Posen in his 2014 book, Restraint. His version of restraint envisages a much smaller military based primarily within the United States. Other restrainers—such as the international relations theorists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt—advocate a grand strategy of offshore balancing, a distinct but related approach that also calls for downsizing the United States’ global military role. (The distinction between the two is one of degree: Posen backs an entirely offshore military presence, whereas Mearsheimer and Walt admit that the United States may occasionally need to intervene to keep a hostile state from dominating a key region.) As grand strategies, both leave many granular policy details unstated, but they present internally coherent and fully formulated approaches to the world.

There is also a looser definition of “restraint.” Increasingly, the term is Washington shorthand for any proposal for a less militarized and activist foreign policy. That includes those put forth not just by academic realists but also by progressive Democrats and conservative Republicans in Congress, as well as various antiwar groups (such as Code Pink and the Friends Committee on National Legislation) and newer entrants into the antiwar space (such as the veterans’ group Common Defense). Thus, the term “restraint” is now used as often to signify this broader political movement as it is to describe a grand strategy.

Any movement that includes Mearsheimer and Code Pink is by necessity a big tent, and indeed, there are many motivations for restraint. For some, it might be a moral consideration: many libertarians believe that war grows the state, and anti-imperialists want to rein in what they see as an overbearing military-industrial complex. For others, the motivation is financial: although conservative deficit hawks are far less vocal on defense than on other issues, they exist, and many progressives and even some mainstream Democrats view cuts to military spending as an easy way to free up resources for infrastructure or social programs. For others in the restraint community, it is personal: some of the recent activism around ending the war on terrorism has been driven by veterans who are concerned about what the conflict has done to their fellow soldiers and to American society writ large. Then there are the strategists, for whom the pursuit of restraint is largely about avoiding the failures and risks of the current approach. There are even those who might be called “restraint-curious,” people who are open to a more restrained foreign policy on specific issues but reject the broader notion.

The result is a coalition that—much like its opposition—is broad and bipartisan, a partnership of the left and the right in which the two sides don’t agree with each other on much else. Consider the congressional activism around ending U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, a movement that was spearheaded by two liberals, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, and two Republicans, Senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and Mike Lee of Utah. Or consider the strange bedfellows made by the war in Afghanistan. In the House of Representatives, advocates of withdrawal included Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, the standard-bearer of the Democratic Party’s left wing, and Matt Gaetz of Florida, a Republican devotee of Trump. The transpartisan nature of the coalition pushing for restraint is one of its core strengths.

#### No empirical support for transition wars --- they misunderstand incentive structures, accommodation theory is true, and conflict is contained --- this card smokes them

Wohlforth 17 William C. Wohlforth, William Curti Wohlforth is the Daniel Webster Professor of Government in the Dartmouth College Department of Government. “Chapter 3: Not Quite the Same as it Ever Was”, in “Will China’s Rise be Peaceful? The Rise of a Great Power in Theory, History, Politics, and the Future.” Oxford University Press. December 27, 2017.

A narrative has taken hold around the world that is directly relevant to this volume: that the material capabilities standing behind the dominant order are in relative decline, and, as a result, contestation – sometimes violent – over basic rules and institutions is on the rise. Legitimacy ultimately rests on power, the argument goes, and so rising powers will seek to undermine the legitimacy of the current order and establish new rules. If the status quo states resist, the result will be instability and hence insecurity. The narrative dominates punditry but also reflects the official policy and concrete, costly behavior of major powers. Putin’s Russia has forcefully toppled one of the foundational pillars of the 1991 settlement: respect for the territorial status quo in Eurasia. China’s neighbors accuse it of raising the specter of a forceful resolution of maritime boundary disputes in contravention of widely agreed regional norms and principles of international law. Both countries continue to increase military expenditures, in Russia’s case shouldering a greater relative burden than the United States (4.2 vs. 3.8 percent of GDP). The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) grouping and its fellow travelers push back against Western-sponsored expansions of norms regarding human rights and legal armed intervention in sovereign states under the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) rubric. On global economic governance, rising powers seek greater roles in existing institutions or periodically work to create nascent regional alternatives. Not surprisingly, attempts to measure the effectiveness of institutionalized cooperation on a large range of key global issues find a depressing downward trend. Where is this headed? Many analysts portray current contestation as the leading edge of a full-blown conflict over the US-led global order. Ably represented in this collection by Christopher Layne’s chapter, their arguments often feature the use of terminology that suggests system-altering changes are afoot, for example, the claim that the unipolar era is over or a new multi- or bipolar world I nigh. Another indicator of this view is the popularity of the 1914 analogy: that China’s rise and its dissatisfaction with the status quo are like Wilhelmine Germany’s, raising similar risks of escalation and major military conflict. Against this view is the position championed in this volume most notably by John Ikenberry and Rosemary Foot, arguing that the current order is far more robust and resilient than the pessimists content. In this view, while contestation grabs the headlines, the main underlying trend is adaptation and accommodation. In this chapter, I address this question using the classical Gilpinian framework as well as more recent rise-and-decline scholarship. I argue that the balance of theory and evidence points to a more nuanced position: we are in for increased competitiveness and contestation; a harder-to-manage world has indeed arrived, but the essential structural imperatives that have operated for the last two decades are likely to remain in place. The pessimists overstate the scale and significance of change; the optimists understate the levels of dissatisfaction and the challenges of accommodation. I consider the implications of three key ways in which the current power shift differs from the canonical historical cases that inform much scholarship and commentary. In each case, there is a big implication and a qualifier. The big implication is that each change favors the status quo states and makes revisionism harder. The qualifier is that each also allows lower-level competition by creating incentives for challengers to challenge and status quo states to stick to current commitments. The three changes, considered in the sections that follow. are these: 1. The near certainty that all-out systemic war is off the table as a mechanism for hegemonic transition 2. The fact that the rising challenger to the system’s dominant state is credibly approaching peer status on only one dimension of state capability, gross economic output; and 3. The historically unprecedented degree of institutionalization in world politics coupled with the uniquely central role institutions play in the dominant power’s grand strategy. A “hegemonic war is characterized by the unlimited means employed and by the general scope of the warfare,” Robert Gilpin wrote over thirty years ago. “Because all parties are drawn into the war and the stakes involved are high, few limitations, if any, are observed with respect to the means employed.” Such a war is exceedingly unlikely to emerge among states armed with secure second-strike nuclear forces, whose core security, future power, and economic prosperity do not hinge on the physical control of others’ territory. We need to know what function these wars served in the past to assess the full implications of their expected absence in the future. Needless to say, there is no scholarly consensus on this question. Here I shall focus specifically on the main theories that assign this type of war an important role in explaining international politics, setting aside for now the many approaches that deny any special functional implications to especially large or costly wars. Two functional arguments are most prominent in the literature. For Gilpin, as for many theorists in the power-cycle tradition, the core function of hegemonic war is to resolve the contradiction between the underlying distribution of capabilities in the system and the hierarchy of prestige. His theory relies on a major lag between the diffusion of system capabilities away from the hegemon, on the one hand, and states’ ability to revise the international order accordingly, on the other hand. As capabilities shift to rising states, their dissatisfaction increases, as does their putative bargaining power, but the dominant states face incentives to hold fast defending the existing order. The gap between the system’s material “base” and its governance superstructure is resolved by a major war, which clarifies the distribution of capabilities and prestige, setting the stage for efficient bargaining over a new order. John Ikenberry stresses a second function: “Major or great-power war is a uniquely powerful agent of change in world politics because it tends to destroy and discredit old institutions and force the emergence of a new leading or hegemonic state.” The first part of Ikenberry’s argument seems intuitive, but it does not clear exactly how war “forces the emergene” of a new hegemon. Randall Schweller has most recently and fulsomely developed the core arguments for why hegemonic war alone can perform these functions. Other destructive events one can imagine, such as a global economic crash, pandemic, or environmental catastrophe, may wreak widespread destruction, but they are not driven by political logics and so cannot perform certain political functions. As Schweller argues, “It is precisely the political ends of hegemonic wars that distinguish them and the crucial international-political functions they perform – most important, crowning a new hegemonic king and wiping the global institutional slate clean – from mere cataclysmic global events.” On his view, only hegemonic war can force the emergence of a new hegemon, clarify power relations, and wipe the interstate institutional structure clean, leaving a tabula rasa for the newly anointed hegemon to write new rules. “The distasteful truth of history,” Schweller writes, “is that violent conflict not only cures the ill effects of political inertia and economic stagnation but is often the key that unlocks all the doors to radical and progressive historical change.” But this distasteful truth rests on an assumption: that war is indeed governed by political logic, while other kinds of global events (or states’ reactions to them) are not. And Clausewitz’s famous thesis that war is a continuation of politics has always been in tension with the antithesis also highlighted by the Prussian theorist: war’s inherent tendency to escape control. The argument that hegemonic wars are at root powerful political processes has yet to be subjected to focused empirical studies. For his part, Gilpin ignored the actual processes wrought by war, focusing almost exclusively on causes. Ikenberry’s narrative studies of postwar order building implicitly refer back to his arguments about war’s effects, but they are not structured around an investigation of these processes. And Schweller’s claim that hegemonic wars are necessary to prevent the degenerative “entrophy” of international politics rests entirely on contemporary evidence of disorder, ungovernability, dissolution, and dissipation rather than concrete evidence that hegemonic wars prevented these processes from occurring in the past.

### 1NC – Xi Lashout DA

#### China decline isn’t inevitable

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Since 1500 C.E., when a rising power has challenged an established power it has ended in violent conflict 80 percent of the time.4 This indicates that war between America and China is not inevitable, but it is highly probable. The applicability of structural analysis to the changes in relative strength and privilege in world order generates the principle anxieties and pressures that lead to war, but classical realism instead stresses the historical processes and biases that determine political action. Policymakers should realise that China is not Nazi Germany; in 2019, Xi Jinping stated, “Civilisations don’t have to clash, what is needed are eyes to see the beauty in all civilisations”, implying China will not use its role or influence to change the ideologies or political practices of other societies (Cited in Mahbubani, 2020:254-255). Neither is China nor the USSR; ‘The Chinese Communist Party is far more capable and adaptable than the Soviet Communist Party’ (Ibid, 271). China does not seek to export its political system around the world, its objective is international respect, not conversion; the grandest expression of Chinese power, the Great Wall, also denotes a consciousness of its limitations and vulnerability (Kissinger, 2014:214). Nevertheless, America is convinced of an existential threat to its hegemony and the emergence of new world order, which arguably has more to do with the failure of the liberal international order, and the misguided belief system that ‘the end-point of development and modernisation is defined by the contemporary West’ (Barkawi& Laffey, 2006:331). Those under attack feel compelled ‘to defend not only their territory but their basic way of life’ (Kissinger, 2014:366).

A realist recalibration of U.S. foreign policy around current national interest and a reassessment of whether its grand strategy of primacy is worth bleeding for may conclude that the U.S. has no necessity to confront China. America’s borders are not in danger of being breached, U.S. defence spending is still more than the next 10 countries combined and it remains the only superpower capable of projecting a military presence globally5. China’s territorial sphere remains limited to the Indo-Pacific region, ‘with more neighbours than any other country, it is deeply embedded in the Asian economic system’ and must balance multiple threats with nuclear powers on many fronts (Khanna, 2019:147). America must remain mindful that ‘War does not always arise from wickedness or folly. It sometimes arises from mere growth and movement (Murray, cited in Carr, 1940: 191). Washington should replace an improvisational China attitude rooted in exceptionalism, with a strategy to accommodate legitimate Chinese interests. It must strengthen, rather than withdraw from its Asian balancing alliances ‘forcing China to focus most of its attention closer to home’ (Walt, 2020) whilst also rebuilding diplomatic capability with China, and abandoning the temptation to view every Chinese action as inherently aggressive, rather as based on legitimate historical and domestic designs; ‘exaggerating the threat posed by small changes to the status quo and rejecting adaptation to the new balance of power in East Asia… could encourage the U.S. to adopt overly competitive policies’ (Glaser, 2019:52).

#### China doesn’t want zero-sum polarity even with Biden. Xi transitions to avoid lash-out. He will back out of Taiwan and the SCS if Biden stops high-level Taipei visits and cooperate in bilateral agreements which proves Xi is reactionary.

Rudd, 21 (Kevin Rudd, KEVIN RUDD is President of the Asia Society, in New York, and previously served as Prime Minister of Australia, "Short of War," Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-02-05/kevin-rudd-usa-chinese-confrontation-short-of-war>, 2021)//ILake-NC

AMERICA THROUGH XI'S EYES Underneath all these strategic choices lies Xi’s belief, reflected in official Chinese pronouncements and CCP literature, that the United States is experiencing a steady, irreversible structural decline. This belief is now grounded in a considerable body of evidence. A divided U.S. government failed to craft a national strategy for long-term investment in infrastructure, education, and basic scientific and technological research. The Trump administration damaged U.S. alliances, abandoned trade liberalization, withdrew the United States from its leadership of the postwar international order, and crippled U.S. diplomatic capacity. The Republican Party has been hijacked by the far right, and the American political class and electorate are so deeply polarized that it will prove difficult for any president to win support for a long-term bipartisan strategy on China. Washington, Xi believes, is highly unlikely to recover its credibility and confidence as a regional and global leader. And he is betting that as the next decade progresses, other world leaders will come to share this view and begin to adjust their strategic postures accordingly, gradually shifting from balancing with Washington against Beijing, to hedging between the two powers, to bandwagoning with China. But China worries about the possibility of Washington lashing out at Beijing in the years before U.S. power finally dissipates. Xi’s concern is not just a potential military conflict but also any rapid and radical economic decoupling. Moreover, the CCP’s diplomatic establishment fears that the Biden administration, realizing that the United States will soon be unable to match Chinese power on its own, might form an effective coalition of countries across the democratic capitalist world with the express aim of counterbalancing China collectively. In particular, CCP leaders fear that President Joe Biden’s proposal to hold a summit of the world’s major democracies represents a first step on that path, which is why China acted rapidly to secure new trade and investment agreements in Asia and Europe before the new administration came into office. Washington, Xi believes, is unlikely to recover its credibility and confidence as a global leader. Mindful of this combination of near-term risks and China’s long-term strengths, Xi’s general diplomatic strategy toward the Biden administration will be to de-escalate immediate tensions, stabilize the bilateral relationship as early as possible, and do everything possible to prevent security crises. To this end, Beijing will look to fully reopen the lines of high-level military communication with Washington that were largely cut off during the Trump administration. Xi might seek to convene a regular, high-level political dialogue, as well, although Washington will not be interested in reestablishing the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, which served as the main channel between the two countries until its collapse amid the trade war of 2018–19. Finally, Beijing may moderate its military activity in the immediate period ahead in areas where the People’s Liberation Army rubs up directly against U.S. forces, particularly in the South China Sea and around Taiwan—assuming that the Biden administration discontinues the high-level political visits to Taipei that became a defining feature of the final year of the Trump administration. For Beijing, however, these are changes in tactics, not in strategy. As Xi tries to ratchet down tensions in the near term, he will have to decide whether to continue pursuing his hard-line strategy against Australia, Canada, and India, which are friends or allies of the United States. This has involved a combination of a deep diplomatic freeze and economic coercion—and, in the case of India, direct military confrontation. Xi will wait for any clear signal from Washington that part of the price for stabilizing the U.S.-Chinese relationship would be an end to such coercive measures against U.S. partners. If no such signal is forthcoming—there was none under President Donald Trump—then Beijing will resume business as usual. Meanwhile, Xi will seek to work with Biden on climate change. Xi understands this is in China’s interests because of the country’s increasing vulnerability to extreme weather events. He also realizes that Biden has an opportunity to gain international prestige if Beijing cooperates with Washington on climate change, given the weight of Biden’s own climate commitments, and he knows that Biden will want to be able to demonstrate that his engagement with Beijing led to reductions in Chinese carbon emissions. As China sees it, these factors will deliver Xi some leverage in his overall dealings with Biden. And Xi hopes that greater collaboration on climate will help stabilize the U.S.-Chinese relationship more generally.

### Primacy DA

#### Restraint works – only offshore balancing locks in primacy, ensures domestic development, and checks terrorism and proliferation

Walt & Mearsheimer 16 JOHN J. MEARSHEIMER is R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. STEPHEN M. WALT is Robert and Renee Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School, July/August 2016, "The Case for Offshore Balancing," Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/case-offshore-balancing> mvp

Americans’ distaste for the prevailing grand strategy should come as no surprise, given its abysmal record over the past quarter century. In Asia, India, Pakistan, and North Korea are expanding their nuclear arsenals, and China is challenging the status quo in regional waters. In Europe, Russia has annexed Crimea, and U.S. relations with Moscow have sunk to new lows since the Cold War. U.S. forces are still fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, with no victory in sight. Despite losing most of its original leaders, al Qaeda has metastasized across the region. The Arab world has fallen into turmoil—in good part due to the United States’ decisions to effect regime change in Iraq and Libya and its modest efforts to do the same in Syria—and the Islamic State, or ISIS, has emerged out of the chaos. Repeated U.S. attempts to broker Israeli-Palestinian peace have failed, leaving a two-state solution further away than ever. Meanwhile, democracy has been in retreat worldwide, and the United States’ use of torture, targeted killings, and other morally dubious practices has tarnished its image as a defender of human rights and international law.

The United States does not bear sole responsibility for all these costly debacles, but it has had a hand in most of them. The setbacks are the natural consequence of the misguided grand strategy of liberal hegemony that Democrats and Republicans have pursued for years. This approach holds that the United States must use its power not only to solve global problems but also to promote a world order based on international institutions, representative governments, open markets, and respect for human rights. As “the indispensable nation,” the logic goes, the United States has the right, responsibility, and wisdom to manage local politics almost everywhere. At its core, liberal hegemony is a revisionist grand strategy: instead of calling on the United States to merely uphold the balance of power in key regions, it commits American might to promoting democracy everywhere and defending human rights whenever they are threatened.

By husbanding U.S. strength, an offshore-balancing strategy would preserve U.S. primacy far into the future.

There is a better way. By pursuing a strategy of “offshore balancing,” Washington would forgo ambitious efforts to remake other societies and concentrate on what really matters: pre­serving U.S. dominance in the Western Hemisphere and countering potential hegemons in Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf. Instead of policing the world, the United States would encourage other countries to take the lead in checking rising powers, intervening itself only when necessary. This does not mean abandoning the United States’ position as the world’s sole superpower or retreating to “Fortress America.” Rather, by husbanding U.S. strength, offshore balancing would preserve U.S. primacy far into the future and safeguard liberty at home.

SETTING THE RIGHT GOALS

The United States is the luckiest great power in modern history. Other leading states have had to live with threatening adversaries in their own backyards—even the United Kingdom faced the prospect of an invasion from across the English Channel on several occasions—but for more than two centuries, the United States has not. Nor do distant powers pose much of a threat, because two giant oceans are in the way. As Jean-Jules Jusserand, the French ambassador to the United States from 1902 to 1924, once put it, “On the north, she has a weak neighbor; on the south, another weak neighbor; on the east, fish, and the west, fish.” Furthermore, the United States boasts an abundance of land and natural resources and a large and energetic population, which have enabled it to develop the world’s biggest economy and most capable military. It also has thousands of nuclear weapons, which makes an attack on the American homeland even less likely.

These geopolitical blessings give the United States enormous latitude for error; indeed, only a country as secure as it would have the temerity to try to remake the world in its own image. But they also allow it to remain powerful and secure without pursuing a costly and expansive grand strategy. Offshore balancing would do just that. Its principal concern would be to keep the United States as powerful as possible—ideally, the dominant state on the planet. Above all, that means main­taining hegemony in the Western Hemisphere.

Unlike isolationists, however, offshore balancers believe that there are regions outside the Western Hemisphere that are worth expending American blood and treasure to defend. Today, three other areas matter to the United States: Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf. The first two are key centers of industrial power and home to the world’s other great powers, and the third produces roughly 30 percent of the world’s oil.

In Europe and Northeast Asia, the chief concern is the rise of a regional hegemon that would dominate its region, much as the United States dominates the Western Hemisphere. Such a state would have abundant economic clout, the ability to develop sophisticated weaponry, the potential to project power around the globe, and perhaps even the wherewithal to outspend the United States in an arms race. Such a state might even ally with countries in the Western Hemisphere and interfere close to U.S. soil. Thus, the United States’ principal aim in Europe and Northeast Asia should be to maintain the regional balance of power so that the most powerful state in each region—for now, Russia and China, respectively—remains too worried about its neighbors to roam into the Western Hemisphere. In the Gulf, meanwhile, the United States has an interest in blocking the rise of a hegemon that could interfere with the flow of oil from that region, thereby damaging the world economy and threatening U.S. prosperity.

Offshore balancing is a realist grand strategy, and its aims are limited. Promoting peace, although desirable, is not among them. This is not to say that Washington should welcome conflict anywhere in the world, or that it cannot use diplomatic or economic means to discourage war. But it should not commit U.S. military forces for that purpose alone. Nor is it a goal of offshore balancing to halt genocides, such as the one that befell Rwanda in 1994. Adopting this strategy would not preclude such operations, however, provided the need is clear, the mission is feasible, and U.S. leaders are confident that intervention will not make matters worse.

HOW WOULD IT WORK?

Under offshore balancing, the United States would calibrate its military posture according to the distribution of power in the three key regions. If there is no potential hegemon in sight in Europe, Northeast Asia, or the Gulf, then there is no reason to deploy ground or air forces there and little need for a large military establishment at home. And because it takes many years for any country to acquire the capacity to dominate its region, Washington would see it coming and have time to respond.

In that event, the United States should turn to regional forces as the first line of defense, letting them uphold the balance of power in their own neighborhood. Although Washington could provide assistance to allies and pledge to support them if they were in danger of being conquered, it should refrain from deploying large numbers of U.S. forces abroad. It may occasionally make sense to keep certain assets overseas, such as small military contingents, intelligence-gathering facilities, or prepositioned equipment, but in general, Washington should pass the buck to regional powers, as they have a far greater interest in preventing any state from dominating them.

If those powers cannot contain a potential hegemon on their own, however, the United States must help get the job done, deploying enough firepower to the region to shift the balance in its favor. Sometimes, that may mean sending in forces before war breaks out. During the Cold War, for example, the United States kept large numbers of ground and air forces in Europe out of the belief that Western European countries could not contain the Soviet Union on their own. At other times, the United States might wait to intervene after a war starts, if one side seems likely to emerge as a regional hegemon. Such was the case during both world wars: the United States came in only after Germany seemed likely to dominate Europe.

In essence, the aim is to remain offshore as long as possible, while recognizing that it is sometimes necessary to come onshore. If that happens, however, the United States should make its allies do as much of the heavy lifting as possible and remove its own forces as soon as it can.

Offshore balancing has many virtues. By limiting the areas the U.S. military was committed to defending and forcing other states to pull their own weight, it would reduce the resources Washington must devote to defense, allow for greater investment and consumption at home, and put fewer American lives in harm’s way. Today, allies routinely free-ride on American protection, a problem that has only grown since the Cold War ended. Within NATO, for example, the United States accounts for 46 percent of the alliance’s aggregate GDP yet contributes about 75 percent of its military spending. As the political scientist Barry Posen has quipped, “This is welfare for the rich.”

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Offshore balancing would also reduce the risk of terrorism. Liberal hegemony commits the United States to spreading democracy in unfamiliar places, which sometimes requires military occupation and always involves interfering with local political arrangements. Such efforts invariably foster nationalist resentment, and because the opponents are too weak to confront the United States directly, they sometimes turn to terrorism. (It is worth remembering that Osama bin Laden was motivated in good part by the presence of U.S. troops in his homeland of Saudi Arabia.) In addition to inspiring terrorists, liberal hegemony facilitates their operations: using regime change to spread American values undermines local institutions and creates ungoverned spaces where violent extremists can flourish.

Offshore balancing would alleviate this problem by eschewing social engineering and minimizing the United States’ military foot­print. U.S. troops would be stationed on foreign soil only when a country was in a vital region and threatened by a would-be hegemon. In that case, the potential victim would view the United States as a savior rather than an occupier. And once the threat had been dealt with, U.S. military forces could go back over the horizon and not stay behind to meddle in local politics. By respecting the sovereignty of other states, offshore balancing would be less likely to foster anti-American terrorism.

A REASSURING HISTORY

Offshore balancing may seem like a radical strategy today, but it provided the guiding logic of U.S. foreign policy for many decades and served the country well. During the nineteenth century, the United States was preoccupied with expanding across North America, building a powerful state, and establishing hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. After it completed these tasks at the end of the century, it soon became interested in preserving the balance of power in Europe and Northeast Asia. Nonetheless, it let the great powers in those regions check one another, intervening militarily only when the balance of power broke down, as during both world wars.

During the Cold War, the United States had no choice but to go onshore in Europe and Northeast Asia, as its allies in those regions could not contain the Soviet Union by themselves. So Washington forged alliances and stationed military forces in both regions, and it fought the Korean War to contain Soviet influence in Northeast Asia.

In the Persian Gulf, however, the United States stayed offshore, letting the United Kingdom take the lead in preventing any state from dominating that oil-rich region. After the British announced their withdrawal from the Gulf in 1968, the United States turned to the shah of Iran and the Saudi monarchy to do the job. When the shah fell in 1979, the Carter administration began building the Rapid Deployment Force, an offshore military capability designed to prevent Iran or the Soviet Union from dominating the region. The Reagan administration aided Iraq during that country’s 1980–88 war with Iran for similar reasons. The U.S. military stayed offshore until 1990, when Saddam Hussein’s seizure of Kuwait threatened to enhance Iraq’s power and place Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil producers at risk. To restore the regional balance of power, the George H. W. Bush admin­istration sent an expeditionary force to liberate Kuwait and smash Saddam’s military machine.

For nearly a century, in short, offshore balancing prevented the emergence of dangerous regional hegemons and pre­served a global balance of power that enhanced American security. Tellingly, when U.S. policymakers deviated from that strategy—as they did in Vietnam, where the United States had no vital interests—the result was a costly failure.

Events since the end of the Cold War teach the same lesson. In Europe, once the Soviet Union collapsed, the region no longer had a dominant power. The United States should have steadily reduced its military presence, cultivated amicable relations with Russia, and turned European security over to the Europeans. Instead, it expanded NATO and ignored Russian interests, helping spark the conflict over Ukraine and driving Moscow closer to China.

In the Middle East, likewise, the United States should have moved back offshore after the Gulf War and let Iran and Iraq balance each other. Instead, the Clinton administration adopted the policy of “dual containment,” which required keeping ground and air forces in Saudi Arabia to check Iran and Iraq simultaneously. The George W. Bush administration then adopted an even more ambitious strategy, dubbed “regional transformation,” which produced costly failures in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Obama administration repeated the error when it helped topple Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya and when it exacerbated the chaos in Syria by insisting that Bashar al-Assad “must go” and backing some of his opponents. Abandoning offshore balancing after the Cold War has been a recipe for failure.

HEGEMONY’S HOLLOW HOPES

Defenders of liberal hegemony marshal a number of unpersuasive arguments to make their case. One familiar claim is that only vigorous U.S. leadership can keep order around the globe. But global leadership is not an end in itself; it is desirable only insofar as it benefits the United States directly.

One might further argue that U.S. leadership is necessary to overcome the collective-action problem of local actors failing to balance against a potential hegemon. Offshore balancing recognizes this danger, however, and calls for Washington to step in if needed. Nor does it prohibit Washington from giving friendly states in the key regions advice or material aid.

Other defenders of liberal hegemony argue that U.S. leadership is necessary to deal with new, transnational threats that arise from failed states, terrorism, criminal networks, refugee flows, and the like. Not only do the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans offer inadequate protection against these dangers, they claim, but modern military technology also makes it easier for the United States to project power around the world and address them. Today’s “global village,” in short, is more dan­gerous yet easier to manage.

This view exaggerates these threats and overstates Washington’s ability to eliminate them. Crime, terrorism, and similar problems can be a nuisance, but they are hardly existential threats and rarely lend themselves to military solutions. Indeed, constant interference in the affairs of other states—and especially repeated military interventions—generates local resentment and fosters corruption, thereby making these transnational dangers worse. The long-term solution to the problems can only be competent local governance, not heavy-handed U.S. efforts to police the world.

Nor is policing the world as cheap as defenders of liberal hegemony contend, either in dollars spent or in lives lost. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq cost between $4 trillion and $6 trillion and killed nearly 7,000 U.S. soldiers and wounded more than 50,000. Veterans of these conflicts exhibit high rates of depression and suicide, yet the United States has little to show for their sacrifices.

Defenders of the status quo also fear that offshore balancing would allow other states to replace the United States at the pinnacle of global power. On the contrary, the strategy would prolong the country’s domi­nance by refocusing its efforts on core goals. Unlike liberal hegemony, offshore balancing avoids squandering resources on costly and counterproductive crusades, which would allow the government to invest more in the long-term ingredients of power and prosperity: education, infrastructure, and research and development. Remember, the United States became a great power by staying out of foreign wars and building a world-class economy, which is the same strategy China has pursued over the past three decades. Meanwhile, the United States has wasted trillions of dollars and put its long-term primacy at risk.

Another argument holds that the U.S. military must garrison the world to keep the peace and preserve an open world economy. Retrenchment, the logic goes, would renew great-power competition, invite ruinous economic rivalries, and eventually spark a major war from which the United States could not remain aloof. Better to keep playing global policeman than risk a repeat of the 1930s.

Such fears are unconvincing. For starters, this argument assumes that deeper U.S. engagement in Europe would have prevented World War II, a claim hard to square with Adolf Hitler’s unshakable desire for war. Regional conflicts will sometimes occur no matter what Washington does, but it need not get involved unless vital U.S. interests are at stake. Indeed, the United States has sometimes stayed out of regional conflicts—such as the Russo-Japanese War, the Iran-Iraq War, and the current war in Ukraine—belying the claim that it inevitably gets dragged in. And if the country is forced to fight another great power, better to arrive late and let other countries bear the brunt of the costs. As the last major power to enter both world wars, the United States emerged stronger from each for having waited.

Furthermore, recent history casts doubt on the claim that U.S. leadership preserves peace. Over the past 25 years, Washington has caused or supported several wars in the Middle East and fueled minor conflicts elsewhere. If liberal hegemony is supposed to enhance global stability, it has done a poor job.

Nor has the strategy produced much in the way of economic benefits. Given its protected position in the Western Hemisphere, the United States is free to trade and invest wherever profitable opportu­nities exist. Because all countries have a shared interest in such activity, Washington does not need to play global policeman in order to remain economically engaged with others. In fact, the U.S. economy would be in better shape today if the government were not spending so much money trying to run the world.

Offshore balancing may seem like a radical strategy today, but it provided the guiding logic of U.S. foreign policy for many decades.

Proponents of liberal hegemony also claim that the United States must remain committed all over the world to prevent nuclear proliferation. If it reduces its role in key regions or withdraws entirely, the argument runs, countries accustomed to U.S. protection will have no choice but to protect themselves by obtaining nuclear weapons.

No grand strategy is likely to prove wholly successful at preventing proliferation, but offshore balancing would do a better job than liberal hegemony. After all, that strategy failed to stop India and Pakistan from ramping up their nuclear capabilities, North Korea from becoming the newest member of the nuclear club, and Iran from making major progress with its nuclear program. Countries usually seek the bomb because they fear being attacked, and U.S. efforts at regime change only heighten such concerns. By eschewing regime change and reducing the United States’ military footprint, offshore balancing would give potential proliferators less reason to go nuclear.

Moreover, military action cannot prevent a determined country from eventually obtaining nuclear weapons; it can only buy time. The recent deal with Iran serves as a reminder that coordinated multi­lateral pressure and tough economic sanctions are a better way to discourage proliferation than preventive war or regime change.

To be sure, if the United States did scale back its security guarantees, a few vulnerable states might seek their own nuclear deterrents. That outcome is not desirable, but all-out efforts to prevent it would almost certainly be costly and probably be unsuccessful. Besides, the down­sides may not be as grave as pessimists fear. Getting the bomb does not transform weak countries into great powers or enable them to blackmail rival states. Ten states have crossed the nuclear threshold since 1945, and the world has not turned upside down. Nuclear proliferation will remain a concern no matter what the United States does, but offshore balancing provides the best strategy for dealing with it.

THE DEMOCRACY DELUSION

Other critics reject offshore balancing because they believe the United States has a moral and strategic imperative to promote freedom and protect human rights. As they see it, spreading democracy will largely rid the world of war and atrocities, keeping the United States secure and alleviating suffering.

No one knows if a world composed solely of liberal democracies would in fact prove peaceful, but spreading democracy at the point of a gun rarely works, and fledgling democracies are especially prone to conflict. Instead of promoting peace, the United States just ends up fighting endless wars. Even worse, force-feeding liberal values abroad can compromise them at home. The global war on terrorism and the related effort to implant democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq have led to tortured prisoners, targeted killings, and vast electronic surveillance of U.S. citizens.

Some defenders of liberal hegemony hold that a subtler version of the strategy could avoid the sorts of disasters that occurred in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. They are deluding themselves. Democracy promotion requires large-scale social engineering in foreign societies that Americans understand poorly, which helps explain why Washing­ton’s efforts usually fail. Dismantling and replacing existing political institutions inevitably creates winners and losers, and the latter often take up arms in opposition. When that happens, U.S. officials, believing their country’s credibility is now at stake, are tempted to use the United States’ awesome military might to fix the problem, thus drawing the country into more conflicts.

If the American people want to encourage the spread of liberal democracy, the best way to do so is to set a good example. Other countries will more likely emulate the United States if they see it as a just, prosperous, and open society. And that means doing more to improve conditions at home and less to manipulate politics abroad.

THE PROBLEMATIC PACIFIER

Then there are those who believe that Washington should reject liberal hegemony but keep sizable U.S. forces in Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf solely to prevent trouble from breaking out. This low-cost insurance policy, they argue, would save lives and money in the long run, because the United States wouldn’t have to ride to the rescue after a conflict broke out. This approach—sometimes called “selective engagement”—sounds appealing but would not work either.

For starters, it would likely revert back to liberal hegemony. Once committed to preserving peace in key regions, U.S. leaders would be sorely tempted to spread democracy, too, based on the widespread belief that democracies don’t fight one another. This was the main rationale for expanding NATO after the Cold War, with the stated goal of “a Europe whole and free.” In the real world, the line separating selective engagement from liberal hegemony is easily erased.

There is no good reason to keep U.S. forces in Europe, as no country there has the capability to dominate that region.

Advocates of selective engagement also assume that the mere presence of U.S. forces in various regions will guarantee peace, and so Americans need not worry about being dragged into distant conflicts. In other words, extending security commitments far and wide poses few risks, because they will never have to be honored.

But this assumption is overly optimistic: allies may act recklessly, and the United States may provoke conflicts itself. Indeed, in Europe, the American pacifier failed to prevent the Balkan wars of the 1990s, the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, and the current conflict in Ukraine. In the Middle East, Washington is largely responsible for several recent wars. And in the South China Sea, conflict is now a real possibility despite the U.S. Navy’s substantial regional role. Stationing U.S. forces around the world does not automatically ensure peace.

Nor does selective engagement address the problem of buck-passing. Consider that the United Kingdom is now withdrawing its army from continental Europe, at a time when NATO faces what it considers a growing threat from Russia. Once again, Washington is expected to deal with the problem, even though peace in Europe should matter far more to the region’s own powers.

THE STRATEGY IN ACTION

What would offshore balancing look like in today’s world? The good news is that it is hard to foresee a serious challenge to American hegemony in the Western Hemisphere, and for now, no potential hegemon lurks in Europe or the Persian Gulf. Now for the bad news: if China continues its impressive rise, it is likely to seek hegemony in Asia. The United States should undertake a major effort to prevent it from succeeding.

Ideally, Washington would rely on local powers to contain China, but that strategy might not work. Not only is China likely to be much more powerful than its neighbors, but these states are also located far from one another, making it harder to form an effective balancing coalition. The United States will have to coordinate their efforts and may have to throw its considerable weight behind them. In Asia, the United States may indeed be the indispensable nation.

#### Only restraint solves nuke war BUT the transition would be peaceful and create more resilient global governance, which is goldilocks and balances security with cohesion – that straight turns every answer

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A concert strategy can do what establishment foreign policy cannot, namely de-escalate great power competition by giving up US hegemony. If adopted, the United States would treat other great powers, like Russia, China, and Iran, as equal partners in the maintenance of global stability and incorporate their interests into regional security agreements. The United States would give up its self-assumed role as an unrivaled global hegemon and seek a balance of power based on mutual respect with other great powers as partners rather than enemies. This kind of international posture would result in a more horizontal great power system, one that Stacie Goddard as identified as being productive of status quo rather than revisionist intentions. It would be compatible with recognition of the great power identities of other states and provide them with ontological security.

Transitioning from a hegemonic security strategy to a balance of power one will require that the United States engage in some degree of retrenchment from its already expansive commitments. But supporters of hegemony are wrong when they claim that retrenchment will encourage great power aggression and lead to the abandonment of our allies. The United States can engage in moderate forms of retrenchment consistent with great power recognition while still maintaining commitments to allies that strive to uphold human dignity. For example, were the United States to support a moratorium on NATO expansion, as Michael O’Hanlon suggests, it would signal that the United States is no longer interested in moving the frontiers of its influence to the gates of Moscow and remove the sense of threat experienced by Russian leaders. By recognizing the validity of Russian security interests as well as its great power identity, the equal relationship made possible by a concert strategy will better deal with the threat of interstate conflict compared to US hegemony.

Reviving Global Governance

A concert strategy informed by the internationalist disposition can further enable more robust forms of global governance. Rather than attempt international cooperation based on a priori liberal normative templates, the United States would accept the validity of all claims made by collective actors in world politics in an open-ended and inclusive process of deliberation. The result would be less of a hegemonic order and more of a constitutionalist one, in which the United States binds itself to a truly democratic process of decision-making at the global level. The emergence of global governance norms would be a function less of hegemonic socialization and more of a right held by all actors to contest the validity of standards of expected behavior. In other words, a concert strategy would enable the United States to accept processes of norm contestation as the motor of transnational cooperation and generate more legitimate rules for regulating global governance. It would expand the US order building project initially identified by Ikenberry on the basis of restraint and institutional self-binding, but without retaining its own hierarchical position in world politics or engaging in hypocritical forms of dominance.