# NC

### 1

#### Ethics starts with disagreement – because different agents have subjective interests and motivations, we don’t always agree on what’s right or wrong. Objective ethics tries to create a ‘one size fits all’ solution to this problem by regulating action by some external standards, but this fails.

#### 1] Is-ought fallacy – you cannot logically deduce an ought statement from any set of facts or is statements, which makes it impossible to objectively generate obligations.

#### 2] Subjectivism – everyone has their own desires, motivations, and ends – there is no one concept of good that works in all instances.

#### 3] Skepticism – there is no objective moral truth since I can keep asking why to any justification you give for an action until we get to an unjustified statement.

#### But without constraint on each other’s actions, disagreement can only be resolved by violence, which is a lose-lose for all parties involved.

#### Thus the standard is consistency with contractarianism, as ethics can only emerge out of agreements between ethical subjects.

**Gauthier 86** Gauthier, David P. *Morals by Agreement*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986. Print.

Moral principles are introduced as the objects of full voluntary ex ante agreement among rational persons. Such agreement is hypothetical, in supposing a pre-moral context for the adoption of moral rules and practices. But the parties to agreement are real, determinate individuals, distinguished by their capacities, situations, and concerns. In so far as [Since] they would agree to constraints on their choices, restraining their pursuit of their own interests, they acknowledge a distinction between what they may and may not do. As rational persons understanding the structure of their interaction, they recognize for mutual constraint, and so for a moral dimension in their affairs.

#### Prefer additionally –

#### 1] Psychological egoism is true – empirics prove people ultimately act based on their own selfish interests.

Slote 64 [Michael Anthony Slote, Michael A. Slote is UST Professor of ethics at the University of Miami and an author of a number of books. He was previously professor of philosophy at the University of Maryland, and at Trinity College Dublin. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard, The Journal of Philosophy, “An Empirical Basis for Psychological Egoism,” October 1st, 1964, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2023495.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A242cd2f9910528ef2c393803e6674416]/](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2023495.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A242cd2f9910528ef2c393803e6674416%5d/) lm

In the present paper I wish to argue that psychological egoism may well have a basis in the empirical facts of human psychology. Certain contemporary learning theorists, e.g., Hull and Skinner, have put forward behavioristic theories of the origin and function- ing of human motives which posit a certain number of basically "selfish," unlearned primary drives or motives (like hunger, thirst, sleep, elimination, and sex), explain all other, higher-order, drives or motives as derived genetically from the primary ones via certain "laws of reinforcement," and, further, deny the "fune- tional autonomy" of those higher-order drives or motives.4 Now it is a hotly debated issue in contemporary Learning Theory whether any theory such as we have described briefly above could adequately explain adult human behavior. I shall, however, argue only that a theory of the above kind may well be true, and that from such a theory, fortified only by one additional psychological premise, the truth of egoism (non-altruism) logically follows. I hope to show, thereby, that the question of psychological egoism is still an open empirical issue, however fallacious be the philosophi- cal arguments for it. I should like now to show that a certain empirical hypothesis may, when taken together with the hypothesis of functional de- pendence, entail the thesis of psychological egoism and rule out the possibility of a case like the above, even if the hypothesis of functional dependence taken alone does not.6 Let us imagine that we have a method for determining em- pirically which primary rewards a person prefers to which others. We set up various situations where the man has to choose between primary rewards, situations involving no moral factors and no interests of other people, and determine the man's preferences. A learning theorist might claim that it is true as a matter of empirical fact that whenever a man [someone] systematically (i.e., as a general rule) continues to sacrifice primary reward x to other people, [t]he[y] does so only because [t]he[y] usually obtains thereby some primary reward y and because y ranks higher than x on the person 's preference scorecard, as determined in situations where no considerations of other people's interests and thus of sacrifice to other people's in- terests were involved.7 And the above empirical claim, which involves, but is not exhausted by, the claim that functional de- pendence is true, entails, I think, the thesis of psychological egoism. For if our conscious acts of benevolence and sympathy and sacri- fice, etc., would eventually cease to be performed by us if we did not, in performing those acts, in general give away less in the way of primary-drive satisfactions than we actually got in return, the inevitable conclusion would be that all our acts were fundamentally (or ultimately or "really") motivated by our "selfish" primary drives. And it would be accurate, if this were the case, to say that the driving forces behind all our so-called higher actions were "selfish" primary motives, since only those higher actions would continue to be performed which usually led to a net gain of primary-reward satisfaction for the individuals performing them. If this were the case, then, indeed, none of our actions would ever "really" or fundamentally or ultimately be unselfish. The above-described case of the mother who gives away more in the way of primary-drive satisfaction than she gets for herself in return would just never come up. Psychological egoism would be true. I might add, finally, that the explanation I have attempted to give of the possibility of arguing on an empirical basis for egoism may help us to understand why so many people, especially be- ginning students of philosophy, are so dissatisfied by attempts to discredit egoism by showing the invalidity of the traditional philosophical arguments that have been put forward to prove it, and why the doctrine of egoism keeps cropping up, however many be the philosophical voices that seek to silence it. I am willing to conjecture that egoism will not lie dead, because people in some way see that there may be more in favor of egoism than a priori arguments. It is my very tentative suggestion that the reason for this may be that even those with little or no training in psy- chology believe, however inarticulately, that something like the psychological theory we have been discussing in this paper may well be true, believe that men who act consistently in a benevolent manner, for example, would not be acting benevolently unless their selfish desires and/or interests were usually satisfied by their doing so.

#### 2] Bindingness – basing ethics on contracts between individuals is the only way to solve ethical disagreement since I can reject other moral principles, but by definition I can’t reject those principles which I agree to. That outweighs since otherwise people could just ignore ethics and do whatever they want.

#### 3] Actor spec – governments operate based on a social contract with its citizens where the people consent to constraints on their actions in exchange for the security and protection of the state.

#### Now negate –

#### 1] Unconditional striking breaches no-strike contracts and the conditions under which contracts allow strikes.

NLRB National Labor Relations Board. “The Right to Strike.” *The Right to Strike | National Labor Relations Board*, www.nlrb.gov/strikes.

Strikes unlawful because of timing—Effect of no-strike contract. A strike that violates a no-strike provision of a contract is not protected by the Act, and the striking employees can be discharged or otherwise disciplined, unless the strike is called to protest certain kinds of unfair labor practices committed by the employer. It should be noted that not all refusals to work are considered strikes and thus violations of no-strike provisions. A walkout because of conditions abnormally dangerous to health, such as a defective ventilation system in a spray-painting shop, has been held not to violate a no-strike provision. Same—Strikes at end of contract period.Section 8(d) provides that when either party desires to terminate or change an existing contract, it must comply with certain conditions. If these requirements are not met, a strike to terminate or change a contract is unlawful and participating strikers lose their status as employees of the employer engaged in the labor dispute. If the strike was caused by the unfair labor practice of the employer, however, the strikers are classified as unfair labor practice strikers and their status is not affected by failure to follow the required procedure.

#### 2] Unconditional right to strike is impossible since workers agree to certain conditions on strikes when they form a work contract with their employers. If they disagree with the conditions in the contract then they should renegotiate or pick a different employer.

### 2

#### CP: A just government ought to recognize the right to strike with the condition that Armed Forces cannot strike.

#### Armed forces can’t strike now

LII 6 [Cornell Legal Information Institute, 2006, "10 U.S. Code § 976," Cornell Legal Information Institute, https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/976]/

(a)In this section: (1)The term “member of the armed forces” means (A) a member of the armed forces who is serving on active duty, (B) a member of the National Guard who is serving on full-time National Guard duty, or (C) a member of a Reserve component while performing inactive-duty training. (2)The term “military labor organization” means any organization that engages in or attempts to engage in— (A)negotiating or bargaining with any civilian officer or employee, or with any member of the armed forces, on behalf of members of the armed forces, concerning the terms or conditions of military service of such members in the armed forces; (B)representing individual members of the armed forces before any civilian officer or employee, or any member of the armed forces, in connection with any grievance or complaint of any such member arising out of the terms or conditions of military service of such member in the armed forces; or (C)striking, picketing, marching, demonstrating, or any other similar form of concerted action which is directed against the Government of the United States and which is intended to induce any civilian officer or employee, or any member of the armed forces, to— (i)negotiate or bargain with any person concerning the terms or conditions of military service of any member of the armed forces, (ii)recognize any organization as a representative of individual members of the armed forces in connection with complaints and grievances of such members arising out of the terms or conditions of military service of such members in the armed forces, or (iii)make any change with respect to the terms or conditions of military service of individual members of the armed forces. (3)The term “civilian officer or employee” means an employee, as such term is defined in section 2105 of title 5. (b)It shall be unlawful for a member of the armed forces, knowing of the activities or objectives of a particular military labor organization— (1)to join or maintain membership in such organization; or (2)to attempt to enroll any other member of the armed forces as a member of such organization. (c)It shall be unlawful for any person— (1)to enroll in a military labor organization any member of the armed forces or to solicit or accept dues or fees for such an organization from any member of the armed forces; or (2)to negotiate or bargain, or attempt through any coercive act to negotiate or bargain, with any civilian officer or employee, or any member of the armed forces, on behalf of members of the armed forces, concerning the terms or conditions of service of such members; (3)to organize or attempt to organize, or participate in, any strike, picketing, march, demonstration, or other similar form of concerted action involving members of the armed forces that is directed against the Government of the United States and that is intended to induce any civilian officer or employee, or any member of the armed forces, to— (A)negotiate or bargain with any person concerning the terms or conditions of service of any member of the armed forces, (B)recognize any military labor organization as a representative of individual members of the armed forces in connection with any complaint or grievance of any such member arising out of the terms or conditions of service of such member in the armed forces, or (C)make any change with respect to the terms or conditions of service in the armed forces of individual members of the armed forces; or (4)to use any military installation, facility, reservation, vessel, or other property of the United States for any meeting, march, picketing, demonstration, or other similar activity for the purpose of engaging in any activity prohibited by this subsection or by subsection (b) or (d). (d)It shall be unlawful for any military labor organization to represent, or attempt to represent, any member of the armed forces before any civilian officer or employee, or any member of the armed forces, in connection with any grievance or complaint of any such member arising out of the terms or conditions of service of such member in the armed forces. (e)No member of the armed forces, and no civilian officer or employee, may— (1)negotiate or bargain on behalf of the United States concerning the terms or conditions of military service of members of the armed forces with any person who represents or purports to represent members of the armed forces, or (2)permit or authorize the use of any military installation, facility, reservation, vessel, or other property of the United States for any meeting, march, picketing, demonstration, or other similar activity which is for the purpose of engaging in any activity prohibited by subsection (b), (c), or (d). Nothing in this subsection shall prevent commanders or supervisors from giving consideration to the views of any member of the armed forces presented individually or as a result of participation on command-sponsored or authorized advisory councils, committees, or organizations. (f)Whoever violates subsection (b), (c), or (d) shall be fined under title 18 or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both, except that, in the case of an organization (as defined in section 18 of such title), the fine shall not be less than $25,000. (g)Nothing in this section shall limit the right of any member of the armed forces— (1)to join or maintain membership in any organization or association not constituting a “military labor organization” as defined in subsection (a)(2) of this section; (2)to present complaints or grievances concerning the terms or conditions of the service of such member in the armed forces in accordance with established military procedures; (3)to seek or receive information or counseling from any source; (4)to be represented by counsel in any legal or quasi-legal proceeding, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations; (5)to petition the Congress for redress of grievances; or (6)to take such other administrative action to seek such administrative or judicial relief, as is authorized by applicable laws and regulations.

Amendments 1997—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 105–85 substituted “shall be fined under title 18 or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both, except that, in the case of an organization (as defined in section 18 of such title), the fine shall not be less than $25,000.” for “shall, in the case of an individual, be fined not more than $10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both, and in the case of an organization or association, be fined not less than $25,000 and not more than $250,000.” 1987—Subsec. (a)(1) to (3). Pub. L. 100–26 inserted “The term” after each par. designation and struck out uppercase letter of first word after first quotation marks in each paragraph and substituted lowercase letter. 1986—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 99–661 struck out the second of two commas before “(B)”. 1984—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 98–525 added cl. (B) and redesignated existing cl. (B) as (C). Findings; Purpose Pub. L. 95–610, § 1, Nov. 8, 1978, 92 Stat. 3085, provided that: “(a)The Congress makes the following findings: “(1)Members of the armed forces of the United States must be prepared to fight and, if necessary, to die to protect the welfare, security, and liberty of the United States and of their fellow citizens. “(2)Discipline and prompt obedience to lawful orders of superior officers are essential and time-honored elements of the American military tradition and have been reinforced from the earliest articles of war by laws and regulations prohibiting conduct detrimental to the military chain of command and lawful military authority. “(3)The processes of conventional collective bargaining and labor-management negotiation cannot and should not be applied to the relationships between members of the armed forces and their military and civilian superiors. “(4)Strikes, slowdowns, picketing, and other traditional forms of job action have no place in the armed forces. “(5)Unionization of the armed forces would be incompatible with the military chain of command, would undermine the role, authority, and position of the commander, and would impair the morale and readiness of the armed forces. “(6)The circumstances which could constitute a threat to the ability of the armed forces to perform their mission are not comparable to the circumstances which could constitute a threat to the ability of Federal civilian agencies to perform their functions and should be viewed in light of the need for effective performance of duty by each member of the armed forces. “(b)The purpose of this Act [enacting this section] is to promote the readiness of the armed forces to defend the United States.”

#### Right to strike compromises military readiness.

Keating 6 [Matt Keating, The Guardian, “Why can’t troops join a union or strike?” January 27th, 2006, [https://www.theguardian.com/money/2006/jan/28/careers.themilitary]/](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2006/jan/28/careers.themilitary%5d/) lm

Discontent among the British armed forces has prompted calls for an association to represent the rights of the country's servicemen and women, according to a report in this newspaper this week. A body along the lines of the [Police Federation](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/police-federation) has been suggested.

But should the government go further and allow troops to enlist in a trade union ... and the right to strike?

It is illegal for a non-civilian member of the armed forces to do either. Britain is not breaching the European convention on human rights which allows for legal exemptions. And the relevant law in the UK is the Queen's Regulations, by which every serviceman and woman is bound.

Security reasons - and Britain's military readiness, in particular - are appropriate enough grounds for soldiers to abide by those regulations and not lay down their arms. The Ministry of Defence also forbids troops from belonging to an association that has political activities.

But if the argument is that unionisation undermines military effectiveness, someone should tell our Nato partners in the Netherlands.

Although it is not clear if the unions representing Dutch servicemen and women oppose The Hague's plans to send 1,200 more soldiers to Afghanistan, there are some in Britain who cannot see why British troops should be denied union representation, too.

Most complaints by UK soldiers are dealt with by their commanding officer or the welfare officer at their barracks. If dissatisfied with the outcome at this level, a soldier can take the matter to the Defence Council. "The council would never shirk defending the rights of any soldier," says an MoD spokesman. "And the forthcoming armed forces bill includes the creation of a more independent complaints procedure at lower levels."

Troops can take a work matter to an employment tribunal, but they may encounter difficulties. "If you look at a lot of the cases decided, particularly the ones in the higher courts, they tend to be individuals that have the backing of unions or professional associations," says Brian Palmer, an employment lawyer for Charles Russell. "This is because the costs and the risk of an adverse decision is too great for most individuals to risk."

No one wants to see troops taking industrial action. But while unionisation seems out of the question, don't our servicemen and women deserve a similar right to voice work grievances as the rest of us?

#### Military unions wreck civilian military relations and US hegemony

Caforio 18 [Giuseppe Caforio, Brigadier General with degrees in law, political science, and strategic studies (FYI, the author died ~2015, but this was republished in 2018 in an anthology book), 5-20-2018, "Unionisation of the Military: Representation of the Interests of Military Personnel," SpringerLink, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-71602-2\_19]/Kankee

THE OPPOSITION TO UNIONIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES But if a convergence between the military establishment and civil society is in progress and has brought the two areas of life and work much closer together, why is there a unionization issue for the armed forces? Why is there opposition to a collective bargaining system for military personnel? The fundamental reason must be sought in the specificity of the military, which is summarized thusly by David R. Segal: Because of its unique social function—the legitimate management of violence—the military requires of its personnel a degree of commitment that differs from that required by other modern organizations. Military personnel, unlike their civilian counterparts, enter into a contract of unlimited liability with their employer. They cannot unilaterally terminate their employment any time they wish. They are subject to moving and working in any environment where the service decides they are needed. They are required to place the needs of service above the needs of their families, and must frequently endure long periods of separation. They are often called upon to work more than an eight-hour day, for which they receive no additional compensation. And in time of war, they must face prolonged danger, and may even forfeit their lives. Obviously, the man on the firing line is required to make a commitment of a different order from that made by the worker on the assembly line. (D. Segal and Kramer, 1977, p. 28). Bernhard Boene, in a study devoted to a different research topic (Boene, 1990), is both precise and efficacious in differentiating military "work" from civilian work. Military specificity, writes Boene, does not lie only in the area of the risks to which one supposes the combatant is exposed, but also in the limits of application of common rationality in combat and in the situation of habitual transgression of social norms that it entails. This implies a particular type of socialization. Notwithstanding partial analogies, according to Boene, civil emergencies belong to a different reality than military ones do. An officer, in particular, is not an ordinary civil servant: he must respond to a "call," consisting of a particular interest in military things, dedication to the common welfare, acceptance of risking his life, and submission to a series of obligations that are peculiar to the military profession. SOME THEORETICAL POSITIONS ON THE ISSUE Discussing a sample survey, David Segal observes that in the United States, in the absence of a union for military personnel, there is a considerable "misfit" between soldiers' perception of the characteristics of their role and the preferred characteristics, while in an analogous sample of civilian manpower this misfit is much smaller. In examining the attempted remedies, Segal states: "Any change to be achieved through organizational interventions, however, is likely to be incremental, and not to resolve the discrepancy between the characteristics that military personnel would like in their jobs and the characteristics that they perceived their jobs to have" (D. Segal and Kramer, 1977, p. 46). According to Segal, unionization can solve this problem, but it presents two dangers that must be carefully weighed: the first is that it tends to extend its influence also to aspects of management and direction of the military apparatus; the second is that it involves a politicisation of the personnel. Gwyn Harries Jenkins examines the consequences that unionisation would have on the operational efficiency of the armed forces and identifies three fundamental ones: 1. The creation of a dual authority structure: Since there has been a change in the basis of authority and discipline in the military establishment and a shift from authoritarian domination to greater reliance on manipulation, persuasion and group consensus, unionization extends the boundaries of these changes: it brings into armed forces the full effects of the organizational revolution which pervades contemporary society, creating a dual authority structure while modifying the traditional basis of compliance. (H. Jenkins, 1977, p. 70) 2. A much greater resemblance of the style of military command to that of civilian management. The new tasks and the introduction of unionization would require commanders to possess skills and orientations more and more like those of civilian managers. 3. An abdication by the officer of his traditional image. Indeed, if the officer "wishes to retain his self-image and ideas of honor, then the introduction of trade unions into the military creates a conflict situation with substantial dysfunctional consequences" (H.Jenkins, 1977, p. 71). Harries Jenkins concludes, however, by affirming that, as a radical criticism of the existing military system, "the unionization of the armed forces can only result in an improvement to an otherwise defective situation" (H. Jenkins, 1977, p. 69). According to William Taylor and Roger Arango (Taylor et al., 1977b), many reasons offered in the United States for or against the unionization of military personnel appear to be rhetorical and not sufficiently investigated. Those who take a negative critical stance, for example, contend that unionization would lead to a breakdown in discipline; threaten the chain of command; and, especially, undermine the military's ability to carry out its assigned mission. Through a concrete field analysis, these authors believe they can shed light on the advantages and disadvantages of this process. Among the advantages are the acquisition of a greater sense of individual security, a valorization of the dignity of individuals, improved social communication, and greater competitiveness with other occupations and professions in recruiting personnel. The real drawbacks would essentially be reduced to two: a risk of divisiveness within units, due to acquired strife between personnel categories; and an increase in personnel costs. Carlo Jean (Jean, 1981) states that in itself, the creation of unions would inevitably produce increased confrontation; without it, the union representatives would have neither prestige nor credibility. He does not believe, however, that the biggest drawback that would derive from it would be that of undermining the internal cohesiveness of the armed forces and their operational capacity. According to this author military leaders would align themselves with the union's demands out of necessity to avoid internal breakup. An unacceptable corporative force would be produced that sooner or later would inevitably oppose it to the political power. The danger that a union of military personnel involves for civil society is, in his opinion, much greater than its negative implications on the efficiency of the military itself. Along the same line is the fear expressed by Sen. Thurmond (reported by David Cortright, cited essay) that unionization might reinforce the military establishment and increase its influence over society at large, decreasing the capacity for political control. This issue had already been treated by Cortright in another essay (Cortright and Thurmond, 1977b), where on the one hand he argued that unionization in the armed forces would help to prevent any form of separateness from civil society while noting on the other that little attention was given to the possibility that unionization substantially strengthens the military's ability to wield influence. Thurmond, again, judges the European experience negatively and asks himself how unionized troops would respond in battle. However, to remain faithful to his position, Thurmond conceives the armed forces as a separate body from civil society, argues that military personnel are not comparable to other labor force categories, and advances the fear that union representation of the interests of military personnel would bring the defence budget to unacceptable levels. Of the countries included in our study, unions for military personnel exist in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, and The Netherlands. Unionization is prohibited in England, the United States, Canada, France, Portugal, Turkey, and Greece. Strikes are allowed only in Austria and Sweden. ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE THOUGHT OF VARIOUS AUTHORS

#### Military readiness in the US is key to prevent a Great-Power war and nuclear extinction.

Brands & Edel 19 — Hal Brands; PhD, Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Charles Edel; PhD, Senior Fellow and Visiting Scholar at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney. (“The Lessons of Tragedy: Statecraft and World Order;” Ch. 6: Darkening Horizon; Published by Yale University Press; //GrRv)  
Each of these geopolitical challenges is different, and each reflects the distinctive interests, ambitions, and history of the country undertaking it. Yet there is growing cooperation between the countries that are challenging the regional pillars of the U.S.-led order. Russia and China have collaborated on issues such as energy, sales and development of military technology, opposition to additional U.S. military deployments on the Korean peninsula, and naval exercises from the South China Sea to the Baltic. In Syria, Iran provided the shock troops that helped keep Russia’s ally, Bashar al-Assad, in power, as Moscow provided the air power and the diplomatic cover. “Our cooperation can isolate America,” supreme leader Ali Khamenei told Putin in 2017. More broadly, what links these challenges together is their opposition to the constellation of power, norms, and relationships that the U.S.-led order entails, and in their propensity to use violence, coercion, and intimidation as means of making that opposition effective. Taken collectively, these challenges constitute a geopolitical sea change from the post-Cold War era.

The revival of great-power competition entails higher international tensions than the world has known for decades, and the revival of arms races, security dilemmas, and other artifacts of a more dangerous past. It entails sharper conflicts over the international rules of the road on issues ranging from freedom of navigation to the illegitimacy of altering borders by force, and intensifying competitions over states that reside at the intersection of rival powers’ areas of interest. It requires confronting the prospect that rival powers could overturn the favorable regional balances that have underpinned the U.S.-led order for decades, and that they might construct rival spheres of influence from which America and the liberal ideas it has long promoted would be excluded. Finally, it necessitates recognizing that great-power rivalry could lead to great-power war, a prospect that seemed to have followed the Soviet empire onto the ash heap of history.

Both Beijing and Moscow are, after all, optimizing their forces and exercising aggressively in preparation for potential conflicts with the United States and its allies; Russian doctrine explicitly emphasizes the limited use of nuclear weapons to achieve escalation dominance in a war with Washington. In Syria, U.S. and Russian forces even came into deadly contact in early 2018. American airpower decimated a contingent of government-sponsored Russian mercenaries that was attacking a base at which U.S. troops were present, an incident demonstrating the increasing boldness of Russian operations and the corresponding potential for escalation. The world has not yet returned to the epic clashes for global dominance that characterized the twentieth century, but it has returned to the historical norm of great-power struggle, with all the associated dangers.

Those dangers may be even greater than most observers appreciate, because if today’s great-power competitions are still most intense at the regional level, who is to say where these competitions will end? By all appearances, Russia does not simply want to be a “regional power” (as Obama cuttingly described it) that dominates South Ossetia and Crimea.37 It aspires to the deep European and extra-regional impact that previous incarnations of the Russian state enjoyed. Why else would Putin boast about how far his troops can drive into Eastern Europe? Why else would Moscow be deploying military power into the Middle East? Why else would it be continuing to cultivate intelligence and military relationships in regions as remote as Latin America?

Likewise, China is today focused primarily on securing its own geopolitical neighborhood, but its ambitions for tomorrow are clearly much bolder. Beijing probably does not envision itself fully overthrowing the international order, simply because it has profited far too much from the U.S.-anchored global economy. Yet China has nonetheless positioned itself for a global challenge to U.S. influence. Chinese military forces are deploying ever farther from China’s immediate periphery; Beijing has projected power into the Arctic and established bases and logistical points in the Indian Ocean and Horn of Africa. Popular Chinese movies depict Beijing replacing Washington as the dominant actor in sub-Saharan Africa—a fictional representation of a real-life effort long under way. The Belt and Road Initiative bespeaks an aspiration to link China to countries throughout Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe; BRI, AIIB, and RCEP look like the beginning of an alternative institutional architecture to rival Washington’s. In 2017, Xi Jinping told the Nineteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party that Beijing could now “take center stage in the world” and act as an alternative to U.S. leadership.38

These ambitions may or may not be realistic. But they demonstrate just how significantly the world’s leading authoritarian powers desire to shift the global environment over time. The revisionism we are seeing today may therefore be only the beginning. As China’s power continues to grow, or if it is successful in dominating the Western Pacific, it will surely move on to grander endeavors. If Russia reconsolidates control over the former Soviet space, it may seek to bring parts of the former Warsaw Pact to heel. Historically, this has been a recurring pattern of great-power behavior—interests expand with power, the appetite grows with the eating, risk-taking increases as early gambles are seen to pay off.39 This pattern is precisely why the revival of great-power competition is so concerning—because geopolitical revisionism by unsatisfied major powers has so often presaged intensifying international conflict, confrontation, and even war. The great-power behavior occurring today represents the warning light flashing on the dashboard. It tells us there may be still-greater traumas to come.

The threats today are compelling and urgent, and there may someday come a time when the balance of power has shifted so markedly that the postwar international system cannot be sustained. Yet that moment of failure has not yet arrived, and so the goal of U.S. strategy should be not to hasten it by giving up prematurely, but to push it off as far into the future as possible. Rather than simply acquiescing in the decline of a world it spent generations building, America should aggressively bolster its defenses, with an eye to preserving and perhaps even selectively advancing its remarkable achievements.

### Underview

#### Presumption negates – infinite ways for something to be false but only one way for them to be true, and the aff has the burden of proof. Permissibility negates – doing the aff isn’t obligatory then the squo is permissible.

# Case