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## Off

### 1

#### Medicine treats disease

Merriam-Webster n.d. [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/medicine]

Medicine definition is - a substance or preparation used in treating disease

#### WTO waiver is extra-topical

Braman 9/14 [Nancy Braman is a registered U.S. patent attorney. She has been contributing to IPWatchdog since 2019. 9/14/21, “Iancu, Kilbride, Israel Separate Fact from Fiction During IPWatchdog LIVE Panel on TRIPS IP Waiver,” IP Watchdog, https://www.ipwatchdog.com/2021/09/14/iancu-kilbride-israel-separate-fact-fiction-ipwatchdog-live-panel-trips-ip-waiver/id=137589//lhs-ap]

Andrei Iancu, partner at Irell & Manella and former Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), kicked off the discussion. He explained that the waiver is extraordinarily broad, not only requesting a waiver of patents related to the COVID-19 vaccine technology, but all technologies that impact the treatment and care of COVID-19 related illnesses, including vaccines, respirators, software related to contact tracing, etc. Furthermore, even though the waiver seems on its face to be a temporary solution, it could have permanent consequences. He explained that the danger first lies in the revised language, which states that the waiver shall last for a minimum of three years, after which the waiver can be ended by agreement by the WTO. This is problematic, said Iancu, because in order for any change to be made at the WTO, all 164 member countries must unanimously agree. It is conceivable that at least one country would disagree, and thus the revised proposal effectively would make the waiver permanent.

#### Vote neg for deterrence –

#### 1 – Ground – Extra-topicality allows the aff to add infinite planks to the plan to fiat out of disads

#### 2 – Limits – Allows unpredictable advantage areas like contact tracing software or respirators that moot neg prep – Kills research

### 2

#### Integration between pharma and biotech is accelerating, unlocking innovation.

Cancherini ’21 [Laura; April 30; Consultant in McKinsey’s Brussels office; McKinsey, “What’s ahead for biotech: Another wave or low tide?” https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/pharmaceuticals-and-medical-products/our-insights/whats-ahead-for-biotech-another-wave-or-low-tide]

Fundamentals continue strong

When we asked executives and investors why the biotech sector had stayed so resilient during the worst economic crisis in decades, they cited innovation as the main reason. The number of assets transitioning to clinical phases is still rising, and further waves of innovation are on the horizon, driven by the convergence of biological and technological advances.

In the present day, many biotechs, along with the wider pharmaceutical industry, are taking steps to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, biotechs and pharma companies have [more than 250 vaccine candidates in their pipelines](https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/pharmaceuticals-and-medical-products/our-insights/on-pins-and-needles-will-covid-19-vaccines-save-the-world), along with a similar number of therapeutics. What’s more, the crisis has shone a spotlight on pharma as the public seeks to understand the roadblocks involved in delivering a vaccine at speed and the measures needed to maintain safety and efficacy standards. To that extent, the world has been living through a time of mass education in science research and development.

Biotech has also benefited from its innate financial resilience. Healthcare as a whole is less dependent on economic cycles than most other industries. Biotech is an innovator, actively identifying and addressing patients’ unmet needs. In addition, biotechs’ top-line revenues have been less affected by lockdowns than is the case in most other industries.

Another factor acting in the sector’s favor is that larger pharmaceutical companies still rely on biotechs as a source of innovation. With the [top dozen pharma companies](https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/m-and-a/our-insights/a-new-prescription-for-m-and-a-in-pharma) having more than $170 billion in excess reserves that could be available for spending on M&A, the prospects for further financing and deal making look promising.

For these and other reasons, many investors regard biotech as a safe haven. One interviewee felt it had benefited from a halo effect during the pandemic.

More innovation on the horizon

The investors and executives we interviewed agreed that biotech innovation continues to increase in quality and quantity despite the macroeconomic environment. Evidence can be seen in the accelerating pace of assets transitioning across the development lifecycle. When we tracked the number of assets transitioning to Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III clinical trials, we found that Phase I and Phase II assets have transitioned 50 percent faster since 2018 than between 2013 and 2018, whereas Phase III assets have maintained much the same pace. There could be many reasons for this, but it is worth noting that biotechs with Phase I and Phase II assets as their lead assets have accounted for more than half of biotech IPOs. Having an early IPO gives a biotech earlier access to capital and leaves it with more scope to concentrate on science.

Looking forward, the combination of advances in biological science and accelerating developments in technology and artificial intelligence has the potential to take innovation to a new level. A [recent report](https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/pharmaceuticals-and-medical-products/our-insights/the-bio-revolution-innovations-transforming-economies-societies-and-our-lives) from the McKinsey Global Institute analyzed the profound economic and social impact of biological innovation and found that biomolecules, biosystems, biomachines, and biocomputing could collectively produce up to 60 percent of the physical inputs to the global economy. The applications of this “Bio Revolution” range from agriculture (such as the production of nonanimal meat) to energy and materials, and from consumer goods (such as multi-omics tailored diets) to a multitude of health applications.

#### The biopharmaceutical industry is uniquely reliant on IP protections – undermining them would kill innovation by making an already expensive process completely unfeasible.

Kristina M. Lybecker, PhD, 17 [PhD Economics, Associate Professor of Economics @ Colorado College], “Intellectual Property Rights Protection and the Biopharmaceutical Industry: How Canada Measures Up,” Fraser Institute, January 2017, <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/intellectual-property-rights-protection-and-the%20biopharmaceutical-industry.pdf> C.VC

The unique structure of the innovative biopharmaceutical industry necessitates a variety of intellectual property protection mechanisms. In particular, the industry is characterized by a research and development (R&D) process that is lengthy, expensive, uncertain, and risky. According to DiMasi and colleagues, the estimated cost of developing a new medicine is US$2.6 billion (DiMasi, Grabowski, and Hansen, 2016).2 In addition, the time required to develop a new drug is also significant, averaging 10 to 15 years without any guarantee of success (PhRMA, n.d.). While these figures are highly controversial, biopharmaceutical innovation is unquestionably an expensive and lengthy undertaking.3 For the biopharmaceutical industry, innovation and its protection are essential and the source of both profits and growth. As such, patent protection is disproportionally more important for ensuring that the innovator appropriates the returns to R&D for the biopharmaceutical industry than virtually any other. Extending the findings of the 1987 “Yale Survey” (Levin, Klevorick, Nelson, and Winter, 1987), the “Carnegie Mellon Survey” established that while patents are again considered “unambiguously the least effective appropriability mechanisms,” the drug industry and other scholars regard them as strictly more effective than alternative mechanisms (Cohen, Nelson, and Walsh, 1996). The industry’s disproportionate reliance on patents and other forms of intellectual property protection is confirmed in numerous other studies.4

In essence, IPR protections provide innovative biopharmaceutical firms with an assurance of some return on their investment, thus creating incentives for the development of new technologies that could otherwise be easily replicated and sold by competitors. Due to the tremendous fixed costs required to develop new treatments and cures, a significant potential exists for free riding by follower firms, a market failure that would prevent investment in innovation were it not for the patents and other forms of intellectual property protections that provide a limited period of market exclusivity or other such incentives. Fundamentally, patents amount to an efficiency tradeoff. Society provides innovators with a limited period of market exclusivity to encourage innovation in exchange for public access to this knowledge. In exchange for the temporary static loss from market exclusivity, society gains complete knowledge of the innovation through disclosure, a permanent dynamic gain. Through this tradeoff, the existing patent system corrects the market failure that would stymie innovation. In its Apotex Inc. v. Wellcome Foundation Ltd. finding, Justice Binnie wrote for the Supreme Court of Canada, “A patent, as has been said many times, is not intended as an accolade or civic award for ingenuity. It is a method by which inventive solutions to practical problems are coaxed into the public domain by the promise of a limited monopoly for a limited time. Disclosure is the quid pro quo for valuable proprietary rights to exclusivity which are entirely the statutory creature of the Patent Act” (para. 37).

The biopharmaceutical industry is characterized by a number of legal and economic issues that distinguish it from other research-intensive industries. Danzon (1999) describes three features that are particularly noteworthy. First, given that the biopharmaceutical industry is characterized by an unusually high rate of R&D, intellectual property protection provides for the potential for significant market power and monopoly pricing that raises numerous public health policy questions surrounding prices and profits. Second, virtually every aspect of the industry is heavily regulated, from safety and efficacy to promotion and advertising, to pricing and reimbursement. Danzon describes the impact of these regulations as “profound and multidimensional even within a single country, affecting consumption patterns, productivity, R&D and hence the supply of future technologies” (Danzon, 1999: 1056). Lastly, while research and development costs are borne solely by the innovator, the resulting product is a global public good. “Each country faces an incentive to adopt the regulatory policies that best control its pharmaceutical budget in the short run, free-riding on others to pay for the joint costs of R&D and ignoring cross-national spillovers of national regulatory policies through parallel trade and international price comparisons” (Danzon, 1999: 1056). The combination of these characteristics defines a set of unique economic and legal challenges for the innovation of new drugs and the public health policies that surround their production, marketing, and distribution.

Innovative companies make far greater investments in time, resources, and financial support than do generic firms. Notably, innovation-based companies spend more than 200 times that which generic companies spend on the development of a particular drug (CIPC, 2011: 10). In addition, the investment of time, from laboratory to market, is also close to double for innovative companies relative to generic producers. Table 1 highlights the differences in the drug development processes of innovative and generic companies. For innovative biopharmaceutical companies, the development process is expensive, risky, and time consuming, all of which points to the need for strong IP protection to encourage investment and ensure companies are able to recover their investments.

The risk involved in biopharmaceutical development is starkly illustrated in a recent report by Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO), which reports that less than one of every 10 drugs that enter clinical trials is ultimately approved by the Food and Drug Administration in the United States. The report finds a success rate of merely 9.6%, a calculation that is significantly smaller than the widely-cited 11.8% figure from a 2014 study by the Tufts University’s Center for the Study of Drug Development.5 The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (2012) estimates that more than 3,200 compounds were at different stages of development globally in 2011, but only 35 new medicines were launched (Dawson, 2015).

Fundamentally, research-based biopharmaceutical companies incur greater expenses and risk in the development of their products than do generic manufactures. These investments of time and financial resources should be recognized and the effective patent life should be sufficient to recoup these investments. Continued investment and innovation are contingent upon strong, effective intellectual property protection and the ability of innovative firms to recoup their investments. Patents and other forms of intellectual property protection are disproportionally important to the research-based biopharmaceutical industry. Consequently, the legal architecture necessary to foster a robust innovation-based industry is multifaceted and is a powerful force shaping the biopharmaceutical industry, its profitability, productivity, and innovative future.

**Pharmaceutical innovation is key to protecting against future pandemics, bioterrorism, and antibiotic resistance.**

**Marjanovic and Fejiao ‘20** Marjanovic, Sonja, and Carolina Feijao. Sonja Marjanovic, Ph.D., Judge Business School, University of Cambridge. Carolina Feijao, Ph.D. in biochemistry, University of Cambridge; M.Sc. in quantitive biology, Imperial College London; B.Sc. in biology, University of Lisbon. "Pharmaceutical Innovation for Infectious Disease Management: From Troubleshooting to Sustainable Models of Engagement." (2020). [Quality Control]

As key actors in the healthcare innovation landscape, pharmaceutical and life sci-ences companies have been called on to develop medicines, vaccines and diagnostics for pressing public health challenges. The COVID-19 crisis is one such challenge, but there are many others. For example, MERS, SARS, Ebola, Zika and avian and swine flu are also infectious diseases that represent public health threats. Infectious agents such as anthrax, smallpox and tularemia could present threats in a **bioterrorism con-text**.1 The general threat to public health that is posed by **antimicrobial resistance** is also **well-recognised** as an area **in need of pharmaceutical innovation**. Innovating in response to these challenges does not always align well with pharmaceutical industry commercial models, shareholder expectations and compe-tition within the industry. However, the expertise, networks and infrastructure that industry has within its reach, as well as public expectations and the moral imperative, make pharmaceutical companies and the wider life sciences sector an **indispensable** partner in the search for solutions that save lives. This perspective argues for the need to establish more sustainable and scalable ways of incentivising pharmaceu-tical innovation in response to infectious disease threats to public health. It considers both past and current examples of efforts to mobilise pharmaceutical innovation in high commercial risk areas, including in the context of current efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In global pandemic crises like COVID-19, the urgency and scale of the crisis – as well as the spotlight placed on pharmaceutical companies – mean that contributing to the search for effective medicines, vaccines or diagnostics is **essential** for socially responsible companies in the sec-tor.2 It is therefore unsurprising that we are seeing indus-try-wide efforts unfold at unprecedented scale and pace. Whereas there is always scope for more activity, industry is currently contributing in a variety of ways. Examples include pharmaceutical companies donating existing com-pounds to assess their utility in the fight against COVID-19; screening existing compound libraries in-house or with partners to see if they can be repurposed; accelerating tri-als for potentially effective medicine or vaccine candidates; and in some cases rapidly accelerating in-house research and development to discover new treatments or vaccine agents and develop diagnostics tests.3,4 Pharmaceutical companies are collaborating with each other in some of these efforts and participating in global R&D partnerships (such as the Innovative Medicines Initiative effort to accel-erate the development of potential therapies for COVID-19) and supporting national efforts to expand diagnosis and testing capacity and ensure affordable and ready access to potential solutions.3,5,6 The primary purpose of such innovation is to **benefit patients** and wider **population health**. Although there are also reputational benefits from involvement that can be realised across the industry, there are likely to be rela-tively few companies that are ‘commercial’ winners. Those who might gain substantial revenues will be under pres-sure not to be seen as profiting from the pandemic. In the United Kingdom for example, GSK has stated that it does not expect to profit from its COVID-19 related activities and that any gains will be invested in supporting research and long-term pandemic preparedness, as well as in developing products that would be affordable in the world’s poorest countries.7 Similarly, in the United States AbbVie has waived intellectual property rights for an existing com-bination product that is being tested for therapeutic poten-tial against COVID-19, which would support affordability and allow for a supply of generics.8,9 Johnson & Johnson has stated that its potential vaccine – which is expected to begin trials – will be available on a not-for-profit basis during the pandemic.10 Pharma is mobilising substantial efforts to rise to the COVID-19 challenge at hand. However, we need to consider how pharmaceutical innovation for responding to emerging infectious diseases can best be enabled beyond the current crisis. Many public health threats (including those associated with other **infectious diseases**, **bioterror-ism** agents **and antimicrobial resistance**) are **urgently in need of pharmaceutical innovation**, **even if their impacts are not as visible** to society **as COVID**-19 is in the imme-diate term. The pharmaceutical industry has responded to previous public health emergencies associated with infec-tious disease in recent times – for example those associated with Ebola and Zika outbreaks.11 However, it has done so to a lesser scale than for COVID-19 and with contribu-tions from fewer companies. Similarly, levels of activity in response to the threat of antimicrobial resistance are still **low**.12 There are important policy questions as to whether – and how – industry could engage with such public health threats to an even greater extent under improved innova-tion conditions.

#### Bioterrorism and future pandemics cause extinction.

Hamish De Bretton-Gordon, CBRN Expert @ British Army, 20 [Director @ DBG Defense, Consultant on CBRN and Biosecurity], “Biosecurity in the Wake of COVID-19: The Urgent Action Needed,” Combatting Terrorism Center Sentinel, November/December 2020, Volume 13, Issue 11, <https://ctc.usma.edu/biosecurity-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-the-urgent-action-needed/> C.VC

Policymakers around the world did not grasp just how large the impact of a bio threat could be. Beyond the enormous human and economic impact, the current pandemic has exposed the weakness, lack of preparedness, and poor responsiveness of healthcare systems of even highly developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. And the virus has inflicted carnage, even though SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) is not especially virulent. The world may be confronted with other viruses in the future whose combination of virulence (the harm a pathogen does to its host), transmissibility, and other characteristics pose much greater danger.

While overwhelming evidence points to SARS-CoV-2 spontaneously spreading to humans, the advances in synthetic biology and the growth in the number of Level 3 and 4 biocontainment facilities around the world storing deadly viruses1 mean there is also the very real possibility that in the future, bad actors will try to engineer or steal/obtain a highly transmissible and highly virulent virus and unleash it onto the world. Another risk is accidental releases from such biocontainment facilities.

COVID-19, a highly transmissible but not very virulent pathogen, has had a devastating global impact, a fact that will not have gone unnoticed by rogue states and terror organizations. Advances in synthetic biology have created tools that could be put to malevolent use. In the last two decades, scientists synthesized the poliovirus from its genetic sequence,2 recreated the 1918 Spanish flu virus,3 and succeeded in modifying the H5N1 avian flu virus so that it resulted (in a research laboratory) in airborne transmission among mammals.4 In the future, we should think of weaponized biology as no less of an existential threat to the planet than weaponized atomic science. It should also be noted that the fear and panic that even a medium-scale bioterror attack could create could have dangerous implications that may rival or even surpass the immediate loss of life.

The Need to Rethink Likelihood

Given the fact that in late 2019 when, as far as is known, COVID-19 cases first started emerging in China, it had been more than a century since the previous catastrophic outbreak (the 1918-1919 “Spanish flu” pandemic),d it was unsurprising that many thought of such pandemics as a one-in-a-100-year event. Such assumptions should no longer hold. The encroachment of human settlements into areas that had previously been sanctuaries for wildlife5 and the popularity in some parts of the world of markets where people and wild animals are brought into proximity have made it more likely viruses will make the species leap to human beings.e And when they do, as the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated, the interconnectedness of a world in which millions of people fly each day6 means they can spread very rapidly.

There is also growing concern about engineered viruses. Not only have advances in synthetic biology (SynBio) created growing capacity for extremely dangerous viruses to be engineered in a laboratory, but the number of people with access to potentially dangerous ‘dual use’ technology has greatly expanded and continues to expand, making malevolent use of such technology ever more likely.

In the August 2020 issue of this publication, scientists at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point warned that:

The wide availability of the protocols, procedures, and techniques necessary to produce and modify living organisms combined with an exponential increase in the availability of genetic data is leading to a revolution in science affecting the threat landscape that can be rivaled only by the development of the atomic bomb. As the technology improves, the level of education and skills necessary to engineer biological agents decreases. Whereas only state actors historically had the resources to develop and employ biological weapons, SynBio is changing the threat paradigm.

The cost threshold of engineering viruses is also lowering, with the West Point scientists warning that synthetic biology has “placed the ability to recreate some of the deadliest infectious diseases known well within the grasp of the state-sponsored terrorist and the talented non-state actor.”7

As already noted, another source of vulnerability is that deadly viruses could be stolen from or escape from a research laboratory. There are now around 50 Biosafety Level 4f facilities around the world, where the deadliest pathogens are stored and worked on, and this figure is set to increase in the next few years.g This is a large increase over the last 30 years, creating bigger risk of a breach. Of equal, if not greater concern are the thousands of Biosafety Level 3 labs globally,8 which handle deadly pathogens like COVID-19.9

Given what has been outlined above, the risk of a future destructive biological attack or another devastating global pandemic should no longer be seen as low. From this point forward, there should no higher priority for the international community than biosecurity.

### 3

#### Debt ceiling passes now, but convincing republicans key. Failure causes an unprecedented economic collapse.

Segers 9/12 – Grace Segers is a staff writer at *The New Republic*, 2021 (“Sorry, Everyone, but Congress Is Bringing Back Debt Ceiling Foolishness”, The Soapbox, Available online at <https://newrepublic.com/article/163636/congress-debt-ceiling-janet-yellen>, Accessed 09-13-2021)

“The fact that we even moved into using extraordinary measures, as though that’s normal practice, just is a reflection of how irresponsible Congress has become at doing the things that need to get done,” said Maya MacGuineas, the president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a nonprofit watchdog organization.

Yellen warned in a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday that these extraordinary measures would likely run out sometime in October. She cautioned Congress against “waiting until the last minute,” adding that a delay in action would “likely cause irreparable damage to the U.S. economy and global financial markets.” A global pandemic is a “particularly irresponsible” time to “put the full faith and credit of the United States at risk,” Yellen said.

Because no one’s ever been crazy enough not to raise the debt ceiling in a responsible manner, we only have a theoretical understanding about what might happen if Congress doesn’t act, and the country defaults on its debt on “X Date,” when extraordinary measures will run out. Suffice it to say: It will be very bad. The Treasury Department, for instance, won’t be able to make payments on critical priorities such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, military pay, and veterans’ benefits.

“This event would be unprecedented in the modern era, like nothing we’ve ever seen before,” said Shai Akabas, the director of economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington think tank. (The BPC estimates that the “X Date” will occur sometime between mid-October and mid-November.)

If we reach X Date (which seems like as good a name as any for the day lawmakers might wreck the economy, so let’s stick with it), the Treasury Department may attempt to prioritize certain payments, such as interest on federal debt, or for key social programs. But this would mean that other payments would not be made on time. Another option would be for the Treasury to try to wait until it can pay one day’s worth of debts, which would result in growing delays.

Another fun fact is that the global financial system is also highly dependent on U.S. Treasury bonds, and if the country is unable to pay interest, it could have international repercussions. Think of risks like recession, spiking interest rates, and volatility in world markets.

“We don’t know which of these consequences are going to materialize and exactly when they would materialize, but we know that there are a lot of possible risks,” Akabas said.

Yellen’s warning to Congress harkens back to 2011, when the country came so close to defaulting on its debts that credit rating agency Standard & Poor’s downgraded the nation’s credit for the first time. That crisis was ultimately averted by a deal hashed out between then–Vice President Joe Biden and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. (After the deal was reached, McConnell said that he believed the debt ceiling was a “hostage worth ransoming,” as it focused Congress on addressing the national debt.)

The deal to suspend the debt ceiling in 2019, part of an agreement by Pelosi and former Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, was reached with little drama. But that was back when Donald Trump was president and Republicans controlled the Senate—two years later, the political landscape is different. President Joe Biden is now in office, and Democrats have razor-thin majorities in both houses of Congress.

But with control of only 50 seats in the Senate—stop me if you’ve heard this before!—Democrats need support from at least 10 Republicans in order to pass most legislation, including a debt-limit increase.

Republicans have signaled unwillingness to raise the debt ceiling, blasting what they see as unchecked spending by the Democrats in power. As early as May, Senate Minority Whip John Thune told reporters that it was “unlikely” 10 Republicans would vote for a debt ceiling increase without some spending cuts.

McConnell said last month that it was Democrats’ “obligation to govern,” and that “the essence of governing is to raise the debt ceiling to cover the debt.” In an interview with The Louisville Courier-Journal published Thursday, McConnell said that “America must never default” but argued that the onus was on the Democrats to raise the limit.

“The debt ceiling needs to be raised. The issue is who should do it. And under these uniquely unprecedented circumstances, it’s their obligation to do it,” McConnell said.

Republicans point out—correctly—that Democrats technically don’t need their help to raise the debt ceiling. They could just tie it to their potpourri of policy priorities known as the reconciliation bill, using a process that would allow it to be approved with a simple majority in the Senate and therefore no Republican votes. This would likely be the safest approach to ensuring the debt ceiling is raised.

But Democrats hit back that the debt ceiling is a bipartisan issue and that the latest round of debt was primarily racked up under a Republican president. Pelosi said Wednesday that a debt ceiling hike would not be included in reconciliation, and argued that raising the limit was necessary to pay off debts incurred by the “Trump credit card.”

“W​​hen President Trump was President, we, Democrats, supported lifting the debt ceiling because it’s the responsible thing to do. I would hope that the Republicans would act in a similarly responsible way,” Pelosi said. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said separately on Wednesday that “it would be just the height of irresponsibility for Republicans to play games, to take the debt limit hostage.”

Both parties hold responsibility for the roughly $6.5 trillion in debt that the country has incurred since 2019. Some of that debt came from the nearly $2 trillion Republican tax overhaul in 2017, and some from the $1.9 trillion coronavirus relief measure spearheaded by Democrats in March, both of which passed along partisan lines through reconciliation. Some of it also comes from the initial coronavirus relief measures that passed last year with bipartisan support.

Democrats could potentially lure Republican votes by tying a provision raising or suspending the debt ceiling to a continuing resolution, or C.R., funding the government. Biden has also asked Congress to provide emergency funding for hurricane relief and for resettling Afghan refugees, which could also be rolled into the C.R. Schumer and Pelosi have stayed mum on whether they will decide to go this route.

“We have a number of different ways we’re going to look at getting the debt ceiling done. We must get it done and stay tuned,” Schumer said Wednesday.

If Democrats decide to bundle all of these issues together, they would basically be daring Republicans to let the country default on its debts—along with allowing government funding to expire and voting down emergency relief.

“What we’re creating is a showdown where Democrats are trying to show that the Republicans are being irresponsible, but the cost of proving that irresponsibility is an economic worldwide catastrophe,” Blessing said.

Even if we don’t default on our debts, just getting close to the X Date could have negative effects on the economy. S&P downgraded the country’s credit rating in 2011 not because the default had occurred but because of the threat presented by political brinkmanship.

As we get closer to the X Date, it’s possible that multiple credit rating agencies could downgrade the country’s credit. If that happened, it could have ripple effects for the national economy and for our status as the world’s reserve currency.

Waiting to act could also be costly. “We know that investors are already starting to demand higher interest rates on Treasury securities that are returning around the timing of the X Date, because they have even a slightly elevated concern that the U.S. might not make good on its debts,” Akabas said. Higher rates costs taxpayers more, because we would otherwise be paying lower rates on the Treasury bills.

“The sooner that Congress addresses the debt limit, the sooner those risks will be mitigated, and the lower the costs will be,” Akabas said. But once Congress acts, either by raising the debt ceiling to a fixed amount or by suspending it to a certain date, that just ensures we will be dealing with this problem all over again in a few years.

#### Weakening IP expends Biden’s political capital making domestic agenda untenable

Bhadrakumar 5/9 [M K Bhadrakumar is a former Indian diplomat. MAY 9, 2021, “Biden’s talk of vaccine IP waiver is political theater,” Asia Times, https://asiatimes.com/2021/05/bidens-talk-of-vaccine-ip-waiver-is-political-theater//lhs-ap]

India has welcomed US support for a relaxation in patent rules to give developing countries affordable access to vaccines and medicines. New Delhi is “hopeful that with a consensus based approach, the waiver can be approved quickly at the WTO.” But is the optimism over an easing of the the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) warranted? The US statement is cautiously worded and noncommittal. It only says, “We will actively participate in text-based negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) needed to make that happen. “Those negotiations will take time given the consensus-based nature of the institution and the complexity of the issues involved.” The Biden administration’s emphasis continues to be on “our vaccine supply for the American people.” It is an America First strategy. President Joe Biden has plans to vaccinate, at least partially, 70% of adults by July 4 so that herd immunity to Covid-19 will reduce infections. Biden’s decision on the TRIPS waiver can only be seen as a political move. A Reuters report says, citing informed sources, “Wednesday’s decision allows Washington to be responsive to the demands of the [American] eft and developing countries, while using WTO negotiations to narrow the scope of the waiver. Since the negotiations will take time, the decision also buys time to boost vaccine supplies through more conventional means.” In effect, the Biden administration is juggling several balls in the air. On the one hand, the progressive left in the US politics, including Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in the Democratic Party, has been demanding a TRIPS waiver for Covid vaccines. Developing countries, supported by the WHO and the UN, are also demanding the waiver. India, a key Indo-Pacific ally of the US, was the initiator of the proposal on TRIPS waiver back in December and, in principle, the Biden administration is committed to “multilateralism.” On the other hand, Biden, whose political life of half a century was largely spent in the US Congress, is well aware of the **awesome clout** of the pharmaceutical companies in American politics. From that lobby’s perspective, the patent waiver “amounts to the expropriation of the property of the pharmaceutical companies whose innovation and financial investments made the development of Covid-19 vaccines possible in the first place,” as a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security puts it. The US pharmaceutical industry and congressional Republicans have already gone on the offensive blasting Biden’s announcement, saying it undermines incentives for American innovation. Besides, the argument goes, even with the patent waiver, vaccine manufacturing is a complex process and is not like simply flipping a switch. Senator Richard Burr, the top Republican on the US Senate Health Committee, denounced Biden’s decision. “Intellectual property protections are part of the reason we have these life-saving products,” he said. “Stripping these protections only ensures we won’t have the vaccines or treatments we need when the next pandemic occurs.” The Republican senators backed by Republican Study Committee chairman Jim Banks propose to introduce legislation to block the move. Clearly, Biden would rather spend his **political capital** on getting the necessary legislation through Congress to advance his domestic reform agenda rather than spend **time and energy** to take on the pharmaceutical industry to burnish his image as a good Samaritan on the world stage. Conceivably, Biden could be counting on the “text-based negotiations” at the WTO dragging on for months, if not years, without reaching anywhere. The US support for the waiver could even be a tactic to persuade pharmaceutical firms to back less drastic steps like sharing technology and expanding joint ventures to boost global production quickly. So far Covid-19 vaccines have been distributed primarily to the wealthy countries that developed them, while the pandemic sweeps through poorer ones such as India, and the real goal is, after all, expanded vaccine distribution. Biden is well aware that there will be huge opposition to the TRIPS waiver from the United States’ European allies as well. The British press has reported that the UK has been in closed-door talks at the World Trade Organization in recent months along with the likes of Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, Singapore, the European Union and the US, who all opposed the idea. Whereas the MEA claims that “the proposal has received the support of more than 120 countries,” Western reports have a conservative figure of 80 countries. The WTO has 164 members and all countries must agree before a waiver gets approved. It does seem a long shot. Curiously, Germany has already scrambled to reject Biden’s proposal forcefully.

#### Economic crisis sparks world war.

Sundaram and Popov 19 – Jomo Kwame Sundaram, a former economics professor, was United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, and received the Wassily Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought in 2007, Vladimir Popov, a former senior economics researcher in the Soviet Union, Russia and the United Nations Secretariat, is now Research Director at the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute in Berlin, February 12th (“Economic Crisis Can Trigger World War”, Inter Press Service, Available online at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/02/economic-crisis-can-trigger-world-war/>, Accessed 09-14-2021)

Economic recovery efforts since the 2008-2009 global financial crisis have mainly depended on unconventional monetary policies. As fears rise of yet another international financial crisis, there are growing concerns about the increased possibility of large-scale military conflict.

More worryingly, in the current political landscape, prolonged economic crisis, combined with rising economic inequality, chauvinistic ethno-populism as well as aggressive jingoist rhetoric, including threats, could easily spin out of control and ‘morph’ into military conflict, and worse, world war.

Crisis responses limited

The 2008-2009 global financial crisis almost ‘bankrupted’ governments and caused systemic collapse. Policymakers managed to pull the world economy from the brink, but soon switched from counter-cyclical fiscal efforts to unconventional monetary measures, primarily ‘quantitative easing’ and very low, if not negative real interest rates.

But while these monetary interventions averted realization of the worst fears at the time by turning the US economy around, they did little to address underlying economic weaknesses, largely due to the ascendance of finance in recent decades at the expense of the real economy. Since then, despite promising to do so, policymakers have not seriously pursued, let alone achieved, such needed reforms.

Instead, ostensible structural reformers have taken advantage of the crisis to pursue largely irrelevant efforts to further ‘casualize’ labour markets. This lack of structural reform has meant that the unprecedented liquidity central banks injected into economies has not been well allocated to stimulate resurgence of the real economy.

From bust to bubble

Instead, easy credit raised asset prices to levels even higher than those prevailing before 2008. US house prices are now 8% more than at the peak of the property bubble in 2006, while its price-to-earnings ratio in late 2018 was even higher than in 2008 and in 1929, when the Wall Street Crash precipitated the Great Depression.

As monetary tightening checks asset price bubbles, another economic crisis — possibly more severe than the last, as the economy has become less responsive to such blunt monetary interventions — is considered likely. A decade of such unconventional monetary policies, with very low interest rates, has greatly depleted their ability to revive the economy.

The implications beyond the economy of such developments and policy responses are already being seen. Prolonged economic distress has worsened public antipathy towards the culturally alien — not only abroad, but also within. Thus, another round of economic stress is deemed likely to foment unrest, conflict, even war as it is blamed on the foreign.

### 4

#### The United States federal government should substantially increase production and global distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine

#### The counterplan alone solves distribution and reinvigorates US leadership.

Gayle et al 21. [(HELENE GAYLE is President and CEO of the Chicago Community Trust and has served in global health and development roles with CARE, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. GORDON LaFORGE is a Senior Researcher at Princeton University and a lecturer at Arizona State University’s Thunderbird School of Global Management. ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER is CEO of New America and former Director of Policy Planning at the U.S. State Department) “America Can—and Should—Vaccinate the World,” Foreign Affairs, March 19, 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-03-19/america-can-and-should-vaccinate-world>] TDI

These initiatives come not a moment too soon. In tackling the **worst global crisis** of a lifetime, the **United States has so far been upstaged**. Russia and China have aggressively marketed and distributed their vaccines to foreign countries, **largely to advance foreign policy goals**. Russia is using the jab to bolster its image and investment prospects and to drive a wedge between EU countries. China is donating doses to gain leverage in territorial disputes and expand its influence under the Belt and Road Initiative. Both Moscow and Beijing have **moved to undercut the United States in its own backyard by supplying vaccines to Latin America.** The Biden administration is right to want to take the lead in vaccinating the world, for a host of reasons both self-interested and altruistic. But it should not fall into the trap of trying to beat Russia and China at their own game—handing out vaccines to specific countries based on their geostrategic importance and the amount of attention they are receiving from rival powers. Rather, **Biden should pursue** abroad the sort of “all in” unity approach that he has proclaimed at home. His administration should focus less on strategic advantage than on vaccinating the largest number of people worldwide in the shortest amount of time. In so doing, the United States would **concentrate on what the world’s peoples have in common—susceptibility to this and many other viruses**—regardless of the nature of their governments. ALL IN AND ALL OUT The United States has successfully mobilized its own and international resources to respond to regional crises in the past. In 2003, President George W. Bush started the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the largest global health program focused on a single disease in history. PEPFAR brought together U.S. agencies, private companies, and local civil society groups to help sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia get the AIDS crisis under control, saving millions of lives. In 2004, a tsunami in the Indian Ocean caused more than 220,000 deaths and billions in damage, and the United States led an urgent, similarly inclusive humanitarian relief and recovery effort that rescued victims, hastened reconstruction, and built lasting goodwill in South and Southeast Asia. Biden can improve on Bush’s precedent by going global, and he has already taken steps toward doing so. Under President Donald Trump, the United States refused to participate in the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, an international partnership that aims to guarantee COVID-19 vaccine access for the entire world. The Biden administration reversed this stance immediately and contributed $4 billion, making the United States the largest donor to the effort. Still, even if COVAX meets the ambitious target of delivering two billion doses to developing nations by the end of 2021, it will be able to vaccinate only 20 percent of those countries’ populations. Just imagine, however, what could happen if Washington were to treat COVID-19 as the equivalent of the enemy in a world war or the pandemic as a global version of the regional AIDS and Ebola epidemics of years past. Imagine, in other words, what all-out mobilization would look like if the **United States treated the COVID-19 pandemic like the global threat** that it is. The Biden administration is right to want to take the lead in vaccinating the world. Washington would lead a multilateral, whole-of-society effort to help COVAX vaccinate the world. The government would activate the military and call upon allies in the G-7 and NATO for a major assistance operation that speeds the flow of vaccine supplies and strengthens delivery systems. As it has pledged to do in the Quad summit deal, the U.S. government would use the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other civilian agencies and development programs to help countries with their national vaccination programs. And it would enlist companies, nonprofits, and civil society organizations to help increase vaccine production, raise funding, and provide technical assistance to foreign counterparts. The U.S. government should undertake exactly such an effort, right now: an all-out response for an all-in global vaccination campaign. Such a campaign would advance U.S. economic and security interests and **reboot American global leadership** after years of decline. Rather than perpetuate the transactional, friend-by-friend vaccine diplomacy of China and Russia, a U.S.-led vaccine effort could **invigorate a new multilateralism** that is more pragmatic and inclusive than the twentieth-century international order and better adapted to tackling twenty-first-century global threats. Washington would do well to remember that if COVID-19 does come back, authoritarian governments will be able to lock down their populations more quickly and effectively than democracies will, so even in competitive terms, America’s best bet really is to eradicate the novel coronavirus. The United States has a momentous **opportunity to prove both that democracy can deliver** and that American ideals truly are universal. By offering a model of global cooperation that draws on a far wider range of resources than any one government can provide, the United States can lead a vaccine effort that builds on the strengths of its **open and pluralist society.** President Biden would demonstrate unequivocally that the United States is not only “back” but looking—and **leading—far ahead.**

## Case

### 1NC – AT: Solvency

#### Waiver is not contained to pandemics – It threatens tech platforms that especially hurt small businesses, which provide 75% of COVID innovation – Turns vaccines

Donahoe, Ph.D., 8/24 [Dr. Casey Donahoe practices intellectual property law with an emphasis on patent prosecution and strategy in the fields of biotechnology, life sciences and medical devices. A highly versatile patent practitioner with a broad scientific background, he works with a range of technologies at all stages of patent prosecution, and counsels his clients on patent filing and claim strategies, and trademark use. After graduating from Duke University with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Casey worked as a patent examiner at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. August 24, 2021, “Waiver of IP Protections for COVID-19 Vaccines Still Under Consideration at WTO,” The National Law Review, www.natlawreview.com/article/waiver-ip-protections-covid-19-vaccines-still-under-consideration-wto//lhs-ap]

The proposed waiver, though, wades into relatively unchartered territory of compulsory transfers of undisclosed information. Likely the biggest threat felt by vaccine manufacturers is that the compulsory transfer of undisclosed information will not simply diminish their return on investments in COVID19 vaccines, but would jeopardize entire proprietary technological platforms that support a wide range of potential products. Such giveaways would likely impact small-to-medium sized enterprises especially, which account for approximately 75% of US COVID-19 treatments, and particularly small university spin-outs, which are highly depend on IP for valuation. [Balfour 2021-06-30]

### 1NC – AT: Disease

#### 1] Waiver doesn’t solve – COVID vaccines require technical knowledge, financial investment, and training – At best, aff has a 10% chance of solvency in 11 years

Hotez et al. 5/10 [ PETER J. HOTEZ is Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and Co-Director of Texas Children’s Hospital Center for Vaccine Development at Baylor College of Medicine. He served as U.S. Science Envoy for vaccine diplomacy during the Obama administration. MARIA ELENA BOTTAZZI is Associate Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and Co-Director of Texas Children’s Hospital Center for Vaccine Development at Baylor College of Medicine. PRASHANT YADAV is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development, Affiliate Professor at INSEAD, and Lecturer at Harvard Medical School. May 10, 2021, “Producing a Vaccine Requires More Than a Patent,” Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-05-10/producing-vaccine-requires-more-patent//lhs-ap>]

Intellectual property sharing may be helpful in the long term. But producing complicated biologics, especially innovative ones such as mRNA or adenovirus-vectored vaccines, is not solely a matter of patent access. Small-molecule antiviral drugs are comparatively straightforward: the multistep chemical processes through which they are synthesized are often fully detailed in published patents or scientific papers. Chemists and formulation experts can often synthesize and scale up production just from knowing the drug structure. But vaccines are different. Producing and manufacturing lipid-encased mRNA molecules, recombinant adenoviruses, or even the proteins or whole inactivated viruses used in older-generation vaccines requires a far higher level of sophistication than is needed for producing small-molecule drugs. Moreover, vaccine production must meet stringent requirements for quality control, quality assurance, and regulatory oversight.

The effective transfer of such complex technology requires a receiving ecosystem that can take years, sometimes decades, to build. Countries seeking to ramp up vaccine production will need to train staff scientists and technicians. They will also need scientific administrators versed not only in basic research and development but also in detailed record keeping, including specific documentation practices such as batch production records. Moreover, they will need strong quality control systems and regulatory guardrails. Building such an infrastructure requires intensive training and often considerable financial investment and risk. It also takes time—by some estimates, vaccine development requires at least 11 years, and even then the probability that such efforts will result in bringing a vaccine to market is less than ten percent. Consider that the COVID-19 vaccines were themselves the outcome of decades of research and development. Few nations are prepared to take such risks.

Only a handful of low- or middle-income countries currently have the capacity to produce new vaccines. The most notable and largest is India, which currently makes the adenovirus-vectored vaccines developed by Janssen and by Oxford and AstraZeneca, as well as an older-technology recombinant protein vaccine and a whole inactivated virus vaccine. Manufacturers in Brazil, Cuba, and some Southeast Asian countries have experience producing childhood vaccines and may be able to develop the capacity to make COVID-19 vaccines as well. Other possibilities may develop elsewhere, including in the Middle East and Africa. But in the near term, such manufacturers will require financing, access to very large amounts of raw materials and supplies (possibly including relaxation of export controls), and some technical expertise in manufacturing and quality control if they are to produce the existing vaccines against COVID-19.

Vaccinating India alone will require almost two billion doses, and more than 12 billion doses will be required to vaccinate the world. The emergence of new variants and the need for booster doses may increase demand even further. Whether mRNA vaccine technology can be scaled to produce billions of doses in 2021, or even by early 2022, remains entirely unknown, but the goal is worth pursuing. To this end, some kind of patent relaxation may be necessary, but far from sufficient. Would-be producers will need technical know-how, regulatory controls, and components that are currently in very short supply, such as nucleotides and lipids.

#### 3] They don’t solveInfectious diseases don’t cause extinction

Owen Cotton-Barratt 17, et al, PhD in Pure Mathematics, Oxford, Lecturer in Mathematics at Oxford, Research Associate at the Future of Humanity Institute, 2/3/2017, Existential Risk: Diplomacy and Governance, https://www.fhi.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Existential-Risks-2017-01-23.pdf

For most of human history, natural pandemics have posed the greatest risk of mass global fatalities.37 However, there are some reasons to believe that natural pandemics are very unlikely to cause human extinction. Analysis of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list database has shown that of the 833 recorded plant and animal species extinctions known to have occurred since 1500, less than 4% (31 species) were ascribed to infectious disease.38 None of the mammals and amphibians on this list were globally dispersed, and other factors aside from infectious disease also contributed to their extinction. It therefore seems that our own species, which is very numerous, globally dispersed, and capable of a rational response to problems, is very unlikely to be killed off by a natural pandemic.

One underlying explanation for this is that highly lethal pathogens can kill their hosts before they have a chance to spread, so there is a selective pressure for pathogens not to be highly lethal. Therefore, pathogens are likely to co-evolve with their hosts rather than kill all possible hosts.39

### 1NC – AT: Heg

#### They don’t solve – Forsyth is about hard power, not soft power from vaccines

#### Primacy is bad –

#### Adversary prolif

Fettweis 18

Christopher J. Fettweis, an American political scientist and the Associate Professor of Political Science at Tulane University, “Chapter 2: Unipolarity and Nuclear Weapons,” *Psychology of a Superpower: Security and Dominance in U.S. Foreign Policy,* Columbia University Press, 2018, accessed through Georgetown Libraries

First and most obviously, the second nuclear age is likely to be marked by a great deal more proliferation than the first. According to Bracken, the “overarching theme” of the age will be the “breakdown of the major power monopoly over the bomb.”6 Unipolarity provides strong incentives for smaller states, who have no hope of balancing the United States, to pursue nuclear weapons. No matter how much effort the United States puts into non- and counterproliferation, “nuclear weapons will nevertheless spread, with a new member occasionally joining the club,” predicted Kenneth Waltz. 7 “The most likely scenario in the wake of the Cold War,” argued John Mearsheimer, “is further nuclear proliferation in Europe,” and “it is not likely the proliferation will be well managed.”8 Instability and insecurity would spread, as would nuclear weapons, throughout the global South.9 Since new nuclear states were almost inevitable, both Waltz and Mearsheimer felt that it was in the interest of the West to attempt to manage, and indeed even to encourage, gradual proliferation to help stabilize the system.

These chains of proliferation will lead to new, potentially unstable nuclear rivalries. Were North Korea to be accepted as the ninth nuclearweapons state, Graham Allison warned in 2004, South Korea and Japan would build their own arsenals “by the end of the decade.”10 The second nuclear age will be “much more decentralized,” with “many independent nuclear decision centers.”11 A “multipolar nuclear order” is on the horizon, if it has not already arrived.12

The new nuclear powers are not likely to resemble the old. The second major assumption of the SNA literature is that proliferation will reach less enlightened parts of the globe, those led by unpredictable, semirational tyrants. The old rules of deterrence may not apply, since the motivations of these actors are not only less knowable but often ruled by passions and nationalism. “The idea of budding defense intellectuals sitting around computer models and debating strategy in Iran or Pakistan defies credulity,” or at least Bracken’s estimation, since in these states “hysterical nationalism” overrules rationality.13 The “overdetermined” cascades of proliferation across Asia will bring a host of new, less trustworthy actors into the nuclear camp, from rogue states to nonstate actors, all of whom will be essentially undeterrable by traditional means.14 Their motivations will be less rational or simply less transparent to the outside world.

In the second nuclear age, not just an accidental but the intentional use of nuclear weapons by new nuclear actors cannot be ruled out.15 Rogue states do not seek nuclear weapons for the reasons that motivated earlier proliferants. While all U.S. observers believe that Washington’s arsenal exists for defensive purposes, to deter any attack that our enemies would otherwise contemplate, the primary use of new nuclear weapons will be offensive. The possibility for irrationality in new nuclear powers inspired the United States to scrap the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and begin thinking about how to “tailor” deterrence to target smaller actors.16 A nuclear Iran will use its weapons to bully or even attack, not deter. In 2017, experts warned that North Korean intercontinental ballistic missiles would be coercive, to extract concessions from U.S. allies. “North Korea’s contempt for its neighbors suggests that it would hold them hostage with its nuclear weapons,” wrote the widely respected ambassador Chris Hill. “Would proliferation stop with South Korea and Japan? What about Taiwan?”17 As a result, the basic assumptions of deterrence need to be rethought.

#### Yes peaceful transition –

#### The only comprehensive study proves retrenchment is comparatively more peaceful

MacDonald & Parent 11—Professor of Political Science at Williams College & Professor of Political Science at University of Miami [Paul K. MacDonald & Joseph M. Parent, “Graceful Decline? The Surprising Success of Great Power Retrenchment,” International Security, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Spring 2011), pp. 7–44]

In this article, we question the logic and evidence of the retrenchment pessimists. To date there has been neither a comprehensive study of great power retrenchment nor a study that lays out the case for retrenchment as a practical or probable policy. This article fills these gaps by systematically examining the relationship between acute relative decline and the responses of great powers. We examine eighteen cases of acute relative decline since 1870 and advance three main arguments. First, we challenge the retrenchment pessimists’ claim that domestic or international constraints inhibit the ability of declining great powers to retrench. In fact, when states fall in the hierarchy of great powers, peaceful retrenchment is the most common response, even over short time spans. Based on the empirical record, we find that great powers retrenched in no less than eleven and no more than fifteen of the eighteen cases, a range of 61–83 percent. When international conditions demand it, states renounce risky ties, increase reliance on allies or adversaries, draw down their military obligations, and impose adjustments on domestic populations. Second, we find that the magnitude of relative decline helps explain the extent of great power retrenchment. Following the dictates of neorealist theory, great powers retrench for the same reason they expand: the rigors of great power politics compel them to do so.12 Retrenchment is by no means easy, but necessity is the mother of invention, and declining great powers face powerful incentives to contract their interests in a prompt and proportionate manner. Knowing only a state’s rate of relative economic decline explains its corresponding degree of retrenchment in as much as 61 percent of the cases we examined. Third, we argue that the rate of decline helps explain what forms great power retrenchment will take. How fast great powers fall contributes to whether these retrenching states will internally reform, seek new allies or rely more heavily on old ones, and make diplomatic overtures to enemies. Further, our analysis suggests that great powers facing acute decline are less likely to initiate or escalate militarized interstate disputes. Faced with diminishing resources, great powers moderate their foreign policy ambitions and offer concessions in areas of lesser strategic value. Contrary to the pessimistic conclusions of critics, retrenchment neither requires aggression nor invites predation. Great powers are able to rebalance their commitments through compromise, rather than conflict. In these ways, states respond to penury the same way they do to plenty: they seek to adopt policies that maximize security given available means. Far from being a hazardous policy, retrenchment can be successful. States that retrench often regain their position in the hierarchy of great powers. Of the fifteen great powers that adopted retrenchment in response to acute relative decline, 40 percent managed to recover their ordinal rank. In contrast, none of the declining powers that failed to retrench recovered their relative position. Pg. 9-10

#### Spheres of influence are inevitable – BUT consolidation and non-military influence solve deterrence

Allison 20 [GRAHAM ALLISON is Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at the Harvard Kennedy School and the author of Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap? March/April 2020, “The New Spheres of Influence,” Foreign Affairs, Volume 99, Number 2, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-02-10/new-spheres-influence//lhs-ap]

In the heady aftermath of the Cold War, American policymakers pronounced one of the fundamental concepts of geopolitics obsolete. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described a new world “in which great power is defined not by spheres of influence . . . or the strong imposing their will on the weak.” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that “the United States does not recognize spheres of influence.” Secretary of State John Kerry proclaimed that “the era of the Monroe Doctrine is over,” ending almost two centuries of the United States staking claim to its own sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere.

Such pronouncements were right in that something about geopolitics had changed. But they were wrong about what exactly it was. U.S. policymakers had ceased to recognize spheres of influence—the ability of other powers to demand deference from other states in their own regions or exert predominant control there—not because the concept had become obsolete. Rather, the entire world had become a de facto American sphere. Spheres of influence had given way to a sphere of influence. The strong still imposed their will on the weak; the rest of the world was compelled to play largely by American rules, or else face a steep price, from crippling sanctions to outright regime change. Spheres of influence hadn’t gone away; they had been collapsed into one, by the overwhelming fact of U.S. hegemony.

Now, however, that hegemony is fading, and Washington has awakened to what it calls “a new era of great-power competition,” with China and Russia increasingly using their power to assert interests and values that often conflict with those of the United States. But American policymakers and analysts are still struggling to come to grips with what this new era means for the U.S. role in the world. Going forward, that role will not only be different; it will also be significantly diminished. While leaders will continue announcing grand ambitions, diminished means will mean diminished results.

Unipolarity is over, and with it the illusion that other nations would simply take their assigned place in a U.S.-led international order. For the United States, that will require accepting the reality that there are spheres of influence in the world today—and that not all of them are American spheres.

THE WORLD AS IT WAS

Before making pronouncements about the new rules of geopolitics, post–Cold War U.S. secretaries of state should have looked back to the final months of World War II, when U.S. policymakers were similarly resistant to accepting a world in which spheres of influence remained a central feature of geopolitics. Competing views on the issue lay at the core of a debate between two top Soviet experts in the U.S. government.

On February 4, 1945, President Franklin Roosevelt met with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Yalta. At Roosevelt’s side was his translator and principal adviser on the Soviet Union, Charles Bohlen. Just that morning, Bohlen had opened an urgent private missive from his close colleague George Kennan in Moscow. Kennan correctly forecast that the Soviet Union would attempt to maintain control of as much of Europe as it could. The question was what the United States should do about that. Kennan asked, “Why could we not make a decent and definitive compromise with it—divide Europe frankly into spheres of influence—keep ourselves out of the Russian sphere and keep the Russians out of ours?”

The United States must realize that there are spheres of influence in the world today—and that not all of them are American.

Bohlen was appalled. “Utterly impossible,” he erupted in response. “Foreign policy of that kind cannot be made in a democracy.” Reflecting on this moment later, Bohlen explained: “The American people, who had fought a long, hard war, deserved at least an attempt to work out a better world.” Between 1945 and 1947, Bohlen worked alongside other leading figures in the Roosevelt and then the Truman administration to realize their “one world” vision, in which the allies who had fought together to defeat the Nazis would remain allied in creating a new global order. But he ultimately resigned himself to the world as it was—in short, Kennan had been right. “Instead of unity among the great powers on the major issues of world reconstruction—both political and economic—after the war, there is complete disunity between the Soviet Union and the satellites on one side and the rest of the world on the other,” Bohlen acknowledged in the summer of 1947 in a memo to Secretary of State George Marshall. “There are, in short, two worlds instead of one.”

When he finally came to share Kennan’s diagnosis, Bohlen did not shrink from the implications. His memo to Marshall concluded:

Faced with this disagreeable fact, however much we may deplore it, the United States in the interest of its own well-being and security and those of the free non-Soviet world must . . . draw [the non-Soviet world] closer together politically, economically, financially, and, in the last analysis, militarily in order to be in a position to deal effectively with the consolidated Soviet area.

This conviction became a pillar of the United States’ strategy for the coming decades, and it rested on the acceptance of spheres of influence. There would be areas that would be subjected to Soviet domination, with often terrible consequences, but the best course for the United States was to bolster those powers on the periphery of this Soviet sphere while reinforcing the strength and unity of its own sphere.

For the four decades that followed, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in the great-power competition that we know as the Cold War. In the Soviet sphere, the captive nations of Eastern Europe remained under the boot of an “evil empire.” American presidents faced repeated crises in which they had to choose between sending troops into Soviet-dominated nations to support freedom fighters seeking to exercise rights that the American creed declares universal and standing by as those freedom fighters were slaughtered or suppressed. Without exception, U.S. presidents chose to watch instead of intervene: consider Dwight Eisenhower when Hungarians rose up in 1956 and Lyndon Johnson during the Prague Spring of 1968 (or, after the Cold War, George W. Bush when Russian troops attacked Georgia in 2008 and Barack Obama when Russian special forces seized Crimea). Why? Each had internalized an unacceptable yet undeniable truth: that, as U.S. President Ronald Reagan once explained in a joint statement with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

This bit of Cold War history should serve as a reminder: a nation that is simultaneously idealistic and realistic will always struggle to reconcile rationales and rationalizations of purpose, on the one hand, with realities of power, on the other. The result, in the foreign policy analyst Fareed Zakaria’s apt summary, has been “the rhetoric of transformation but the reality of accommodation.” Even at the height of U.S. power, accommodation meant accepting the ugly fact of a Soviet sphere of influence.

TECTONIC SHIFTS

After nearly half a century of competition, when the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union disappeared, in 1991, the United States was left economically, militarily, and geopolitically dominant. In the first two decades of the post–Cold War era, U.S. defense spending exceeded the defense budgets of the next ten nations combined (five of them U.S. treaty allies). Operationally, that meant that, as Secretary of Defense James Mattis’s 2018 National Defense Strategy put it, the United States “enjoyed uncontested or dominant superiority in every operating domain. We could generally deploy our forces when we wanted, assemble them where we wanted, and operate how we wanted.” The United States and its allies could welcome new members into NATO, applying to them its Article 5 security guarantee, without thinking about the risks, since the alliance faced no real threat. In that world, strategy in essence consisted of overwhelming challenges with resources.

But that was then. The tectonic shift in the balance of power that occurred in the first two decades of the twenty-first century was as dramatic as any shift the United States has witnessed over an equivalent period in its 244 years. To paraphrase Vaclav Havel, then the president of Czechoslovakia, it has happened so fast, we have not yet had time to be astonished. The U.S. share of global GDP—nearly one-half in 1950—has gone from one-quarter in 1991 to one-seventh today. (Although GDP is not everything, it does form the substructure of power in relations among nations.) And as the United States’ relative power has declined, the menu of feasible options for policymakers has shrunk. Consider, for example, the U.S. response to China’s Belt and Road Initiative. With currency reserves of almost $3 trillion, China can invest $1.3 trillion in infrastructure linking most of Eurasia to a China-centered order. When Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the United States would increase its own investments in the Indo-Pacific in response, he was able to come up with just $113 million in new investments.

China has, of course, been the chief beneficiary of this transformation. In the past generation, its GDP has soared: from 20 percent of the U.S. level in 1991 to 120 percent today (measured by purchasing power parity, the metric that both the CIA and the International Monetary Fund use to compare national economies). Although China faces many internal challenges, there are more reasons to expect this basic economic trend to continue than to bet that it will stop soon. With four times as many citizens as the United States, and if Chinese workers become as productive as Portuguese workers are today (that is, around half as productive as Americans), China will see its GDP rise to double that of the United States.

In Asia, the economic balance of power has tilted especially dramatically in China’s favor. As the world’s largest exporter and second-largest importer, China is the top trading partner of every other major East Asian country, including U.S. allies. (And as an aggressive practitioner of economic statecraft, Beijing does not hesitate to use the leverage this provides, squeezing countries such as the Philippines and South Korea when they resist Chinese demands.) Globally, China is also rapidly becoming a peer competitor of the United States in advanced technologies. Today, of the 20 largest information technology companies, nine are Chinese. Four years ago, when Google, the global leader in artificial intelligence (AI), the most significant advanced technology, assessed its competition, Chinese companies ranked alongside European companies. Now, that state of affairs is barely visible in the rearview mirror: Chinese companies lead in many areas of applied AI, including surveillance, facial and voice recognition, and financial technology.

China’s military spending and capabilities have surged, as well. A quarter century ago, its defense budget was one-25th that of the United States; now, it is one-third and on a path to parity. And whereas the U.S. defense budget is spread across global commitments, many of them in Europe and the Middle East, China’s budget is focused on East Asia. Accordingly, in specific military scenarios involving a conflict over Taiwan or in the South China Sea, China may have already taken the lead. Short of actual war, the best tests of relative military capabilities are war games. In 2019, Robert Work, a former U.S. deputy secretary of defense, and David Ochmanek, one of the Defense Department’s key defense planners, offered a public summary of the results from a series of classified recent war games. Their bottom line, in Ochmanek’s words: “When we fight Russia and China, ‘blue’ [the United States] gets its ass handed to it.” As The New York Times summarized, “In 18 of the last 18 Pentagon war games involving China in the Taiwan Strait, the U.S. lost.”

Russia is a different matter. Whatever President Vladimir Putin might want, Russia will never again be his father’s Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union dissolved, the resulting Russian state was left with less than half the GDP and half the population and saw its borders rolled back to the days before Catherine the Great. Yet Russia remains a nuclear superpower with an arsenal that is functionally equivalent to that of the United States; it has a defense industry that produces weapons the world is eager to buy (as India and Turkey have demonstrated in the past year); and it boasts military forces that can fight and win—as they have demonstrated repeatedly in Chechnya, Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria. On a continent where most of the other nations imagine that war has become obsolete, and maintain military forces more for ceremonial than combat operations, military prowess may now be Russia’s major comparative advantage.

BACK TO BASICS

The claim that spheres of influence had been consigned to the dustbin of history assumed that other nations would simply take their assigned places in a U.S.-led order. In retrospect, that assumption seems worse than naive. Yet because many U.S. analysts and policymakers still cling to images of China and Russia formed during this bygone era, their views about what the United States should and should not do continues to reflect a world that has vanished.

Over the course of centuries of geopolitical competition, policymakers and theorists developed a set of core concepts to help clarify the complexities of relations among states, including spheres of influence, balances of power, and alliances. These concepts must be adapted to take account of specific conditions in the twenty-first century. Yet they remain the sturdiest building blocks available for understanding and constructing international order.

Where the equilibrium of forces between one state and another shifts to the point where the first becomes predominant, the resulting new balance of power casts a shadow that becomes, in effect, a “sphere of influence.” That specific term entered the vocabulary of diplomacy in the early nineteenth century, but the concept is as old as international relations itself. (As Thucydides noted, after the defeat of the Persians in the fifth century BC, Sparta demanded that Athens not rebuild the walls around its city-state to leave itself vulnerable.) Traditionally, great powers have demanded a degree of deference from lesser powers on their borders and in adjacent seas, and they have expected other great powers to respect that fact. Recent actions by China and Russia in their respective neighborhoods are just the most recent examples of that tradition.

Spheres of influence also extend beyond geography. When the United States led the world in the creation of the Internet, and the hardware and software that empowered it, the United States enjoyed what Michael Hayden, a former director of the National Security Agency, later called a “golden age of electronic surveillance.” Since most countries were unaware of the surveillance capabilities revealed by the former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, the United States had an unparalleled ability to exploit technology to listen to, track, and even influence them. But post-Snowden, many states are resisting the current U.S. campaign to prevent them from buying their 5G wireless infrastructure from the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei. As the leader of a country currently considering the choice recently put it, Washington is trying to persuade other countries not to buy Chinese hardware because it will make it easier for China to spy and instead to buy American hardware, which would make it easier for the United States to spy.

A REALISTIC RECKONING

From the perspective of American interests and values, the consequences of increases in China’s and Russia’s power relative to that of the United States are not good. As great powers, China and Russia can use their power to suppress protesters’ freedom in Hong Kong or block Ukrainian membership in NATO. The South China Sea is likely to become more like the Caribbean than the Mediterranean—that is, China’s neighbors in Southeast Asia will be as beholden to China as Latin Americans have been to their hemispheric hegemon. Ukraine will have to get over the loss of Crimea as countries in Russia’s “near abroad” learn to be both more fearful of and more deferential to the Kremlin.

For many other nations and individuals around the world who have found shelter under the American security umbrella and found inspiration in a vision of an American-led international order that safeguards core liberties, the consequences will be tragic. Recent events in Syria offer a preview of what’s to come. As the Arab Spring erupted in late 2010 and 2011, Obama famously declared that Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad “must go.” But Putin had other ideas, and he was willing to act on them. He demonstrated that a nation Obama had dismissed as a “regional power” could use its military forces to defy the United States and help the Syrian leader consolidate his control.

This has been a horror for Syrians, and the millions of displaced people have had a major impact on neighboring countries and Europe. But did Obama, or, later, President Donald Trump, conclude that this outcome was so costly that it would be better to send large numbers of U.S. troops to fight and perhaps die in Syria? Can Americans sleep soundly in a world in which Putin and Assad now smile when they ask visitors who is gone and who is still standing? U.S. inaction speaks for itself.

Sadly, Americans will come to accept such outcomes as good enough—at least for the foreseeable future. Like Assad’s atrocities, Russia’s absorption of Crimea and China’s militarization of the South China Sea are now facts on the ground that no one will contest militarily.

Washington can shape other countries’ strategies through nonmilitary means.

Acknowledging that other powers have spheres of influence does not, of course, mean that the United States can do nothing. It is a reflection of the recent overmilitarization of U.S. foreign policy that restraint in the use of military force is often equated with acquiescence. Washington has other ways in which it can shape other countries’ calculations of costs and benefits: through the condemnation of unacceptable actions; the denial of legal status; the imposition of economic sanctions on countries, companies, and individuals; and support for local resisters. But such tools can rarely decisively alter a decision another power has made when interests it sees as vital are at stake. And it is worth remembering how often a refusal to recognize and accept realities on the ground in the shadow of other powers has led to major U.S. policy failures. From General Douglas MacArthur’s rush to the Chinese border during the Korean War (which triggered Chinese intervention and a bloody, inconclusive war) to George W. Bush’s insistence that NATO offer membership to Georgia and Ukraine (which led to Georgian overconfidence, ending in the country’s partial dismemberment by Russia), a stubborn disregard of brute facts has been counterproductive.

THE MUSEUM OF RETIRED INTERESTS

When it comes to doing what it can, Washington should focus above all on its alliances and partnerships. If China is destined to be “the biggest player in the history of the world,” as the longtime Singaporean leader Lee Kuan Yew once claimed, the United States must work to assemble allied powers who together will constitute a correlation of forces to which China will have to adjust.

This logic is most evident in the economic arena. Before the Trump administration ended U.S. participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, that trade agreement promised to bring together countries accounting for 40 percent of global GDP under a common set of rules on everything from tariffs to state-owned enterprises to labor and environmental standards—providing a counterweight to Chinese economic might that could have made Beijing a rule-taker rather than a rule-maker. Thanks to the efforts of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the TPP is now a reality—but without the United States. If American policymakers could find a way to allow strategic interests to trump politics, the United States could rejoin the TPP. If that new TPP were combined with the parallel trade agreement between the United States and the European Union that was being negotiated at the end of the Obama administration, nearly 70 percent of the world’s GDP could be on one side of the balance, versus China’s approximately 20 percent on the other.

Washington will need partners that bring more in assets than they introduce in risks.

In the military arena, the same logic applies, but with more complexity. Washington will need partners—but partners that bring more in assets than they introduce in risks. Unfortunately, few of the United States’ current allies meet this standard. The U.S. alliance system should be subjected to a zero-based analysis: every current ally and partner, from Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand to Latvia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, should be considered in terms of what it is doing to enhance U.S. security and well-being, and with what risks and costs. Alliances are not forever. Historically, when conditions have changed, particularly when a focal enemy has disappeared or balances of power have shifted dramatically, so, too, have other relationships among nations. Most Americans today have forgotten an era in which NATO had a counterpart in Asia, SEATO (the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), and even an analogue in the Middle East, CENTO (the Central Treaty Organization); both of those are now artifacts in the museum of retired national interests. As Kennan noted, “There is more respect to be won . . . by a resolute and courageous liquidation of unsound positions than by the most stubborn pursuit of extravagant or unpromising objectives.”

To understand the risks entailed in the inheritance of current U.S. alliances, consider two scenarios U.S. defense planners worry about today. If, watching China’s suppression of protests in Hong Kong, Taiwan should make a dramatic move toward independence that leads China to react violently, would the United States go to war with China to preserve Taiwan’s status? Should it? On the European front, if in response to an uprising of ethnic Russian workers in Riga’s shipyards, the Latvian government cracked down on ethnic Russians and sparked Russia’s annexation of a swath of Latvia—Crimea 2.0—would NATO launch an immediate military response, in accordance with its Article 5 guarantee? Should it? If the answer to any of those questions is not a straightforward yes—and it is not—then the time has come for an alliance-focused version of the stress tests for banks used after the 2008 financial crisis.

Such an approach is all the more important given the realities of nuclear weapons in this new world. Both China and Russia have reliable second-strike nuclear capabilities—that is, the ability to withstand an initial nuclear attack and conduct a retaliatory strike that could destroy the United States. Accordingly, not only is nuclear war not a viable option; even a conventional war that could escalate to nuclear war risks catastrophe. Competition must thus be tempered by caution, constraints, and careful calculations in risk taking. For a nation that has accumulated a long list of entanglements with nations that may have, or may imagine they have, a blank check from Washington, this creates a big problem. The line between reassuring an ally and emboldening its leadership to act recklessly is a fine one.

If the balance of military power in a conventional war over Taiwan or the Baltics has shifted decisively in China’s and Russia’s favor, current U.S. commitments are not sustainable. The gap between those commitments and the United States’ actual military capabilities is a classic case of overstretch. What a zero-based assessment would mean for the current alliance system, and for U.S. relations with each of more than 50 treaty allies and partners, should emerge as a result of an analysis of the evidence. But it would likely lead the United States to shed some allies, double down on others whose assets are as important for U.S. security as U.S. assets are for them, and radically revise the terms of each commitment to make obligations and restraints as prominent as reassurances and guarantees.

This process would also enhance the credibility of the commitments that the United States chose to renew. While the veterans of the Cold War rightly claim that NATO has been the greatest alliance in the history of the world, neither Trump nor Obama before him was convinced. Tellingly, American military commanders doubted that the North Atlantic Council would authorize a military response to the Russian annexation of Crimea or that the U.S. government would be able to make a decision about how to respond before the event was over. Rethinking the United States’ commitments to its allies would enhance American security and make these same pacts stronger.

PRESENT AT THE (RE-)CREATION

Strategy is the purposeful alignment of means and ends. Among the many ways in which a strategy fails, the two most common are mismatch—when the means an actor can organize and sustain are insufficient to achieve the stated ends—and vision blindness, when an actor is mesmerized by an ideal but unachievable end. The United States’ twenty-first-century wars in the Middle East offer vivid examples of both.

Going forward, U.S. policymakers will have to abandon unattainable aspirations for the worlds they dreamed of and accept the fact that spheres of influence will remain a central feature of geopolitics. That acceptance will inevitably be a protracted, confusing, and wrenching process. Yet it could also bring a wave of strategic creativity—an opportunity for nothing less than a fundamental rethinking of the conceptual arsenal of U.S. national security.

The basic view of the United States’ role in the world held by most of today’s foreign-policy makers was imprinted in the quarter century that followed the U.S. victory in the Cold War. That world is now gone. The consequences are as profound as those that Americans confronted in the late 1940s. Accordingly, it is worth remembering how long it took individuals now revered as “wise men” to understand the world they faced. Nearly five years passed between Kennan’s “Long Telegram,” an early warning of Cold War competition, and the policy paper NSC-68, which finally laid out a comprehensive strategy. The confusion that reigns in the U.S. foreign policy community today should thus not be a cause for alarm. If it took the great strategists of the Cold War nearly five years to forge a basic approach, it would be beyond hubris to expect this generation to do better.

#### Defense –

#### No revisionism

Fettweis 18 Christopher J. Fettweis, Political Science Professor at Tulane University. [Psychology of a Superpower: Security and Dominance in US Foreign Policy, Columbia University Press]//BPS

How would the system respond? Could the New Peace survive without its policeman? Good counterfactual analysis minimizes the number of both assumptions and alterations of reality. It is also obviously wise to choose relatively simple cases, ones that do not involve many potentially confounding variables. 127 The ramifications of an actual supervolcanic blast would not be contained in the United States; the massive amount of material ejected into the atmosphere would blot out the sun and cause global temperatures to drop for years. To keep this thought experiment manageable, let us imagine a natural disaster that only affects the United States, one resulting in the effective disappearance of U.S. military and political engagement with the rest of the world. The effect of an aloof United States on some regions need not be imagined because it already exists. In South America, the U.S. Southern Command has a minuscule operating budget and no troops to speak of, despite its theoretical “responsibility” for the entire continent. The United States maintains no significant physical presence in Africa or large swaths of Asia. A Yellowstone supereruption would presumably not change security calculations in these areas much at all. Europe would be similarly unaffected, sat least in the short term. The United States currently maintains 95,000 troops from all services in its European Command, none of whom are tasked with maintaining the internal stability of its allies. During the Cold War, U.S. troops did not involve themselves in the domestic conflicts of their host states, unlike their Soviet counterparts. Their job was always to protect Europe from without, not within. The continent is the world’s most stable, its countries the most cooperative, and its people the least martial. It would probably take more than the removal of U.S. troops for ash-cleaning duties to bring back security dilemmas, arms races, and conflict. Borders have hardened, as have norms of conflict resolution. No one can know for sure, of course, but Europe does not seem to be a good candidate for chaos in the absence of the United States. Without the presence of U.S. forces, much of the Middle East would be unstable and chaotic. With the presence of U.S. forces, much of the Middle East is unstable and chaotic. A supervolcano erupting in Wyoming would not have much impact on the security of the world’s most dangerous region. Israel would be just as safe as it was before, since its marked military superiority over all potential rivals is the ultimate guarantor of its security, not U.S. troops or ships. Without the prospect of help from Uncle Sam, the failing governments of Iraq and Libya, as well as the rebels in Syria and our allies in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, and elsewhere, would learn to become more self-sufficient. Perhaps they would even make long-term deals with their rivals. It might be good to throw them out of the U.S. nest and encourage them to fly on their own or crash. Fears of a resurgent Iran would be articulated by the usual suspects, no doubt, but both history and the realities of power suggest Tehran would find it hard to dominate its neighbors, even if it had the will to do so. The regions that would be of most concern in such a scenario would be the peripheries of those once and potentially future great powers, Russia and China. To believers in the “deterrence model,” first described by Robert Jervis four decades ago, weakness is provocative, and the post-U.S. world would seem everywhere weak. 128 Moscow and Beijing would attempt to expand their influence, and ultimately perhaps their borders, once they were assured that they would face no pushback from Washington. Perhaps gradual interference in their near-abroads, such as we have already seen in eastern Ukraine, northern Georgia, and the South China Sea, would occur with increasing frequency in the vacuum left by a U.S. withdrawal. While such expansion cannot be ruled out, especially in the long run, large border adjustments would probably not occur in the absence of U.S. power, for least two reasons. First, the removal of American troops would not alter the calculations regarding the costs and benefits of conquest in the twenty-first century. Although absorbing neighbors sometimes paid substantial dividends in the pre–information age, today territory is unrelated to wealth. 129 The people of larger states are not automatically better off than those of small ones. India is not richer than Singapore; Russia would not benefit from invading Ukraine; China would hardly be materially better off if it ruled Taiwan. The other members of the international system might not be able to stop such adventurism militarily, but they can certainly punish it economically. The costs related to invasion and the inevitable problems that arise during occupation would outweigh any possible benefits that may accrue. Conquest in a trading system is profoundly irrational, and the incentives for peace are strong. Rational calculations are not the only motivations for cross-border violence. As Norman Angell argued a century ago, people have to believe that war is not worth the cost before they will forswear it. 130 The quest for glory and prestige has sent many an army into motion over the centuries; Alfred Thayer Mahan responded to Angell’s rationalism a century ago by pointing out that “nations are under no illusion as to the unprofitableness of war itself” but honor often compels them to fight anyway. 131 By 2017, however, those calculations have changed. It is not at all clear that glory still automatically accompanies conquest. The second reason to believe that Russia and China might not dominate their near-abroads in an essentially U.S.-free world is that the behavioral norms of the New Peace discourage aggression. Imperialism invites opprobrium, not admiration. This does not mean that such assaults could not happen—Genghis Khan was unconcerned about opprobrium, for instance, and Vladimir Putin might be too—but surely it is significant that conquest has been all but absent since the Second World War. The unipole is not the only thing restraining potential combatants; both their material and reputational interests do so as well. If and when a catastrophic supervolcanic eruption weakens the United States, other countries would still have substantial interest in maintaining the overlapping network of international economic and political institutions that serve the interests of all members. All would want to see free trade and investment continue unmolested, whether or not the global policeman could punish violators. Most would continue to place some value on international law, human rights, and the UN system. Why any state would want to move backward to a mercantilist time of pure self-help and violence would be difficult to imagine. It is 2017, not 1717. Volcanologists assure us that someday Yellowstone will awaken with terrifying fury. The human and material cost will be immense, but the ramifications for international security may not be as dramatic. While it might take that kind of event to settle the questions concerning hegemonic-stability theory once and for all, we can still use our imaginations to anticipate the kind of reaction that the system would have if the global 911 is taken off the hook. Even more decisively than a Trump superpresidency, a supervolcano eruption would test the New Peace and settle forever debates over the importance of unipolarity. Until then, one can only imagine what the system would be like without the United States. And the smart money would be with those who say that it would probably look pretty much the same, with very small amounts of conflict and warfare, even if few people seem to notice. In the end, what can be definitely said about the relationship between U.S. power and international stability? Probably not much that will satisfy partisans. The pacifying virtue of U.S. hegemony will remain largely an article of faith in some circles in the policy world. Like most beliefs, it will resist alteration by logic and evidence. Beliefs rarely change, so debates rarely end. For those not yet fully converted, however, perhaps it will be significant that corroborating evidence for the relationship is extremely hard to identify. If indeed hegemonic stability exists, it does so without leaving much of a trace. Neither Washington’s spending, nor its interventions, nor its overall grand strategy seem to matter much to the levels of armed conflict around the world (apart from those wars that Uncle Sam starts). The empirical record does not contain much support for the notion that unipolarity and the New Peace are related. At the same time, three common psychological phenomena suggest that hegemonic stability is particularly susceptible to misperception. U.S. leaders probably exaggerate the degree to which their power matters. Researchers will need to look elsewhere to explain why the world has entered the most peaceful period in its history.