## 2nr

#### Biden PC is key.

Sullivan 9-2 – CNN White House reporter based in Washington, DC, where she covers the Biden administration. (Kate; Published: September 2, 2021; “Biden says he'll press Congress on infrastructure after wildfires and Ida wreak havoc on US: 'The climate crisis is here'”; Accessed: September 3, 2021; https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/02/politics/biden-hurricane-ida/index.html)//CYang

(CNN) President Joe Biden said Thursday he plans to press Congress to take further action on his infrastructure proposals that he says will better prepare the nation for future natural disasters and the effects of climate change. Speaking hours after remnants of Hurricane Ida caused dangerous flash floods and tornadoes across the Northeast and as wildfires burn their way across the western US, Biden said his infrastructure proposals would shore up infrastructure that will be challenged in the coming decades. "The past few days of Hurricane Ida and the wildfires in the West and the unprecedented flash floods in New York and New Jersey is yet another reminder that these extreme storms and the climate crisis are here," Biden said, speaking from the White House.

The President said the nation needs to be better prepared, and argued his plan would make key investments that would make electric grids and transmission lines more resilient to storms, wildfires and floods. Biden said he had spoken to the governors of New York and New Jersey in the wake of the floods and damage, and said he was planning on speaking to the governor of Pennsylvania. "There's a lot of damage, and I made clear to the governors that my team at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, is on the ground and ready to provide all the assistance that's needed," Biden said, speaking from the White House.

"My message to everyone affected is we're all in this together. The nation is here to help. That's the message I've been making clear to the mayors, governors, energy and utility leaders in the region who my administration has been working closely with over the past few days," Biden said. Biden said since the hurricane made landfall, more than 6,000 members of the National Guard have been activated in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas and other states to support search and rescue efforts. "We know that there is much to be done in this response on our part. We need to get power restored. We need to get more food, fuel and water deployed," Biden said.

The President said he gets hourly updates on relief efforts from FEMA "well into the night," and said his team would be working "around the clock until the critical needs of the region are fully met. And we will meet them." Biden said his team has been working with private companies to accelerate the restoration of power and cell phone services. "It's beginning to get back up, but there's a long way to go," Biden said.

Biden will be traveling on Friday to Louisiana to meet with Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, and parish presidents, mayors and local officials representing the affected areas. He said the governor encouraged the President to come and assured him his visit would not disrupt recovery efforts on the ground.

"We are here for you," Biden said, addressing those affected by the storm. "And we're making sure the response and recovery is equitable, so that those hit hardest get the resources they need and are not left behind." Biden noted the region hit by the hurricane is a key center of the nation's oil production and refining infrastructure. As a result, he said his administration is moving quickly to increase the availability of gas and ease the pressure on gas prices around the country.

## 1

#### CP: The United States Congress should repeal welfare and transfer programs, including but not limited to Social Security and Medicare and repeal base-narrowing features of the individual income tax system. The United States Department of Health and Human Services should provide a basic-income guarantee of $13,788 to individuals age 18 or older in the United States and provide a basic-income guarantee of $6,894 to individuals under the age of 18 in the United States.

#### Replacing welfare and tax breaks with a basic income solves inequality and is completely revenue-neutral

Jensen et al 17 (Matthew, William Ensor, Anderson Frailey, Amy Xu, founding director of the Open Source Policy Center (OSPC) at AEI, which makes critical policy simulation models AND research associates at American Enterprise Institute, May, “A Budget-Neutral Universal Basic Income”, <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UBI-Jensen-et-al-working-paper.pdf>, Aly M)

Reform  
We model a policy reform that repeals most welfare and transfer programs (benefit programs) and basenarrowing features of the individual income tax system in favor of a Universal Basic Income (UBI). The UBI is calibrated to neutralize the budgetary effect of the reform including taxes collected on UBI income, which would be taxable. Individuals under 18 receive a UBI that is one-half of that received by individuals 18 and over.  
This reform repeals 20 benefits programs, which are listed in Appendix A. A selection of major benefits programs—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Veterans Benefits (VB), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)—are modeled using Transfer Augmentation Model (C-TAM), and the benefits totals are assigned to individuals in the Current Population Survey (CPS). Benefit payments for these programs total $2.17 trillion in 2014. We also repeal many smaller programs using total outlays reported by the Office of Management and Budget. Payments for these programs total just over $366 billion. In the distributional analysis later in this paper, we assume the distribution of the nonmodeled programs matches that of a subset of the modeled benefits: Medicaid, VB, SNAP, and SSI. Combined, the repeal of these programs frees up $2.54 trillion for a UBI in 2014.  
The reform also repeals 23 provisions in the federal individual income tax code, listed in Table 1, which we model with Tax Calculator and Tax Data. In total, the base-broadening tax reform increases tax liabilities by $649 billion in 2014. We do not repeal several provisions because of lack of data, including the exclusion for employer-provided health insurance.  
Results  
Together, repealing the benefit programs and tax reform frees up $3.21 trillion for a UBI. After accounting for the additional revenue gained by making the UBI taxable, this is sufficient to finance a UBI of $13,788 for individuals 18 or older and $6,894 for individuals under 18.

#### Basic income removes inequality as an economic possibility

Santens 1/15 (Scott, founding member of the Economic Security Project, an adviser to the Universal Income Project, a founding committee member of Basic Income Action, committee member of the US Basic Income Guarantee Network, 2017, “Why we should all have a basic income”, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/why-we-should-all-have-a-basic-income/>, Aly M)

Humans need security to thrive, and basic income is a secure economic base – the new foundation on which to transform the precarious present, and build a more solid future. That’s not to say it’s a silver bullet. It’s that our problems are not impossible to solve. Poverty is not a supernatural foe, nor is extreme inequality or the threat of mass income loss due to automation. They are all just choices. And at any point, we can choose to make new ones.  
Based on the evidence we already have and will likely continue to build, I firmly believe one of those choices should be unconditional basic income as a new equal starting point for all.

## 2

#### Reconciliation passes now - Biden PC is key to getting democratic skeptics on board, but it’s tentative

Cochrane & Weisman 11/05 [Emily Cochrane - correspondent based in Washington. She has covered Congress since late 2018, focusing on the annual debate over government funding and economic legislation, ranging from emergency pandemic relief to infrastructure, Jonathan Weisman - congressional correspondent, veteran Washington journalist and author of the novel “No. 4 Imperial Lane” and the nonfiction book “(((Semitism))): Being Jewish in America in the Age of Trump.” His career in journalism stretches back 30 years, “Live Updates: House Democrats Push Toward Votes on Biden’s Agenda”, 11-05-2021, https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/05/us/biden-spending-infrastructure-bill]//pranav

At the White House, Mr. Biden called on lawmakers to pass the legislation. “I’m asking every House member, member of the House of Representatives, to vote yes on both these bills right now,” the president said. Spooked by Tuesday’s electoral drubbing, Democrats labored to overcome concerns among moderates about the cost and details of a rapidly evolving, $1.85 trillion social safety net and climate plan and push it through over unified Republican opposition. They also hoped to clear a Senate-passed $1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill — the largest investment in the nation’s aging public works in a decade — for Mr. Biden’s signature. Top Democratic officials said they were confident they could complete both measures by day’s end, but Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California and her team continued to haggle with holdouts. Several moderates were pushing for more information about the cost of the sprawling plan, including a nonpartisan analysis from the Congressional Budget Office, the official scorekeeper responsible for calculating the fiscal impact of the 2,135-page legislation. “I think everyone’s waiting for the C.B.O. to do their job,” said Representative Jared Golden, Democrat of Maine, speaking to reporters on Friday morning as he left Ms. Pelosi’s office, where White House officials were also meeting on next steps. But Representative Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, the majority leader, said the cost estimate would not be ready by the end of the day, and a person familiar with the discussions said a score from the budget office was weeks away from completion. “We’re working on it,” Mr. Hoyer said. Ms. Pelosi spent much of the day on Thursday buttonholing lawmakers on the House floor to try to corral support for the social policy bill, which includes monthly payments to families with children, universal prekindergarten, a four-week paid family and medical leave program, health care subsidies and a broad array of climate change initiatives. Mr. Biden and members of his cabinet worked the phones to win over Democratic skeptics. With Republicans united in opposition, Democrats could afford to lose as few as three votes from their side. As Democrats labored to unite their members behind the bill, Republicans sought to wreak procedural havoc on the House floor, forcing a vote to adjourn the chamber that leaders held open for hours to buy time for their negotiations. While the Senate approved the $1 trillion infrastructure bill in August, the measure has stalled as progressives have repeatedly refused to supply their votes for it until there is agreement on the other bill.

#### Business lobbying backlash ensures Sinema flips – empirics prove she doesn’t like similar bills

Duda ’21 [Jeremy, Prior to joining the Arizona Mirror, he worked at the Arizona Capitol Times, where he spent eight years covering the Governor's Office and two years as editor of the Yellow Sheet Report, “Business groups urge Kelly, Sinema to oppose pro-union PRO Act”, 08-30-2021, https://www.azmirror.com/2021/08/30/business-groups-urge-kelly-sinema-to-oppose-pro-union-pro-act/]//pranav

Business groups publicly called on Democratic U.S. Sens. Mark Kelly and Kyrsten Sinema to oppose a sweeping piece of pro-organized labor legislation that would wipe out Arizona’s “right-to-work” law that prohibits mandatory union membership. At a press conference at the office of the Arizona chapter of the Associated General Contractors near the state Capitol on Monday, leaders of several business groups warned that the Protecting the Right to Organize Act — or PRO Act, as it’s more commonly known — would undermine Arizona’s recovery from the economic slump it faced last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, undermine the “gig economy,” jeopardize secret ballots in union organization votes, give unions access to confidential employee information and strip Arizonans of their right not to join a union. The bill would allow unions to override right-to-work laws and collect union dues from non-members who still benefit from collective bargaining. It would also prohibit company-sponsored meetings to urge employees against unionizing, define most independent contractors as employees, protect employees who are attempting to unionize from being fired and allow unions to engage in secondary strikes in support of other striking workers, among other provisions. “We want to thank and tell Senator Sinema and Senator Kelly that we appreciate them for not signing on as co-sponsors to the PRO Act, because if they were to change their opinions, New York Sen. Chuck Schumer will put this up for a vote,” said Danny Seiden, president and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Kelly and Sinema are two of only three Senate Democrats, along with Virginia’s Mark Warner, who haven’t co-sponsored the bill or thrown their public support behind it. Kelly last month told the Huffington Post that he opposes the independent contractor provision, but that he supports the “overall goals” of the legislation. Sinema is widely known as a holdout on the Democratic side and hasn’t supported the PRO Act, but spokesman Pablo Sierra-Carmona indicated that she hasn’t made up her mind, and that she won’t do so unless and until it comes up for a vote in the Senate.

#### Labor reform saps PC – empirically prove with Obama, corporate opposition, and Democratic resistance

Leon 21 Luis Feliz Leon, 01-06-2021, “"If we want it, we’re going to have to fight like hell for it" - Labor faces an uphill battle to pass the PRO Act,” Strike Wave, https://www.thestrikewave.com/original-content/labor-faces-uphill-battle-to-pass-pro-act/SJKS

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), which died in the Senate during President Barack Obama’s first term, had similar potential to increase union membership, as it would have enabled workers to get union representation if a majority signed union cards (“card check”) rather than through an election. It died because Obama was unwilling to put political capital behind it to overcome opposition from Republicans and center-right Democrats. “EFCA was very close to becoming law. At the end of the day, in my view, the Obama administration did not put the necessary political capital into securing its passage,” said EPI's McNicholas. “The Obama administration decided to focus on ‘bipartisan’ and ‘reach across the aisle’ type solutions to the 2008 financial crisis, and thus didn't care about EFCA in the face of the anti-EFCA mobilization by strong ‘antis’ like the Chamber of Commerce,” says Susan Kang, a professor of political science at John Jay College who studies political economy, labor, and human rights. “Basically, labor was swept aside by the Obama administration … at the exact moment when he had the strongest mandate and political capital.” Another issue, said Patrick Burke, an organizer with United Auto Workers Local 2322 in Massachusetts, was that EFCA's card-check provisions, when framed as a replacement for elections, “became very easy to demonize and difficult to explain to people not already familiar with labor law.” “The short story is that the EFCA was doomed from a few moderate Dems not being willing to go through with card check once actually in power to enact it. The long story is that the labor movement's disappearance from the ‘adult table’ of Democratic politics has cyclical downward effects. They're less able to convince Dems to go out on the limb for them and to prioritize their legislative requests,” said Brandon Magner, a labor lawyer in Indiana. Despite a history of betrayal and rejection, labor and immigrant rights organizations, [coalesced](https://progressive.org/dispatches/power-behind-win-feliz-leon-201123/) around Biden, a self-professed “[union guy](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/11/16/biden-holds-joint-meeting-with-union-leaders-and-retail-auto-tech-ceos.html),” after the primaries and [helped deliver](https://progressive.org/dispatches/bargaining-rights-with-that-feliz-leon-201229/) him to the White House in the hope that doing so would lead to [executive action](https://indypendent.org/2020/12/immigrants-rights-advocates-descend-on-delaware/) on immigration and labor law reform. “We call on Congress to pass and Biden to sign the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act early in 2021 to make sure every worker who wants to form or join a union is able to do so freely and fairly,” AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said in a [statement](https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-looks-forward-working-president-elect-joe-biden-0) after the election. But union organizers, researchers, and labor lawyers see dim prospects for winning significant labor reform during the Biden administration. “The PRO Act is obviously dead in the Senate unless Mitch McConnell gets knocked into the minority, but I don't see it being passed without full-throated support for gutting the filibuster from Biden, Harris, Schumer, Durbin, and more,” said Magner, the labor lawyer, adding that “the history of failed labor law reform efforts indicates you need 60 votes to pass anything.” That is particularly true of Democrats in “right-to-work” states like [South Carolina](https://www.postandcourier.com/politics/scs-rep-joe-cunningham-to-vote-against-pro-union-bill-in-break-with-democrats/article_426b38e2-4862-11ea-a0d9-77a96531c47e.html) where U.S. Rep. Joe Cunningham was a reliable opponent in the House. But the greatest liability might be Biden himself. “The few times that Biden met McConnell at the negotiating table during the Obama years, McConnell [left with Biden’s wallet](https://theintercept.com/2019/06/24/joe-biden-tax-cuts-mitch-mconnell/),” dryly [observed](https://theintercept.com/2020/12/28/mcconnell-trump-election/) The Intercept’s Ryan Grim. “Even if the Democrats capture the Georgia Senate seats, their margin will be too small to overcome a Republican filibuster or, if they change the rules, more than one Democrat will break ranks, and no Republicans will support the act,” said Friedman. Even if Biden were to somehow outmaneuver McConnell’s chicanery, there would be fierce opposition to contend with on the corporate side from the likes of Americans for Tax Reform, which has [used](https://www.atr.org/ab5) Georgia runoff elections as an opportunity to fearmonger on the PRO Act, and, when backed against the wall, Biden may revert to his timeworn moderate instincts and not go to bat for labor reform unless forced to. “Prospects for major labor law reform under the Biden administration are directly tied to unions’ and union federations’ willingness to hold the administration’s feet to the fire. They are not going to do it on their own – if we want it, we’re going to have to fight like hell for it,” said Pitkin, the former UNITE HERE organizer. “The biggest question is whether there is enough street heat and organizing to prioritize legislation like this," said Burke, the UAW organizer. “Workers in motion spur labor-law reforms, not the other way around.”

#### They lash out against Reconciliation – it includes similar provisions

FURCHTGOTT-ROTH 10/09 [Diana, former acting assistant secretary for economic policy at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, is adjunct professor of economics at George Washington University, “Democrats can't pass the PRO Act, so it's buried in the reconciliation bill”, 10-09-2021, https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/575992-dems-cant-pass-the-pro-act-so-its-buried-in-the-reconciliation-bill]//pranav

Union membership has been declining for decades as workers find better uses than union dues for their hard-earned dollars. But union bosses and their supporters are trying to change the law to force hard-working Americans into unions. How? Through the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), a bill that would expand the power of union leaders at the expense of workers. After sailing through the House, the PRO Act now appears stalled in the Senate and Democrats are trying to slip some PRO Act provisions into a massive reconciliation bill. American workers are wise to turn down union membership. Union pension plans are in trouble. In 2020, the Labor Department listed 121 union plans in critical status, defined as less than 65 percent funded, and 61 in endangered status, with less than 80 percent funded. Unions desperately need new workers to join, because they pay contributions for many years without withdrawing money. Most recently, Amazon workers in Alabama resoundingly rejected efforts by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store International Union to organize their plant, with more than 70 percent of workers voting against the union. The union’s plan was in critical status between 2015 and 2019, and the Labor Department informed the plan’s administrators that it had to be reorganized by reducing benefits and increasing contributions. Union leaders and their allies on Capitol Hill believe the way to increase membership after decades of decline is to pass elements of the PRO Act through reconciliation. Unlike the PRO Act, which needs 60 votes in the Senate to enable it to move to President Biden’s desk for signature, the reconciliation bill, which deals with taxes and spending, needs only a simple majority. So via a massive reconciliation bill, congressional Democrats are trying to move some labor union provisions of the PRO Act by arguing they are actually revenue raisers.

#### Reconciliation is k2 stopping existential climate change – warming is incremental and every change in temperature is vital

Higgins 8/16 [Trevor, Senior Director, Domestic Climate and Energy, “Budget Reconciliation Is the Key to Stopping Climate Change”, 08-16-2021, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/news/2021/08/16/502681/budget-reconciliation-key-stopping-climate-change/]//pranav

The United States is suffering acutely from the chaotic changes in climate that scientists now directly attribute to the burning of fossil fuels and other human activity. The drought, fires, extreme heat, and floods that have already killed hundreds this summer across the continent and around the world are a tragedy—and a warning of worsening instability yet to come. However, this week, the Senate initiated an extraordinary legislative response that would set the world on a different path. Enacting the full scope of President Joe Biden’s Build Back Better agenda would put the American economy to work leading a global transition to clean energy and stabilizing the climate. A look at what’s coming next through the budget reconciliation process reveals a ray of hope that is easy to miss amid the fitful negotiations of recent months: At long last, Congress is on the verge of major legislation that would build a more equitable, just, and inclusive clean energy economy. This is our shot to stop climate change. Building a clean energy future must start now Until the global economy stops polluting the air and instead starts to draw down the emissions of years past, the world will continue to heat up, blundering past perilous tipping points that threaten irreversible and catastrophic consequences. Stemming the extent of warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius rather 2 degrees or worse will reduce the risk of crossing such tipping points or otherwise exceeding the adaptive capacity of human society. Every degree matters. Stabilizing global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius starts with cutting annual greenhouse gas emissions in the United States to half of peak levels by 2030. This isn’t about temporary offsets or incremental gains in efficiency—it’s about the rapid adoption of scalable solutions that will work throughout the world to eliminate global net emissions by 2050 and sustain net-negative emissions thereafter. Building this better future will tackle climate change, deliver on environmental justice, and create good jobs. It will give us a shot to stop the planet from continuously warming. It will alleviate the concentrated burdens of fossil fuel pollution, which are concentrated in systemically disadvantaged, often majority Black and brown communities. It will empower American workers to compete in the global clean energy economy of the 21st century. There is no time to lose in the work of building a clean energy future.

## Case

### Solvency

#### Aff gets circumvented.

Lanard 17 [Noah Lanard, editorial fellow. Donald Trump just took another swipe at the labor unions that helped elect him, Mother Jones, 7-19-2017, Accessible Online at http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/07/trumps-labor-board-appointments-are-another-blow-for-unions/]

Trump’s NLRB nominees are expected to create further challenges for workers seeking to unionize. Emanuel is a shareholder and longtime lawyer at Littler, the world’s largest management-side employment law firm. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) has called it is one of the nation’s “most ruthless” union-busters. Emanuel’s clients include Uber and other companies accused of violating workers’ rights, according to his ethics disclosure form.

Outside of his legal practice, Emanuel has decried California’s “terrible climate for job creation,” citing the state’s generous overtime and break requirements for employees.

Kaplan was previously an attorney for the House education and labor committee. In that role, he drafted a bill to reverse an NLRB rule, dubbed the “ambush election rule” by conservative critics, that allowed workers to vote on unionization as soon as 11 days after a petition was submitted. The bill, which did not pass, would have also reversed the board’s recognition of micro-unions.

At Emanuel and Kaplan’s nomination hearing last week, Sens. Al Franken (D-Minn.) and Warren were particularly concerned by Emanuel’s record of defending the mandatory arbitration agreements that Carlson and many others have signed. Pressed by Franken, Emanuel declined to criticize arbitration agreements that prevent women who are sexually harassed from suing their employers in court. In theory, the legality of the arbitration agreements is now in the Supreme Court’s hands. But Ronald Meisburg, a former NLRB board member, has said it’s possible the NLRB could revisit the decision before the court decides. Emanuel told Warren he does not expect to recuse himself if the issue comes up.

The committee’s approval of both nominees along party lines on Wednesday follows other moves under Trump that are less than friendly to labor. Trump’s nominee for deputy labor secretary, Patrick Pizzella, was criticized last week for working with disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff to advocate for what was compared to sweatshop labor in the Northern Mariana Islands, a US commonwealth, in the early 2000s. The goods, which were often made by Chinese and Filipino workers, had the advantage of being stamped “Made in the USA.”

Neil Gorsuch, whom Trump appointed to the Supreme Court, has a long record of siding with employers in labor disputes. In the court’s upcoming term, Gorsuch will hear arguments in a case that will decide whether mandatory arbitration agreements violate the National Labor Relations Act.

#### *TONS* of alt causes – poor quality employment, bad working conditions, gender gap in participation etc.

BHRRC ’19 [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, We help communities and NGOs get companies to address human rights concerns, and provide companies an opportunity to present their response in full, “ILO report: Poor quality employment & inadequate working conditions are major issues in global labour markets”, 02-15-2019, https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/ilo-report-poor-quality-employment-inadequate-working-conditions-are-major-issues-in-global-labour-markets/]//pranav

Poor quality employment is the main issue for global labour markets, with millions of people forced to accept inadequate working conditions, according to a new report from the International Labour Organization (ILO). New data gathered for the World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019 (WESO) show that a majority of the 3.3 billion people employed globally in 2018 had inadequate economic security, material well-being and equality of opportunity, while reducing unemployment globally is not being reflected in improvements in the quality of work. The report cautions that some new business models, including those enabled by new technologies, threaten to undermine existing labour market achievements – in areas such as improving employment formality and security, social protection and labour standards. Among the issues highlighted are: the lack of progress in closing the gender gap in labour force participation; the persistence of informal employment; and that more than one in five young people (under 25) are not in employment, education or training, compromising their future employment prospects.

#### Plan flaw – “ought” isn’t evaluative, but rather refers to a moral judgement on whether we must take a moral obligation which means it cannot be implemented. That means you negate a. no solvency because the plan won’t pass – presume neg because they haven’t won a reason to shift away from the s-quo and b. textual education is key to effective policy-making – a 2012 weed bill in Arkansas was rejected because it was phrased incorrectly.

There is NO internal link to higher wages anywhere in this 1ac – read their ev – it’s all bad.

Myall is ab spec events from the past which proves squo strikes solve their offense and right to strke isn’t key

#### Their ev proves circumvention and that companies don’t care – ww inserts green

#### 1ac. Samuels 10/8

Alana Semuels October 8, 2021 10, 2-24-2021, "U.S. Workers Are Realizing It's the Perfect Time to Go on Strike," Time, https://time.com/6105109/workers-strike-unemployment/, 10-26-2021//Aanya

Greater income inequality, more strikes Part of the support of unions and organizing may come from Americans’ discontent with growing inequality, much as inequality a century ago galvanized a labor movement then, says Tom Kochan, a professor of work and employment research at MIT. There are a growing number of billionaires in America–708 as of August—with a net worth of $4.7 trillion as of August 17. That’s more than the total net worth of the bottom 50% of Americans. “I think the accumulated effects of the loss of good jobs in manufacturing, stagnant wages, growing inequality, and the growing disparity between executives and managers and the workforce—all of that is fueling increases in organizing,” he says. Some of this labor activism was happening before the pandemic, Kochan says, when even the government’s strike tracker showed an uptick in unrest. Teachers in states like Arizona and Oklahoma started striking in 2018 because of low pay and a lack of public funding. In 2020, NBA athletes walked out of a playoff game to protest the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisc.



Support for labor unions has increased in recent years Gallup

The year 2019 saw 25 work stoppages involving 1,000 or more workers, the most since 2001. In 2017, 48% of non-unionized workers said they would vote to join a union if given the chance, higher than the share who said that in 1995 (32%) and 1977 (33%), according to Kochan’s research. The pandemic worsened working conditions for thousands of workers like Deyo. Kellogg workers at a plant in Battle Creek, Mich., told the local news that they were lauded as heroes for working 16 hour days, seven days a week during the pandemic, and rather than reward them, the company recently decided to offshore some of their jobs. They went on strike on Oct. 5. Musicians at the San Antonio Symphony say they voluntarily accepted an 80% pay cut last season, and that the symphony then proposed first to permanently cut their pay by 50% and then to cut the number of full-time members from 72 to 42. They went on strike on Sept. 27. Do strikes work? For their part, employers say that they’re being fair, and that workers are being unreasonable. Kellogg provides workers with benefits and compensation that are among the industry’s best, a company spokesman, Kris Bahner, said in a statement. The company says it has not proposed moving any jobs from the Ready to Eat Cereal plants, which are the plants where the workers are striking, as part of negotiations. The San Antonio Symphony said, in a statement, that the union and the symphony agreed to a 25% reduction in weekly salary for the 2020-2021 season, but that because there were fewer performances and because fewer musicians could fit on stage because of social distancing guidelines, some musicians did make 80% less than they would have made in a normal season. The symphony needs to make “fundamental changes,” a spokesperson said, and it cannot afford to spend more than it makes through ticket sales and donations. Carolyn Jackson, the CEO of St. Vincent’s, where Deyo and hundreds of other nurses are striking, says that the nurses are trying to push a 1:4 nurse to patient ratio that Massachusetts voters rejected by a large margin in 2018. The hospital has done research and decided its staffing is appropriate, and that its staffing ratios are in fact better than most other hospitals in the state, she says. Ryan says the hospital announced it was hiring 100 permanent replacement nurses in May during a COVID-19 surge, and that the striking nurses are insisting on getting their old positions back. That the hospital is not budging speaks to the fact that despite this increase in worker activism, workers may not gain much more power in the long run. Over the last 40 years, the government has made it much more difficult for workers to both form unions and to strike, says Heidi Shierholz, the president of the Economic Policy Institute, a progressive think tank. Amazon was able to effectively interfere in a union vote among its workers this spring, she says, preventing the union from succeeding.

### Heg Bad

T/L – only terminal impact from 1ac is heg – no new 1ar impacts bc the entirety of the 1nc is predicated on there being 1 terminal imapct

#### Hegemony is a terminally unsustainable fantasy based in a revisionist strategy of American exceptionalism – pursuit causes numerous failed states, financial crises, widening inequality, worldwide proliferation, anti-western terrorism, and emboldens adversaries like Russia and China

Walt 19 Stephen Walt is the Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School. [“The End of Hubris,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 98, Iss. 3, (May/Jun 2019): 26-35, 4-16-2019, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-04-16/end-hubris>] DTS

IF IT AIN'T BROKE . . . In the nineteenth century, when the United States was weak, leaders from George Washington to William McKinley mostly avoided foreign entanglements and concentrated on building power domestically, expanding the country's reach across North America and eventually expelling the European great powers from the Western Hemisphere. In the first half of the twentieth century, U.S. presidents such as Wood- row Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt used the country's newfound strength to restore the balance of power in strategically critical regions outside the Western Hemisphere. But they let other great powers do most of the heavy lifting, and thus the United States emerged relatively unscathed-and stronger than ever-from the world wars that devastated Asia and Europe. Letting other states shoulder the burden was not possible during the Cold War, so the United States stepped up and led the alliances that contained the Soviet Union. American leaders paid lip service to democracy promotion, human rights, and other idealistic concerns, but U.S. policy was realist at its core. Through the Bretton Woods system and its successors, the United States also helped foster a more open world economy, balancing economic growth against the need for financial stability, national autonomy, and domestic legitimacy. Put simply, for most of U.S. history, American leaders were acutely sensitive to the balance of power, passed the buck when they could, and took on difficult missions when necessary. But when the Soviet Union collapsed and the United States found itself, as the former national security adviser Brent Scowcroftput it in 1998, "standing alone at the height of power . . . with the rarest opportunity to shape the world," U.S. leaders rejected the realism that had worked well for decades and tried to remake global politics in accordance with American values. A new strategy-liberal hegemony-sought to spread democracy and open markets across the globe. That goal is the common thread linking President Bill Clinton's policy of "engagement and enlargement," President George W. Bush's "freedom agenda," and President Barack Obama's embrace of the Arab revolts of 2010-11 and his declaration that "there is no right more fundamental than the ability to choose your leaders and determine your destiny." Such thinking won broad support from both political parties, the federal bureaucracies that deal with international affairs, and most of the think tanks, lobbies, and media figures that constitute the foreign policy establishment. At bottom, liberal hegemony is a highly revisionist strategy. Instead of working to maintain favorable balances of power in a few areas of vital interest, the United States sought to transform regimes all over the world and recruit new members into the economic and security institutions it dominated. The results were dismal: failed wars, financial crises, staggering inequality, frayed alliances, and emboldened adversaries. HEGEMONIC HUBRIS When Clinton took office in 1993, the United States was on favorable terms with the world's other major powers, including China and Russia. Democracy was spreading, Iraq was being disarmed, and Iran had no nuclear enrichment capacity. The Oslo Accords seemed to herald an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Washington seemed well positioned to guide that process. The European Union was adding new members and moving toward a common currency, and the U.S. economy was performing well. Americans saw terrorism as a minor problem, and the U.S. military seemed unstoppable. The wind was at the country's back. Life was good. But those circumstances fueled a dangerous overconfidence among American elites. Convinced that the United States was "the indispensable nation," as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright famously put it in 1998, they believed they had the right, the responsibility, and the wisdom to shape political arrangements in every corner of the world. That vision turned out to be a hubristic fantasy. Repeated attempts to broker peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians all failed, and the two-state solution sought by three U.S. presidents is no longer a viable option. Al Qaeda attacked the U.S. homeland on September 11, 2001, and Washington responded by launching a global war on terrorism, including invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Those campaigns were costly failures and shattered the U.S. military's aura of invincibility. Much of the Middle East is now embroiled in conflict, and violent extremists operate from Africa to Central Asia and beyond. Meanwhile, India, Pakistan, and North Korea tested and deployed nuclear weapons, and Iran become a latent nuclear weapons state. The collapse of the U.S. housing market in 2008 exposed widespread corruption in the country's financial institutions and triggered the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression-a calamity from which the global economy has yet to fully recover. In 2014, Russia seized Crimea, and it has interfered in a number of other countries since then-and its relations with the West are now worse than at any time since the Cold War. China's power and ambitions have expanded, and cooperation between Beijing and Moscow has deepened. The eurozone crisis, the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the eu, and energetic populist movements have raised doubts about the eu's future. Democracy is in retreat worldwide; according to Freedom House, 2018 was the 13th consecutive year in which global freedom declined. Illiberal leaders govern in Hungary and Poland, and the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Demoracy Index has downgraded the United States from a "full" to a "flawed" democracy. The United States was not solely responsible for all these adverse developments, but it played a major role in most of them. And the taproot of many of these failures was Washington's embrace of liberal hegemony. For starters, that strategy expanded U.S. security obligations without providing new resources with which to meet them. The policy of "dual containment," aimed at Iran and Iraq, forced the United States to keep thousands of troops on the Arabian Peninsula, an additional burden that also helped convince Osama bin Laden to strike at the U.S. homeland. Nato expansion committed Washington to defend weak and vulnerable new members, even as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom let their military forces atrophy. Equally important, U.S. efforts to promote democracy, the open-ended expansion of nato, and the extension of the alliance's mission far beyond its original parameters poisoned relations with Russia. And fear of U.S.-led regime change encouraged several states to pursue a nuclear deterrent-in the case of North Korea, successfully. When the United States did manage to topple a foreign foe, as it did in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, the results were not thriving new democracies but costly occupations, failed states, and hundreds of thousands of dead civilians. It was delusional for U.S. leaders to expect otherwise: creating a functional democracy is a difficult process under the best of circumstances, but trying to do it in fractured societies one barely understands is a fool's errand. Finally, globalization did not deliver as promised. Opening up markets to trade and investment brought great benefits to lower and middle classes in China, India, and other parts of the developing world. It also further magnified the already staggering wealth of the world's richest one percent. But lower- and middle-class incomes in the United States and Europe remained flat, jobs in some sectors there fled abroad, and the global financial system became much more fragile. This sorry record is why, in 2016, when Trump called U.S. foreign policy "a complete and total disaster" and blamed out-of-touch and unaccountable elites, many Americans nodded in agreement. They were not isolationists; they simply wanted their government to stop trying to run the world and pay more attention to problems at home. Trump's predecessors seemed to have heard that message, at least when they were running for office. In 1992, Clinton's mantra was "It's the economy, stupid." In 2000, Bush derided Clinton's efforts at "nation building" and called for a foreign policy that was "strong but humble." Obama pledged to end foreign wars and focus on "nation building at home." These expressions of restraint were understandable, as surveys had repeatedly shown that a majority of Americans believed the country was playing the role of global policeman more than it should and doing more than its share to help others. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2013, 80 percent of Americans agreed that "we should not think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home," and 83 percent wanted presidents to focus more on domestic issues than on foreign policy. Clinton, Bush, and Obama all understood what the American people wanted. But they failed to deliver it. So has Trump. Although his Twitter feed and public statements often question familiar orthodoxies, the United States is still defending wealthy nato allies, still fighting in Afghanistan, still chasing terrorists across Africa, still giving unconditional support to the same problematic Middle Eastern clients, and still hoping to topple a number of foreign regimes. Trump's style as president is radically different from those of his predecessors, but the substance of his policies is surprisingly similar. The result is the worst of both worlds: Washington is still pursuing a misguided grand strategy, but now with an incompetent vulgarian in the White House.

#### US hegemony encourages economic challenges which exacerbate economic tensions with China and risk the global economy. Chinese economic hegemony is good and US economic hegemony is declining.

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China’s challenges to US hegemony In light of the power transition perspective, the three most recent examples of China’s challenges to US hegemony in the world are the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the creation of the AIIB, and Beijing’s plan for “Made in China 2025.” First of all, China’s BRI, which is also called the “One Belt, One Road” Initiative or the Initiative of “the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road,” is Chinese President Xi Jinping’s signature project. The BRI was first announced in 2013 when Xi visited Central and Southeast Asia. It seeks to connect Asia, Africa and Europe to promote regional economic cooperation, infrastructure construction, and world peace. It was motivated by “the Silk Road Spirit” (i.e. peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit) of more than two millennia ago that is, China claims, “a historic and cultural heritage shared by all countries around the world” (The State Council of the Republic of China, 2015). According to the “Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative” published jointly by the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), accelerating the construction of the BRI “can help promote the economic prosperity of the countries along the Belt and Road and regional economic cooperation, strengthen exchanges and mutual learning between different civilizations, and promote world peace and development” (The State Council of the Republic of China, 2015). Hence, Beijing contends that BRI “is a great undertaking that will benefit people around the world” (The State Council of the Republic of China, 2015). The BRI currently includes about 70 countries that accounts for 70 percent of the world’s population, 55 percent of the world’s Gross National Product and 75 percent of global energy reserves (Cavanna, 2018). Many countries in the world (e.g. “from Panama to Madagascar, South Africa to New Zealand” (Kuo and Kommenda, 2018)) have officially pledged support for the BRI. Second, the AIIB is a China-led multilateral development bank, which was originally launched by Chinese President Xi in 2003. Among others, Beijing’s frustration with the slow reform process of economic governance in the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2008, its intention to popularize the Renminbi (China’s currency) as a global reserve currency, and its hope to increase its voice in global financial institutions were the important motivations of the creation of the AIIB. With $100bn of initial capital, the AIIB, headquartered in Beijing, officially came into operation in January 2016. The stated main goal of the AIIB was to “improve social and economic outcomes in Asia” (AIIB, 2018a) by providing finance to the various infrastructure projects of the region’s developing countries. Beijing claims that AIIB-funded projects will better connect people, markets and services to promote sustainable growth, development, and prosperity (AIIB, 2018b). Along with the New Development Bank (NDB),[7] which is formally called the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Development Bank headquartered in Shanghai, and Chinese lending institutions such as the Silk Road Fund and Chinese policy banks, the launch of the AIIB represents China’s major financial initiatives that could rival US-led multilateral institutions. As of October 2018, the AIIB has 87 approved members (68 members and 19 prospective members) around the world and its total investment amounts up to $6.4bn. As Tekdal (2017, p. 375) notes, although the AIIB has no official link to the BRI, a primary motivation of its creation was to fund projects in BRI partner countries. As an emerging economic hegemon, which is dissatisfied with the global economic governance in which its voting share in the existing multilateral institutions like the IMF, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank does not match its economic power as the world’s second largest economy and the world’s biggest trading nation, China’s initiatives of the BRI, the AIIB and the NDB demonstrate its long-term goal of reshaping the global economic order. Third, “Made in China 2025” is Beijing’s ten-year industrial development plan. First, announced and approved by China’s State Council in 2015, it is “a blueprint for Beijing’s plan to transform the country into a high-tech powerhouse that dominates advanced industries like robotics, advanced information technology, aviation, and new energy vehicles” (Laskai , 2018). By enhancing Chinese industries’ competitiveness and innovation and reducing China’s dependence on foreign technology through achieving 40 percent of domestically manufactured basic components and basic materials by 2020 and 70 percent of self-sufficiency in core components and basic materials in industries like aerospace equipment and telecommunication equipment by 2025 (Morrison, 2018, p. 47; Laskai, 2018), its goal is to make China a manufacturing superpower that dominates the world market in future high-tech industries. Indeed, while the term “Made in China” has typically meant cheap products such as clothing, shoes and consumer electronics with low quality, “Made in China 2025” intends to turn China into an independent and cutting-edge technology-driven economy. Beijing believes that by moving toward higher value-added high-tech industries, they could escape the so-called “middle-income trap that has plagued many developing countries” (Hopewell, 2018) with the problems of increased wages and low productivity. US efforts to prolong US hegemony China’s initiatives of the BRI, the AIIB and Made in China 2025 certainly threaten the global hegemony of the USA, which is now over seven decades. Layne (2018, p. 96) points out that “Since the onset of the Great Recession,[8] China has successively taken top position in the world in exports (passing Germany); in trade (passing the USA); and in manufacturing (claiming a title the USA had held for a century).” Based on these facts, he argues that the Great Recession and the rapid rise of China as a leading economic power have demonstrated the reality of American decline – i.e. the end of the unipolar era or Pax Americana[9] (Layne, 2012, p. 204). Although China repeatedly claims that it does not seek to replace US hegemony in the world, its behavior revealed by the initiatives of the BRI, the AIIB and Made in China 2015 illustrates that its ultimate goal is to be a global hegemon[10]. This is not surprising because all the rising powers in history invariably sought to first dominate the region they are situated (Mearsheimer, 2011, 2014) and expand their power globally (Gilpin, 1981). Given that “It is more difficult for the leaders of a declining hegemon to accept the reality or prospect of their country’s diminished influence and status” (Chan, 2008, p. 50), the USA has every reason to prolong its hegemony in the post-1945 world, which has served its own interests (Layne, 2018, p. 105). These efforts to maintain US hegemony are well observed in the case of American actions against China’s initiatives of the BRI, the AIIB and Made in China 2015. First of all, despite China’s claim that the BRI aims to promote world peace and development, many analysts in Washington view it as a Chinese version of Marshall Plan that seeks to boost Chinese investment around the world for global dominance. They think that as “a top-level design for which the central government has mobilized the country’s political, diplomatic, intellectual, economic and financial resources” (Rolland, 2018), the BRI is Beijing’s “attempt to remake global commerce on China’s terms and project Chinese power far and wide” (Chellaney, 2018). As the BRI expands in scope, it could give China too much leverage and control over other countries, especially those that are small and poor (Kuo and Kommenda, 2018). Also, by making China a major hub of global investment, trade, and finance, the BRI contributes to build a Chinese version of hub-and-spoke network system. Thus, Harry Harris, head of US Pacific Command Admiral, argued in early 2018 that the BRI is “a concerted, strategic endeavor by China to gain a foothold and displace the USA and our allies and partners in the region” (Harris, 2018). Moreover, given “almost all the ports and other transport infrastructure being built can be dual-use for commercial and military purposes” the BRI is regarded not simply as China’s plan to build roads and railways across Eurasia and Africa or the Indo-Pacific, but as Beijing’s grand strategy for the next decades and its vehicle to write new rules that reflect Chinese interests (Kuo and Kommenda, 2018). Indeed, Beijing has made a link between the BRI and the concept of China’s core national security interests. For example, Wei Fendge, China’s Defense Minister, told Pakistan’s Navy chief in 2018 that “China was ready to provide security guarantees for the One Belt, One Road project” (Smith, 2018). Therefore, Eisenman contends that with no exact definition of its scope and contents, the BRI is China’s attempt to “create a new Sinocentric era of globalization using both traditional tools of Chinese statecraft as well as new types of economic incentives and debt financing arrangements” (Eisenman, 2018). In other words, the BRI reflects China’s increasing relative power in the world as well as growing Beijing’s ambitions to shape global economic governance (Tekdal, 2017, p. 378). It “exemplifies how China is flaunting its global ambitions” (Chellaney, 2018). As the BRI is increasingly seen as a major source of China’s political and economic influence of the world, US policy makers have expressed their concerns[11] and have begun to take some measures against it. For example, the USA, along with Japan and India, have discussed trilateral efforts to foster infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific region since 2015. In particular, the Trump Administration has sought to create a development finance mechanism, which is designed to counter the negative effects of the BRI. It has also begun to explore ways to become more proactive in promoting regional connectivity and infrastructure initiatives in partnership with Japan. Moreover, reviving their Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue in November 2017, the USA, together with Japan, Australia and India, discussed not only the need to foster a new vision for regional infrastructure but also the need to further support the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank in order to enhance lending for infrastructure projects in the region. Furthermore, the joint statement released after the meeting between the US President Trump and India’s Prime Minister Modi at the White House in June 2017 made it clear that the two countries agreed to promote a vision for regional ties by strengthening “regional economic connectivity through the transparent development of infrastructure and the use of responsible debt financing practices, while ensuring respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the rule of law, and the environment” (The White House, 2017). This is, in fact, an announcement by the leaders of the two countries of the vision, which is completely at odds with the BRI. In addition, drawing careful attention to the “neo-colonialist characteristics”[12] of the BRI, the US–Japan Business Council and the US–India Business Council jointly launched in May 2018 a new private-sector initiative, called the Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Trilateral Forum, which aims to insulate sovereign states from external coercion, support good governance and liberty, promote market-based economics, and help support quality and sustainable infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific region (Smith, 2018). Likewise, the USA sought hard to prevent the creation of the AIIB. Despite its stated goal of helping to finance the various infrastructure projects of the developing countries in Asia, the USA viewed the AIIB as China’s efforts to weaken existing financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the Asian Development Bank, which are largely under the influence of the USA and its close ally, Japan (Kim, 2018, p. 618; Kim, 2016c, p. 69). Hence, the USA strongly lobbied against the creation of the AIIB. Washington even pressured its allies not to agree to the AIIB’s creation. Although US opposition to the AIIB was reportedly due to US doubts that the AIIB would stick to the same level of transparency and governance structure as the IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the real reason was Washington’s concerns about the shifting balance of power between the USA and China (Layne, 2018, p. 103). In any case, US efforts to prevent a China-led financial institution in Asia miserably failed. Indeed, despite USA’s strong resistance and pressures, the AIIB was successfully launched and most US allies except Japan (e.g. Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Australia, Israel, South Korea, etc.) joined the AIIB as its founding members. In total, 57 countries all over the world participated in the AIIB as its founding members. After all, China’s ability to attract widespread support for the creation of the AIIB was seen by Washington as a significant threat to America’s global economic leadership (Layne, 2018, p. 102). By showing that Washington was not able to keep its allies onside in the face of Beijing’s growing power, the establishment of the AIIB illustrated that US economic power in the world is declining whereas China’s economic influence is increasing. To some observers, China’s AIIB initiative and US failure to prevent its creation signaled that “the Sino-American balance of power now is tilting towards Beijing” (Layne, 2018, p. 103). By the same token, Washington views China’s initiative of “Made in China 2015” as a very serious challenge to US hegemony in the world. Since Made in China 2015 calls for achieving China’s self-sufficiency through technology substitution and aims to transform China into a high-tech powerhouse that dominates advanced industries, the USA views it as a real threat to US technological leadership in the world (Laskai, 2018). According to the US President Trump, the Made in China 2025 program unfairly disadvantages US companies because it involves Chinese government’s subsidies and heavy investments in innovation and research as well as Beijing’s policies to promote the forced technology transfer of US companies in exchange for obtaining access to the lucrative Chinese market (Hopewell, 2018). Therefore, he contends that “Made in China 2025” must be stopped (Landler, 2018). Although the Trump Administration’s policy of imposing tariffs on foreign steel affects not only China but also US allies like South Korea, its main goal is to fight China’s industrial policy in high-tech manufacturing sectors such as artificial intelligence, aerospace, robotics, and energy-saving vehicles. As China’s persistent economic growth brings it into direct competition with the USA, Trump has explicitly stated that the proposed US tariffs are indeed designed to impede the program of Made in China 2025 (Hopewell, 2018). Seen from Beijing, this sort of US policy appears as if Washington aimed to “prevent China (from) moving into the industries of the future so as to ensure continued American dominance of the most profitable sectors of the global economy, and the most strategically-significant technologies” (Rachman, 2018). Given that China is the most serious competitor to the USA in the twenty-first century, the contest over future industries and technologies underscores the fact that the Sino–US trade rivalry has important strategic implications (Rachman, 2018). Conclusion Since the end of the Second World War, the USA has undoubtedly been a global hegemon. With its preponderant military and economic strength, it has created a liberal international economic order and maintained it by promoting global free trade. USA sudden turn to protectionism under the banner of “America First” in the Trump administration illustrates “US fear” that its hegemony or Pax Americana is declining vis-à-vis China’s growing power. It also demonstrates that the USA now seeks to deter China from overtaking its hegemony so as to keep US hegemony as long as possible. Currently, the USA and China are waging a trade war. What is important to note here is that the driving force of the trade war between the world’s two largest economies is more political than economic. That is to say, as China’s economic and political influence in the world vis-à-vis that of the USA increases, US fear about China’s power also grows. Under these circumstances, Washington makes every effort to assert its global dominance by deterring China’s challenge to its hegemony[13]. It is this sort of “US fear” about hegemonic power transition from Washington to Beijing that brought about US policies against the BRI, the AIIB, and Made in China 2015. The fear of hegemonic power transition is indeed a driving force for the US-launched trade war. Understood this way, the trade war between the USA and China may be a harbinger of a much larger-scale conflict between the two parties, since as PTT predicts, war is more likely to occur when the power gap between a declining hegemon and a rising challenger is getting closed. As China’s economic, technological, military and political rise continues down the road, the USA will try to contain it in order to maintain its global hegemony. The obvious consequence of this seesaw game is the intensification of the Sino–US competition over global hegemony. The USA and China, the two most powerful states in the world, appear as if they were on a collision course. What this means is that so long as US fear about China’s overtaking US hegemony persists, a similar type of conflict between the two hegemonic powers is likely to occur in the future even if the current trade war is over.

#### US collapse is inevitable

Freier 17 (Nathan, Project Director & Principal Author of the DoD Risk Assessment, “At Our Own Peril: DoD Risk Assessment in a Post-Primacy World”, *Department of Defense*, https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/PUB1358.pdf)

Both inside and outside the United States, a great number of analysts and opinionmakers are questioning the continued strength of U.S. commitment to its commonly recognized security obligations. At the same time, the study team found through extensive interactions with key defense stakeholders that the maintenance of the U.S. position as a dominant global power is untenable without both active maintenance and expansion of meaningful security partnerships worldwide.16 The world has grown accustomed to U.S. leadership. Yet, there are real fears that a combination of effective counter-U.S. resistance and deliberate, unilateral U.S. hesitation and restraint have both diminished American leverage and eroded many of the key advantages essential to the United States maintaining and leading its historically strong network of alliances and partnerships.17 According to General David Petraeus, “The paradox of the moment is that, just as the threats to the world order [the United States] created have grown ever more apparent, American resolve about its defense has become somewhat ambivalent.”18 In the end, the study team found this objective to be at the same time potentially the United States’ single greatest competitive advantage, as well as its single greatest vulnerability.19 Going forward, senior U.S. decision-makers will need to carefully account 46 for the strength of U.S. relationships, the reliability of individual U.S. partners, and the degree and merit of partner contributions to collective defense and security.20 Underwrite a Stable, Resilient, and Rules-Based International Order. Senior U.S. decision-makers naturally feel an obligation to preserve the U.S. global position within a favorable international order while protecting the United States and its people from consequential aggression, attack, or disruption.21 Before September 11, 2001 (9/11), this had very specific implications for DoD. Prior to 9/11, the operative international order felt comfortable to U.S. strategists, as they or their predecessors had—over the previous 55 years—largely been responsible for its construction and maintenance.22 Up to 9/11, that operative order was perceived to be dominated by the well-practiced, often-predictable competitive and cooperative relationships between states. In reality, while global security affairs were likely considerably more complex than perceived in the immediate post-Cold War period and through 9/11, this classically realist frame or lens was nonetheless the aperture through which U.S. policymakers and senior military leaders understood the world and its distribution of power.23 Since 9/11, however, U.S. perceptions of both the complexity of the contemporary order (or disorder) and its inherent hazards have grown more sophisticated, uncertain, unsettling, and confounding.24 The next section describes the contemporary post-primacy environment in detail. While the United States still clings to significant political, economic, and military leverage, that leverage is increasingly exhibiting less reach, durability, and endurance. In short, the rules-based global order that the United States built and sustained for 7 decades is under enormous stress. The greatest source of stress lies in an inherent dynamism in the character and velocity of consequential change in strategic conditions. General Petraeus is instructive here as well. He recently observed: Americans should not take the current international order for granted. It did not will itself into existence. [The United States] created it. Likewise, it is not self-sustaining. [The United States has] sustained it. If [the United States] stops doing so, it will fray and, eventually, collapse.25 U.S. adjustment to the post-primacy era has been uneven at best. What can be perceived by foreign rivals or domestic partisan opposition as fecklessness on the part of those charged with U.S. foreign and security policy might instead simply be confusion— confusion about the proximate source and nature of consequential hazards, the risks associated with action or inaction against them, and the stability of the foundation upon which past best practice has most often ably averted military catastrophe, contagious insecurity, and uncontrolled disorder.26 Today, past best practice is increasingly ineffective. Revisionist or revolutionary powers such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea demonstrate a penchant for paralyzing, counter-U.S. gray zone competition.27 Vulnerable states are also falling victim to more organic networked rejectionist forces and movements that effectively challenge the legitimate exercise of political authority wherever they emerge. The growth, persistent presence, and corrosive impact of these stateless environmental forces lead to noticeable spikes in terrorism, insurgency, and civil conflict, and undermine the U.S.-led 47 order often less by purpose than by implication. In reality, the “rules” in “rules-based” are failing and the United States is struggling to keep pace.28

#### Allies are losing faith in American leadership and China will take over as a global hegemon

Heer 18 (Jeet, former editor at the New Republic and journalist who’s written for The National Post, The New Yorker, and The Paris Review, “Are We Witnessing the Fall of the American Empire?”, *The New Republic*, https://newrepublic.com/article/147319/witnessing-fall-american-empire)

But America won’t lose its dominance if these new powers accept the rules the United States has set down. Brookings Institute fellow Thomas Wright notes in his new book, All Measures Short of War, that during the long interlude between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the election of Donald Trump, many American leaders thought they could get rising powers to buy into the American-led global system.

“Normally, the U.S. order would collapse upon the decline of the United States and the rise of a country like China,” he wrote. “But some U.S. strategists, scholars, and leaders believed they were creating an order that would become indispensable to rising powers because it transcended old notions of the national interest. Even after America had declined or reduced its leadership role, non-Western powers would need its rules and institutions to grow economically, to reassure other countries about their power, and to tackle common problems.”

For Wright, the real problem is that China is not, as American leaders had hoped, assenting to the American-led order. Rather, China is starting to assert itself as a regional power with an identity quite distinct from the liberal international order. China is challenging the liberal order by building islands in the South China Sea (as a display of force) and by eliminating term limits on President Xi Jinping (thus forestalling any political liberalization).

But Wright also notes that in terms of economic strength and military capabilities, the U.S. is maintaining or extending its advantage. “With enough political will, the United States could choose to have the most military might overall in almost any crisis or conflict,” Wright contends. “Finally, when compared on a global scale of relative power, it is clear that the United States is surpassing most other nations. The GDP gap between the United States and Russia is growing, and the United States has outperformed European countries following the financial crisis.”

Thus, America is not facing imperial decline so much as a period of renewed inter-imperial conflict, with newly emboldened regional powers like China and Russia eager to challenge the global hegemon. And the country is in a much weaker position to fend them off, due to the damage Trump is doing to the third pillar of the American empire: cultural dominance.

Most analysts, including McCoy and Wright, agree that American hegemony has always relied heavily on other countries’ consent. The American model is an attractive one to many of the world’s people, and democratic countries have long valued America as an ally. “The American empire was built by people who recognized that often the best way to exert power was through non-coercive means,” Cooper, of The Week, wrote. “Trump represents a different tradition—a pinched, ignorant, aggressive, insecure tradition, one that insists only military force and chest-thumping belligerence matters.”

Trump has alienated America’s allies by denigrating NATO, threatening a trade war, and nuclear brinksmanship. According to a Gallup poll conducted in 134 countries and released earlier this year, faith in American leadership has plummeted sharply to a new low of 30 percent, compared to 48 percent in 2016 while Barack Obama was president and 34 percent in George W. Bush’s final year. “When you factor in the 43% who disapprove of America’s leadership,” Quartz reported, “Trump now has a global net approval rating lower than Russia’s Vladimir Putin and China’s Xi Jinping.”

American power rests on a sturdy economic and military foundation that took many generations to build. It’ll take more than one president to destroy it. What Trump can do, though, is destroy allies’ faith in America. And that, combined with the growing ambition of China and Russia, could destabilize the entire world.

#### Hegemony causes debt accumulation—non-uniques every internal link.

Kazda, 18 — Adam Kazda; Journalist citing internal Pentagon audits and Admiral Michael Mullen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (6-19-2018; "Military Spending: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly;" *Pursuit*; https://www.ourpursuit.com/military-spending-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/; //GrRv)

The Bad

For more than two decades the Pentagon has been unable to complete a financial audit. In recent years we learned it cannot provide adequate documentation for $6.5 trillion worth of year-end adjustments and it has failed to pursue reforms that could save billions. Waste and inefficiency runs rampant in the Department of Defense. Yet, Congress does little to address these issues, presumably, to look more “pro-military” to voters (as if any of our Representatives in Congress are “anti-military”). Areas inside the DoD ripe for improvement include its spending on overhead costs, unneeded personnel and bases, and procurement.

NDAA Defense Business Board The Pentagon’s overhead costs would rank 49th in gross domestic product if matched up with every other nation in the world, and the Defense Business Board (DBB) has criticized the DoD for its lack of innovation. Personnel is perhaps one of the larger structural issue inside the DoD. There are about 1.3 million total active duty service members, but only 150,000 are deployed. Of the 1.2 million not deployed, almost 400,000 are serving in commercial roles, costing taxpayers $54 billion every year. These positions include support, supply, transportation, communications, morale, welfare, and recreation support. The DBB calls this a “poor use of our most expensive personnel – active duty military.” If just one-third of active duty military in commercial roles were replaced with civilians, it would save $53 billion over ten years. LEARN ABOUT OUR MISSION Another way to reduce overhead and personnel costs could come from closing unneeded military bases. Blessed by our most senior military officers, closing bases remains a heated political issue in Congress. “Members focus on parochial concerns, such as jobs lost, and the negative economic impact on surrounding communities,” says Christopher Preble of Politico. Finally, the Pentagon spends a good chunk of their budget on procurement. This year, auditors found the Pentagon’s procurement agency, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), lost track of $800 million. The audit “found that misstatements in the agency’s books totaled at least $465 million for construction projects it financed” and “didn’t have sufficient documentation — or any documentation at all — for another $384 million worth of spending.” An agency responsible for over 100,000 daily defense related orders that can’t keep its books in order should concern taxpayers and Congress. Defense Logistics Agency While the DoD is a bloated government agency, there are some bright spots to report. An audit of the DoD is currently underway and procurement processes are beginning to change from taxpayers paying for cost overruns, to contractors paying for overruns. Reforms like streamlining DoD bureaucracy and overhead are essential to rebuilding America’s military. Since it is necessary soldiers have what they need in order to do their job safely and effectively, eliminating or reforming costly non-essential Pentagon programs should be a top priority. The Ugly

What if I told you the current U.S. Secretary of Defense and the previous Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff both agree that our greatest national security threat is not another country or terrorist organization, but our national debt.

U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis:

“The foundation of military strength is our economic strength. In a few short years paying interest on our debt will be a bigger bill than what we pay for defense. Much of that interest money is destined to leave America for overseas. If we refuse to reduce our debt/pay down our deficit, what is the impact on national security for future generations who will inherit this irresponsible debt and the taxes to service it? No nation in history has maintained its military power if it failed to keep its fiscal house in order.”

Admiral Michael Mullen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

“The most significant threat to our national security is our debt, and the reason I say that is because the ability for our country to resource our military — and I have a pretty good feeling and understanding about what our national security requirements are — is going to be directly proportional — over time, not next year or the year after, but over time — to help our economy. That’s why it’s so important that the economy move in the right direction, because the strength and the support and the resources that our military uses are directly related to the health of our economy over time.”

We’ve written about it hundreds of times, but the strength of America relies on her economic prosperity. A growing national debt limits economic growth and crowds out opportunity. Long term deficits could lead to economic disasters, inflation, and high interest rates that send more tax dollars to pay off interest on our debt rather than priorities like education, infrastructure, and not the least of which, defense.

#### AND — drives recurrent, economic shocks.

Ikenberry & Nexon, 19 — G. John Ikenberry is Albert G. Milbank professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University and Global Eminence Scholar at Kyung Hee University, South Korea. Daniel H. Nexon is an associate professor in the School of Foreign Service and the Department of Government at Georgetown University. (“Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders;” *Security Studies*; Vol. 28, No. 3; pg. 395–421; //GrRv)

More broadly, in examining how American-led ordering in domains such as the international monetary system, trade, and security could mutually reinforce one another, Norrlof called attention to the possibility of positive feedbacks that can sustain hegemony. At the same time, Mastanduno, Norrlof, and other participants in this wave of research pointed to the need to view international order as a complex of distinctive but interacting systems, while also calling more attention to the interaction between American domestic political economy and hegemonic ordering.44

Indeed, the feedbacks involved might even prove destabilizing, in unanticipated ways, for international order. For example, Michael Aklin and Andreas Kern argue that America troop deployments signal a security interest by the United States in stabilizing host countries. This, in turn, leads host governments to engage in riskier economic policy and foreign investors to accept that increased risk, on the assumption that Washington will arrange for bailouts in the event of a crisis. Thus, US security commitments might help drive recurrent economic shocks.45

#### Heg isn’t necessary for economic growth – if anything, it inhibits it

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A. Trevor and Benjamin H Friedman, “National Interests, Grand Strategy, and the Case for Restraint” in *US Grand Strategy in the 21st Century: The Case for Restraint*, Routledge Press, p. 6-7

Restraint also denies that US military actions have net positive economic effects. American prosperity is the result of participation in, not control of, the international economic system, according to restraint. American military might is not required to ensure the ability of American companies to sell their goods around the world, not even to ensure the flow of oil on which much of its economy relies (Gholz and Press 2010). In peacetime, threats to trade for naval forces to protect against are virtually nonexistent. Even major wars do not disturb trade to the point that fighting to help end them is less costly than sitting out (Gholz and Press 2001). Rather than creating economic dependence that requires military protection, globalization creates supply options and thus reduces the need to militarily protect trade routes or stabilize supplier states (Sapolsky, Friedman, Gholz, and Press 2009).

It is true that the United States played the leading role in establishing the liberal institutions that make globalization possible. It does not follow, restrainers argue, that the United States must play the role of hegemon to maintain them. In any case, US wealth-potential access to its massive domestic market-is a stronger inducement to economic openness than military alliances (Friedman, Green, and Logan 2013).

#### Restraint is more effective at solving prolif

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Brendan Rittenhouse, “Primacy and proliferation: why security commitments don’t prevent the spread of nuclear weapons” in *US Grand Strategy in the 21st Century: The Case for Restraint*, Routledge Press, p. 54-56

That logic is why policymakers display such unanimous support for nuclear inhibition as a goal of American foreign policy. In a world where genuine dangers to American security are few and far between, the potential negative consequences of nuclear proliferation stand out. They serve as something of a trump card in the grand strategic debate between primacy and restraint. In one recent exchange, primacy advocates Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth retreated from a number of security-based justifications for American political and military commitments, substituting instead the threat that increased international competition might pose to the international economic and institutional order. But they retain their emphasis on the potential consequences of nuclear use (Craig et al. 2013). Primacy's simple syllogism-retrenchment increases insecurity; insecurity causes proliferation; proliferation begets more proliferation; while military and political engagement reduce all of the preceding variables-is a powerful weapon against efforts to restrain American commitments.

But according to the large mass of literature in political science, primacy's syllogism is flawed. At its heart is the strong intuition that security concerns represent the core reason for acquiring nuclear weapons-an intuition many of the realist champions of restraint share. Yet if we are to take the mainstream of research on "demand side" drivers of proliferation seriously, then this motive is far less powerful than either the policymaking world or the grand strategy debate generally acknowledge.Author after author emphasizes instead the multiple and wide-ranging set of constraints that confront would-be proliferators. Even if US withdrawal were to increase regional insecurity, security concerns have high hills to climb in order to push states toward the fateful step of nuclear acquisition. Proliferation has been a historically slow and haphazard process, and is likely to remain so.

Primacy's arguments receive their strongest support from relatively recent, dissenting research. But this research-impressive as it is-cuts in multiple directions. If Monteiro and Debs are correct, then US commitments will incentivize nuclear proliferation as often as they deter it. The weak states that Washington's mentorship are most likely to influence are also the least likely to proliferate if its protection is withdrawn. If Miller is correct, dominoes may indeed be more likely to fall than the literature suspects, but it is unclear how much more likely. IfHymans or Solingen is right, then there are strong internal in1pediments to proliferation even in the face of a regional state's nuclear acquisition. Moreover, a number of sanctions will remain available for influencing the calculations of would-be proliferators.

Looking to the future, what can be said about the odds of proliferation in a world with greatly weakened alliance commitments? East Asia, where the chance of major war with a regional power is greatest, would appear to have a number of factors pushing against further proliferation after American withdrawal. R egional allies are dominated by internationalist, trade-oriented coalitions unlikely to risk the consequences of American economic coercion. While their legal-rational Weberian bureaucracies would likely make them more technically adept at weaponization, these same bureaucracies provide a number of veto points for any decision to do so. In any case, there are not so many oppositional nationalists in these democratic polities who might be willing to take the fateful leap. Finally, South Korea and Taiwan are weak, making them exposed to Chinese coercion without American protection. Beijing is not likely to look kindly on either state proliferating.

The trajectory of proliferation in the Middle East, absent continued American efforts to manage its politics, is more uncertain. Nuclear bureaucracies in the region are more likely to suffer from neo-patrimonial management practices, which will make nuclear acquisition difficult. Still, the Iranian nuclear program has obtained a reasonable level of sophistication, even if it took thirty years. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, and other regional actors have increasingly professional military bureaucracies, suggesting that if properly motivated they might produce a technically competent program. If the nuclear deal between Tehran and the PS+ 1 were to collapse, and Iran to return to its previous enrichment activities, such motivation might exist in ample supply.

Moreover, other restraining forces are less prevalent in the Middle East. The concentration of political power in the hands of autocrats suggests there would be few veto points to obstruct a leader's decision to pursue the bomb. The domestic politics of these societies suggest that oppositional nationalism is not uncommon, so the right kind ofleader might be available. The region is permeated by trade restrictions and politically dominated by inward-facing coalitions resistant to US economic pressure. With Israeli threats of preventive war against Iran proven hollow, the only systemic constraint on proliferation is the threat of US preventive attack. Fears of dominoes will be better founded if there are several ongoing nuclear programs in the region, rather than one dubiously disguised nuclear arsenal. These speculations have three implications. First, contrary to the common wisdom, the likelihood of nuclear proliferation in East Asia may not rise very much following US retrenchment; such a withdrawal is thus far less dangerous for nuclear reasons than usually imagined. Second, the fulfilhnent (and eventual extension) of the PS+ 1 's deal with Iran should remain a top non-proliferation prirrity, since the abrogation of this agreement is likely a condition for nuclear 7ompetition in the Middle East. Third, the United States will probably not be able to do without the threat of force if it wishes to manage proliferation in the regidn. Monteiro and Debs' and Coe and Vaynman's research suggests that credible threats of counterproliferation actions against rogue states remain essential for dealing with proliferators not numbered among American friends.

In short, the political science literature is not all good news for advocates of restraint. Nevertheless, on our current evidence, primacy's core propositions about nuclear proliferation are probably mistaken, or at least greatly overstated. Restraint is therefore significantly more viable, even adopting the traditional assumptions that have motivated policy debate. Policymakers should be told as much. .

#### Their authors suffer psychological bias – every claim is suspect

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

The Political Psychology of Unipolarity Evidence supporting the notion that US power is primarily responsible for the New Peace is slim, but belief in the connection is quite strong, especially in policy circles. The best arena to examine the proposition is therefore not the world of measurable rationality, but rather that of the human mind. Political psychology can shed more light on unipolarity than can any collection of data or evidence. Just because an outcome is primarily psychological does not mean that it is less real; perception quickly becomes reality for both the unipolar state and those in the periphery. If all actors believe that the United States provides security and stability for the system, then behavior can be affected. Beliefs have deep explanatory power in international politics whether they have a firm foundation in empirical reality or not. Like all beliefs, faith in the stability provided by hegemony is rarely subjected to much analysis.79 Although they almost always have some basis in reality, beliefs need not pass rigorous tests to prove that they match it. No amount of evidence has been able to convince some people that vaccines do not cause autism, for example, or that the world is more peaceful than at any time before, or that the climate is changing due to human activity. Ultimately, as Robert Jervis explains, “we often believe as much in the face of evidence as because of it.”80 Facts may change, but beliefs remain the same. When leaders are motivated to act based on unjustified, inaccurate beliefs, folly often follows. The person who decides to take a big risk because of astrological advice in the morning’s horoscope can benefit from baseless superstition if the risk pays off. Probability and luck suggest that successful policy choices can sometimes flow from incorrect beliefs. Far more often, however, poor intellectual foundations lead to suboptimal or even disastrous outcomes. It is worthwhile to analyze the foundations of even our most deeply held beliefs to determine which ones are good candidates to inspire poor policy choices in those who hold them. People are wonderful rationalizers. There is much to be said for being the strongest country in the world; their status provides Americans both security and psychological rewards, as well as strong incentives to construct a rationale for preserving the unipolar moment that goes beyond mere selfishness. Since people enjoy being “number one,” they are susceptible to perceiving reality in ways that brings the data in line with their desires. It is no coincidence that most hegemonic stability theorists are American. 81 Perhaps the satisfaction that comes with being the unipolar power has inspired Americans to misperceive the positive role that their status plays in the world. Three findings from political psychology

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