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#### Xi’s regime is stable now, but its success depends on strong growth and private sector development.

**Mitter and Johnson 21** [Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, [Rana Mitter](https://hbr.org/search?term=rana%20mitter&search_type=search-all) is a professor of the history and politics of modern China at Oxford. [Elsbeth Johnson](https://hbr.org/search?term=elsbeth%20johnson&search_type=search-all), formerly the strategy director for Prudential PLC’s Asian business, is a senior lecturer at MIT’s Sloan School of Management and the founder of SystemShift, a consulting firm. May-June 2021, "What the West Gets Wrong About China," Harvard Business Review, [https://hbr.org/2021/05/what-the-west-gets-wrong-about-china accessed 12/14/21](https://hbr.org/2021/05/what-the-west-gets-wrong-about-china%20accessed%2012/14/21)] Adam

In China, however, growth has come in the context of stable communist rule, suggesting that democracy and growth are not inevitably mutually dependent. In fact, many Chinese believe that the country’s recent economic achievements—large-scale poverty reduction, huge infrastructure investment, and development as a world-class tech innovator—have come about because of, not despite, China’s authoritarian form of government. Its aggressive handling of Covid-19—in sharp contrast to that of many Western countries with higher death rates and later, less-stringent lockdowns—has, if anything, reinforced that view.

China has also defied predictions that its authoritarianism would inhibit its capacity to [innovate](https://hbr.org/2011/06/what-the-west-doesnt-get-about-china). It is a global leader in AI, biotech, and space exploration. Some of its technological successes have been driven by market forces: People wanted to buy goods or communicate more easily, and the likes of Alibaba and Tencent have helped them do just that. But much of the technological progress has come from a highly innovative and well-funded military that has invested heavily in China’s burgeoning new industries. This, of course, mirrors the role of U.S. defense and intelligence spending in the development of Silicon Valley. But in China the consumer applications have come faster, making more obvious the link between government investment and products and services that benefit individuals. That’s why ordinary Chinese people see Chinese companies such as Alibaba, Huawei, and TikTok as sources of national pride—international vanguards of Chinese success—rather than simply sources of jobs or GDP, as they might be viewed in the West.

Thus July 2020 polling data from the Ash Center at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government revealed 95% satisfaction with the Beijing government among Chinese citizens. Our own experiences on the ground in China confirm this. Most ordinary people we meet don’t feel that the authoritarian state is solely oppressive, although it can be that; for them it also provides opportunity. A cleaner in Chongqing now owns several apartments because the CCP reformed property laws. A Shanghai journalist is paid by her state-controlled magazine to fly around the world for stories on global lifestyle trends. A young student in Nanjing can study propulsion physics at Beijing’s Tsinghua University thanks to social mobility and the party’s significant investment in scientific research.

#### Xi has committed to the commercial space industry as the linchpin of China’s rise – the plan is seen as a complete 180

**Patel 21** [Neel V. Patel, Neel is a space reporter for MIT Technology Review. 1-21-2021, "China’s surging private space industry is out to challenge the US," MIT Technology Review, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2021/01/21/1016513/china-private-commercial-space-industry-dominance/> accessed 12/14/21] Adam

Until recently, China’s space activity has been overwhelmingly dominated by two state-owned enterprises: the China Aerospace Science & Industry Corporation Limited (CASIC) and the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC). A few private space firms have been allowed to operate in the country for a while: for example, there’s the China Great Wall Industry Corporation Limited (in reality a subsidiary of CASC), which has provided commercial launches since it was established in 1980. But for the most part, China’s commercial space industry has been nonexistent. Satellites were expensive to build and launch, and they were too heavy and large for anything but the biggest rockets to actually deliver to orbit. The costs involved were too much for anything but national budgets to handle.

That all changed this past decade as the costs of making satellites and launching rockets plunged. In 2014, a year after Xi Jinping took over as the new leader of China, the Chinese government decided to treat civil space development as a key area of innovation, as it had already begun doing with AI and solar power. It issued a policy directive called [Document 60](https://archive.md/o/bc9l4/www.cpppc.org/en/zy/994006.jhtml) that year to enable large private investment in companies interested in participating in the space industry.

“Xi’s goal was that if China has to become a critical player in technology, including in civil space and aerospace, it was critical to develop a space ecosystem that includes the private sector,” says Namrata Goswami, a geopolitics expert based in Montgomery, Alabama, who’s been studying China’s space program for many years. “He was taking a cue from the American private sector to encourage innovation from a talent pool that extended beyond state-funded organizations.”

As a result, there are now 78 commercial space companies operating in China, according to a[2019 report by the Institute for Defense Analyses](https://archive.md/o/bc9l4/https:/www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/e/ev/evaluation-of-chinas-commercial-space-sector/d-10873.ashx). More than half have been founded since 2014, and the vast majority focus on satellite manufacturing and launch services.

For example, Galactic Energy, founded in February 2018, is building its Ceres rocket to offer rapid launch service for single payloads, while its Pallas rocket is being built to deploy entire constellations. Rival company i-Space, formed in 2016, became the first commercial Chinese company to make it to space with its Hyperbola-1 in July 2019. It wants to pursue reusable first-stage boosters that can land vertically, like those from SpaceX. So does LinkSpace (founded in 2014), although it also hopes to use rockets to deliver packages from one terrestrial location to another.

Spacety, founded in 2016, wants to turn around customer orders to build and launch its small satellites in just six months. In December it launched a miniaturized version of a satellite that uses 2D radar images to build 3D reconstructions of terrestrial landscapes. Weeks later, it [released the first images taken by the satellite](https://archive.md/o/bc9l4/https:/spacenews.com/spacety-releases-first-sar-images/), Hisea-1, featuring three-meter resolution. Spacety wants to launch a constellation of these satellites to offer high-quality imaging at low cost.

To a large extent, China is following the same blueprint drawn up by the US: using government contracts and subsidies to give these companies a foot up. US firms like SpaceX benefited greatly from NASA contracts that paid out millions to build and test rockets and space vehicles for delivering cargo to the International Space Station. With that experience under its belt, SpaceX was able to attract more customers with greater confidence.

Venture capital is another tried-and-true route. The IDA report estimates that VC funding for Chinese space companies was up to $516 million in 2018—far shy of the $2.2 billion American companies raised, but nothing to scoff at for an industry that really only began seven years ago. At least 42 companies had no known government funding.

And much of the government support these companies do receive doesn’t have a federal origin, but a provincial one. “[These companies] are drawing high-tech development to these local communities,” says Hines. “And in return, they’re given more autonomy by the local government.” While most have headquarters in Beijing, many keep facilities in Shenzhen, Chongqing, and other areas that might draw talent from local universities.

There’s also one advantage specific to China: manufacturing. “What is the best country to trust for manufacturing needs?” asks James Zheng, the CEO of Spacety’s Luxembourg headquarters. “It’s China. It’s the manufacturing center of the world.” Zheng believes the country is in a better position than any other to take advantage of the space industry’s new need for mass production of satellites and rockets alike.

Making friends

The most critical strategic reason to encourage a private space sector is to create opportunities for international collaboration—particularly to attract customers wary of being seen to mix with the Chinese government. (US agencies and government contractors, for example, are barred from working with any groups the regime funds.) Document 60 and others issued by China’s National Development and Reform Commission were aimed not just at promoting technological innovation, but also at drawing in foreign investment and maximizing a customer base beyond Chinese borders.

“China realizes there are certain things they cannot get on their own,” says Frans von der Dunk, a space policy expert at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Chinese companies like LandSpace and MinoSpace have worked to accrue funding through foreign investment, escaping dependence on state subsidies. And by avoiding state funding, a company can also avoid an array of restrictions on what it can and can’t do (such as constraints on talking with the media). Foreign investment also makes it easier to compete on a global scale: you’re taking on clients around the world, launching from other countries, and bringing talent from outside China.

Although China is taking inspiration from the US in building out its private industry, the nature of the Chinese state also means these new companies face obstacles that their rivals in the West don’t have to worry about. While Chinese companies may look private on paper, they must still submit to government guidance and control, and accept some level of interference. It may be difficult for them to make a case to potential overseas customers that they are independent. The distinction between companies that are truly private and those that are more or less state actors is still quite fuzzy, especially if the government is a frequent customer. “That could still lead to a lack of trust from other partners,” says Goswami. It doesn’t help that the government itself is often [very cagey about what its national program is even up to](https://archive.md/o/bc9l4/https:/www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-54076895).

And Hines adds that it’s not always clear exactly how separate these companies are from, say, the People’s Liberation Army, given the historical ties between the space and defense sectors. “Some of these things will pose significant hurdles for the commercial space sector as it tries to expand,” he says.

#### Shifts in regime perception threatens CCP’s legitimacy from nationalist hardliners

Weiss 19 Jessica Weiss 1-29-2019 “Authoritarian Audiences, Rhetoric, and Propaganda in International Crises: Evidence from China” <http://www.jessicachenweiss.com/uploads/3/0/6/3/30636001/19-01-24-elite-statements-isq-ca.pdf> (Associate Professor of Government at Cornell University)//Elmer

Public support—or the appearance of it—matters to many autocracies. As Ithiel de Sola Pool writes, modern dictatorships are “highly conscious of public opinion and make major efforts to affect it.”6 Mao Zedong told his comrades: “When you make revolution, you must first manage public opinion.”7 Because autocracies often rely on **nationalist mythmaking**,8 success or failure in defending the national honor in international crises could burnish the leadership’s patriotic credentials or spark opposition. **Shared outrage at the regime’s foreign policy failures could galvanize street protests or elite fissures, creating intraparty upheaval** or inviting military officers to step in to restore order. Fearing a domestic backlash, authoritarian leaders may feel compelled to take a tough international stance. Although authoritarian leaders are rarely held accountable to public opinion through free and fair elections, fears of popular unrest and irregular ouster often weigh heavily on autocrats seeking to maximize their tenure in office. Considering the harsh consequences that authoritarian elites face if pushed out of office, even a small increase in the probability of ouster could alter authoritarian incentives in international crises.9 A history of nationalist uprisings make Chinese citizens and leaders especially aware of the linkage between international disputes and domestic unrest. The weakness of the PRC’s predecessor in defending Chinese sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 galvanized protests and a general strike, forcing the government to sack three officials and reject the Treaty of Versailles, which awarded territories in China to Japan. These precedents have made Chinese officials particularly sensitive to the appearance of hewing to public opinion. As the People’s Daily chief editor wrote: “History and reality have shown us that public opinion and regime safety are inseparable.”10 One Chinese scholar even claimed: “the Chinese government probably knows the public’s opinion better and reacts to it more directly than even the U.S. government.”11

#### Xi will launch diversionary war to domestic backlash – escalates in multiple hotspots

Norris 17, William J. Geostrategic Implications of China’s Twin Economic Challenges. CFR Discussion Paper, 2017. (Associate professor of Chinese foreign and security policy at Texas A&M University’s Bush School of Government and Public Service)//Elmer

Populist pressures might tempt the **party leadership** to encourage **diversionary nationalism**. The logic of this concern is straightforward: the Communist Party might seek to **distract a restless domestic population** with **adventurism abroad**.19 The **Xi** administration wants to **appear tough** in its **defense of foreign encroachments** against China’s interests. This need stems from a long-running narrative about how a weak Qing dynasty was unable to defend China in the face of European imperial expansion, epitomized by the Opium Wars and the subsequent treaties imposed on China in the nineteenth century. The party is **particularly sensitive** to **perceptions of weakness** because much of its **claim to legitimacy**—manifested in **Xi’s Chinese Dream** campaign today—stems from the party’s claims of leading the **restoration of Chinese greatness**. For example, the May Fourth Movement, a popular protest in 1919 that helped catalyze the CPC, called into question the legitimacy of the Republic of China government running the country at that time because the regime was seen as not having effectively defended China’s territorial and sovereignty interests at the Versailles Peace Conference. **Diversionary nationalist frictions** would likely occur if the Chinese leadership portrayed a foreign adversary as having made the first move, thus forcing Xi to stand up for China’s interests. An example is the 2012 attempt by the nationalist governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, to buy the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands from a private owner.20 Although the Japanese central government sought to avert a crisis by stepping in to purchase the islands—having them bought and administered by Ishihara’s Tokyo metropolitan government would have dragged Japan into a confrontation with China—China saw this move as part of a deliberate orchestration by Japan to nationalize the islands. Xi seemingly had no choice but to defend China’s claims against an attempt by Japan to consolidate its position on the dispute.21 This issue touched off a period of heated tensions between China and Japan, lasting more than two years.22 Such dynamics are not limited to Japan. Other possible areas of conflict include, but are not necessarily limited to, **Taiwan**, **India**, and the **South China Sea** (especially with the **Philippines** and **Vietnam**). The Chinese government will use such tactics if it believes that the costs are relatively low. Ideally, China would like to appear tough while avoiding material repercussions or a serious diplomatic breakdown. Standing up against foreign encroachment—without facing much blowback—could provide Xi’s administration with a tempting source of noneconomic legitimacy. However, over the next few years, Xi will probably not be actively looking to get embroiled abroad. Cushioning the fallout from slower growth while managing a structural economic transition will be difficult enough. Courting potential international crises that distract the central leadership would make this task even more daunting. Even if the top leadership did not wish to provoke conflict, a smaller budgetary allotment for security could cause **military interests** in China to **deliberately instigate trouble** to **justify** their **claims over increasingly scarce resources**. For example, an air force interested in ensuring its funding for a midair tanker program might find the existence of far-flung territorial disputes to be useful in making its case. Such a case would be made even stronger by a pattern of recent frictions that highlights the necessity of greater air power projection. Budgetary pressures may be partly behind a recent People’s Liberation Army reorganization and headcount reduction. A slowing economy might cause a further deceleration in China’s military spending, thus increasing such pressures as budgetary belts tighten. Challenges to Xi’s Leadership Xi Jinping’s efforts to address economic challenges could fail, unleashing consequences that extend well beyond China’s economic health. For example, an **economic collapse** could give rise to a Vladimir **Putin–like redemption figure** in China. Xi’s approach of centralizing authority over a diverse, complex, and massive social, political, and economic system is a **recipe for brittleness**. Rather than designing a resilient, decentralized governance structure that can gracefully cope with localized failures at particular nodes in a network, a highly centralized architecture **risks catastrophic**, **system-level failure**. Although centralized authority offers the tantalizing chimera of stronger control from the center, it also puts all the responsibility squarely on Xi’s shoulders. With China’s ascension to great power status, the consequences of internecine domestic political battles are increasingly playing out on the world stage. The international significance of China’s domestic politics is a new paradigm for the Chinese leadership, and one can expect an adjustment period during which the outcome of what had previously been relatively insulated domestic political frictions will likely generate **unintended international repercussions**. Such dynamics will influence Chinese foreign policy and security behavior. Domestic arguments over ideology, bureaucratic power struggles, and strategic direction could all have **ripple effects abroad**. Many of China’s party heavyweights still employ a narrow and exclusively domestic political calculus. Such behavior increases the possibility of international implications that are not fully anticipated, **raising the risks** of **strategic miscalculation** on the world stage. For example, the factional power struggles that animated the Cultural Revolution were largely driven by domestic concerns, yet manifested themselves in Chinese foreign policy for more than a decade. During this period, China was not the world’s second largest economy and, for much of this time, did not even have formal representation at the United Nations. If today’s globally interconnected China became engulfed in similar domestic chaos, the effects would be felt worldwide.23 Weakened Fetters of Economic Interdependence If China successfully transitioned away from its export-driven growth model toward a consumption-driven economic engine over the next four or five years, it could no longer feel as constrained by economic interdependence. To the extent that such constraints are loosened, the U.S.-China relationship will be more prone to conflict and friction.24 While China has never been the archetypal liberal economic power bent on benign integration with the global economy, its export-driven growth model produced a strong strategic preference for stability. Although past behavior is not necessarily indicative of future strategic calculus, China’s “economic circuit breaker” logic seems to have held its most aggressive nationalism below the threshold of war since 1979. A China that is both comparatively strong and less dependent on the global economy would be a novel development in modern geopolitics. As China changes the composition of its international economic linkages, global integration could place fewer constraints on it. Whereas China has been highly reliant on the import of raw materials and semifinished goods for reexport, a consumption-driven China could have a different international trade profile. China could still rely on imported goods, but their centrality to the country’s overall economic growth would be altered. Imports of luxury goods, consumer products, international brands, and services may not exert a significant constraining influence, since loss of access to such items may not be seen as strategically vital. If these flows were interrupted or jeopardized, the result would be more akin to an inconvenience than a strategic setback for China’s rise. That said, China is likely to continue to highly depend on imported oil even if the economic end to which that energy resource is directed shifts away from industrial and export production toward domestic consumption.

#### US–China war goes nuclear – crisis mis-management ensures conventional escalation - extinction

Kulacki 20 [Dr. Gregory Kulacki focuses on cross-cultural communication between the United States and China on nuclear and space arms control and is the China Project Manager for the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, 2020. Would China Use Nuclear Weapons First In A War With The United States?, Thediplomat.com, https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/would-china-use-nuclear-weapons-first-in-a-war-with-the-united-states/] srey

Admiral Charles A. Richard, the head of the U.S. Strategic Command, recently told the Senate Armed Service Committee he “could drive a truck” through the holes in China’s no first use policy. But when Senator John Hawley (R-MO) asked him why he said that, Commander Richard backtracked, described China’s policy as “very opaque” and said his assessment was based on “very little” information. That’s surprising. **China** has been exceptionally **clear** **about** its **intentions** **on** the possible **first** **use** **of** **nuclear** **weapons**. On the day of its first nuclear test on October 16, 1964, China declared it “will never at any time or under any circumstances be the first to use nuclear weapons.” That **unambiguous** **statement** **has** **been** a **cornerstone** **of** **Chinese** **nuclear** **weapons** policy for 56 years and has been repeated frequently in authoritative Chinese publications for domestic and international audiences, including a highly classified training manual for the operators of China’s nuclear forces. Richard should know about those publications, particularly the training manual. A U.S. Department of Defense translation has been circulating within the U.S. nuclear weapons policy community for more than a decade. The commander’s comments to the committee indicate a familiarity with the most controversial section of the manual, which, in the eyes of some U.S. analysts, indicates there may be some circumstances where **China** **would** **use** **nuclear** **weapons** **first** **in** a **war** **with** **the** **U**nited **S**tates. This U.S. misperception is understandable, especially given the difficulties the Defense Department encountered translating the text into English. The language, carefully considered in the context of the entire book, articulates a strong reaffirmation of China’s no first use policy. But it also reveals **Chinese** military planners are **struggling** **with** **crisis** **management** **and** **considering** **steps** **that** could **create** **ambiguity** **with** **disastrous** **consequences**. Towards the end of the 405-page text on the operations of China’s strategic rocket forces, in a chapter entitled, “Second Artillery Deterrence Operations,” the authors explain what China’s nuclear forces train to do if **“**a strong military power possessing nuclear‐armed missiles and an absolute advantage in high‐tech conventional weapons is carrying out intense and continuous attacks against our major strategic targets and we have no good military strategy to resist the enemy.**”** The military power they’re talking about is the United States. The authors indicate China’s nuclear missile forces train to take specific steps, including increasing readiness and conducting launch exercises, to “dissuade the continuation of the strong enemy’s conventional attacks.” The manual refers to these steps as an “adjustment” to China’s nuclear policy and a “lowering” of China’s threshold for brandishing its nuclear forces. Chinese leaders would only take these steps in extreme circumstances. The text highlights several triggers such as U.S. conventional bombing of China’s nuclear and hydroelectric power plants, heavy conventional bombing of large cities like Beijing and Shanghai, or other acts of **conventional** **warfare** **that** “**seriously** **threatened**” the “safety and **survival**” of the nation. U.S. Misunderstanding Richard seems to believe this planned adjustment in China’s nuclear posture means China is **preparing** **to** **use** **nuclear** **weapons** first under these circumstances. He told Hawley that there are a “number of situations where they may conclude that first use has occurred that do not meet our definition of first use.” The head of the U.S. Strategic Command appears to assume, as do other U.S. analysts, that the **Chinese** would **interpret** **these** types of U.S. conventional **attacks** **as** **equivalent** **to** a **U.S. first use** **of** **nuclear** **weapons** against China. But that’s not what the text says. “Lowering the threshold” refers to China putting its nuclear weapons on alert — it does not indicate Chinese leaders might lower their threshold for deciding to use nuclear weapons in a crisis. Nor does the text indicate Chinese nuclear forces are training to launch nuclear weapons first in a war with the United States. China, unlike the United States, keeps its nuclear forces off-alert. Its warheads are not mated to its missiles. China’s nuclear-armed submarines are not continuously at sea on armed patrols. The manual describes how China’s nuclear warheads and the missiles that deliver them are controlled by two separate chains of command. Chinese missileers train to bring them together and launch them after China has been attacked with nuclear weapons. All of these behaviors are consistent with a no first use policy. The “adjustment” Chinese nuclear forces are preparing to make if the United States is bombing China with impunity is to place China’s nuclear forces in a state of readiness similar to the state the nuclear forces of the United States are in all the time. This step is intended not only to end the bombing, but also to convince U.S. decision-makers they cannot expect to destroy China’s nuclear retaliatory capability if the crisis escalates. Chinese Miscalculation Unfortunately, alerting Chinese nuclear forces at such a moment could have terrifying consequences. Given the relatively small size of China’s nuclear force, a U.S. president might be tempted to try to limit the possible damage from a Chinese nuclear attack by destroying as many of China’s nuclear weapons as possible before they’re launched, especially if the head of the U.S. Strategic Command told the president China was preparing to strike first. One study concluded that if the United States used nuclear weapons to attempt to knock out a small fraction of the Chinese ICBMs that could reach the United States it may kill tens of millions of Chinese civilians. The authors of the text assume alerting China’s nuclear forces would “create a great shock in the enemy’s psyche.” That’s a fair assumption. But they also assume this shock could “dissuade the continuation of the strong enemy’s conventional attacks against our major strategic targets.” That’s highly questionable. There is a **substantial** **risk** **the** **U**nited **S**tates **would** **respond** **to** this implicit **Chinese** **threat** **to** **use** **nuclear** **weapons** **by** **escalating**, rather than halting, its **conventional** **attacks**. If China’s nuclear forces were targeted, it would put even greater strain on the operators of China’s nuclear forces. A **slippery** **slope** **to** **nuclear** **war** Chinese military planners are aware that attempting to coerce the United States into halting conventional bombardment by alerting their nuclear forces could fail. They also know it might trigger a nuclear war. But if it does, they are equally clear China won’t be the one to start it. Nuclear attack is often preceded by nuclear coercion. Because of this, in the midst of the process of a high, strong degree of nuclear coercion we should prepare well for a nuclear retaliatory attack. The more complete the preparation, the higher the credibility of nuclear coercion, the easier it is to accomplish the objective of nuclear coercion, and the lower the possibility that the nuclear missile forces will be used in actual fighting. They assume if China demonstrates it is well prepared to retaliate the United States would not risk a damage limitation strike using nuclear weapons. And even if the United States were to attack China’s nuclear forces with conventional weapons, China still would not strike first. In the opening section of the next chapter on “nuclear retaliatory attack operations” the manual instructs, as it does on numerous occasions throughout the entire text: According to our country’s principle, its stand of no first use of nuclear weapons, the Second Artillery will carry out a nuclear missile attack against the enemy’s important strategic targets, according to the combat orders of the Supreme Command, only after the enemy has carried out a nuclear attack against our country. Richard is wrong. There are no holes in China’s no first use policy. But the worse-case planning articulated in this highly classified military text is a significant and deeply troubling departure from China’s traditional thinking about the role of nuclear weapons. Mao Zedong famously called nuclear weapons “a paper tiger.” Many assumed he was being cavalier about the consequences of nuclear war. But what he meant is that they would not be used to fight and win wars. U.S. nuclear threats during the Korean War and the Taiwan Strait Crisis in the 1950s – threats not followed by an actual nuclear attack – validated Mao’s intuition that nuclear weapons were primarily psychological weapons. Chinese leaders decided to acquire nuclear weapons to free their minds from what Mao’s generation called “**nuclear** **blackmail**.” A former director of China’s nuclear weapons laboratories told me China developed them so its leaders could “sit up with a straight spine.” Countering nuclear blackmail – along with compelling other nuclear weapons states to negotiate their elimination – were the only two purposes Chinese nuclear weapons were meant to serve. Contemporary Chinese military planners appear to have added a new purpose: compelling the United States to halt a conventional attack. Even though it only applies in extreme circumstances, it **increases** the **risk** **that** a **war** between the United States and China **will** **end** **in** a nuclear exchange with unpredictable and **catastrophic** **consequences**. Adding this new purpose could also be the first step on a slippery slope to an incremental broadening the role of nuclear weapons in Chinese national security policy. Americans would be a lot safer if we could avoid that. The United States government should applaud China’s no first use policy instead of repeatedly calling it into question. And it would be wise to adopt the same policy for the United States. If both countries declared they would never use nuclear weapons first it may not guarantee they can avoid a nuclear exchange during a military crisis, but it would make one far less likely.

### 1NC – DA

#### Space Commercialization drives Tech Innovation in the Status Quo – it provides a unique impetus.

Hampson 17 Joshua Hampson 1-25-2017 “The Future of Space Commercialization” <https://republicans-science.house.gov/sites/republicans.science.house.gov/files/documents/TheFutureofSpaceCommercializationFinal.pdf> (Security Studies Fellow at the Niskanen Center)//Elmer

The size of the space economy is far larger than many may think. In 2015 alone, the global market amounted to $323 billion. Commercial infrastructure and systems accounted for 76 percent of that 9 total, with satellite television the largest subsection at $95 billion. The global space launch market’s 10 11 share of that total came in at $6 billion dollars. It can be hard to disaggregate how space benefits 12 particular national economies, but in 2009 (the last available report), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) estimated that commercial space transportation and enabled industries generated $208.3 billion in economic activity in the United States alone. Space is not just about 13 satellite television and global transportation; while not commercial, GPS satellites also underpin personal navigation, such as smartphone GPS use, and timing data used for Internet coordination.14 Without that data, there could be problems for a range of Internet and cloud-based services.15 There is also room for growth. The FAA has noted that while the commercial launch sector has not grown dramatically in the last decade, there are indications that there is latent demand. This 16 demand may catalyze an increase in launches and growth of the wider space economy in the next decade. The Satellite Industry Association’s 2015 report highlighted that their section of the space economy outgrew both the American and global economies. The FAA anticipates that growth to 17 continue, with expectations that small payload launch will be a particular industry driver.18 In the future, emerging space industries may contribute even more the American economy. Space tourism and resource recovery—e.g., mining on planets, moons , and asteroids—in particular may become large parts of that industry. Of course, their viability rests on a range of factors, including costs, future regulation, international problems, and assumptions about technological development. However, there is increasing optimism in these areas of economic production. But the space economy is not just about what happens in orbit, or how that alters life on the ground. The growth of this economy can also contribute to new innovations across all walks of life. Technological Innovation Innovation is generally hard to predict; some new technologies seem to come out of nowhere and others only take off when paired with a new application. It is difficult to predict the future, but it is reasonable to expect that a growing space economy would open opportunities for technological and organizational innovation. In terms of technology, the difficult environment of outer space helps incentivize progress along the margins. Because each object launched into orbit costs a significant amount of money—at the moment between $27,000 and $43,000 per pound, though that will likely drop in the future —each 19 reduction in payload size saves money or means more can be launched. At the same time, the ability to fit more capability into a smaller satellite opens outer space to actors that previously were priced out of the market. This is one of the reasons why small, affordable satellites are increasingly pursued by companies or organizations that cannot afford to launch larger traditional satellites. These small 20 satellites also provide non-traditional launchers, such as engineering students or prototypers, the opportunity to learn about satellite production and test new technologies before working on a full-sized satellite. That expansion of developers, experimenters, and testers cannot but help increase innovation opportunities. Technological developments from outer space have been applied to terrestrial life since the earliest days of space exploration. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) maintains a website that lists technologies that have spun off from such research projects. Lightweight 21 nanotubes, useful in protecting astronauts during space exploration, are now being tested for applications in emergency response gear and electrical insulation. The need for certainty about the resiliency of materials used in space led to the development of an analytics tool useful across a range of industries. Temper foam, the material used in memory-foam pillows, was developed for NASA for seat covers. As more companies pursue their own space goals, more innovations will likely come from the commercial sector. Outer space is not just a catalyst for technological development. Satellite constellations and their unique line-of-sight vantage point can provide new perspectives to old industries. Deploying satellites into low-Earth orbit, as Facebook wants to do, can connect large, previously-unreached swathes of 22 humanity to the Internet. Remote sensing technology could change how whole industries operate, such as crop monitoring, herd management, crisis response, and land evaluation, among others. 23 While satellites cannot provide all essential information for some of these industries, they can fill in some useful gaps and work as part of a wider system of tools. Space infrastructure, in helping to change how people connect and perceive Earth, could help spark innovations on the ground as well. These innovations, changes to global networks, and new opportunities could lead to wider economic growth.

#### Strong Innovation solves Extinction.

Matthews 18 Dylan Matthews 10-26-2018 “How to help people millions of years from now” <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/26/18023366/far-future-effective-altruism-existential-risk-doing-good> (Co-founder of Vox, citing Nick Beckstead @ Rutgers University)//Re-cut by Elmer

If you care about improving human lives, you should overwhelmingly care about those quadrillions of lives rather than the comparatively small number of people alive today. The 7.6 billion people now living, after all, amount to less than 0.003 percent of the population that will live in the future. It’s reasonable to suggest that those quadrillions of future people have, accordingly, hundreds of thousands of times more moral weight than those of us living here today do. That’s the basic argument behind Nick Beckstead’s 2013 Rutgers philosophy dissertation, “On the overwhelming importance of shaping the far future.” It’s a glorious mindfuck of a thesis, not least because Beckstead shows very convincingly that this is a conclusion any plausible moral view would reach. It’s not just something that weird utilitarians have to deal with. And Beckstead, to his considerable credit, walks the walk on this. He works at the Open Philanthropy Project on grants relating to the far future and runs a charitable fund for donors who want to prioritize the far future. And arguments from him and others have turned “long-termism” into a very vibrant, important strand of the effective altruism community. But what does prioritizing the far future even mean? The most literal thing it could mean is preventing human extinction, to ensure that the species persists as long as possible. For the long-term-focused effective altruists I know, that typically means identifying concrete threats to humanity’s continued existence — like unfriendly artificial intelligence, or a pandemic, or global warming/out of control geoengineering — and engaging in activities to prevent that specific eventuality. But in a set of slides he made in 2013, Beckstead makes a compelling case that while that’s certainly part of what caring about the far future entails, approaches that address specific threats to humanity (which he calls “targeted” approaches to the far future) have to complement “broad” approaches, where instead of trying to predict what’s going to kill us all, you just generally try to keep civilization running as best it can, so that it is, as a whole, well-equipped to deal with potential extinction events in the future, not just in 2030 or 2040 but in 3500 or 95000 or even 37 million. In other words, caring about the far future doesn’t mean just paying attention to low-probability risks of total annihilation; it also means acting on pressing needs now. For example: We’re going to be better prepared to prevent extinction from AI or a supervirus or global warming if society as a whole makes a lot of scientific progress. And a significant bottleneck there is that the vast majority of humanity doesn’t get high-enough-quality education to engage in scientific research, if they want to, which reduces the **odds that we have enough trained scientists to come up with the breakthroughs** we need as a civilization to survive and thrive. So maybe one of the best things we can do for the far future is to improve school systems — here and now — to harness the group economist Raj Chetty calls “lost Einsteins” (potential innovators who are thwarted by poverty and inequality in rich countries) and, more importantly, the hundreds of millions of kids in developing countries dealing with even worse education systems than those in depressed communities in the rich world. What if living ethically for the far future means living ethically now? Beckstead mentions some other broad, or very broad, ideas (these are all his descriptions): Help make computers faster so that people everywhere can work more efficiently Change intellectual property law so that technological innovation can happen more quickly Advocate for open borders so that people from poorly governed countries can move to better-governed countries and be more productive Meta-research: improve incentives and norms in academic work to better advance human knowledge Improve education Advocate for political party X to make future people have values more like political party X ”If you look at these areas (economic growth and technological progress, access to information, individual capability, social coordination, motives) a lot of everyday good works contribute,” Beckstead writes. “An implication of this is that a lot of everyday good works are good from a broad perspective, even though hardly anyone thinks explicitly in terms of far future standards.” Look at those examples again: It’s just a list of what normal altruistically motivated people, not effective altruism folks, generally do. Charities in the US love talking about the lost opportunities for innovation that poverty creates. Lots of smart people who want to make a difference become scientists, or try to work as teachers or on improving education policy, and lord knows there are plenty of people who become political party operatives out of a conviction that the moral consequences of the party’s platform are good. All of which is to say: Maybe effective altruists aren’t that special, or at least maybe we don’t have access to that many specific and weird conclusions about how best to help the world. If the far future is what matters, and generally trying to make the world work better is among the best ways to help the far future, then effective altruism just becomes plain ol’ do-goodery.

## Case

### Solvency

#### 1] Plan wording means you should presume negative—its worded that china bans all appropriation so it bans Russia and rthe US—internal link turns the aff b/c russia and the US are obviously pissed

#### 2] Circumvention—China will continue public appropriation of outer space if private entities are banned—their evidence proves that public and private sector are tied together in legislation– Pen reads blue—CX was damining—no private key warrant AND china has a vested interest to switch to public sector, so they can’t solve

**1AC Jiang Zhao 18** [Shengli Jiang & Yun Zhao (2018) “The Aftermath of the US Space Resource Exploration and Utilization Act: What’s Left for China?” [https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c3a4/fb6e0f91f4d8a13ddac4b0f949f6c3afa5c0.pdf //](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c3a4/fb6e0f91f4d8a13ddac4b0f949f6c3afa5c0.pdf%20//) JB]

China is a “responsible major country” of **space activities**.96 It should thus take corresponding positions in response to the adoption of the Act. With rapid development of space science and technology, **China** will be ready to **engage** in the exploration and **utilization of space resources** in the near future.97 Space resources have high value but limited quantity. As **space science** and technology **for** exploring and **utilizing** those space **resources** may be used for both **civilian** and **military purposes**, it is necessary for China to firmly **refute** the **legality of granting private entities** the right of **appropriation over space resources** for global common interest. In addition, China should **not** follow the **unilateral approach** of appropriating space resources. Instead, it should actively promote the improvement of the existing space legal regime, taking the leading role in establishing an **international mechanism** governing the exploration and **utilization of space resources**. In this process, China should take full account of due interests of the whole international community in the exploration and utilization of space resources, as well as maintain the international rule of law for the peace and security of outer space.98 On the domestic level, meanwhile, China is in the process of drafting its national space law which will provide legal basis for the space industry.99 This law is expected to clarify the legal status of space resources, the attribution of the right of appropriation, the right to use and profits over space resources, and the rules for the exploration and utilization of space resources **by both governmental and private entities**. On the international law level, China should play a more active role in the international space law-making process regarding space commercialization and privatization.100 In this course, China is willing to **establish** a **global governance** mechanism for space exploration and utilization. This part will focus on an international mechanism for the space mining activities.

### Russia

#### No space escalation.

Bowen 18 [Bleddyn Bowen, Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Leicester. The Art of Space Deterrence. February 20, 2018. https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/the-art-of-space-deterrence/]

Fourth, the ubiquity of space infrastructure and the fragility of the space environment may create a degree of existential deterrence. As space is so useful to modern economies and military forces, a large-scale disruption of space infrastructure may be so intuitively escalatory to decision-makers that there may be a natural caution against a wholesale assault on a state’s entire space capabilities because the consequences of doing so approach the mentalities of total war, or nuclear responses if a society begins tearing itself apart because of the collapse of optimised energy grids and just-in-time supply chains. In addition, the problem of space debris and the political-legal hurdles to conducting debris clean-up operations mean that even a handful of explosive events in space can render a region of Earth orbit unusable for everyone. This could caution a country like China from excessive kinetic intercept missions because its own military and economy is increasingly reliant on outer space, but perhaps not a country like North Korea which does not rely on space. The usefulness, sensitivity, and fragility of space may have some existential deterrent effect. China’s catastrophic anti-satellite weapons test in 2007 is a valuable lesson for all on the potentially devastating effect of kinetic warfare in orbit

**Insurmountable barriers and everyone has an interest in keeping space peaceful**

**Dobos 19** [(Bohumil Doboš, scholar at the Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, and a coordinator of the Geopolitical Studies Research Centre) “Geopolitics of the Outer Space, Chapter 3: Outer Space as a Military-Diplomatic Field,” Pgs. 48-49] TDI

Despite the theorized potential for the achievement of the terrestrial dominance throughout the utilization of the ultimate high ground and the ease of destruction of space-based assets by the potential space weaponry, the utilization of space weapons is with current technology and no effective means to protect them far from fulfilling this potential (Steinberg 2012, p. 255). In current global international political and technological setting, the utility of space weapons is very limited, even if we accept that the ultimate high ground presents the potential to get a decisive tangible military advantage (which is unclear). This stands among the reasons for the lack of their utilization so far. Last but not the least, it must be pointed out that the states also develop passive defense systems designed to protect the satellites on orbit or critical capabilities they provide. These further decrease the utility of space weapons. These systems include larger maneuvering capacities, launching of decoys, preparation of spare satellites that are ready for launch in case of ASAT attack on its twin on orbit, or attempts to decrease the visibility of satellites using paint or materials less visible from radars (Moltz 2014, p. 31). Finally, we must look at the main obstacles of connection of the outer space and warfare. The first set of barriers is comprised of physical obstructions. As has been presented in the previous chapter, the outer space is very challenging domain to operate in. Environmental factors still present the largest threat to any space military capabilities if compared to any man-made threats (Rendleman 2013, p. 79). A following issue that hinders military operations in the outer space is the predictability of orbital movement. If the reconnaissance satellite's orbit is known, the terrestrial actor might attempt to hide some critical capabilities-an option that is countered by new surveillance techniques (spectrometers, etc.) (Norris 2010, p. 196)-but the hide-and-seek game is on. This same principle is, however, in place for any other space asset-any nation with basic tracking capabilities may quickly detect whether the military asset or weapon is located above its territory or on the other side of the planet and thus mitigate the possible strategic impact of space weapons not aiming at mass destruction. Another possibility is to attempt to destroy the weapon in orbit. Given the level of development for the ASAT technology, it seems that they will prevail over any possible weapon system for the time to come. Next issue, directly connected to the first one, is the utilization of weak physical protection of space objects that need to be as light as possible to reach the orbit and to be able to withstand harsh conditions of the domain. This means that their protection against ASAT weapons is very limited, and, whereas some avoidance techniques are being discussed, they are of limited use in case of ASAT attack. We can thus add to the issue of predictability also the issue of easy destructibility of space weapons and other military hardware (Dolman 2005, p. 40; Anantatmula 2013, p. 137; Steinberg 2012, p. 255). Even if the high ground was effectively achieved and other nations could not attack the space assets directly, there is still a need for communication with those assets from Earth. There are also ground facilities that support and control such weapons located on the surface. Electromagnetic communication with satellites might be jammed or hacked and the ground facilities infiltrated or destroyed thus rendering the possible space weapons useless (Klein 2006, p. 105; Rendleman 2013, p. 81). This issue might be overcome by the establishment of a base controlling these assets outside the Earth-on Moon or lunar orbit, at lunar L-points, etc.-but this perspective remains, for now, unrealistic. Furthermore, no contemporary actor will risk full space weaponization in the face of possible competition and the possibility of rendering the outer space useless. No actor is dominant enough to prevent others to challenge any possible attempts to dominate the domain by military means. To quote 2016 Stratfor analysis, "(a) war in space would be devastating to all, and preventing it, rather than finding ways to fight it, will likely remain the goal" (Larnrani 20 16). This stands true unless some space actor finds a utility in disrupting the arena for others.

#### No Russia-China alliance AND the US doesn’t impact it.

Carafano 19 — (James Jay Carafano is Vice President for Foreign and Defense Policy at the Heritage Foundation, 8-5-2019, "Why the China-Russia Alliance Won't Last," National Interest, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-china-russia-alliance-wont-last-71556>

So, now everybody wants to be Bismarck. They see themselves shaping history by artfully moving big pieces on the geostrategic chessboard. And one gambit they just can’t resist is moving to snip the growing bonds of Sino-Russian cooperation. My advice to them: Just stop. Fears of an allied China and Russia running amok around the world are overblown. Indeed, there is so much friction between these “friends,” any attempt to team up would likely give both countries heat [rash](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-china-russia-alliance-wont-last-71556). Siren’s Cat Call Here’s the lame narrative that’s animating the Bismarck wannabes: The United States is pushing back against Moscow and pressing Beijing. This is driving Moscow and Beijing closer together. Beijing and Moscow will then gang-up on the United States. To prevent this, the United States should make nice with Moscow (undermining the incipient Sino-Russian détente) and then focus on beating back against China. This is an idea that should be dumped into the dustbin before it has any [history](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-china-russia-alliance-wont-last-71556). Yes, China and Russia are going to work together to some degree. They have important things in common. For example, both are unaccountable authoritarian regimes that share the Eurasian continent. Other indicators of compatibility: they like doing business with each other, and both like to make up their own rules. Heck, they don’t even have to pretend the liberal world [order](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-china-russia-alliance-wont-last-71556) is a speed-bump in their joint ventures. Both happily engage with the world’s most odious regimes, from Syria to Venezuela. And, of course, neither has any compunction about playing dirty when it serves their interests. They already play off of each other to frustrate foreign-policy initiatives from Washington. For example, if the United States pressures Russia to vote a certain way on a measure before the UN Security Council, Russia will often don the white hat and vote as we desire, knowing that Beijing will veto the measure for them. Similarly, if the United States leans on Beijing stop giving North Korea some form of aid and comfort, Beijing can go along with the request, knowing that Moscow will pick up the baton for them. What the neo-Bismarcks need to ask themselves is: Why would Russia or China ever consider giving up these practices? Why would they make the ongoing great power competition easier for the United States? That makes no sense. That is not in their self-interest. Any notion that the United States could somehow seduce Russian president Vladimir Putin from playing house with Beijing is fanciful. Putin doesn’t do something for nothing; his price would be quite high. He could demand a free hand in Ukraine, or lifting sanctions, or squelching opposition to Nordstream II, or giving Russia free rein in the Middle East. Any of these “deals” would greatly compromise American interests. Why would we do that? And what, exactly, is Putin going to deliver in return? What leverage does Russia have on Beijing? The answer is not near enough to justify any of these concessions. On the other hand, what leverage would a Russia-China alliance have on the United States? They wouldn’t jointly threaten Washington with military action. A central element of both their strategies is that they [want to win](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-china-russia-alliance-wont-last-71556) against the United States “without fighting.” Moscow might be happy if the United States got distracted in a military mix-up with China. Conversely, Beijing could okay with the Americans have an armed confrontation with the Russians. But, neither of them will be volunteering to go first anytime soon. Even if they linked arms to threaten the United States in tandem, the pain would not be worth the gain. As long as America maintains [a credible global](https://www.heritage.org/military-strength/download-the-2019-index) and strategic deterrent, a Sino-Russian military one-two punch is pretty much checkmated. Peace through strength really works. If direct military confrontation is out of bounds, then what can Beijing and Moscow do using economic, political, and diplomatic power or tools of hybrid warfare? The answer to that question is easy: exactly what they are already doing. We have plenty of evidence of on-going political warfare aimed at the United States, its friends, allies, and interests. Some of these activities are conducted in tandem; some are instances of copy-catism; and some are independent and original. The political warfare takes many forms—ranging from [corrosive economic behavior](https://www.cipe.org/events/corrosive-capitals-threat-to-democracy-how-china-and-russia-undermine-rule-of-law-through-foreign-investment-and-development-strategies/) to [aggressive diplomacy](https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sharp-Power-Rising-Authoritarian-Influence-Full-Report.pdf) to [military expansionism](https://www.heritage.org/military-strength/assessing-threats-us-vital-interests/asia) and [more](https://www.iri.org/resource/new-report-exposes-chinas-malign-influence-and-corrosion-democracy-worldwide). All these malicious efforts are a problem. What they don’t add up to is an existential threat to vital U.S. interests. In other words, we can handle this without sucking up to Putin and undermining our own interests. In fact, we already have a [national-security strategy](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf) that adequately addresses these concerns. One more thing inhibiting a Sino-Russian hookup. Russian and Chinese power is largely asymmetrical. They have very different strengths and weaknesses. In coordinating their malicious activities against the United States, they don’t line out very well. China, for example, can’t really do anything substantive to help Russia in Syria. Putin doesn’t have much to offer in the South China Seas or in brokering a U.S.-China trade agreement. **Strategic Friction** There are also limits to the Sino-Russia era of good feelings. Other than trying to take America down a notch, their global goals are not well aligned. Indeed, the more they try to cooperate, the more their disparate interests will grate on the relationship. For example, China is meddling more in Central Asia and the Arctic—spaces where Russia was dominant. Moscow has to ask itself: Why is Beijing elbowing in? There is an argument that rather than looking for a strategic partnership, China is just biding its time till Russia implodes, and Beijing steps in and [sweeps](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-china-russia-alliance-wont-last-71556) up the choice pieces. And, as much as Putin likes to tweak Trump about Moscow’s ties with Beijing, it is becoming more apparent to Washington that Russia is ever more the junior partner. Can Putin really continue to play Robin to a Chinese Batman? As for China, they have to ask: What does Robin really bring to the dynamic-duo? **Play the Long Great Power Game** The world doesn’t require a twenty-first century Bismarck. The United States will do better simply by continuing its strategy of pushing back on Russia and China, while letting them know there’s an off-ramp waiting for them if—and only if—they respect U.S. interests. Sure, this makes double duty for Washington. The United States has to mitigate Moscow’s efforts to destabilize Europe, even as it pushes for a free and open Indo-Pacific. But these tasks are not beyond our capabilities—and for us the pain is worth the gain. Rather than try to pry Putin and Xi Jinping apart, Trump should continue to squeeze them from both sides. The natural friction in the Russian and Chinese relationship will prevent them from effectively ganging up on the United States. And it wouldn’t hurt if the United States should find subtle ways to remind them that they would foolish to trust each other too much. The primary interest of both Putin and Xi is to assure the survival of their regimes. The American squeeze play will leave them with little choice but to accept the fact that America is strong, it’s here to stay, and their regimes have to live with it. This is the only kind of global balancing that will bring about stable relationships in the long-term.

### Heg

#### Not epistemically suspect – our authors are vetted and used peer reviewed studies that prove the empirical downfall of hegemony---answer my warrants

#### China’s space strategies strengthen deterrence now. PLA deterrence is key to joint operations, which ensure Chinese modernization beyond space.

* AT: Old – Doesn’t matter its about space deterrence strategies leading to joint operations, they need ev that those strategies don’t exist or are unsuccessful
* Deterrence kickstarts joint operations which encourage synergies among services and highlights strengths and weaknesses

Cheng 11 Dean Cheng is a Research Fellow in Chinese Political and Security Affairs in the Asian Studies Center at The Heritage Foundation. August 16, 2011. “China’s Space Program: A Growing Factor in U.S. Security Planning” [China’s Space Program: A Growing Factor in U.S. Security Planning (indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com)](https://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/bg2594.pdf) Accessed 12-17 // gord0

China’s space efforts are not simply the actions of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) or efforts at political signaling to obtain a space arms control treaty, as some have posited. Rather, these actions occur within a particular strategic and military context. The first contextual element is the broadening view of the PLA’s responsibilities. One of the PLA’s foremost tasks is to preserve the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As the PRC’s economic and national interests have expanded beyond its borders, what is deemed essential for preserving the party’s power has also expanded. To this end, Hu Jintao and his predecessor, Jiang Zemin, set forth the new “historic missions” of the PLA. Not only do these new historic missions sustain the longstanding duty of providing support to the CCP, but now the PLA is responsible for helping to safeguard China’s national development, its expanding national interests, and furthering the objective of maintaining global stability and peace. Hence, the PLA is expanding China’s space capabilities in this strategic, national light, especially given the PLA’s roles in safeguarding national development and interests. To fulfill these historic missions, the PLA must be able to exploit space at times and places of its own choosing and, equally important, be able to deny an opponent the same freedom of action. PLA writings increasingly mention the need for a deterrence capacity in space and elsewhere. To these historic missions must be added the additional task of constraining conflicts, both by preventing their outbreak and by limiting their extent if they occur nonetheless. Both of these tasks fall under the rubric of deterrence. As the PRC’s economic and national interests have expanded beyond its borders, what is deemed essential for preserving the party’s power has also expanded. What is striking, however, is that, while Western writings on deterrence generally focus on dissuading an opponent from performing actions that the deterring power would prefer it not undertake, Chinese writings also talk about compellence. That is, to deter an opponent successfully, the PLA must not only dissuade, but also be able to coerce an opponent into undertaking actions that the deterred power would prefer not to do. In this regard, Chinese discussions about deterrence not only note roles for conventional and nuclear forces, but also highlight the importance of space deterrence. Finally, by way of context, the PLA continues to improve its ability to undertake joint operations. This interest in joint operations was already evident a decade ago, when the PLA promulgated a variety of gangyao that would help to guide future military planning, training, and operations.3 The capstone of these gangyao was devoted to joint military operations. The ability to conduct joint operations is portrayed as a hallmark of Local Wars Under High-Tech tions, because such operations allow synergies among services, pit one’s strengths against its opponent’s strengths, and shield one’s weaknesses. As the 2010 edition of China’s National Defense, China’s biennial defense white paper, notes, “The PLA takes the building of joint operation systems as the focal point of its modernization and preparations for military struggle.”4 According to various PLA analyses, the key to successful joint operations is the ability to gather, transmit, and exploit information. Indeed, the very description of future wars has shifted from Local Wars Under High-Tech Conditions to Local Wars Under Informationalized Conditions—the most important high technologies are those related to information technology. Similarly, the 2010 Chinese defense white paper notes that the PLA “strives to enhance its fighting capabilities based on information systems.”5 Only the high ground of space can provide the opportunity to gather information; transmit it rapidly, securely, and reliably; and exploit it promptly. To create synergistic effects, widely dispersed units must be able to establish a common situational awareness framework and to coordinate their activities, timing their operations to maximize mutual support. If future wars will be marked by the “three nons” of non-contact, nonlinear, and nonsymmetrical operations, then information will be the keystone of success in future wars. In order to effect joint operations, according to PLA analyses, a military must be able to exploit space. Only the high ground of space can provide the opportunity to gather information; transmit it rapidly, securely, and reliably; and exploit it promptly. PLA writings describe space as essential for reconnaissance and surveillance, communications, navigation, weather forecasting, and battle damage assessment. A military that is capable of effective joint operations can also deter an opponent. Thus, space capabilities strengthen conventional deterrence as well as deterring in their own right. The PLA has an interest in achieving space dominance to fulfill its historic tasks, to deter future conflicts if possible, and to fight and win Local Wars Under Informationalized Conditions if necessary. This context suggests that China is following a particular method in developing an expanding array of space capabilities, including a growing range of satellites, a new heavy-lift space launcher, and a fourth launch site on Hainan Island, which is much nearer the equator. This underlying interest is reflected in certain space missions, which PLA writings suggest are particularly important. Most obviously, the PLA expects improved space information support. With each passing year, China’s satellite constellations will provide better information to military users. Today, Chinese systems provide not only basic earth observation capabilities, but also: • An autonomous navigation system, which is already operational, unlike the European Galileo system; • Data relay capacity; • Weather forecasting; and • Earth observation, including growing maritime surveillance capability. In addition, China’s improving space capabilities, coupled with its steadily advancing conventional capabilities, will provide the increased ability to seek space superiority or space dominance (zhitian quan) through a combination of space offensive and defensive operations.

#### Chinese military modernization functions as a deterrent for nuclear war with the US

* AT: Not About Space – the internal link argument is in Cheng. “space capabilities strengthen conventional deterrence”. It also says space is the only way to “establish a common situational awareness framework”
* First, JL-2 Subs enable SSBN’s to attack the US, and A2/AD strategy further deters US interventions.
* Second, joint operation modernization allows for China to join Russia-US nuclear arms control talks. That changes distribution power and deterrence but only with hard military power strengthened by modernization.

Cimbala 15 Stephen J Cimbala, Professor of Political Science at PSU Brandywine. Summer 2015. “Chinese Military Modernization” [Chinese Military modernization: Implications for Strategic Nuclear Arms Control (af.edu)](https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-09_Issue-2/cimbala.pdf#:~:text=China%E2%80%99s%20political%20and%20military%20objectives%20in%20Asia%20and,two%20follow-on%20challenges%3A%20escala-tion%20control%20and%20nuclear%20signaling.) Accessed 12-18 // gord0

China’s political and military objectives in Asia and worldwide differ from those of the United States and Russia, reflecting a perception of that nation’s own interests and of its anticipated role in the emerging world order.1 Its growing portfolio of smart capabilities and modernized platforms includes stealth aircraft, antisatellite warfare systems, quiet submarines, “brilliant” torpedo mines, improved cruise missiles, and the potential for disrupting financial markets. Among other indicators, China’s already deployed and future Type 094 Jin-class nuclear ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), once they are equipped as planned with JL-2 submarine launched ballistic missiles, will for the first time enable Chinese SSBNs to target parts of the United States from locations near the Chinese coast. Along with this, China’s fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines supports an ambitious anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy to deter US military intervention to support allied interests in Asia against Chinese wishes.2 China’s diplomacy creates additional space for maneuver between Russian and American perceptions. While China may lack the commitment to arms control transparency, the nation’s current and future military modernization entitles Beijing to participate in future Russian-American strategic nuclear arms control talks. Entering China into the US-Russian nuclear-deterrence equation creates considerable analytical challenges, for a number of reasons. To understand these challenges one must consider the impact of China’s military modernization, which creates two follow-on challenges: escalation control and nuclear signaling. Military Modernization China’s military modernization is going to change the distribution of power in Asia, including the distribution of nuclear and missile forces. This modernization draws not only on indigenous military culture but also on careful analysis of Western and other experiences. As David Lai has noted, “The Chinese way of war places a strong emphasis on the use of strategy, stratagems, and deception. However, the Chinese understand that their approach will not be effective without the backing of hard military power. China’s grand strategy is to take the next 30 years to complete China’s modernization mission, which is expected to turn China into a true great power by that time.”3 Chinese military modernization and defense guidance for the use of nuclear and other missile forces hold some important implications for US policy. First, Chinese thinking is apparently quite nuanced about the deterrent and defense uses for nuclear weapons. Despite the accomplishments of modernization thus far, Chinese leaders are aware that their forces are far from nuclear-strategic parity with the United States or Russia. Conversely, China may not aspire to this model of nuclear strategic parity, such as between major nuclear powers, as the key to war avoidance by deterrence or other means. China may prefer to see nuclear weapons as one option among a spectrum of choices available in deterring or fighting wars under exigent conditions and as a means of supporting assertive diplomacy and conventional operations when necessary. Nuclear-strategic parity, as measured by quantitative indicators of relative strength, may be less important to China than the qualitative use of nuclear and other means as part of broader diplomatic-military strategies.4 Second, China is expanding its portfolio of military preparedness not only in platforms and weapons but also in the realms of command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) and information technology. Having observed the US success in Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in 1991, Chinese military strategists concluded that the informatization of warfare under all conditions would be a predicate to future deterrence and defense operations.5 As Paul Bracken has noted, the composite effect of China’s developments is to make its military more agile—meaning, more rapidly adaptive and flexible.6 The emphasis on agility instead of brute force reinforces traditional Chinese military thinking. Since Sun Tzu, the acme of skill has been winning without fighting, but if war is unavoidable, delivering the first and decisive blows is essential. This thinking also stipulates that one should attack the enemy’s strategy and his alliances, making maximum use of deception and basing such attacks on superior intelligence and estimation. The combination of improved platforms and command-control and information warfare should provide options for the selective use of precision fire strikes and cyberattacks against priority targets while avoiding mass killing and fruitless attacks on enemy strongholds.7

#### Top level—we win the sustaibailty debate-their most recent impact card is from 2015 which doesn’t take into account the disaster of Trump or the impact of Taiwan and COVID on geopolitics—1AR is too late

Walt 20 Stephen M. Walt, Stephen M. Walt is the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international relations at Harvard University. 7-23-2020, "How to Ruin a Superpower," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/23/how-to-ruin-a-superpower/> - BS

By the mid-1990s, the United States found itself in a position of primacy unmatched in modern history. Its combination of economic, military, and soft power dwarfed all others, and scholars such as William Wohlforth and Stephen Brooks offered sophisticated and well-reasoned arguments for why the unipolar era might last as long or longer than the bipolar era that preceded it. What these optimists did not anticipate, alas, was the series of self-inflicted wounds that the United States would suffer in the years that followed, a train wreck of recurring blunders that has accelerated and worsened under Donald Trump. In particular, Trump’s egregious mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic is producing debilitating long-term effects that will further accelerate America’s decline. Even if he is defeated in November and a Joe Biden administration does nearly everything right, the consequences of Trump’s reign of error will be with us for many years to come.

Before Trump, the mistakes of the unipolar era fell under three main headings. The first error was adopting a grand strategy of liberal hegemony, which sought to spread democracy, markets, and other liberal values far and wide and to bring the whole world into a liberal order that was designed and led by the United States. This vastly ambitious strategy provoked a strong backlash from a variety of quarters, led to unnecessary and costly wars that squandered trillions of dollars, and undermined key sectors of the U.S. economy.

The second mistake was to allow public institutions to deteriorate, by starving them of resources and then blaming them for all our problems. Republican leaders pushed tax cuts with scant regard for the fiscal consequences, while the IRS was defunded to the point that it could no longer deter or detect widespread evasion and fraud. Like the Prussian Junkers or the pre-revolutionary French aristocrats, wealthy Americans—including Trump—found countless new ways to avoid contributing enough to public coffers and with less and less fear that they might get caught. Instead of creating and funding robust, competent, and respected public institutions—the sort of administrative and managerial capacity that would be invaluable in a pandemic and that some other countries have—Americans decided they didn’t need them.

The third misstep was the weaponization of partisan politics that began with the Newt Gingrich revolution in the U.S. Congress. As Julian Zelizer documents in a fascinating but disturbing new book, Gingrich’s decision to take down House Leader Jim Wright began a process that turned American politics into a blood sport where gaining and retaining power mattered more than advancing the public interest. Aided by talk radio hate-mongers like Rush Limbaugh and the factually challenged propagandists at the Weekly Standard and Fox News, conspiracy theories, slander, and the steady erosion of the “soft guardrails” of democracy replaced respectful debate, discussion, and compromise.

Unfortunately, these three trends were also sharply at odds with each other. Remaking the world in America’s image is an enormous undertaking; if you were serious about it, you’d need a large, well-funded, and highly competent state to do it. Not only would running the world require a strong military, but it would also take a large, highly professional diplomatic corps to manage the political fallout abroad, a vast army of well-trained development experts, and lots of safety-net programs back home to deal with the destabilizing consequences of economic globalization. In this way, the grand strategy of liberal hegemony was fundamentally at odds with the endless demand for tax cuts and the concomitant desire to shrink the state. Liberal hegemony’s defenders got around this problem by assuming that the tides of history were running their way and that creating a global liberal order would be relatively easy. As Fareed Zakaria noted back in 1998, the result was a “hollow hegemony,” as the United States tried in vain to manage the world on the cheap.

Moreover, if a single country hopes to mold local politics in lots of very different places, it damn well better be politically united at home. Running the world entails substantial sacrifices, and doing it effectively requires a powerful bipartisan consensus and robust public support. Needless to say, a poisonous atmosphere of relentless partisanship, where politicians on the make repeatedly grandstand over made-up scandals (remember those endless congressional hearings about Benghazi?), is antithetical to the forging of national unity. Endless gridlock also made American democracy a less appealing model for other societies.

To be clear: I don’t think liberal hegemony would have worked even if the United States decided to pursue it in a more serious and sophisticated fashion. But doing it in the half-assed way America did made failure inevitable and at no small cost.

The consequences of these three errors provided the toxic brew that allowed an incompetent and narcissistic charlatan like Trump to reach the White House. Since then, he has managed to drive America’s image around the world to record lows, bungled the trade war with China, pushed Iran closer to a nuclear bomb, and lavished praise on a number of murderous dictators (some of whom are openly hostile to the United States). His only significant foreign-policy achievement to date is getting Britain to decide not to use Huawei technology for its new 5G digital network, but that’s not much to show for nearly four years in office. Apart from appointing a lot of conservative judges, Trump’s major achievement as 2020 dawned was not screwing up the economic recovery that Barack Obama had bequeathed to him.

Then came COVID-19.

It’s not just that the United States has made mistakes—the very idea of U.S. global leadership is broken from the ground up.

The administration’s disastrous mishandling of the pandemic has been well documented elsewhere, and there’s no need to rehearse that depressing story once more. Instead, I want to highlight what the long-term consequences for America’s global position are likely to be. Spoiler alert: It’s not a pretty picture.

First, as I’ve argued before, Trump’s attempt to wish away the problem (along with the rest of his administration’s incompetent response) has tarnished America’s dwindling reputation as a society that knows how to get things done effectively. When countries all over the world are barring Americans from their territory due to legitimate fears that they will spread the disease, while looking on with a combination of shock and pity, you know something has gone badly wrong. Consider this: Rwandans, Uruguayans, and Algerians are all welcome to visit Europe this summer. Americans aren’t.

Second, the economic depression caused by the pandemic will leave deep scars on the U.S. economy, and the damage increases the longer the crisis occurs. Jobs won’t suddenly reemerge once a lot of businesses have gone under, and bankruptcies and layoffs will continue until we get the virus under control. The U.S. Federal Reserve and Congress have provided emergency funds to cushion the blow temporarily, but these measures have ballooned the federal deficit to historically high levels. The longer the crisis continues, the bigger the pile of debt will be.

Here’s the key takeaway: Although the pandemic has harmed every economy in the world, other countries have got it under control, can begin to reopen safely, and will suffer less long-term damage as a result. That’s why Trump’s failure is so disastrous: By prolonging the period where the United States has to maintain lockdowns and other restrictive measures, he has guaranteed that a subsequent recovery—whenever it finally occurs—will be slower and less vigorous.

Third, the lockdown has exacerbated both intimate partner abuse and child abuse while making it harder to detect both. Schoolteachers often spot and report signs of child abuse, for example, but that is less likely to happen when kids aren’t physically in class. Chronic abuse has serious emotional consequences for its victims, and the longer the pandemic continues, the worse such problems will be. The result: The United States will have a higher-than-expected incidence of mental health problems in the future, which is both a tragedy for the victims and a further drain on U.S. power.

Fourth, although keeping public schools closed is necessary to get the virus under control, it will inevitably have a negative effect on learning and put American kids even further behind their foreign counterparts in terms of educational achievement. Once again, education everywhere has suffered as a result of COVID-19, but the damage will be greatest in countries that didn’t deal with it successfully and are still facing an escalating spiral of new cases. Sad to say, the United States is one of those countries.

Fifth, higher education will take a big hit, too. America’s colleges and universities have been the world’s best for decades and a huge driver of innovation for the U.S. economy. They are suffering from the shutdown and especially from the loss of foreign students, who have been both a source of revenue and in the past a further engine of technological advancement. Although the Trump administration has reversed its ill-advised attempt to ban foreign students receiving only online education this fall, the poor U.S. response to the pandemic will lead some of the foreign students who used to come to the United States to pursue educational opportunities in countries where their health is not at risk and universities are open for normal operations. America has long benefited from so-called “brain gain” (i.e., talented foreigners who arrived in the country for college or graduate school and chose to remain, lending their talents to innovative U.S. companies); that benefit is likely to be smaller in the future. The longer America trails the world in dealing with COVID-19, the more damage it will suffer on this front as well.

Last but not least, the pandemic has not stopped women from bearing children, but many are now doing so in an atmosphere of enormous economic uncertainty and coronavirus-related stress. A growing body of research shows that maternal stress of all kinds has deleterious effects on fetal and early childhood development, with long-term consequences for a child’s physical well-being, cognitive abilities, emotional maturity, and overall life chances. Once again: These harmful effects are undoubtedly present in every country where the coronavirus has spread, but the damage will be greatest in countries where the virus has yet to be brought under control. That’s America.

The United States still has a number of important advantages compared with other major powers, including abundant natural resources, a still innovative economy, temperate climate (at least so far), and an extremely favorable geopolitical location. Those qualities make long-term success more likely but do not guarantee it. The country also faces a number of serious rivals—most notably a still rising China—but recent decades suggest that Americans remain their own worst enemy. Trump didn’t deliberately and consciously set out to ruin the United States—and torpedo his own chances for reelection—he just couldn’t help himself. It is the rest of us—and especially our children and grandchildren—who will suffer the consequences.

#### Economics---china will outpace the US---that’s Layne AND

MacDonald 18—Associate professor of political science at Wellesley College [Paul K. MacDonald and Joseph M. Parent (Associate professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame), April 2018, *Twilight of the Titans: Great Power Decline and Retrenchment*, Chapter 10: Conclusion: Retrenchment as Reloading, pgs 190-1, Cornell University Press, ProQuest Ebook Central, Accessed through the Wake Forest Library]

There are many complex issues bound up in this debate. Scholars differ on what metrics to use, what timeframes to examine, and what comparisons to make. We follow the method that yielded the most commonsense cases: lasting ordinal transitions involving relative shares of great power gross domestic product (GDP). Using this approach, the United States is on pace to enter acute relative decline sometime in the next decade. 23 To be perfectly clear, this prediction depends on a number of factors that are hard to predict. Extrapolating out from present trends is notoriously unreliable, and much depends on the baseline year one chooses to begin with. There will be shocks and surprises, and it is impossible to know their frequency, magnitude, or direction. Yet using our terminology, the United States is likely to face a decline that is small or medium in magnitude. This is good news for the United States and for China, since it affords both powers the time and space to manage the impending transition. It deserves emphasis that China is no world-beater, the United States is no weakling, and American decline is likely modest. As always, much depends on the measures used. Power is an intricate concept and sensitive to context. Every measure of power has its drawbacks, and we already detailed many of the ﬂaws of using GDP in chapter 3. We agree that GDP trends mask a great deal of nuance, cross-national GDP ﬁgures are imprecise, and China’s ﬁgures are more suspect than most. Yet GDP is determinate and correlates with a number of compelling metrics, many of which suggest that China is indisputably gaining ground on the United States. Over the past decade, the United States has experienced a decline in global share of high technology exports, trademark applications, market capitalizations of its publicly traded companies, and renewable energy production. Meanwhile, China has gained relative to the United States in terms of patent applications, high technology exports, and information and communication technology service exports. 24 Even when it comes to GDP per capita, which many claim provides “a much more robust indicator of national power,” China is gaining ground. 25 China’s GDP per capita has tripled over the past decade, and the U.S. advantage has declined as a result. Naturally, these are not the only indicators one could point to, and economic measures may lose traction on the political consequences of China’s rise. Yet experts come to similar conclusions: Thomas Christensen ﬁnds China’s rise very real, though the United States retains a commanding lead on many measures, and Jonathan Kirshner sees American economic advantages fading. 26 Even U.S. policymakers, who reject the term decline, nevertheless acknowledge that the distribution of international power is shifting. In his West Point speech, President Obama observed, “The world is changing with accelerating speed. This presents new opportunities, but also new dangers.” 27 Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton conceded, “The Asia-Paciﬁc has become a key driver of global politics. . . . Harnessing Asia’s growth and dynamism is central to American economic and strategic interests.” 28 Whether one prefers the term “rising power” or “emerging power,” the implication is the same: the geopolitical landscape is shifting, and U.S. policymakers must plan accordingly.

#### Fiscal and military overstretch.

Porter 18—Professor of international security and strategy at the University of Birmingham [Patrick, 6/5/2018, “A World Imagined: Nostalgia and Liberal Order”, Cato Institute, <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/world-imagined-nostalgia-liberal-order>, Language edited change denoted by brackets]

The United States is accumulating record deficits and growing, unsustainable debts. According to the Congressional Budget Office, federal debt will reach 150 percent of GDP by 2047.70 Because repayment obligations are the first, compulsory items in expenditure and because heavy fiscal burdens beyond a certain proportion of debt-to-GDP tend to choke economic growth,71 a growing debt load directly impedes the country’s ability to sustain its way of life alongside its extensive international commitments. U.S. grand strategy also gives Washington a proclivity to continuous wars that it chooses to fund through deficits. According to one estimate, U.S. wars from 2001 to 2016 had a budgetary cost of approximately $4.79 trillion, taking into account indirect costs such as interest on borrowing and through-life care for veterans.72 Those wars have led to further geopolitical crises and demand for further commitment. C

onflict-induced anarchy in Iraq and Libya created footholds for the Islamic State and, by upsetting the balance of power in the Persian Gulf, opened the way to a Saudi-Iran cold war that now implicates the United States. The Trump administration has not reversed this imbalance but aggravated it. It has significantly increased the defense budget, while significantly reducing taxes. It has embarked on a deficit-financed military buildup, a pattern that historically increases imbalances in the economy and triggers a “boom-bust” cycle, and where overreaching wars (like Iraq) and financial meltdowns (like the global financial crisis) are linked.73 The final 2018 defense budget is expected to be 13 percent higher than that of 2017.74 The United States’ grand strategy of primacy saddles it with defense and national security expenditures that amount to over 68 percent of discretionary spending, taking into account the base budget and overseas contingency operations and support for veterans affairs, homeland security, and the nuclear weapons program.75 Meanwhile, the overall direction so far of President Trump’s foreign policy has been to multiply America’s security commitments and entanglements. The United States has implicated itself more deeply in the geopolitics of the Persian Gulf. Trump has intensified America’s confrontation with Iran by abandoning the multiparty settlement on Iran’s nuclear program. He has reinforced U.S. patronage of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies, while hardening Washington’s alignment with Israel by recognizing Jerusalem as its capital. By November 2017, Trump had increased the number of troops and civilians working for the Department of Defense in the Middle East by 33 percent.76 At the time of writing, the status of America’s commitment in Syria is not clear, with the administration both promising to withdraw yet indicating it would stay to defeat the remnants of the Islamic State, and threatening to continue to punish Syria for chemical weapons use. He increased the U.S. commitment to the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater. Lastly, the Trump administration’s National Security Strategy openly acknowledges competition against “revisionist” powers Russia and China.77 And its Nuclear Posture Review expands the conditions under which the United States would threaten nuclear use and plans an increased arsenal of low-yield nuclear bombs.78 Escalating rivalries are the likely result. Not only is this imbalance between power and commitments financially difficult to service. It also makes the country harder to govern. Recurrent clashes over federal budgets and the increasing tradeoffs between consumption, investment, and defense lead to periods of [demise] ~~paralysis~~. We see a dangerous interaction between domestic discord and foreign policy failure. These deteriorating circumstances make it imperative for Washington to conduct a cold reassessment of its grand strategy. It needs to ask what works and what doesn’t, to rank its interests into a hierarchy and distinguish what is vital from what is desirable, to assess what is achievable, and what costs and sacrifices it can bear. The growing demand on already scarce resources, from the mounting costs of defense to the current and future burdens of entitlements, means that it will be difficult for the superpower to increase its extraction of resources from its population base. For a reassessment to be realistic, the country must be able to consider retrenchment, burden shifting, the accommodation of potential rivals, and the limitation of commitments. History suggests strategies that bring a state’s power and commitments into balance and that can successfully prevent overstretch, insolvency, or exhaustion.79 To do this, decisionmakers can draw on an American tradition of prudential, realist thinking about aligning resources and goals. As Samuel P. Huntington summarized it, to address the gap between ambitions and capabilities, states can attempt to redefine their interests and so reduce their commitments to a level which they can sustain with their existing capabilities; to reduce the threats to their interests through diplomacy; to enhance the contribution of allies to the protection of their interests; to increase their own resources, usually meaning larger military forces and military budgets; to substitute cheaper forms of power for more expensive ones, thus using the same resources to produce more power; to devise more effective strategies for the use of their capabilities, thereby securing also greater output in terms of power for the same input in terms of resources.80 If, however, Washington is held to a fictitious and demanding historical standard, this exercise will be impossible. If “liberal order” visions prevail, it will be deemed immoral even to consider an alternative of restraint. A pernicious byproduct of such nostalgia is its reductionism, whereby traditionalists assert a false choice between primacy or “global leadership” on one hand and inward-looking isolation on the other. Accordingly, advocates of primacy brand today’s realists who call for retrenchment as Trumpian.81 By contrast, if Washington can be liberated from the burdensome historical fantasy that hegemonic nostalgists impose upon it, then it can gain a clearer-sighted appreciation of the choices now before it.

#### Rise of authoritarianism.

Michael J. Boyle 20, Associate professor of political science at Rutgers University and a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, “America and the Illiberal Order After Trump,” Survival, Vol. 62, Issue 6, 12/02/2020, T&F. language edited.

The liberal order, as we knew it, is gone. The network of institutions, rules and norms established by the United States after the Second World War has long been under siege, pressured from without by China and other rising powers, and from within by populist leaders who saw little value in it. The coronavirus pandemic has compounded these pressures and revealed that many assumptions about the liberal order were false. Global institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) have not proven capable of coordinating governments to respond collectively to threats, liberal-democratic states have not cooperated either inside or outside of such institutions, and the United States could not be counted on to lead others through a crisis.1 Multinational institutions such as the United Nations appeared irrelevant as states closed their borders and chased after medical supplies with increasing desperation. The G7 and G20 both failed to come up with workable plans, while the WHO became a battleground for influence between Washington and Beijing.2 The greatest failure, however, lay with the United States, which catastrophically failed to manage its own epidemic, much less lead others in managing theirs.3 Against this background, any hope of a return to the previous liberal order premised on US power is now extinguished.

The big question is what comes next.4 There are three broad schools of thought. The first is that the United States can recover from this crisis and restore some version of the liberal order, curtailing China’s geopolitical ascent.5 This view holds that the institutions of the liberal order are battered but fundamentally sound, and can be recast to take account of diminished American power.6 Under the second view, China will emerge victorious from the pandemic because it has successfully controlled the virus at home, albeit with draconian measures, and will use its success and a dose of propaganda to assert an increasingly dominant status.7 In a manner befitting its power, China will seek to dramatically revise or overturn the liberal order and elevate its own institutions. A third, more pessimistic, outlook is that the world will belong to no one and that what will follow this crisis is anarchy, closer in practice to a chaotic multipolar order than to the unipolar order that prevailed following the collapse of the Soviet Union.8 In this scenario, the decline of the US will [destroy] ~~cripple~~ institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, and produce a patchwork of institutions and norms mirroring the dispersal of power and influence in a world dominated by neither Washington nor Beijing.

There is a fourth, worrying possibility: that the increasingly stark geopolitical competition between the US, Russia and China will yield not anarchy but an illiberal order, marked by strengthened regional hierarchies, the hollowing out of the institutions of the liberal order, and the spread of illiberal practices and values.9 Under this bleak scenario, the order becomes illiberal because it reflects the character and foreign-policy practices of the leading states: Russia and China, two illiberal, authoritarian powers; and the United States, which showed signs of a slide into authoritarianism under President Donald Trump. A global struggle involving three illiberal states would induce other states to mimic their foreign-policy practices and furnish a permissive environment for the growth of authoritarianism elsewhere. This darker world would not be an inevitable consequence of China’s exporting its values, but rather an outcome of the United States’ abandonment of its liberal values and its decision to act more like Russia and China in the struggle for power and influence. The international order will consolidate around illiberalism so long as the three most powerful states in the system – the United States, Russia and China – have that character. In a 2018 speech, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas acknowledged that due to internal changes in the three most powerful states, the ‘world order that we once knew, had become accustomed to and sometimes felt comfortable in – this world order no longer exists’.10

The consolidation of an illiberal order would be more favourable to China and Russia, and to illiberal regional powers such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, than to the remaining liberal democracies. This presents some difficult choices for the next US administration. After the damage inflicted by the Trump administration, the world is unlikely to go back to trusting the leadership of the US and accepting its natural leadership of a liberal order.11 At the same time, in an environment shifting to the advantage of its enemies, and with its allies increasingly weak, distrustful and divided, the US cannot afford to withdraw entirely from the world for fear of giving Russia and China opportunities to exploit. Facing the immense difficulty of either restoration or retrenchment, a Biden administration must instead engage in rapid reform of American political institutions in order to compete effectively with Russia and China and salvage, in weaker forms, the surviving institutions of the liberal order. To be successful, US foreign policy must now begin at home: the US, if it recovers, will not be able to manage a long-term ideological struggle against illiberalism unless it addresses illiberalism in its political institutions and shows that liberalism has something to say for itself in a world unforgiving of its weaknesses.

Two and a half superpowers

The days when US policymakers hoped that it was possible to work with China as a responsible stakeholder of the liberal order are over. Today, most policymakers and analysts accept that the US will be locked in a struggle against an increasingly assertive China for generations. Some have described this as the Cold War 2.0.12 The logic behind this claim is that China is a rising power, with vast economic clout and growing military strength, and is positioning itself as a counterweight to the US. China’s grey-zone operations and cyber attacks, its hostage-taking of foreign citizens and its aggressive propaganda suggest that Beijing is seeking to expand its global reach. The consequences of its harsh authoritarianism are now undeniable, from its construction of vast concentration camps for Uighurs in Xinjiang to its brutal clampdown in Hong Kong. In some ways, China’s conduct seems to echo the Soviet Union’s at the beginning of its advance to global power, and to imply that more clashes between the US and China are inevitable. The Cold War 2.0 analogy is also comforting to the American foreign-policy establishment in its suggestion that the US would eventually prevail without resorting to outright war.

Yet the analogy misleads more than it informs, especially concerning the role that ideology will play. Naturally, the US and China will engage in intense geopolitical competition for some time, and China will attempt to extend its global reach, as its recent economic and security agreements with Iran indicate.13 But the ideological character of the contest is different from that of the first Cold War. China does not offer an ideology or model of government that is easily transferable to other states. Its attempts to promote the Beijing consensus as an alternative model of development has been taken up only by a relatively small number of states, many of which have used it as leverage to play Washington and Beijing off one another.14 The ideological appeal of China is principally limited by the fact that it is pursuing a national vision of greatness, not a global project intended to make the world like China. The future that China offers is not the promised land of a world transformed by the abolition of private property, which the Soviet Union once appeared to offer, but rather one in which capitalist acquisition and wealth creation is made more efficient and less encumbered by democracy and human-rights concerns than what has been on offer from the West.

China’s own mistakes have also circumscribed its ideological appeal. These include, in particular, its efforts to bully and exploit states in the developing world to give it exclusive access to natural resources. Especially under President Xi Jinping, China’s assertiveness in the South China Sea has made its neighbours in Asia even more nervous. Recent border clashes with India have only reaffirmed suspicions of China’s expansionist intentions and made others harden their positions. It is increasingly clear that bandwagoning with China comes with unacceptable costs. As Australian Minister of Defence Linda Reynolds has noted, ‘in the grey zone, when the screws are tightened, influence becomes interference, economic cooperation becomes coercion and investment becomes entrapment’. 15 While China has traditionally feared encirclement by US allies, it has effectively encircled itself with enemies. 16 Its efforts to crush dissent, as well as its bungled attempt to hide the scale of the coronavirus outbreak, have also won it few friends in Europe and North America.

The Cold War 2.0 analogy also ignores Russia’s substantial role in opposing the United States and joining China in trying to undermine the liberal order. Critics argue that Russia should not be considered a superpower along the lines of China and the United States, with Barack Obama having once dismissed Russia as little more than a ‘regional power’. According to this view, its vestigial superpower status derives largely from its legacy nuclear arsenal rather than its ability to wield broad geopolitical power. It is certainly true that Russia is not comparable to China or the United States in many standard measures of power. Its economy is relatively small and quite weak, subject to price fluctuations in oil and gas revenues and plagued by stagnant incomes, growing unemployment and rising discontent. In 2019, the Russian Federation ranked 11th in the world in GDP, below India and Brazil. 17 It is also widely distrusted in its own region for its invasions of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014.

This view, though, understates how well President Vladimir Putin plays a weak hand, developing new strengths to compensate for Russia’s shortcomings. Unable to compete in raw military or economic power globally, Russia has instead positioned itself as a power broker in regions such as the Middle East, which has no dominant one. 18 This explains Russia’s willingness to join the negotiations on the Iran nuclear deal, to prop up the regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria and to send mercenaries into Libya. In other regions, it plays the spoiler, undermining the US and its allies with covert actions that violate long-held norms, such as offering bounties to the Taliban for killing American soldiers in Afghanistan or assassinating dissidents abroad. A large element of its strategy has been exploiting institutional weaknesses in democratic states by interfering in their elections, hacking their computer systems, flooding their media with disinformation and exploiting opportunities for corruption of public officials. 19 Russia does not need to compete with the US or China in every way as long as it can use corruption, disinformation, subversion and cyber warfare to inflate its influence. By doing so, Russia can preserve its strategic independence and carve out a space for manoeuvre amid two giants with global ambitions.

If Russia were just an obstructionist power – albeit a nuclear-armed one – it would still be possible to dismiss it as half a superpower. But since 2014 Russia has developed a stronger relationship with China that amplifies Moscow’s power and influence. By casting them as US rivals but also minimising their potency, American foreign policy has helped to drive Russia and China closer together in an uneasy strategic partnership, creating a bloc of two powerful authoritarian states opposed to American power. 20 The Trump administration’s National Security Strategy rightly describes Russia and China as strategic rivals that together wish to ‘shape a world antithetical to US values and interests’. 21 But it also portrays both countries as having little impact outside their regions and underestimates the seriousness of their attack on the liberal order. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s calls for a ‘new alliance of democracies’ to balance China comes too late and ignores the role Russia plays in bolstering China. 22 Their partnership does not resolve all differences: Russian and Chinese interests are not always aligned, and geopolitical competition between them is regular and ongoing. But they are in accord about the undesirability of the liberal order and the advantages that would flow from working in concert to overturn it. To that end, practical Sino-Russian cooperation has increased in terms of joint military exercises and cooperation on missile defences. In 2019, trade between the two exceeded $100 billion for the first time, and today China is Russia’s largest trading partner and Russia is China’s largest oil supplier. 23 Their relationship, which Putin himself describes as ‘alliancelike’, has some fissures, but also sufficient grounding against the liberal order to keep them aligned against the United States. 24

An illiberal order

Although neither country can sell its own government as a model for others in the way that the Soviet Union once did, together they are making a different kind of ideological argument for replacing the liberal order with an illiberal one. Their case comprises three overlapping critiques of the liberal order. Firstly, Russia has led an attack on the efforts by the United States to sidestep the restrictions on the use of force in the UN Charter and to engage in regime change. Russia’s rhetorical strategy is to present itself as a defender of ‘Charter liberalism’, specifically existing institutions such as the UN and international law, and to call for a return to first principles in their application, especially concerning the injunction against the use of force other than for self-defence. 25 Like China, it positions itself as a defender of sovereign rights of recognised states regardless of their human-rights records. The underlying idea is to reinforce the UN Charter’s restrictions on the use of force and to articulate a norm of neo-Westphalian sovereignty that will restrain the US from using military force to overthrow governments the way it did in Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011. 26 Russia in this way seeks to stake out the moral high ground, appearing to support a fairer and more rules-based world order and the restraint of an overbearing rival. Russian arguments against US interventionism are flagrantly hypocritical, as Russia itself has intervened in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria without UN approval. But the Russian position has still resonated with China and many rising powers, including Brazil, India and South Africa, which are protective of their sovereign rights due to long legacies of imperialism and embrace the norm of non-intervention as a way of guarding against US intervention in their affairs.

Secondly, for over 20 years Russia and China have advocated a return to a multipolar order, sharing the baseline view that a world with a less dominant US and a diffusion of power to regions is consistent with their interests. 27 In 2007, speaking in Munich, Putin argued that unipolarity was inherently dangerous because it encouraged the US to behave recklessly and would eventually destroy it from within. 28 On balance, China has remained more ambiguous, hinting at various points that it would accept a unipolar order, or at least one with a more equitable relationship between the US and China. But an underlying theme of its arguments since 1992 has been a call for a multipolar world that restrains any one country from pursuing ‘gunboat diplomacy’. 29 Although it has shied away from directly targeting the US by name, it has consistently called for a ‘democratization of international relations’ and an effective end to unipolarity. 30 For more than a decade, China has positioned itself as a partner of ‘newly emerging powers’ in the developing world in hopes that their gradual development will foster a multipolar order. 31 At a minimum, it demands that non-Western countries have a greater say in setting rules and norms of the international order than they did in the US-dominated one.

Thirdly, Russia and China are repudiating liberalism at home and abroad, and rejecting the laissez-faire free trade traditionally associated with globalisation. 32 They depict liberalism as an ideology of weakness, enfeebling states already strained by the forces of globalisation and allowing their societies to be infected by pernicious outside influences. Putin has argued that liberalism is ‘obsolete’, urged its rejection at home and sought to repel American proselytising abroad. 33 China is redoubling its efforts to extend its ‘discourse power’ against the West, and includes several core values of liberalism – such as constitutionalism, civil society and universal values – among its ‘seven perils’. 34 The underlying argument – that liberalism fails at home to deal with the causes of societal disorder – implies that global institutions premised on Lockean liberalism, such as the United Nations, might also fare poorly against transnational threats and the effects of hyper-globalisation, especially the rapid movement of capital flows and people. If liberalism is falling apart at home, the reasoning also goes, then international institutions premised on its ethos may no longer be fit for purpose. Russia and China couple these arguments with covert efforts to illustrate the weaknesses of liberal governments by means of disinformation and election-hacking, as well as killing or imprisoning dissidents, spies and journalists. 35

The call for a return to respecting sovereignty norms, a fairer multipolar order and a rejection of liberalism as an organising principle in politics constitutes an attack on what John Mearsheimer has described as the ‘thick’ version of the liberal-international order. 36 This version, in operation from 1990 to 2019, involved a bipartisan effort to transform the order from one constrained by the boundaries of state sovereignty into something more ambitious and progressive. 37 One result was that respect for democracy and human rights became a condition of entry for many institutions of the liberal order. The West, under American leadership, wanted to spread liberal democracy around the world and to recast the order itself as truly international, based on a normative consensus in support of human rights and the responsibility of states to adhere to specific standards of liberal political and economic governance. 38

It is this thick version of the liberal order that China and Russia reject and seek to replace. Beyond that, their arguments articulate an alternative order favourable to their interests and established by instilling illiberal values in governments around the world. The quid pro quo is the expansion of their freedom of action for stronger norms against intervention and in support of repressing domestic enemies. This deal is attractive to governments nervous about unchecked American power and alarmed about the degree to which successive US administrations have swept international law aside and forcibly overthrown governments. The reassertion of the right of non-interference would end what is perceived as the United States’ exclusive prerogative, as the presumptively ‘indispensable power’, to undertake humanitarian intervention, regime change and other selective uses of force.

With the US restrained, Russia and China would enjoy a permissive environment for establishing informal hierarchies in their immediate regions and extending their influence outward through illiberal means. 39 Consistent with their preferences for a neo-Westphalian conception of sovereignty, inter-state war of the old kind – declared, formal and conducted by recognised armies – and overt regime change would be rare. But beneath those thresholds, Russia and China would be free to play dirty and to extend their influence by penetrating, influencing and weakening the political systems of other governments through subversion, disinformation, corruption and hacking. What will change is not the tactics – these are not new – but rather their scope and the frequency of their use, particularly against the remaining liberal democracies and liberal institutions, as both Russia and China reassert their regional dominance and probe the limits of their geopolitical reach.

In this illiberal order, the contest for influence would become particularly bitter with respect to the character of institutions, with the traditional ones of the liberal order coming under the greatest pressure. As the examples of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank show, China and Russia are developing these regional institutions alongside existing US-led ones in order to weaken them and enmesh other countries in a deeper economic relationship with Moscow and Beijing. The idea is to afford these countries greater access to capital while limiting their freedom to seek other trading partners. By way of China’s Belt and Road Initiative, development would be advanced through preferential deals, but with multiple choke points built in to give China leverage against participants that might later object to their terms. These institutions weaken US leverage and the patronage networks that left many governments in the developing world beholden to Washington. 40 Within traditional institutions of the liberal order, such as the World Trade Organization and the WHO, Russia and China employ coalitions of illiberal states to stymie US initiatives, particularly in the area of human rights. Witness the duelling letters sent in 2019 to the UN Human Rights Council over China’s detention programme in Xinjiang: 22 liberal democracies (excluding the US) signed a condemnatory letter, while 37 authoritarian and illiberal states signed a supportive one. 41 Russia, China and their supporters will continue to mount other efforts to change the character of these organisations, such as changing vote allocations and influencing committee appointments.

Accompanying the shift to an illiberal order will be the worldwide diffusion of illiberal values. Freed from respect for democracy and human rights as a precondition of joining and benefiting from global institutions, other states could indulge in illiberal governance at home, cracking down on dissidents, rigging elections and persecuting minorities, all under the guise of protecting sovereignty. Underwritten by Russian and Chinese power, and supported by norms prioritising sovereign prerogatives, governments could impose trade restrictions to withstand some of the negative effects of globalisation while celebrating exemplary economic and cultural nationalism. Liberal commitments to democracy and human rights would no longer impede governments from restricting global trade and finance, or immigration flows, on the pretext of surviving in a world made turbulent by the rapid movement of people, ideas and capital.

The shift towards illiberalism was already evident in the pre-pandemic world and is likely to accelerate thereafter. According to Freedom House, 2020 was the 14th straight year of decline in global freedom, with 64 countries having experienced some deterioration in the strength of their democracy. 42 With support from Russia and China, authoritarian governments and populist right-wing movements are finding common cause. As Bruce Jones and Torrey Taussig have written, ‘worryingly for the Western institutions in which they operate, illiberal actors across the West and beyond at times appear to be forging a loose “nationalist international”, with shared disdain for liberal domestic and multilateral arrangements’. 43 Transnational links, now in evidence among right-wing parties worldwide, have opened up space for Russia or China to intervene, offering assistance ranging from overt endorsement to covert support for elements aligned with their interests.

Both China and Russia present a vision of the world attractive to governments weary of fighting the coronavirus. It prioritises a neo-Westphalian approach to sovereignty, insisting on strong governments against threats that move easily across borders. It offers tight control over immigration and the use of digital surveillance to control unseen risks from within their populations. To a world increasingly worried about dispersed and congested supply lines, an illiberal order stresses self-reliance against the evils of globalisation and justifies closing borders to people and goods in the name of economic and cultural nationalism. It rejects global institutions based on shaky US leadership in favour of less demanding regional institutions. In a world that has been reminded of the need for capable, insulated governments against unpredictable perils, an illiberal order, even at a steep price, might seem attractive.

Illiberal America

The democratic decay of the United States itself has lent momentum to the development of an illiberal order. Much of the blame rests with Trump, who was elected as the American embodiment of the illiberal values espoused by an increasingly reactionary Republican Party. But Trump is a symptom as well as a cause, given that many drivers of democratic decay in the US – the influence of money in its politics, gerrymandering and a hyper-partisan media – long predate his entry into politics. Even so, political and social polarisation has now reached levels in the US not seen since Reconstruction. 44 Authoritarian instincts, particularly among Republican voters, have grown. 45 Since the emergence of the Tea Party, the Republican Party has drifted farther to the right than most of its European counterparts, making US politics largely a contest between a centrist party and a far-right one. 46 Corruption under Trump has soared, with the US ranking 23rd out of 180 countries on Transparency International’s 2019 index. 47 Democratic norms that have traditionally restrained the political parties have been shattered, and Republicans have sought to use any lever of power necessary to stack institutions such as the federal judiciary to their advantage. 48

As a result, American institutions are growing more dysfunctional. Polarisation has hobbled the effectiveness of the US Congress in conducting effective oversight of presidential actions. 49 Appointments to major positions in the executive and judicial branches are routinely held up by Republican Senate leaders for political gain. Relations between the executive and the legislative branches are increasingly rancorous, with each side denying the legitimacy of the other to act in various domains, including foreign policy. 50 Due to Republican obstructionism, Congress often cannot pass an annual budget and must resort to last-minute emergency appropriations. 51 This has increased doubt about the ability of the US government to honour its debt, which in April 2020, before the full effect of the pandemic was known, was estimated to be a cumulative $24 trillion. 52

The election of Donald Trump marked an important change in American foreign policy. Despite efforts to explain him through the Jacksonian tradition, Trump represents something different: an attempt to extend American dominance through predominantly illiberal means. 53 Trump’s foreign policy is not isolationist, and despite various glosses on ‘America First’, it does not articulate a radically new foreign policy. 54 Instead, it echoes many of the presumptions of his predecessors – in particular, that the US is the leader of a unipolar order, that alliances and institutions are useless without it, that it can use force as needed. What is different with Trump is the centrality of illiberalism to his thinking. He praises the illiberal elements of George W. Bush’s policy – for example, preventive war, torture and extraordinary rendition – and amplifies them with new ones borrowed from authoritarian governments. His endorsement of crackdowns on dissidents worldwide and his willingness to solicit bribes for policy changes are closer to the behaviour of Russia and China than to that of any Republican predecessors. Such emulation has made the boasts of a new ‘swagger’ in American foreign policy all the more pathetic, because under Trump the US has become more of a value-taker from authoritarians than a global value-maker.

The influence of illiberalism in Trump’s foreign policy can be seen in his approach to democratic allies and authoritarian rivals. Many critics have noted that he effectively reversed the traditional pattern of supporting friendly democracies and isolating authoritarian rivals. He treats long-standing allies such as Canada, France and the United Kingdom as if they have accepted a subordinate status in a hierarchy dominated by the United States. When Trump threatens firm allies like Germany for their failure to ‘pay’ for their defence, he belittles them as though they were mere appendages of American power. In adopting an entirely transactional approach to alliances, he echoes his predecessors’ discomforts about burden-sharing without making any conscientious effort to persuade allies to increase their commitments. Thus, Trump’s behaviour erodes the hierarchical element of the liberal order, abandoning the procedures and atmospherics of consent that rendered it tolerable and disregarding the autonomy and preferences of other states, much as authoritarian great powers like China have treated their tributary states.

Trump has also shown far greater contempt for established institutions than his predecessors have done. Granted, many presidents have sidelined the UN and other multilateral institutions when they have stood in the way of American objectives, and when expeditious have sought to extend American influence through such institutions. Trump, however, has tried to hold them hostage to American demands by denying their legitimacy, threatening their funding or withdrawing from them outright. His approach derives from the illiberal presumption that dominant states call all the shots all the time. Trump sees value in international institutions only insofar as they act in accord with and amplify American power. 55

Finally, Trump’s conduct appeared to mimic the illiberalism of Russia, China and other authoritarian states in his celebration of nationalism and naked self-interest. Some have described Trump’s foreign policy as ‘illiberal hegemony’ because it abandoned efforts to spread democracy. 56 Trump did not accept the traditional liberal presupposition that a state’s regime type is relevant to its foreign-policy orientation, according no special status to democracies or the US itself. In 2017, President Trump remarked in a CNN interview that ‘there are a lot of killers. You think our country’s so innocent?’ 57 Implicitly, Trump’s foreign policy emphasised an organic conception of the nation and defended any actions to protect it as natural and inevitable. This explains Trump’s call for a ‘great awakening of nations, for the revival of their spirits, their pride, their people and their patriotism’. 58 A corollary was that, as one of his advisers remarked, liberal internationalism was ‘well past the point of diminishing returns’ and that states should act unashamedly in the interest of their nation. 59 This is more than just cold-blooded realism; in Trump’s hands, it amounts to a licence to do whatever is needed to protect the dominant group, including restrictions on immigration or crackdowns on minorities. Trump’s denial of liberal norms in favour of a chauvinistic conception of the nation also was at the root of US Secretary of State Pompeo’s making the validity of human rights conditional on their alignment with foundational American beliefs. 60 This redefinition places the US closer to China and other illiberal states, many of which have rejected universal definitions of human rights on the same grounds.

While illiberalism has manifested itself during previous administrations, only with Trump did it become the central thrust of US foreign policy. It has diminished America’s reputation but also its power, for as Hannah Arendt long ago noted, power diminishes when it is used for domination. Its gravest effect has been on the liberal order. Shredding norms and institutions, denigrating the value of international public goods and celebrating America’s unilateral military power, Trump offered little incentive for states to accede to a thick liberal order that grants exceptional privileges to the United States. 61 In effect, he allowed the mask to slip, advertising the liberal order’s brutality but offering few reasons to accept its continuance.

The case for reform

The United States’ descent into illiberalism and the growing assertiveness of Russia and China are yielding an illiberal order distinguished by renewed efforts to establish regional hierarchies, the weakening and supplanting of US-led global institutions, and the propagation of illiberal values. These changes are resetting the ways in which states compete, as evidenced by the increase in scope and frequency of tactics such as cyber warfare, subversion and disinformation, designed to sow discord in democratic political systems. 62 Over time, the rules, norms and institutions that marked the liberal order will atrophy and give way to ones that formally protect state sovereignty but turn a blind eye to subversion.

For the United States, already marked by deep dysfunction and an illiberal Republican Party, such a world presents a dangerous temptation. The country could continue to drift in an illiberal direction, becoming more like Russia and China in the contest for global influence as it ceases to uphold and defend existing institutions. Doing so might yield some short-term benefits: an unconstrained US could shake down allies for greater burden-sharing and more advantageous trade deals, manipulate global institutions and – as it often did in the Cold War – underwrite authoritarian and illiberal governments to advance its own interests. Such measures might allow it to compete with Russia and China effectively, but at the cost of consolidating the illiberal order, fracturing alliances, permanently [destroying] ~~disabling~~ many global institutions and squandering whatever moral legitimacy the US still possesses.

The obvious alternative is to attempt to return to the status quo ante and restore the liberal order that existed during the Obama administration, as Joe Biden has pledged to do. This policy of restoration is naturally attractive, as it casts Trump as an aberration and allows the US to reclaim the mantle of world leadership. But it is not clear that durable restoration is possible. Many allies have come to distrust the US due to its erratic policies and contemptuous behaviour. Given the current levels of domestic political polarisation and institutional dysfunction, there is also no reason to believe that a future Republican president would not repudiate many of the policies of a restorationist Biden administration. The breakdown of the Cold War-era bipartisan strategic consensus has reduced the United States’ capacity to maintain a stable and predictable foreign policy. 63 The prescription for remedying US foreign policy probably cannot be just more US leadership. 64

Another option would be for the US to retrench, scaling back its military commitments abroad in the hopes of reallocating resources to domestic policy. There are powerful arguments for this approach. The Pentagon budget is bloated with enormous waste while healthcare, education and infrastructure remain chronically underfunded. The US military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have cost $6.4trn, to little if any strategic advantage. 65 There is a growing consensus in Washington that continued immersion in the Middle East would produce diminishing returns. 66 The pursuit of hegemony and the defence of the liberal order has led the US to incur high political and economic costs while allowing other threats, such as climate change, to grow. 67

A strategy of retrenchment, however, also carries risks. In regions like Europe and Asia, it could signal to Russia and China that US alliances are vulnerable. US allies, in turn, would have fewer reasons to honour US leadership and join coalitions when needed. Retrenchment would thus create permissive conditions for the regional hierarchies that Russia and China are seeking to establish and allow them to expand their reach outwards, accelerating rather than restraining the development of an illiberal order. 68 It might also [destroy] ~~cripple~~ some of the key global institutions, thus undercutting the ability of the United States to manage transnational threats such as climate change and nuclear proliferation. 69

Neither restoration nor retrenchment would halt or reverse the emergence of an illiberal order without the reform of America’s own illiberalism. Its urgent foreign-policy challenge is at least partially ideological: to prove that liberal democracy can compete in an increasingly illiberal world. For this, domestic institutional reforms are required. First, however, the Biden administration needs to stop the current bleeding at the international level. To do so, it should immediately seek to reassure allies in Europe and Asia of its military support and guarantees, and reaffirm commitments to institutions such as the WHO and to various existing trade deals. In particular, it should renegotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership, as Biden has pledged to do. More broadly, the US should advocate a ‘flexible coordinator’ model of international collective action rather than presumptively defaulting to American leadership in all areas. Such a model would allow allies greater diplomatic autonomy and leverage over a particular issue. A post-Trump foreign policy must forsake the default assumption that the US retains primus inter pares rank over all issues and decisions, and go beyond the atmospherics of consent to provide genuine issue ownership for allies. Doing so would set the US apart from Russia and China as a liberal-international steward. Such an approach would not forsake American power – the US would still enjoy military superiority and political influence – but would rather apply it so as to enable flexible and adaptive coalitions of partners to take the lead over different issues.

In addition, the United States should recast its approach to Russia and China. Neither is a suitable or willing US ally, and their long-term goal – an illiberal order conducive to their geopolitical expansion – is not in the US interest. This does not mean that the US should be unrelentingly hostile to them, which would only drive them closer together. Cooperation over common threats like climate change is possible, and should be pursued. But cooperation with Moscow or Beijing will not happen until both recognise that the US is no longer on the defensive and is capable of reasserting itself after experiencing what Putin has described as a ‘deep internal crisis’. 70 One way to signal this reassertion is to make Russia and China pay a larger, more public cost for interference in US elections and attempts to subvert American democracy. To do so, it goes almost without saying that the White House cannot publicly deny the reality of such efforts or task the US intelligence community’s leadership to downplay them, as Trump has done. Nor can it merely treat such attacks as garden-variety aspects of spycraft. Instead, it must confront them as overt security threats. More muscular retaliatory policies could include sanctions on governments or individuals, trade penalties, the limitation of access to US banks and covert reprisal. 71

With these policy adjustments made, the Biden administration can turn to the paramount element of a reoriented US foreign policy: domestic reform. There are many areas in pressing need of it, including healthcare, economic inequality, education and policing. From a foreign-policy perspective, however, the most profound and urgent need is to fix the institutions of democratic governance itself. Much as the civil-rights movement in the 1960s galvanised Americans to believe that the US had a fixable if flawed political system, sustained efforts to fix American institutions today would renew faith in the United States and give other countries a reason to join it in opposing the consolidation of an illiberal order. To this end, the Biden administration should seek the swift passage of a new Voting Rights Act, named after the late US congressman John Lewis, which would address the racial discrimination that underlies voter suppression, especially in poor and minority areas. 72 It should also back statehood for both Washington DC and Puerto Rico, thus changing the Electoral College map in a way that will compel the Republican Party to stop catering to a minority of white voters and abandon the illiberalism embraced by the party during the Trump years. In addition, Congress should tighten US laws against corruption to reduce foreign influence in the US political process. In addition to diminishing public trust, an American political system penetrated by foreign powers can lower the confidence of allies and partners in shared intelligence and jointly undertaken action, and impel them to distance themselves from the United States. The Biden administration needs to propose legislation to close the loopholes opened by the US Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision that allow money to pour into the US system through corporations. 73 It also needs to tighten regulations on lobbying for foreign entities and close the revolving door through which US national-security officials can capitalise on their experience and connections to lobby for other governments. Cutting off these pathways of corporate and foreign influence in American politics will boost faith in the integrity of the political system and thwart efforts by Russia, China and other illiberal states to influence policy outcomes.

A difficult third step for a Biden administration would involve rolling back the vast executive powers that the White House has accumulated. Presidents are generally and perhaps understandably loath to shrink the powers of the office, but now it is necessary. An over-endowed executive branch – and, in particular, tolerance for the profligate use of the executive order – is the primary reason that Trump has been able to inflict so much damage on the American polity over the past four years. He is not unique: both George W. Bush and Obama relied heavily on executive orders to govern in the face of a deadlocked Congress. Like many authoritarians, however, Trump has inordinately relied on special powers deriving from national emergencies to enact policies that Congress would never have approved. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, the president can now invoke 136 statutory emergency powers, many of which are obscure and have rarely been used. 74 The fact that the US government is substantially ruled by decree, with each president imposing or repealing previous executive orders, makes the government less predictable and credible to allies. It also allows illiberal policies to flourish when someone like Trump is elected. If Biden wants to enhance the democratic credibility of the United States abroad, efforts to abolish some emergency powers, to strengthen the oversight powers of Congress and to reduce the sweeping executive powers of the presidency are necessary.

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It seems counter-intuitive that in a time of great danger US foreign policy must begin at home. It also seems jarring that to meet the challenge of illiberalism the US needs to limit the powers of the executive branch. But the hard reality of the post-Trump moment is that an illiberal order is coalescing around the preferences of Russia and China. Liberalism is failing at home and abroad. Addressing this requires admitting that the unipolar moment is over and that a ‘thick’ liberal order is out of reach. But it does not mean abandoning liberalism or pretending that there is no ideological dimension to the threat. While not succumbing to the temptation of behaving as if it faces a second cold war, the US must toughen its line against the efforts of Russia and China to sow discord in democratic governments while also urgently fixing its own political institutions. A foreign policy of reform is the best way to rise to the threat and to show a fearful world that liberalism is not a defunct value system.

#### Heg is unsustainable – it will be slow and stable, but the aff accelerates geopolitical tensions.

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Today the military, economic, institutional and ideational pillars that have supported the Pax Americana are being challenged by China. This raises two fundamental and intimately connected questions: if China surpasses, equals or even approximates the United States in these dimensions of power, can the Pax Americana endure? And, if it cannot, what will replace it? Posing these questions raises the contentious issue—contentious at least in the US—of whether American power is, in fact, declining. During his abortive 2012 run for the Republican presidential nomination, Jon Huntsman—President Obama's Ambassador to China, and now President Trump's Ambassador to Russia—succinctly expressed the prevailing view of the US foreign policy establishment when he said: ‘Decline is un-American.’ Leading US security studies experts agree. These primacists argue that the extent of China's rise—and hence of America's decline—are, like premature reports of Mark Twain's death, greatly exaggerated. Primacists believe the international system is still unipolar, and that US power will keep it that way for a long time to come. This claim is increasingly dubious. Indeed, the case made by the ‘declinists’ of the 1980s—notably Paul Kennedy, Robert Gilpin, David Calleo and Samuel P. Huntington—looks stronger every day.23 Contrary to the portrayal of their argument by many of their critics, the 1980s declinists did not claim either that America's post-Second World War power advantages had already dissipated, or that the United States was on the brink of a rapid, catastrophic decline. Rather, they pointed to domestic and international economic drivers that, over time, would cause American economic power to diminish relatively, thereby shifting the balance of power. In essence, the declinists believed that the United States was experiencing a slow—‘termite-like’—decline caused by fundamental structural weaknesses in the American economy that were gradually nibbling at its foundations.24 Kennedy himself was explicitly looking ahead to the effects this termite decline would have on the US world role in the early twenty-first century. As he wrote: The task facing American statesmen over the next decades … is to recognize that broad trends are under way, and that there is a need to ‘manage’ affairs so that the relative erosion of the United States' position takes place slowly and smoothly, and is not accelerated by policies which bring merely short-term advantage but longer-term disadvantage.25 The unwinding of the Pax Americana Decline may be ‘un-American’, but that does not mean it isn't happening. America's ‘unipolar moment’ has turned out to be rather—well, momentary.26 The Great Recession that began in 2007–2008 did not end America's unipolar ascendancy. It did, however, focus attention on, and accelerate, the ebbing of American power—the evidence of which has cumulated rapidly over the ensuing ten years. This slippage of US dominance is chipping away at each of the four pillars on which the Pax Americana was erected: military power; economic power; institutions; and soft power. As these pillars erode, it becomes increasingly doubtful that the Pax Americana can endure. China's challenge to American military power Until now the dominant view within the US foreign policy establishment has been that military strength is the one area in which America's advantage is insurmountable (at least within any meaningful time-frame). American military power is considered by US policy-makers and many security studies scholars to be the geopolitical trump card—no pun intended—that will ensure continuing American dominance even if China closes the economic and technological gaps separating it from the United States.27 However, some within the foreign policy establishment are beginning to question this viewpoint. Important recent studies of the Sino-American military balance suggest that some analysts are taking a fresh look at the question of how long it will take China to catch up with the US militarily. China and the United States face different grand strategic challenges. As self-styled global hegemon, America must be able project decisive military power to the three regions it considers vital to both its security and its prosperity: Europe, the Middle East and east Asia. In contrast, China's strategic goals, at least for now, are more limited. China aims at dominating its own geographic backyard: that is, it seeks regional hegemony in east and south-east Asia, which have become the focal points of Sino-American geopolitical competition. Even if China is not at present able to mount a global challenge to the US, there is evidence that it is beginning to draw level with the United States in regional military power in east Asia. In a recent report on the Sino-American military balance, the RAND Corporation refers to the ‘receding frontier of US military dominance’ in east Asia.28 According to RAND, the trend lines in the Sino-American military rivalry in east Asia are not favourable for the United States: ‘Although China has not closed the gap with the United States, it has narrowed it—and it has done so quite rapidly. Even for many of the contributors to this report, who track military developments in Asia on an ongoing basis, the speed of change … was striking.’29 In a recent book, Roger Cliff, an east Asian security expert at RAND, says that by 2020 China's military establishment will be almost on an equal footing with America's with respect to doctrine, equipment, personnel and training (though still lagging behind in organizational structure, logistics and organizational culture). Consequently, he predicts that by 2020 American military dominance in east Asia will be significantly eroded.30 He predicts that the 2020s will witness a power transition in east Asia and that at this point China will be able to challenge the regional status quo.31 American economic decline and the impairment of US economic hegemony During the past decade, signs of waning US economic power—and China's growing economic muscle—have become too numerous to ignore. Since the onset of the Great Recession, China has successively taken top position in the world in exports (passing Germany); in trade (passing the United States); and in manufacturing

(claiming a title the United States had held for a century). In 2014 the World Bank made the stunning announcement that China had vaulted past the United States to become the world's largest economy (measured by purchasing power parity (PPP);32 and in the early to mid-2020s China is predicted to overtake the United States in GDP measured by market exchange rate.33 These shifts in the relative economic power of China and the United States have enormous economic and geopolitical implications. Indeed, in July 2017 Christine Lagarde, managing director of the IMF, stated that in ten years' time the organization's headquarters—which are required by its by-laws to be located in its member country with the largest economy—could be in Beijing.34 Taken together, these indicators paint a clear picture of relative economic decline. American primacists have advanced a number of clever but unconvincing arguments in an attempt to downplay the significance of the ongoing economic power shift from America to China. For example, some primacists assert that per capita GDP is a better yardstick of national power than aggregate GDP; that newly developed metrics of national power have diminished the importance of GDP as a measure of a state's economic power; that China is far behind the United States in advanced technology; and that China is incapable of doing innovation.35 This last claim is ubiquitous among primacists.36 It is, however, undermined by recent developments. For example, in September 2016 China began operating the world's largest radio telescope, which is intended to project China's ambitions deep into the universe, and bring back the kind of dramatic discoveries that win honours such as Nobel Prizes.37 In August 2016 China launched the world's first quantum satellite, which could lead ‘to new, completely different methods for transmitting information’.38 In another example of how China is catching up with the United States in innovation and technology, in June 2016 a Chinese computer (using made-in-China microprocessors) topped the ranking of the world's fastest supercomputers.39 In July 2017 China's State Council announced an ambitious plan to sprint to the front of the pack in artificial intelligence (AI), including both military and civilian applications.40 Indeed, The Economist recently observed that already ‘China could be a close second to America—and perhaps even ahead of it—in some areas of AI’.41 And China is moving to the forefront in green technologies (solar panels and wind-generated power) and in electric cars.42 The waning of US economic dominance may not be obvious to primacists, but it is perfectly apparent to many observers in the real world.43 The weakening of US relative economic power, which became unmistakably clear during the Great Recession, has undercut the Pax Americana both by compromising the United States' ability to manage the international economy and by shifting the Sino-American geopolitical balance in east Asia. During the Great Recession it became evident that in some (not all) respects the United States was unable to fulfil its responsibility as the international economy's manager. After all, an economic hegemon is supposed to solve global economic crises, not cause them. But it was the freezing up of the US financial system triggered by the sub-prime mortgage crisis that plunged the global economy into hot water. The economic hegemon is supposed to be the lender of last resort in the international economy. The United States, however, has become the borrower of first resort—the world's largest debtor. When the global economy falters, the economic hegemon is supposed to jump-start recovery by purchasing other nations' goods. From the end of the Second World War until the Great Recession struck, it was America's willingness to consume foreign goods that constituted the primary firewall against global economic downturns. When the Great Recession hit, however, the US economy proved too infirm to lead the global economy back to health. It fell to China to pull the global economy out of its nose-dive by stepping up to the plate with a massive stimulus programme. Barack Obama acknowledged the deeper implications of this when, at the April 2009 G20 meeting in London, he conceded that, in important respects, the United States' days as the economic hegemon were numbered because it was too deeply in debt to continue as the world's consumer of last resort. Instead, he said, the world would have to look to China (and other emerging market states, plus Germany) to be the motors of global recovery. ‘If there is going to be renewed growth,’ Obama stated, ‘it can't just be the United States as the engine, everybody is going to have to pick up the pace.’ He added that in some ways the world has become accustomed to the United States being a voracious consumer market and the engine that drives a lot of economic growth worldwide. And I think that in the wake of the crisis, even as we're doing stimulus, we have to take into account our own deficits.44

#### Clinging causes great power war.

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The fate of international orders is closely linked to power transition dynamics. Throughout modern international history the prevailing international order has reflected the balance of power that existed at the time of its creation. When that balance changes sufficiently, the old order will be replaced by a new one. Viewed from this perspective, what are the Pax Americana's prospects? How will China's rise, and America's decline, affect the international order in the years ahead? The surprising answer given by top US security studies scholars is: ‘Not much.’ The United States, so the argument goes, can ‘lock in’ the Pax Americana's essential features, including its rules, norms and institutions.65 John Ikenberry, Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth are the leading proponents of the lock-in thesis. Ikenberry was the first to set out the concept, arguing in After victory that a hegemon, by building an institutionalized, rules-based international order, ‘can lock-in favorable arrangements that continue beyond the zenith of its power’.66 In other words, the international order can remain intact even after the hegemonic power that created it has lost its pre-eminent position in the international political system. On this point, Ikenberry echoes Robert Keohane's argument in After hegemony that, once a liberal international order has been established by a hegemonic power, if the hegemon declines it is possible for a small group of Great Powers to take the place of the former hegemon and collectively manage the international system.67 That is, under certain conditions ‘hegemonic stability’ can exist even if there is no hegemonic power. In Liberal Leviathan, Ikenberry built on this logic to argue that, even if the Pax Americana were to wither completely, the LRBIO would nevertheless survive. As Ikenberry put it: ‘America's position in the global system may decline but the international order it leads can remain the dominating logic of the twenty-first century.’68 Ikenberry's view seems to have evolved, however. In jointly authored articles in International Security and Foreign Affairs, Brooks, Ikenberry and Wohlforth embrace hegemonic stability theory.69 That is, they contend that, like all international orders, the post-1945 international order does, in fact, require a hegemonic power to maintain it—and not just any hegemon, but the United States. The logic of their argument is that the LRBIO and the Pax Americana are one and the same, and that US pre-eminence is a necessary condition for the LRBIO. According to them, the United States must exercise ‘global leadership’—the US foreign policy establishment's code phrase for hegemony—by acting as a security provider and geopolitical stabilizer; by maintaining an open, liberal international economy; and by promoting global cooperation through upholding and revising the post-1945 liberal order—which is both ‘institutional and normative’—created by the Pax Americana.70 They also claim that the post-1945 Pax Americana ‘allows the United States to … wrap its hegemonic rule in a rules-based order’.71 This helps to conceal the actual motives of self-interest and realpolitik that underlie American hegemony. Read together, the International Security and Foreign Affairs articles by Brooks, Ikenberry and Wohlforth make clear the authors' view that the post-1945 LRBIO is inextricably linked to US hegemony; that is, to the Pax Americana. This is in keeping with the common understanding of hegemonic stability theory. As they see it, the post-1945 international order based on American pre-eminence ‘has served the US well for the past six decades and there is no reason to give it up now’.72 The argument has special force given that, according to the—correct—logic of their argument (and of hegemonic stability theory), if American hegemony goes, the LRBIO goes with it. In their preference for maintaining the post-1945 hegemonic American international order, Brooks, Ikenberry and Wohlforth echo the renowned late nineteenth-century British statesman Lord Salisbury. Presiding over a hegemonic Britain that was already perceptibly declining, he famously said: ‘Whatever happens will be for the worse. Therefore, it is in our interest that as little should happen as possible.’ The post-1945 international order is (or was) a concrete manifestation of America's hegemonic status. So, of course, the US foreign policy establishment wants as little change as possible in international politics. Why would it wish otherwise, when change would inevitably be both the cause and effect of diminishing American power and influence? The United States has every incentive for wanting to prolong the post-1945 international order. After all, for most of the last 70 years or so, the US has occupied the geopolitical penthouse (‘when America ruled the world’). From that lofty height, however, the only direction it can go is down. The lock-in strategy is seductive because it holds out (or appears to hold out) the possibility that the United States can preserve the status quo—the post-1945 international order—even as the geopolitical status quo of American hegemony is changing. Lock-in is attractive—superficially—because it assumes that China's rise will not effect a major change in the international system. Specifically, lock-in holds that China's rise can be managed by integrating it into the post-1945 international order, and ensuring that the exercise of Chinese power takes place within that order's rules and institutions.73 By doing so, it is claimed, the United States can offset its declining power and ‘ensure the international order it leads can remain the dominating logic of the twenty-first century’.74 Lock-in assumes that China has no interest in overturning—or significantly modifying—the post-1945 international order in which it rose and became wealthy. Certainly, China did rise within the Pax Americana's LRBIO. However, China did not rise to preserve that American-dominated order. For some three decades (beginning with Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms) China took a low profile in international politics, and avoided confrontation both with the United States and with its regional neighbours. Integration into the open international economy spurred China's rapid growth. China's self-described ‘peaceful rise’ followed the script written by Deng Xiaoping: ‘Lie low. Hide your capabilities. Bide your time.’ However, the fact that China bandwagoned with the United States in joining the international economic order did not mean that its longer-term intention was—or is—to preserve the post-1945 international order. In joining the liberal economic order, Beijing's goal was not simply to get rich; by integrating itself into the post-1945 international order, China was able to avoid conflict with the United States until it became wealthy enough to acquire the military capabilities necessary to compete with America for regional hegemony in east Asia.75 Judging from Xi Jinping's policy pronouncements, China's days of biding its time and hiding its capabilities are over. Lock-in proponents argue that even as the Sino-American military and economic balance continues to tilt increasingly in Beijing's favour, the post-1945 international order's rules, institutions and norms will offset America's loss of hard power. There is historical evidence that suggests this is wishful thinking. Take the case of Britain after the Second World War. Despite the dramatic weakening of Britain's economic and financial clout caused by its efforts in the two world wars, after 1945 British leaders believed that the United Kingdom could remain one of three major world powers. In pursuit of this goal, they formulated their own version of lock-in. As the historian John Darwin puts it, officials in London thought that by transforming the Commonwealth, Britain could transition ‘from an empire of rule to an empire of influence’.76 Specifically, they believed that ‘free from the authoritarian, acquisitive and exploitative traditions of the old version of empire’, the reconfigured Commonwealth ‘would make the British connection voluntary, democratic, and mutually beneficial’.77 The reformed Commonwealth therefore would serve as the institutional instrument of continuing British world power, within which shared values and norms would bind Britain's former colonies and dominions to London's leadership.78 The reasons why British policy-makers bought into this vision sound an awful lot like the reasons why the present-day American proponents of lock-in think it will preserve the United States' global leadership even as its hard power erodes. Lock-in did not work for Britain following the Second World War, and there is scant reason to think it will work for the United States in the coming years of the twenty-first century. The lock-in strategy also assumes that if the Pax Americana's institutions are reformed, Beijing (and other non-western emerging powers) will find it more attractive to remain in the post-1945 international order than to overturn it. That assumption, however, is logically flawed: achieving lock-in by reforming the existing international order presumes that the United States can have its cake (preserving the Pax Americana) and eat it too (reforming the current international system's legacy institutions). But, as we all know, when the cake is eaten, it's gone. Reform—at least, any kind of reform that would appeal to China—would mean the United States yielding significant power in international institutions to accommodate Beijing. However, doing so would reduce US ability to shape outcomes, diminish Washington's voice in international institutions, and impose constraints on US autonomy in foreign and domestic policy.79 As University of Birmingham lecturer Sevasti-Eleni Vezirgiannidou observes with respect to institutional reform: ‘It is questionable whether this will really preserve US influence or rather, on the contrary, diminish it, as the United States will have to share power in a reformed order and thus will be restricted in its ability to act unilaterally.’80 The US foreign policy establishment may talk the talk of reforming the international order (and the institutions that underpin it), but it is doubtful it will walk the walk with respect to reform, because that would mean accepting a downsized American role in international politics. On the contrary, Washington's opposition to the AIIB indicates that the United States is not prepared to see its influence in the international order diminished. And, with respect to reforming the post-1945 international order to accommodate the reality of a risen China, this is the nub of the problem: instead of preserving the Pax Americana, reform would lead to changes in the international order that would undermine it. Of course, regardless of whether there is institutional reform, the coming decades are likely to witness major changes in the international order irrespective of America's preferences. What will happen to the international order as China continues to rise, and America's relative power continues to decline? As Yogi Berra, the greatest of all American philosophers (immortalized in baseball's Hall of Fame), said: ‘Making predictions is hard. Especially about the future.’ However, one thing seems pretty certain: China is not on the verge of either of ruling the world, or becoming a global hegemon comparable to the United States after the Second World War; not yet, anyway. Thus, for the next several decades (at least) it will be neither China's world nor America's: international leadership will be contested.81 During this period, China can be expected to act pretty much as one would expect any Great Power to act while making the shift from rising to risen: it will use its newfound power to seek a much greater voice in managing—and shaping—the international order, and its underlying norms. For example, China will want others to acknowledge its ‘core interests’, including respect for its territorial integrity and its sovereignty. Beijing has expanded the geographic scope of its core interests beyond Tibet and Taiwan to include the South and East China Seas and Xinjiang. And, reflecting its insistence that states should refrain from intervening in others' internal affairs, preservation of its political, economic and social systems also has been defined as a core interest.82 During the period of contested international leadership there is unlikely to be wholesale abandonment of the post-1945 international institutions. For example, as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Beijing is an acknowledged part of the Great Power club. Similarly, we should not expect to see a dramatic overhaul of the international economic system. As the world's top-ranking exporter and trading state, China benefits hugely from economic openness. However, the state plays a much greater role in China's economy than it does in the United States and Europe. Beijing will want rules that protect its semi-mercantilist economic policies and also ensure that its state-owned industries are not disadvantaged. Beijing will continue pressing for an even greater voice, both for itself and for the developing world, in institutions such as the IMF and World Bank (unless or until they are superseded by new ‘made in China’ institutions). In this respect, China will position itself as the developing world's champion—a role for which it is well suited. Like many nations in the developing world—but unlike the United States—China has been a victim of western Great Power policies of imperialism and colonialism. As such, China has a claim to prominence in constructing a new international order that reflects the values of the developing world rather than those of the United States and the West.83 Even though the international economy will remain (more or less) open, in other respects the international system is likely to become much less liberal politically. The Chinese Communist Party's 19th Congress demonstrated that China is not converging with the West: it is not going to become a democracy any time soon—if ever. Consequently, as China's role in shaping the international agenda increases, democracy and human rights will become less salient. China will almost certainly try to change the norms that favour democracy promotion, ‘humanitarian’ intervention, human rights and the Responsibility to Protect. Beijing will resist norms that divide states into two camps, ranging democratic ‘good guys’ against non-democratic ‘bad guys’.84 Instead, it will offer its policy of ‘market authoritarianism’ to developing states as a better model of political, social and economic development than the US model based on the Washington Consensus. As its power continues to increase, China will seek to recast the world order in a way that not only advances its interests but also acknowledges both its enhanced power and its claims to status and prestige equal to those of the declining hegemon.85 For now, Beijing is (mostly) ‘working within the system’ to revise the post-1945 international order while simultaneously laying the groundwork for an alternative international order that eventually could displace the Pax Americana. As a 2007 report by the Center for a New American Security concluded: Rather than seeking to weaken or confront the United States directly, Chinese leaders are pursuing a subtle, multifaceted, long-term grand strategy that aims to derive as many benefits as possible from the existing international system while accumulating the economic wherewithal, military strength, and soft power resources to reinforce China's emerging position as at least a regional great power.86 Even as it stays within the post-1945 international order, Beijing is not doing so to preserve it. In this sense, as Martin Jacques has observed, China is playing a double game. It is operating ‘both within and outside the existing international system while at the same time, in effect, sponsoring a new China-centric international system which will exist alongside the present system and probably slowly begin to usurp it’.87 The creation of the AIIB, which Beijing intends should ultimately eclipse the IMF and World Bank, is a good example of this strategy. American scholars and policy-makers believe that a lock-in strategy can be employed to head off any Chinese attempt to create a new international order, or to create a parallel order. They believe this because they have imbued the concept of a ‘rules-based, institutionalized, liberal international order’ with a talismanic quality. In so doing they have air-brushed Great Power politics out of the picture. As they see it, rules and institutions are politically neutral and, ipso facto, beneficial for all. Hence, they can be an effective substitute for declining hard power. However, rather than existing separately from the balance of power, rules, norms and institutions reflect it. Hence the world is no more likely to continue upholding the Pax Americana once US power declines than Britain's dominions and former colonies were inclined to perpetuate the empire after the Second World War. The fate of the Pax Americana, and that of the international order, will be determined by the outcome of the Sino-American rivalry. As the British scholar E. H. Carr observed, a rules-based international order ‘cannot be understood independently of the political foundation on which it rests and the political interests which it serves’.88 The post-Second World War international order is an American order that privileges US interests.89 Even the discourse of ‘liberal order’ cannot disguise this fact. Today, the ground is shifting beneath the Pax Americana's foundations. Those who believe that lock-in can work view international politics as being, in essence, geopolitically antiseptic. For them, Great Power competition and conflict are transcended by international institutions, rules and norms. This is not how the real world works, however.90 Great Power politics is about power. Rules and institutions do not exist in a vacuum, hermetically sealed off from Great Power po

litics. Nor are they neutral. Rather, they reflect the distribution of power in the international system. In international politics, who rules makes the rules. In his classic study of international relations between the world wars, The Twenty years' crisis, Carr analysed the political crisis of the 1930s caused by the breakdown of the post-First World War order symbolized by the Versailles Treaty.91 The Versailles system cracked, Carr argued, because of the widening gap between the order it represented and the actual distribution of power in Europe. Carr used the events of the 1930s to make a larger geopolitical point. International orders reflect the balance of power that exists at time of their creation. Over time, however, the relative power of states changes, and eventually the international order no longer reflects the actual distribution of power between or among the leading Great Powers. When that happens, the legitimacy of the prevailing order is called into question, and it will be challenged by the rising power(s). When the balance of power swings—or is perceived to swing—in its direction, a rising power becomes increasingly dissatisfied with the international order, and seeks to revise it. The challenger wants to change the rules embodied in the existing international order—rules written, of course, by the once dominant but now declining Great Power that created it. It also wants the allocation of prestige and status changed to reflect its newly acquired power. The incumbent hegemon, of course, wants to preserve the existing international order as is—an order that it midwifed to advance, and consolidate, its own interests. The E. H. Carr Moment presents the incumbent hegemon with a choice. It can dig in its heels and try to preserve the prevailing order—and its privileged position therein; or it can accede to the rising challenger's demands for revision. If it chooses the former course of action, it runs the risk of war with the dissatisfied challenger. If it chooses the latter, it must come to terms with the reality of its decline, and the end of its hegemonic position. The E. H. Carr Moment is where the geopolitical rubber meets the road: the status quo power(s) must choose between accommodating or opposing the revisionist demands of the rising power(s). Liberal internationalists such as John Ikenberry argue that China will not challenge the current international order, even as the distribution of power continues to shift in its favour. This is a doubtful proposition. The geopolitical question—the E. H. Carr Moment—of our time is whether the declining hegemon in east Asia, the United States, will try to preserve a status quo that is becoming increasingly out of sync with the shifting distribution of power, or whether it can reconcile itself to a rising China's revisionist demands that the international order in east Asia be realigned to reflect the emerging power realities. Unless the United States can adjust gracefully to this tectonic geopolitical shift, the chances of a Sino-American war are high—as they always are during power transitions.92 However, whether change comes peacefully or violently, the Pax Americana's days are numbered.

#### No heg impact and retrenchment’s stabilizing – prefer cross-regional estimates and new statistics.

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Even the most ardent supporters of the hegemonic-stability explanation do not contend that U.S. influence extends equally to all corners of the globe. The United States has concentrated its policing in what George Kennan used to call the "strong points," or most important parts of the world: Western Europe, the Pacific Rim, and the Persian Gulf.70 By doing so, Washington may well have contributed more to great-power peace than to the overall global decline in warfare. If the former phe-nomenon contributed to the latter, by essentially providing a behavioral model for weaker states to emulate, then perhaps this lends some sup-port to the hegemonic-stability case.71 In general, Washington has shown less interest in the affairs of the global South since the end of the Cold War, and the level of violence in almost all regions has declined. The United States intervenes far less in the political and military affairs of Latin America compared to any time in the twentieth century, for instance, and the states of the region are more peaceful. Warfare in Africa is at an all-time low, as noted above, as is relative U.S. interest outside of counterterrorism and security assistance. Regional peace and stability exist where there is active U.S. intervention, in other words, as well as where there is not. No direct relationship seems to exist across regions. The U.S. sheriff certainly appears to have enforced rules upon the great powers. Since we do not have a "control" Europe, however, one without the presence of U.S. troops and alliance commitments, it is dif-ficult to know what is causing those states to behave. In much of the rest of the world, the United States has not been especially eager to enforce any particular rules. Even rather incontrovertible evidence of genocide has not been enough to inspire action. Washington's intervention choices have at best been erratic: crises in Libya and Kosovo inspired responses, but much more blood flowed uninterrupted in Rwanda, Dar-fur, Congo, Sri Lanka, and Syria. When U.S. intervention has occurred, its wisdom and efficacy have not been encouraging. The security situation in the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East, to cite the most obvious example, would be better off if U.S. troops had stayed home.72 In recent years, substantial hard-power investments (Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq),

moderate intervention (Libya), and reliance on diplomacy (Syria) have been equally ineffective in stabilizing states torn by conflict. The region may well be essentially unpacifiable and immune to outside policing. At the very least, it seems hard to make the case that the U.S. presence has improved matters. In this strong point, unipolarity has failed to bring peace. To say that the United States has not always been successful in impos-ing peace on willing combatants would be to understate. The fruitless effort to encourage the various combatants in Syria to stop killing one another is a prominent example, and there are others. The United States also took the peacemaking lead during one of the rare interstate conflicts of the New Peace era, the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. A high-level U.S. delegation containing former and future national-security advisors (Anthony Lake and Susan Rice) made a half-dozen trips to the region, but it was unable to prevent either the outbreak or recurrence of the con-flict. Lake and his team shuttled back and forth between the capitals with some frequency, and President Clinton made repeated phone calls to the leaders of the respective countries, offering to hold peace talks in the United States, all to no avail.73 The war did not end until the Ethiopians essentially won in late 2000. The globocop was irrelevant. The Horn of Africa is hardly the only region where states are free to fight one another today without fear of serious U.S. involvement. Since they are choosing not to do so with increasing frequency, something else is probably affecting their calculations. Stability exists even in those places where the potential for intervention by the sheriff is minimal. Hegemonic stability can only take credit for influencing those decisions that would have ended in war without the presence, whether physical or psychological, of the United States. It seems hard to make the case that the relative peace that has descended on so many regions is primar-ily attributable to the kind of heavy hand of the neoconservative levia- than or that of its lighter, more liberal cousin. Something else appears to be at work. CONFLICT AND U.S. CHOICES If U.S. power is the only thing holding back the forces of global chaos, then we would expect to see some variation in violence as the relative capabilities of the United States wax and wane. During the 1990s, the United States cut back on defense by about 25 percent, spending $100 billion less in real terms in 1998 than it did in 1990.74 To those believers in the neoconservative version of hegemonic stability, this irresponsible "peace dividend" endangered both national and global security. "No serious analyst of American military capabilities doubts that the defense budget has been cut much too far to meet America's responsibilities to itself and to world peace," argued Kristol and Kagan at the time.75 The world grew dramatically more peaceful while the United States cut its forces, however, and it stayed just as peaceful even as spending rebounded after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The incidence and magnitude of global conflict declined while the military budget was cut under President Clin-ton, kept declining (though more slowly) as the Bush administration ramped it back up, and stayed steady as Obama cut back again. U.S. mili-tary spending has varied during the New Peace from a low in constant dollars of less than $400 billion to a high of more than $700 billion, but war does not seem to have noticed. The same nonrelationship exists between other potential proxy mea-surements for U.S. power and conflict. No connections exist between warfare and fluctuations in U.S. GDP, or alliance commitments, or for-ward military presence. Europe experienced very little fighting when there were 300,000 American troops stationed there, for example, and very little after 90 percent of those troops were removed. It is hard to find much correlation between U.S. actions and systemic stability. Noth-ing the United States actually does seems to matter to the New Peace. Absolute military spending might not be as important as relative. Although Washington cut back on spending during the 1990s, its advan-tage over all possible rivals never wavered. The United States has accounted for between 35 and 41 percent of global military spending every year since the collapse of the Soviet Union.76 Perhaps perceptions of U.S. power, as well as its willingness to use it, keep the peace. Fluc-tuations in its enormous defense budget might be unimportant com-pared to how the United States chooses to employ that budget. In other words, perhaps the grand strategy of the United States, rather than its absolute capability, is decisive in maintaining stability. Perceptions of U.S. power and the strength of its hegemony are to some degree functions of its willingness to use that power. A strong United States that chose to stand on the sidelines during crises would not encourage or enforce international cooperation. If indeed U.S. stra-tegic choices are directly related to international stability, then variation in its choices ought to have consequences for levels of conflict. A restrained United States would presumably be less likely to play the role of sheriff than one following a more activist approach. Indeed, hege-monic-stability theorists warn that following a grand strategy that did not make global policing a priority would court disaster. The "present danger" about which Kristol, Kagan, and their fellow travelers warned is that the United States "will shrink its responsibilities and—in a fit of absentmindedness, or parsimony, or indifference—allow the interna-tional order that it created and sustains to collapse."77 The Pulitzer Prize—winning journalist Brett Stephens predicted that an insufficiently activist U.S. grand strategy would result in "global pandemonium." 78 Liberals fear restraint as well and also warn that a militarized version of primacy would also be counterproductive in the long run. Washing-ton can undermine its creation over time through thoughtless unilat-eral actions that violate its own rules. Many liberals predicted that the invasion of Iraq and its general contempt for international institutions and law would call the legitimacy of the order into question. Ikenberry worried that Bush's "geostrategic wrecking ball" would lead to a more hostile, divided, and dangerous world.79 Thus while all hegemonic- stability theorists expect a rise of chaos during a restrained presidency, liberals also have grave concerns regarding primacy. If either version is correct—that global stability is provided by U.S. hegemony—then maintaining that stability through a grand strategy based on either primacy (to neoconservatives) or "deep engagement" (to liberals) is clearly wise.80 If, however, U.S. actions are only tangentially related to the outbreak of the New Peace or if any of the other proposed explanations are decisive, then the United States could retrench with-out fear of negative consequences. The grand strategy of the United States is therefore crucial to theo-ries of hegemonic stability. And, once again, there is no evidence that U.S. choices matter much. Although few observers would agree on the details, most would probably acknowledge that post—Cold War grand strategies of American presidents have differed in some important ways. As it happens, each administration is a reasonable representation of one the four ideal types of grand strategy laid out by Posen and Ross in 1996.81 Under George H.W. Bush, the United States followed the path of "selective engagement," which is sometimes referred to as "balance-of- power realism"; Bill Clinton's grand strategy looks a great deal like what Posen and Ross call "cooperative security" and others call "liberal inter- nationalism"; George W. Bush, especially in his first term, forged a strat-egy that was as close to "primacy" as any president is likely to get; and Barack Obama, despite some early flirtation with liberalism, followed a restrained realist path, which Posen and Ross label "neoisolationism" but its proponents refer to as "strategic restraint."82 In the lingo of political science, we have substantial variation in the independent variable, more than enough to determine its effect on the phenomenon under consider-ation. The result is clear (see table 1.1). Armed-conflict levels fell steadily throughout the post—Cold War era, irrespective of the grand strategic path Washington chose. Neither the primacy of George W. Bush nor the restraint of Barack Obama had much effect on the level of global violence. Despite continued warnings (and the high-profile mess in Syria), the world has not experienced an increase in violence while U.S. behavior became more restrained. Once again, if the grand strategy of the United States is responsible for the New Peace, it is leaving no trace in the evidence. If a correlation did exist between U.S. actions and international stabil-ity, if other states had reacted differently to fluctuations in U.S. military spending or grand strategy, then surely hegemonic-stability theorists would argue that their expectations had been fulfilled. Many liberals were on the lookout for chaos while George W. Bush was in the White House, just as neoconservatives have been quick to identify apparent worldwide catastrophe under President Obama.83 If increases in vio-lence would have been evidence for the wisdom of hegemonic strate-gies, then logical consistency demands that the lack thereof should at least pose a problem. As it stands, the only evidence we have regarding the relationship between U.S. power and international stability suggests that the two are unrelated. The rest of the world appears quite capable and willing to operate effectively without the presence of a global police~~man~~. Those who think otherwise base their view on faith alone. Hegemonic stability is a belief, in other words, rather than an estab-lished fact, and as such it deserves a different kind of examination.