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## The End of the American Era and the New International Order (2010-2022)

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Requirements for the Master Degree in Civilization and Literature option

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## Dedication

“Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.”

*-John Locke*

I dedicate this work to:

To my mother for her unconditional love, support, and care.

To my cousin, Rofaida, who has been of great technical support throughout this journey.

To my best friend, Imad, my intellectual companion, who was there for me every time I needed him.

To the best character that was ever written in literary history, Eren Jeager, a personal inspiration to keep moving forward.

To all the teachers who helped us expand our way of thinking and enrich our knowledge.

To whomever seeks a better and rational understanding of the world.

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## Abstract

International orders are designed and built by superpowers to serve and protect their national interests, including that built and fought for by the United States. Since the end of the Second World War, America had emerged as a superpower, touting its exceptional culture and benevolent political values, and globalizing its way and vision via a tripartite approach. Thus, this study seeks to explore the perceived national and international characteristics that enabled the United States to distinguish itself as the superpower that has been playing a key role in shaping global politics since the mid-twentieth century, eventually managing to construct a global order for itself. This study also sheds light on the policies and events which the United States employed and went through to preserve its supremacy over past and present competitors, while also pointing out to its own geopolitical blunders. To meet those objectives, the historical, investigative and analytical approaches were used with a qualitative method. The significance of this study lies in drawing the plausible contours of a new international order that is emerging in the midst of America's ongoing decline, by examining the post-Cold War political literature in correlation with present day events. The findings of this inquiry posit the ending of America's unipolar world, and with that the emergence of a multipolar, multicivilizational one.

**Key Words:** American exceptionalism, International Order, Unipolar moment, Liberal triumphalism, Multipolarity, The Cold War.

## List of Acronyms

<b>NSS</b>	National Security Strategy
<b>AIPAC</b>	American Israeli Public Affairs Committee
<b>LGBTQ</b>	Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders, Queers
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>USSR</b>	United Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>VOA</b>	Voice of America
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>BRI</b>	Belt and Road Initiative
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

<b>GNA</b>	Government of National Accord
<b>PMU</b>	Popular Mobilization Units
<b>IRGC</b>	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates

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## **General Introduction**

## Introduction

Historically, from the moment the first Puritans arrived at its shores, America was seen as a sanctuary for those fleeing religious persecution and repression in Europe. Later, at a time when Europeans were still living under the whims of their monarchs, the United States served as a beacon for freedom, individual rights, republicanism, democracy, free market economics, the rule of law and was at the vanguard of the nascent industrial revolution.

Its unique historical development was later reinvigorated by its civil war which represented a “national rebirth” to the people and further entrenched the tenets of a mindset that put the United States and the American society alike on a higher rank and solidified the sense of national superiority. The latter was later translated into a belligerent foreign policy and a confrontational international posture, both of which were rooted in the sense of righteousness and uniqueness of its values and ideals. The United States’ involvement in “The Great War” and later in the Second World War further served in cementing its global image not only as a military conqueror but as a virtuous power fighting against tyranny and striving for the freedom of humanity.

The triumph of the US-led allied forces in World War Two culminated in the creation of a new international system. This new world order that was to govern international relations between state actors was inaugurated with the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944, establishing a new monetary system, replacing the gold standard with the U.S. dollar as the global currency and establishing America’s hegemony as the dominant power in world economy. Furthermore, in its efforts to secure its control over the emerging system of international relations vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the United States embarked on a mission of creating military alliances, building military bases, overthrowing ‘rogue regimes’ and supporting democratic and friendly nations. In this process of ‘securing world peace’ phrases like ‘International Community and its antecedent ‘The

Free World' became euphemistic collective nouns used to give global legitimacy to actions reflecting the interests of the US and the West.

Still, having said that, this train of extraordinariness might be arriving at its final stop. With the late 1990s, the preceding collapse of the Berlin Wall and the fragmentation of the Soviet Union, there was a feeling of euphoria that spread all across the Western World and the US in particular that a new unipolar world led by the United States was emerging, that liberal democracy will take hold and that American ideals and values will be the norm. That was not the case. America's status as a global hegemon was being challenged by China's steady rise while communism was being replaced by global Islamic Jihadism, all coupled with continuous and costly covert and overt military entanglements. On the domestic front, the United States was being overwhelmed by mass multicultural immigration that began to undermine the longstanding American way of life and created sub-communities within the American society as a result of the shortcomings of the assimilation efforts of conservatives in the US government. The US-being the core Western state-may as well be sitting at the vanguard of the West's cultural decline.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the past 100 years, America's sense of exceptionalism and supremacy has largely stemmed from its resilience and durability in the face of cataclysmic social and economic upheavals on the domestic front while projecting formidable political influence and military power abroad. This sense of entitlement is what ultimately enabled it to create a US-led world order which preserved its global status and national interests. Yet, since we entered the new millennium, Western-dominated global media would have us believe that 'Uncle Sam' is still exceptional, and with that reflecting an American desire, a diplomatic maneuver, that America today is still America of the past. However, as described by Prof. Samuel P. Huntington, the West-likely a euphemism

for the US- has been in a state of decline since the 1990s and will continue be in the foreseeable future. That is partly due to America's inability to further compete with an ever more belligerent China and a post-Soviet Russian resurgence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Domestically, the ascension of neoconservative white-nationalists to power, with the likes of Donald J. Trump and Mike Pence, has resulted in a steep rise in right-wing popularity in what was perceived as a reaction to the continuous influx of immigrants and refugees from Middle Eastern and Latin American countries and with that undermining the fundamental liberal values of the republic and leading to civil unrest in several major cities.

The United States is still undoubtedly the dominant global power and will continue to be for some time, but it is no longer the sole superpower. As the world is moving ever more closely towards multipolarity; America is becoming less of a nation to be modeled after. Taking that probability into account, this research aims to mine for the contributing elements behind this historical demise and the kind of impact that would bear on the international system.

In light of the above-mentioned research contextualization, the research probes the following primary research question:

- What impact has America's steady decline had on the international order?

This question shall be investigated through the following sub-questions:

- What are the mechanisms and dynamics that shaped the US-led world order?
- How are the domestic shortcomings and foreign mishaps of U.S. policy exacerbating America's decline as the dominant power?
- What are the possible manifestations of a post-American international order?

## **Research Aims**

This study seeks to provide both a chronological and analytical examination of the origins of the present US established international system and hopes to provide a feasible forecast of the direction it seems to be going in the midst of America's most fragile period. In order to achieve that ultimate objective, this document will also dig into the political characteristics, historical circumstances, and cultural dynamics that enabled the United States to assume its position as a global hegemon in a world of multiple ancient powers.

Academically speaking, this document will also attempt to provide a correlational study of how the international order came to be via the rise of one single dominant power and how that power's decline is affecting the postmodern world of nation-states.

## **Significance of the Research**

Since the end of World War Two, America has been a major player in the hallways of global politics and a formidable military, economic and cultural powerhouse to be reckoned with. It then goes without saying that an examination of America's perceived historical superiority and its current yet perhaps slow downfall is a legitimate avenue into achieving a comprehensive and plausible understanding of the new parameters that would shape the new unfolding global order. Having said that, the United States is indeed still the dominant power of our time, and even though its decline has been in progress for some time now, it, however, might still stabilize, reverse or speed up. Thus, a thorough and historical perusal into the circumstances that allowed Uncle Sam to be the 'Global Big Brother' is neither unneeded nor pointless.

## **Research Methodology**

This study will be based on a number of approaches in which the historical approach will be applied to trace back the cultural, political and economic tendencies that enabled the US to

assume its role as a unique global powerhouse, along with an analytical and investigative approach that is carried out to dig for and highlight the main internal and external factors contributing to its demise. The research also consults relevant books, papers, and articles relevant to the inquiry proposed. The study is based on looking for the available studies made by historians, scholars and political scientists on this subject in relation to the new perspective in which we will attempt to highlight.



## **Chapter One**

### **America's Exceptionalism: Origins and Implications**

## Introduction

Since the establishment of its first settlement in 1607 and up until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United States has been seen as a unique and distinct political and cultural entity with formidable military and economic might that has not been experienced by a single nation since the heyday of the Roman Empire. However, as a political and intellectual term, 'American Exceptionalism' has been a contesting point in a heated discussion between various historians, sociologists, political scientists, philosophers and politicians on opposite sides of the American political spectrum. As such, the concept of 'American Exceptionalism' carries within itself different interpretations and perspectives relating to the religious, cultural, historical and political elements that make America a nation like no other. Having said that, even though the belief in America's relative uniqueness to the rest of the world has been present in the American mindset since the War of Independence in 1775, the utilization of the term 'American exceptionalism' outside the academic world and specifically in American political discourse has only been ubiquitous during the recent decades since the end of the Cold War. Accordingly, an inquiry into the history of the United States, its creation as a creolized European breakaway state, and most significantly, the compatibility of its governmental and constitutional composition with its multiracial society serves a great deal in uncovering the pillars based on which the belief in America's exceptional nature, both as a country and as a society, seems to rest.

This chapter seeks to explain the concept of 'American Exceptionalism'. By following both a historical and analytical approach, this chapter examines the history of the United States both in terms of its significant events and its unique social and cultural fabric. Furthermore, it underscores the intricate and dazzling components and mechanisms that allowed American politics to walk throughout its existence in an exceptional paralleled line with that of its society.

## 1.1 The Concept of American Exceptionalism

On the broadest level, 'American Exceptionalism' points to the residing belief that the United States is and has been a rather distinct nation from its former European patrons due to its unique historical evolution, national creed, creole society, and rather distinct political institutions which were undoubtedly influenced by the religious background of its Puritan benefactors (Hoffman 225). Simply put, 'American Exceptionalism' is used to refer to the 'uncommon' trajectory that the newly founded nation took upon its independence, and even before, which singled it out from the rest of the world. In addition, and in their attempt to provide a new start for their citizens with the hopes of a better life for posterity, the Founding Fathers of America paved the way for this sense of national exceptionalism by enshrining, Kim R. Holmes argues:

the principles of natural law, liberty, limited government, individual rights, the checks and balances of government, the civilizing role of religion in society, and the crucial role of civil society and civil institutions in grounding and mediating our democracy and our freedom in the American culture. (Holmes)

In other words, from a strictly academic standpoint, 'American Exceptionalism' does not refer to the superiority of the American race-if there was such a thing, nor the preeminence of a single American religion, but rather to the American conviction in the righteousness as well as universality of American creed, ideals and culture which adopted "the blend of classical philosophy, Christianity, and even Enlightenment ideas," Holmes adds, and later embodied them in its ensuing "mix of liberty, limited government, natural rights, and religious liberty that made the American founding unique." In the realm of domestic politics and international relations, however, the term dates back to the 1920s and 1930s as it emerged from within the debates between

American communists regarding “the inhibition of some unique characteristics of American society in the transition from capitalism to socialism” (Foner). Still, according to Foner, the term was later employed as a tool of psychological warfare against the Soviet Union beginning with the 1950s, suggesting a national responsibility in leading the Free World to victory. In domestic political rhetoric, since America is an exceptional nation-as described by the French Alexis de Tocqueville in his book *‘Democracy in America’*, that America cannot simply be treated the same as other nations, it acts uniquely in terms of its foreign policy and international posture. To put it in a global and domestic perspective, even though some scholars equate the concept with ‘nationalism’, the most accurate interpretation would be that of “the conviction that Americans have nothing to learn from the rest of the world,” Eric Foner further stated, but instead, “it is the world who must follow America’s suit.”

## **1.2 Characteristics of American Exceptionalism**

America’s perceived sense of exceptionalism is reflected in its international conduct regarding the international community and its relations with other major actors, as “in 1992, U.S. exceptionalists looked out over the world and saw confirmation of their vision of a U.S.-led (and dominated) world” (Sachs 67). Moreover, the entrenched sense of American entitlement and righteousness as well as the belief in the universality of American values emanate from the unique history and the distinct national identity of its civil society and system of governance (Restad 11). This duality of internal sociocultural structure and international conduct coalesce to embody Americans’ sense of superiority (see fig.1).

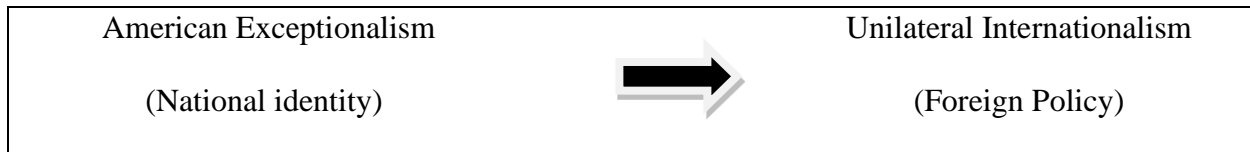


Fig.1. The Dichotomy of American Exceptionalism. Hilde E., Restad. *American Exceptionalism: An idea that made a nation and remade the world*. Routledge, 2015.

### 1.2.1 The Notion of Freedom

From the first Puritans to arrive on its shores to the ensuing influx of immigrants, America has served as a beckon of hope, opportunity and liberty in an ancient world overrun by oppression and tyranny. As such, of all the democratic principles that Americans cherish, none is more valuable, distinct, inalienable and, indeed, exceptional than the idea of freedom (Bacevich 25). The concept remains one that many Americans invoke whenever the need comes to distinguish their nation and way of life from that of many other countries, including their European partners. Throughout American history, the notion of freedom has been a cornerstone in various major American events, such as the American Revolution, the Westward Expansion and the American Civil War. This was evident in Thomas Jefferson's usage of the phrase "empire of liberty" in a series of his correspondences which insinuated and equated American expansion, pushing forward the American frontier, as a triumph of the forces of freedom and democracy. America's obsession with the notion of freedom has ultimately resulted in a "crusader state" that has continuously been on a mission to 'free' the world and universalize American exceptional values, a conviction that continues to be a defining characteristic of this country's national identity (Melcon).

Consequently, "American exceptionalism has always been linked to the idea of freedom," as "no idea is more fundamental to Americans' sense of themselves as individuals and as a nation than freedom" (Foner).

### 1.2.2 American Creolization and the Melting Pot Effect

In the academic discipline of anthropology and the realm of cultural studies, “Creolization” refers to societies that arise from a mixture of ethnic, religious and racial elements to form a new material, psychological, and spiritual self-definition (Wikipedia). As such, the aforementioned definition clearly applies to the United States which was established by “a mixture of English, Scots-Irish, Highland Scot, German, African, Native American, French, Dutch, and other ethnicities.” (Holmes). Each group with its own separate and distinct cultural background, language, values, religion and national heritage coming into contact with each other and impacting one another in an exceptionally relative peace and coexistence-more than it was between the European belligerents at the time, acquired a sense of historical continuity and national belonging from America's founding due to assimilation and educational experiences. In addition, the years between 1870 and 1915 saw the largest influx of immigrants to the U.S. yet, which was estimated between 15 to 20 million from Great Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia, but also from Southern and Eastern Europe who differed in culture and customs from the prevailing Anglo-Saxon tone of the country and lacked the linguistic background to communicate effectively (“Immigration in the early 1900s”).

As those immigrants arrived to the U.S., they brought with them their ‘cultural idiosyncrasy,’ their language, customs, music, fashion, cuisine, literature, and religious practices. The American society was, and still is, quite exceptional in regard to its cosmopolitan constitution. However, it is imperative to consider the factors and mechanisms that allowed this diverse nation-state to sustain itself, to a certain degree, without the specter of fragmentation up to this present day (Mauk and Okland 30).

Whereas 20<sup>th</sup> century attempts to create multicultural, diverse nation-states have been proven to be quite hazardous, the American model proved itself to be quite unique. The American melting pot, as it is famously called, was the center piece of the American immigration System. While new immigrants had the chance to bring their indigenous culture and customs with them, becoming an American meant they had to engage in a one-way process of cultural influence and where the differences between ethnicities 'melted away' and from which America's unique cultural identity emerged (Why is America Called the Melting Pot?).

### **1.2.3 American Political System**

The hard-learned lessons from their European past had made America's Founding Fathers wary of despotism and the notion of centralized power. As such, an exceptional and unique political apparatus came into being, one that, as the French political scientist Tocqueville would later describe, "has virtually no way to exercise tyrannical authority." That being said, in examining the distinguishing characteristics that set the American political system apart, the following ones arise to the surface:

1. **The U.S. Constitution:** The ratification of such a unique document served to immediately set the newly created nation-state apart from its European counterparts in positing the idea "that people's rights are granted directly by the Creator - not by the state - and that the people, then, and only then, grant rights to government. The concept is so simple, yet so very fundamental and far-reaching" (The Unique Idea of the American Constitution). In contrast with other former and future governments where the state is seen as the grantor of human rights, the U.S. constitution embodies the idea that it is the people who, in fact, determine which rights they want to delegate and which ones they want to secure.

Subsequently, the Founding Fathers managed to control and limit the sway of the government and secure republicanism for posterity (Mauk and Okland 114). Moreover, the American Constitution also ensured the protection of individual rights of the citizenry, businesses, minorities and even residents and visitors on American soil through the famous 'Bill of Rights 1791' (A Brief History of Human Rights). By doing so, the constitution also recognizes and works in parallel with the complex multiethnic and religiously diverse American society, cementing the sense of belonging and justice for the minorities and repelling the prospect of ethnic conflict and religious persecution. Accordingly, The Bill of Rights is used as a counterweight to the dominion of the federal government over private citizens and entities within US jurisdiction as it "protects freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to keep and bear arms, the freedom of assembly and the freedom to petition the government. It also prohibits unreasonable search and seizure, cruel and unusual punishment and compelled self-incrimination" (A Brief History of Human rights). Finally, in addition to limiting the influence of the government and protecting citizens' rights, the Constitution also managed to set in stone two other exceptional American concepts: the balance of power between branches of the government [checks and balances] and the division of jurisdiction between the federal and state governments [federalism] (Mauk and Okland 115).

2. **Checks and Balances:** the system of checks and balances is associated with the concept of separation of powers which enables each branch of the government with powers to check the other branches and prevent any single one from becoming too powerful. Even though that each branch of the U.S. government enjoys absolute autonomy regarding its jurisdiction and authority; the system of checks and balances guarantees that none of the



branches curtails the concepts of democracy, republicanism and individual liberties by grabbing and consolidating too much power. Of all the distinguishing mechanisms in the American political system, this remains the most exceptional one, putting U.S. democracy and institutions above all others (Shom) (see fig.2).

The significance of such a system was enunciated by former Supreme Court judge Antonin Scalia in his opening statement to the Senate when he stated:

...the real key to the distinctiveness of America is the structure of our government...Americans can appreciate that and learn to love the separation of powers, which means learning to love the gridlock, which the Framers believed would be the main protection of minorities ... so that the legislation that gets out will be good legislation. (Scalia)

Scalia's comments highlight the distinguishing nature of the American political system and the way it best serves the interests of individuals and especially minority groups against the specter of a hostile majority and the exploitation of democracy by corrupt entities.

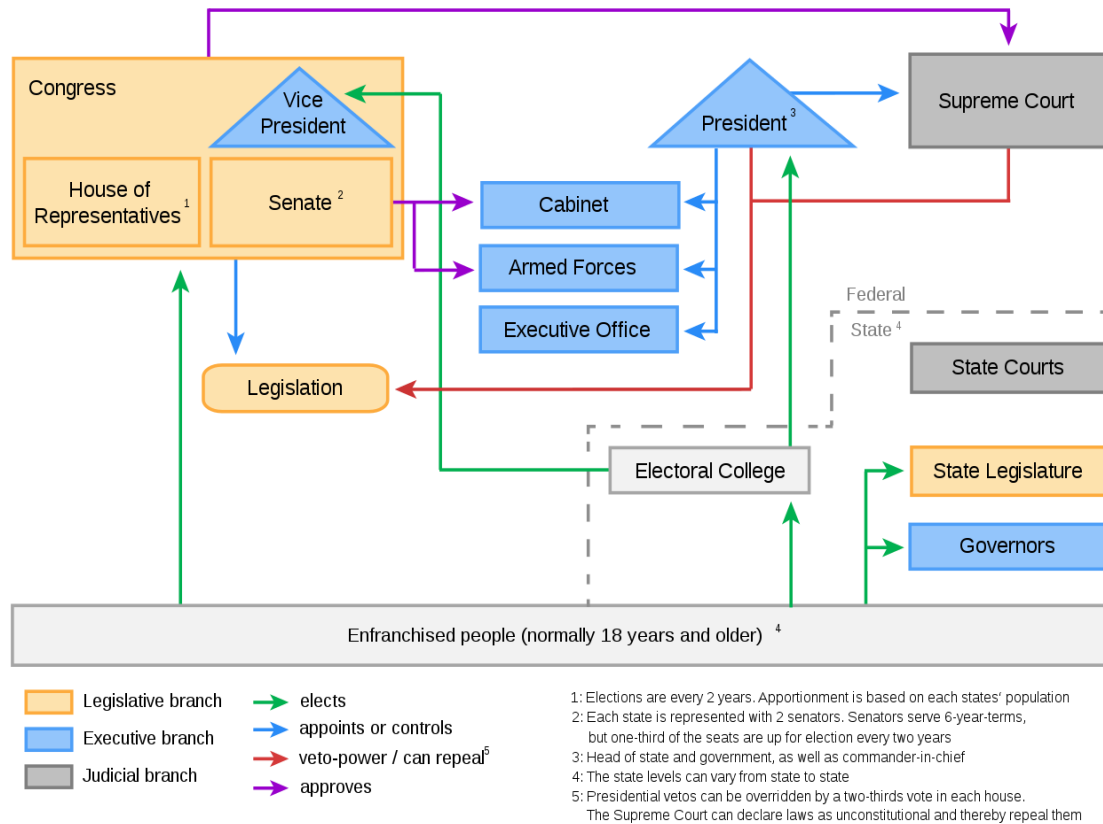


Fig.2. The Dynamics of Power Sharing and Influence Between Branches of the Government. Wikipedia Contributors. *Political system of the United States under the United States Constitution*. Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 27 April 2021, [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_the_United_States).

### 1.2.4 American Foreign Policy

In the realm of international relations, foreign policy is seen as the nexus of memory and desire (Porter 2). America's exceptional geographical location has been a contributing factor in shaping its foreign policy agenda as it established the notion of security as a top priority objective in U.S. foreign policy (Mauk and Okland 158). As such, throughout its history, the U.S. has sought to achieve the duality of becoming a regional hegemon in the Western Hemisphere and at the same time preventing the rise of any peer competitor (Mearsheimer).

Accordingly, the traditional isolationist stance was replaced by global interventionism where the United States fought two world wars and a cold War in its historical quest of preventing the domination of East Asia or Western Europe by a single power (Huntington). More importantly, and perhaps the most distinguishing feature of U.S. foreign policy, the sense of exceptionalism can be seen in America's unilateralism regarding its adherence to international law, human rights conventions, and exemptions from universal rules. Furthermore, Francis Fukuyama sheds light on the embodiment of American exceptionalism within its foreign policy by interpreting the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) as an affirmation of exceptionalism:

Clearly, a doctrine of preventive war is not one that can be safely generalized throughout the international system... The fact that the United States granted itself a right that it would deny to other countries is based, in the NSS, on an implicit judgment that the United States is different from other countries and can be trusted to use its military power justly and wisely in ways that other powers could not. (Fukuyama 101)

Domestically, the trinity of pressure groups, think tanks and media outlets exert considerable influence on the American foreign policy making process. Think tanks help shape American foreign policy by generating original ideas and options for policymakers, offering venues for high-level discussions, educating U.S. citizens about the world, and by supplementing official efforts to mediate and resolve conflict (Haass). Lobbies, on the other hand, influence the decisions of policy makers and politicians, both in the executive and especially the legislative branch with the most prominent example being the American Israel Public Affairs Committee

(AIPAC) which is part of a “loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively works to move U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction” (Mearsheimer and Walt 3). Finally, being the democratic republic that it is, American public opinion has significant sway over U.S. foreign policy as “public support is essential because it legitimizes the government within democracies” (Dorani). Since the end of World War Two, major U.S. media outlets have shaped and altered American public opinion on key foreign policy issues such as communism as “media coverage of the Cold War between America, its allies and the Soviet Union served to escalate domestic fear of imminent destruction,” Alexander Stafford explains, and the Vietnam War where “news coverage at the beginning of the conflict was often scripted and pro-Western.” Ultimately, we cannot help but notice how the aforementioned tripartite classification of domestic factors, in terms of their impact on U.S. foreign policy, converge at the confluence of American public opinion as the common denominator behind America's peace and war time decision making.

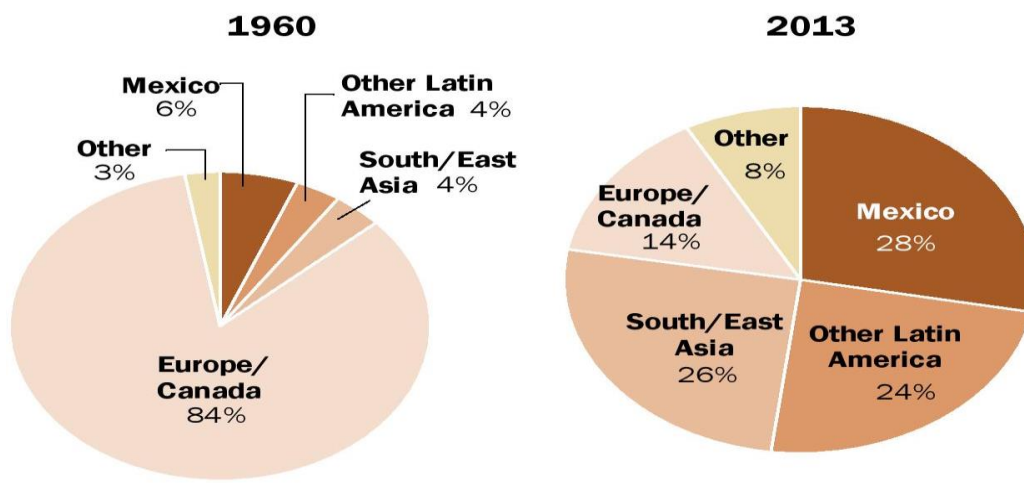
### **1.3 The Beginning of the End**

The inception of the twenty first century saw alarm bells going off by some political scientists and international relations experts such as Prof. Samuel P. Huntington and John J. Mearsheimer regarding what they saw as the ending of the unipolar world brought by the relative decline of the West vis-à-vis the non-western powers. Being the global hegemon and the leading western nation, we believe that this civilizational downfall is precipitated by the United States' shortcomings regarding its domestic and foreign policies, the spread of multiculturalism, the rise of right-wing populism, and an idealistic foreign policy driven by the delusions of an international liberal order.

### 1.3.1 The Cultural Ramifications of Multiculturalism and The Rise of Right-Wing Populism

Starting in the 1960s, the concept of American identity has been affected by cultural pluralism due to the preservation of indigenous values of the subcultures by immigrants and their subsequent influence on the American society as a whole, resulting in a new societal identity, “the salad bowl.” In 2013, the Pew Research Center, a Washington-based think tank, estimated that 52% of the foreign population came from Mexico or other Central American countries, 26% from Asia, and only 14% from Europe (see fig.3). By 2050, it projects a demographic shift that will be 29% Hispanic, 13% African American, and 9% Asian (see fig.4). For historically white-dominated liberal democracies such as the U.S., multiculturalism stands as a challenge, as it was put by Professor Bruce Thornton, a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution:

The identity politics at the heart of multiculturalism directly contradict the core assumption of our liberal democracy: the principle of individual and inalienable rights that each of us possess no matter what group or sect we belong to. Multiculturalism confines the individual in the box of his race or culture and then demands rights and considerations for that group, a special treatment usually based on the assumption that the group has been victimized in the past and so deserves some form of reparations. The immigrant “other” (excluding, of course, immigrants from Europe) is now a privileged victim entitled to public acknowledgement of his victim status and the superiority of his native culture. (Thornton)



Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 1960 U.S. decennial census data and 2013 American Community Survey (IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Fig.3. A Dramatic Shift in the Origins of U.S. Immigrants. *Chapter 5: U.S. Foreign-Born Population Trends*. Pew Research Center, 28 Sep. 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2015/09/28/chapter-5-u-s-foreign-born-population-trends/>

As such, the subsequent accommodation of the state for the cultural heritage of new immigrants is bound to create a degree of cultural backlash, both by the public (white majority) and the conservative intellectual elite who perceive it as an attack on their way of life as it was expressed in the words of Prof. Russell Sias:

Do we want to live in a country where, when we travel from one community to another, we need to speak different languages, where some communities are likely to be resentful of 'outsiders,' where cultures do not mix, are not shared,

and where people have nothing in common? Do we want to allow multiculturalism to segregate America and then wonder if it will literally come apart as the Soviet Union has done? (Sias)

Indeed, failed experiences aimed at bringing people with different cultures together under the umbrella of multiculturalism, the ensuing intra-community hostilities and the eventual demise of the state showcase the dangers of such an approach, with prominent examples being the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. In the case of American multiculturalist model, Ben Shapiro, the American conservative political commentator and columnist, has argued that:

[...] the Left, under the gaze of diversity and multiculturalism, has divided the American society into groups, where one's opinion is only valuable if they are a member in one of these groups. The hierarchy of victimhood' starts with the LGBTQ, then African-Americans, Hispanics, Jews, Asians, Muslims, and at the bottom we find straight European-Americans. (Shapiro)

Shapiro's comments reflect the perceived threat by conservative and Right-Wing politicians towards the liberal Left and its multicultural agenda directed against European-Americans. Political scientist Samuel P. Huntington further described multiculturalism as "basically an anti-Western ideology." According to Huntington, multiculturalism has "attacked the identification of the United States with Western civilization, denied the existence of a common American culture, and promoted racial, ethnic, and other subnational cultural identities and groupings."

Even though Huntington does acknowledge the role of mass immigration in changing the demographic fabric of the American society, he, nonetheless, perceives the imbalance between the

numbers of immigrants with the lack of assimilation efforts as the catalyst behind such an American cultural mosaic, stating that Americans need to “pause [legal immigration] and concentrate on assimilating these millions of new immigrants who have come in.” Huntington outlined the risks he associated with multiculturalism in his book, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*.

In terms of its ramifications, prompted by the concept of the “Great Replacement”- the idea that European-Americans are being systemically and gradually replaced by nonwhite immigrants, the rise of the alt-right and the subsequent election of populist figures such as Donald Trump stand as testaments to the reaffirmation of the historically white dominated American society (Ware).

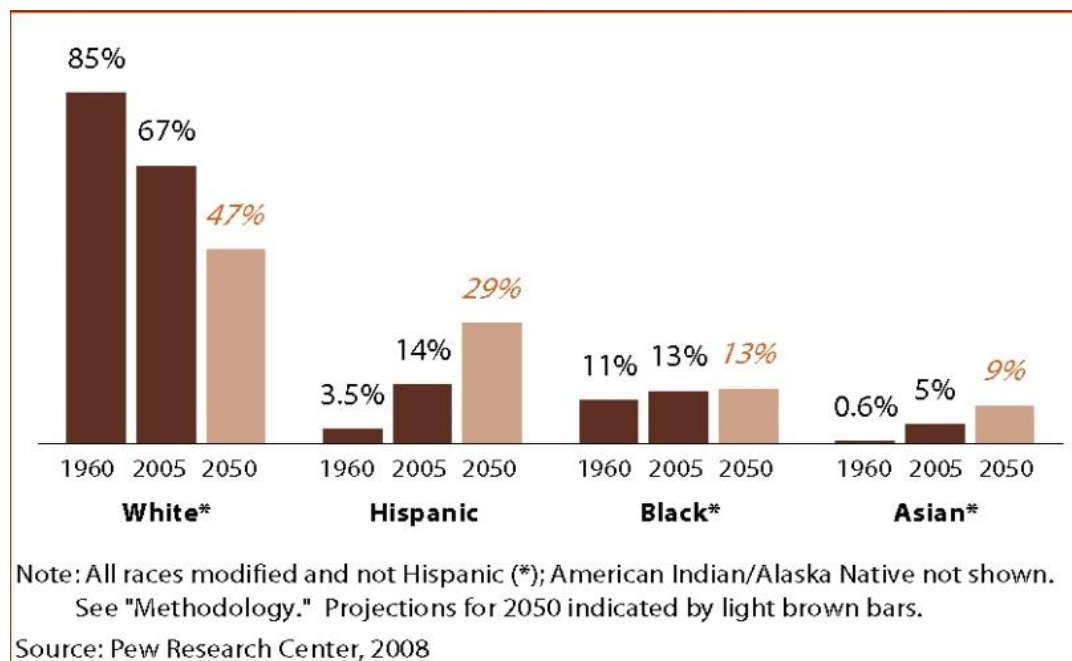


Fig.4. U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, Actual and Projected: 1960, 2005 and 2050. Jeffery, Passel. D'Vera, Cohn. *U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050*. Pew Research Center, 11 Feb. 2008, <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2008/02/11/us-population>



As such, the ensuing nationwide flight ban on five Muslim countries, the building of the Wall on the southern front against Latino immigrants, the clashes that took place in Charlottesville, Virginia between the alt-right and antifascist groups (ANTIFA), the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing violence that erupted between the Black Lives Matter activists and law enforcement, the recent hate crime wave targeting Asians as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2021 Capitol Riots can be seen as the symptoms of the failure of multiculturalism, to a certain extent, but also its detrimental role in creating a divisive atmosphere represented in identity politics as well as the rise of the alt-right and white nationalism (Thornton). Ultimately, the shortcomings of multiculturalism emanate from the mechanisms that govern the post-Cold War World, America included, where culture, not ideology, is what either brings people together or drives them apart as “the crucial distinctions among human groups concern their values, beliefs, institutions, and social structure, not their physical size, head shapes and skin colors” (Huntington 42).

### **1.3.2 The Folly of a Liberal International Order**

The reunification of Germany and the ensuing disintegration of the Soviet Union during the early 1990s signaled the end of the bipolar world and the triumph of the US-led Western block. The aftermath was an atmosphere of uncertainty and trepidation in the former communist nations yet that of euphoria and exhilaration among western political elite and intellectuals who saw only one trajectory ahead: liberal hegemony. In his notable book, *The End of History and The Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama best illustrates this conviction in global liberalism, stating that:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such ... That is, the end

point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. (Fukuyama 11)

However, this pervasive view of one harmonious world unified by a single international system, although very appealing at the time, has historically been proven to be misguided as “similar illusions of harmony flourished, briefly, at the end of each of the twentieth century’s other major conflicts” (Huntington 31). Though both Fukuyama and Huntington presented compelling arguments about what the post-Cold War order might look like, a liberal international order, nonetheless, did emerge in the following decade and a half (Mearsheimer). Having said that, we still need to take into consideration what that liberal international order entailed, what were the U.S. and the West’s objectives behind it, its impact on U.S. global interests and if it is still a viable venue for dictating the rules of global politics.

An ‘international order’ is defined by political scientist John Mearsheimer as “a group of international institutions that help govern interactions among member states and which must include all of the world’s great powers.” The unipolar system that emerged in the 1990s corresponds to such a view as the United States remained the sole superpower standing (Mearsheimer 11). By extrapolation, the liberal international order refers to the period of time when liberal democracies, via the leadership of the U.S., dominated global institutions, promoted liberal democracy to other countries, touted the capitalist economic model, and attempted to integrate non-western nations into western-created institutions, unchallenged. To put it in simple terms, the liberal international order can be seen as the period of time roughly between 1990 and 2005 when the U.S., prompted by the elation of triumph and the vision of a peaceful democratic world, acted to create a world in its own image (Mearsheimer). Throughout this decade and a half, the U.S. promoted liberal democracy, capitalism and western notions of human rights through

various policies and in different areas of the world. In Eastern Europe, EU expansion and NATO enlargement to include former communist countries was seen as the next logical step towards a peaceful Europe. In the Middle East, the 'Bush Doctrine' viewed the spread of liberal democracy as an antidote for religious fundamentalism and the threat of nuclear proliferation. In East Asia, the pervading belief among American policy makers at the time was that if China got wealthier, had access to international financial institutions and free global markets than there will be calls for democratization among the Chinese public (Mearsheimer 19-26). However, as the U.S. and the West were following Fukuyama's prism of post-Cold War global politics, the non-western nations were following Huntington's.

The failure of the global liberal paradigm manifested itself violently and gradually in the form of Islamic insurgency throughout the Greater Middle East where western democracy strengthens anti-western political forces- the 9/11 attacks can be seen as a reaction to western encroachment on Muslim nations, Russian backlash against further NATO eastward enlargement and the growing assertiveness of China in the South China Sea vis-a-vi Taiwan. The causes behind the liberal fiasco were furtherly outlined by Mearsheimer as follow:

1. The false belief in the absence of alternatives to liberal democracy.
  2. The crusading tone of U.S. foreign policy which leads to friction with other major powers.
  3. The liberal order clashes with nationalism by undermining sovereignty and national identity.
  4. The integration of China into the liberal world order ultimately undermined unipolarity.
- (Mearsheimer 30-42)

By perusing the aspirations of world peace and global capitalism through the spread of liberal democracy, American foreign policy backfired, as the liberal international order has been proven not only to be delusional but dangerous as well. The United State, in its liberal delirium, has helped embolden ancient powers and significantly undermined its own global status by putting an end to its liberal international order. Further and rigorous illustration of U.S. policies during the post-Cold War order will be tackled in the next chapter.

## **Conclusion**

The American sense of exceptionalism has emanated from its unique foundation and historical evolution. The enshrinement of liberal principles brought by European Enlightenment thinkers in the U.S. constitution turned the newly founded nation into a global sanctuary for the persecuted and entrenched the conviction that America is the nation to be modeled after. Seen as a beacon of liberty, protector of individual rights and an example for cultural coexistence, America ultimately embarked on a unilateral mission to 'free' the world from tyranny by attempting to universalize its experience and disseminate the American model. Eventually, however, the overzealous feeling of the righteousness and universal nature of the American creed backfired. On the domestic front, mass immigration and the failure of assimilation efforts resulted in creating subnational cultural identities and the rise of the alt-right. On the international front, the end of the Cold War and the triumph of the West further solidified the American sense of exceptionalism on a global stage and exacerbated the false expectations for the universal embracement of American liberal values. We have entered the new century where Americans' sense of singularity has started to fade and where great ancient powers are reclaiming their place in international politics.

## **Chapter Two**

### **America in International Politics**

## Introduction

Prior to 1941, American international conduct was characterized by its traditional isolationist stance, with the only exception being its brief and decisive involvement in World War One. However, the attack on Pearl Harbor signaled a historical and irreversible shift in America's foreign policy that would place the United States as major stakeholder in international affairs. The ensuing triumph of the US-led allied forces only further solidified America's status as a global military and economic superpower, one that can no longer return to its international hibernation. Since 1945, America's international conduct varied based on geographical location, strategic goals, domestic considerations, and the demeanor of its archnemesis, the Soviet Union (USSR). Yet, one thing that was consistent with its post-war vision was its new internationalist and belligerent approach to global politics. Still, even though the U.S. have maintained the overall tone of its foreign policy during and after the Cold War, the end of the Thucydidean standoff with the USSR led to a transformation in its approach to global politics, its foreign agenda and its strategy regarding the post-Cold War world.

Accordingly, this chapter aims to provide a description of what a US-led international order entail regarding the mechanisms and dynamics that shape it. To meet that end, this chapter also examines and analyzes U.S. policies that characterized the two major periods that followed the end of American isolationism: the Cold War and the Post-Cold War Worlds.

### 2.1 The Cold War Order

The end of World War Two not only brought about the demise of fascism and Nazism, but also the emergence of a new system of international politics, one that was spearheaded by two adversarial, supercharged and ideologically driven global powers with a growing sense of an

international mission (Westad 32). The aftermath was, therefore, the historical division of the world into the three blocks: the US-led Free World, the Soviet-led Communist block and the more or less non-aligned Third World where much of the conflict between the former two blocks took place. As a result, over the next forty-five years, U.S. foreign policy would be shaped by realist logic; the concepts of balance of power politics, spheres of influence and security deterrence would dominate American international agenda until the end of the twentieth century (McMahon 21).

In the midst of their global geopolitical quarrel, the U.S. as well as the USSR created what Mearsheimer calls “bounded orders”: a regional cluster of institutions that includes a single superpower, which serves to dictate relations among the member states and achieve a balance of power with the competing camp. As such, Mearsheimer rejects the notion of a US-led international order during the Cold War period due to the presence of an adversarial superpower with its own unique bounded system. Instead, Mearsheimer suggests that the Cold War system was a “thin realist international order” where the U.S. and the USSR occasionally worked together to prevent the escalation of regional disputes, sought arms control agreements and non-proliferation treaties while understanding and abiding by each other’s redlines, competing for economic prosperity, military power and political influence through the establishment of their respective bounded orders. In addition, Hedley Bull described an international order as when “two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another’s decisions, to cause them to behave-at least in some measure-as parts of a whole” (qtd. in Huntington 54).

### **2.1.1 A Strategy of Containment: Securing the Grand Area**

As World War Two was coming to end, there was a pervading belief among Soviet political elite that the Americans had waited for the Germans and the Russians to bleed each other out and

then intervened to rip the benefits with the lowest costs. This conviction had some truth to it as it represented the earliest raw version of the ensuing containment strategy aimed at limiting the influence of the Soviet state “not by denying that country territory or resources, but by exhausting it,” as it was stated by John L. Gaddis. Furthermore, the concern of American policy planners at the end of the global conflagration was to prevent, Gaddis added, “the domination of Europe by the Moscow dictatorship without losing the participation of the Red Army in the war against the Nazi dictatorship” (8). As such, it can be argued that containment, though not well enunciated at the time, was present and a weighing factor in American war calculations vis-à-vis its partnership with the USSR.

Postwar containment, however, is known among political scholars to be associated with the Truman Doctrine. The origins of the geostrategic concept as a policy used to halt Soviet power reside in George Kennan’s famous piece, “*The Sources of Soviet Conduct*,” published in 1947 under the pseudonym “Mr. X,” in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. In his article, Kennan explained the sources behind Soviet reasoning by stating that “the political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstances,” while maintaining that “the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” The goals of such a policy were the preservation of the US-led Western system and the areas subordinated to it through the encirclement of Communist powers whose real threat was “their refusal to fulfill their service role—that is, ‘to complement the industrial economies of the West’” (Chomsky 10). Kennan’s list of such regions included:

- A. The nations and territories of the Atlantic community, which include Canada, Greenland and Iceland, Scandinavia, the British Isles, western Europe, the Iberian



Peninsula, Morocco and the west coast of Africa down to the bulge, and the countries of South America from the bulge north;

B. The countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East as far east as, and including, Iran; and

C. Japan and the Philippines. (Gaddis 29)

The aforementioned areas represented the loosely demarcated US-led bulwark aimed at thwarting Communist influence (see fig.1), with each region serving a specific strategic goal, as it was best articulated by Noam Chomsky:

The industrial countries were to be guided by the “great workshops.” Germany and Japan, who had demonstrated their prowess during the war (and now would be working under US supervision). The Third World was to “fulfill its major function as a source of raw materials and a market” for the industrial capitalist societies, as a 1949 State Department memo put it. It was to be “exploited” (in Kennan's words) for the reconstruction of Europe and Japan. (The references are to Southeast Asia and Africa, but the points are general). (Chomsky 12)

Subsequently, the US proceeded with its containment strategy-one that would become the cornerstone of its Cold War policy-via its three components: foreign economic aid, security partnerships and interventionism (Larson).

1. Foreign Economic Aid: the havoc that was wrecked across Europe during World War Two prompted security concerns by U.S. officials out of fear that it would create a suitable habitat for communism to take hold, especially in Western Europe. To curb the prospect of a communist encroachment beyond the Iron Curtain, the U.S.

- government launched its foreign aid program 1947-1953, spearheaded by the Marshall Plan. By providing economic relief to Western European democracies, “It was the first time that the United States had put cold cash as well as warm bodies, in the form of technical advisers, behind the containment policy” (Lancaster). The American induced economic revival of Western Europe was, therefore, seen of existential importance to the U.S. as it represented the first line of defense against the perceived soviet expansionist tendencies (Foreign Aid - The cold war foreign aid program, 1947–1953). In addition to Western Europe, Latin America was another significant recipient of American aid, through the Alliance for Progress, inaugurated in 1961. The belief in Washington was that financial support to presiding, pro-US governments in South and Latin America would quell the specter of communism. To achieve that end, however, the U.S. found itself bankrolling and financing reactionary, right-wing governments as US aid correlated with domestic repression of leftist democratic movements vis-à-vis its relation with Latin America (Chomsky 46).
2. Security Partnerships: the 1948 Berlin Blockade had shaken the allies’ self-confidence in their ability to deter the Soviet forces that were stationed in central Europe and the possibility of a Soviet nuclear deployment on the continent. As such, for the purpose of keeping Europe democratic and capitalist, i.e., to repel Soviet aggression, “military cooperation, and the security it would bring, would have to develop in parallel with economic and political progress” as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would later be founded in 1949 (A Short History of NATO). The alliance’s first and foremost ostensible objective was to work as a balancing force against the significant Soviet military presence on the European continent, even though it was not the only

- one. The full picture behind the formation of the alliance was, in the words of Henry Kissinger, “to keep the Americans in [Europe], the Russians out and the Germans down.” In other words, NATO worked as an instrument to preserve American tutelage over Europe, demilitarize its nations while keeping them reliant on the American security umbrella and working as a bastion against Soviet belligerency (A Short History of NATO). Ultimately, however, US-created security and defense agreements did serve the desired effect of containing the Soviet Union by shielding Western Europe from communist penetration through Germany, limiting Soviet naval movement into the Mediterranean via Turkey, and blocking the Soviet port of Vladivostok and its access to the Pacific via Japan (Friedman).
3. Interventionism: the fear of “the Domino Effect”- the belief that a communist takeover in one nation would quickly lead to communist penetration of neighboring states, each falling like a perfectly aligned row of dominos-prompted a series of US covert and overt interventions over the course of the Cold War, resulting in a de facto delimitation of Communism to Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and China. Over the span of forty-five years, the US had either intervene militarily, supported proxies- many of whom were right-wing dictators or fascists, overthrew democratic regimes, or rigged elections (Peace). In Western Europe, for example, the CIA instigated a bloody war in Greece 1947, subverted the Italian general elections of 1948 out of concerns of an imminent leftist victory and supported both Franco and Salazar in Spain and Portugal respectively. The US also helped overthrow the democratically elected nationalist Iranian leader Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953, the Guatemalan prime minister Jacobo Árbenz in 1954 and the Chilean leftist president Salvador Allende in 1973.

Simultaneously, this wave of suppressing leftist and democratically elected figures was accompanied by strong political support, finance and protection for military, monarchic and right-wing dictatorships, from the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle, the Revolutionary Government Junta in El-Salvador to the dictatorships of Iranian Shah Reza Pahlavi, South Korean despot Park Chung-hee, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and arriving to Indonesian strongman Suharto. Finally, the US government also intervened directly in the Korean War 1950-53, the Vietnam fiasco 1965-75 and the sidelined bombing of Laos and Cambodia with neither one resulting in a decisive American victory, leading direct military intervention to fall out of favor with US officials and the public alike (Chomsky 22, 30, 33-36, 40)

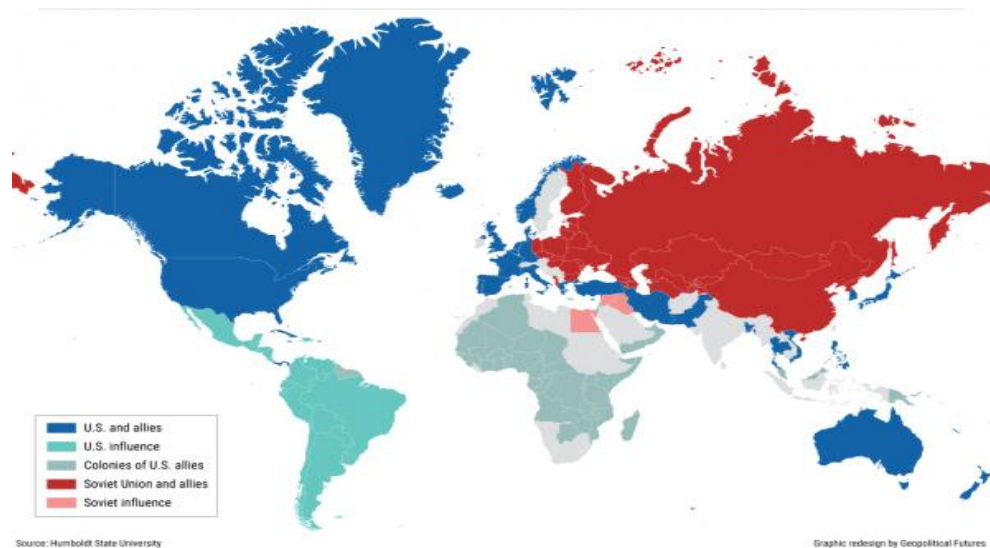


Fig.1. The Delimitation of the Communist Block by US Containment Policy 1959. George, Friedman. "Conflict in the Caucasus and the New American Strategy." *Geopolitical Futures*, 6 Oct 2020, <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/conflict-in-the-caucasus-and-the-new-american-strategy>.

### 2.1.2 America's Soft Power and the Impact of American Pop Culture

Whereas hard power- the threat of military force or economic sanctions, i.e., the ability to coerce-remains potent in international politics, “soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. When you can get others to want what you want,” writes Joseph S. Nye, as it “arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies” (256). In other words, soft power is the policy of neither the carrot (payoffs) nor the stick (threats), but rather the image.

As such, Nye’s words list three elements that form a country’s soft power: its culture, political values and foreign policy. Throughout the Cold War and as US hard power approach focused on containing and combating the spread of Communism through military action and economic pressure, its soft power approach was trying to win the hearts and minds of the peoples, a mission that was initiated by an act of Congress, as it was explained by Eric M. Fattor:

On January 16, 1947, Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Act, thus formally establishing an American foreign communications and propaganda apparatus. The passage of the Smith-Mundt Act committed the United States to using state resources to win the favor and approval of foreign audiences by communicating the values and ideals of the United States and the aims and objectives of its foreign policy. (Fattor 97, 98)

The beginning of the Cold War had revealed the need for state-sponsored media outlets to combat the ideological threat of communism. Among those was the the Voice of America (VOA), a radio broadcasting service that targeted the opinion of peoples around the world, and especially within the USSR , with news about global affairs, discussions about American political system, and more significantly, segments of American music that had a resonating effect with the Russian

audience. Music and entertainment services such as Radio Free Europe also played a key role in painting a positive image of the US in Eastern European countries while official US media and news outlets were seen as an alternative source of information to the official narrative dictated and promulgated by Moscow and were hoped to have the desired effect to motivate citizens living in non-free states to voice their dissatisfaction with their cultural political systems (Fattor 98-100).

Besides the role of American radio and television, American cinema and pop culture had a significant impact in tilting global opinion in favor of Uncle Sam. Hollywood's array of anti-communist works portrayed, on the one hand, the threat posed by the USSR to Americans and their way of life, and on the other hand helped disseminate America's liberal ideas and capitalist model abroad. "Hollywood made hay with the Cold War," argued Tony Shaw, "plundering the conflict for profit and propaganda from beginning to end." Subsequently, the entente that existed between Hollywood and the US government during the Cold War had its roots in the desire to protect capitalist consumerism and manifested itself in the highly charged anti-Soviet, anti-Communist propaganda (Shaw 304).

Despite the advantage that was given to the U.S. by the ubiquitous nature of its pop culture and movie industry-proped-up by centuries of imperialistically induced spread of the English language, it is worth mentioning that America's image and with it its ability to utilize its soft power efficiently was considerably trashed by its unpopular-domestically and globally- Vietnam War and the ensuing bombing of neighbouring Laos and Cambodia.

### **2.1.3 The Weaponization of the Dollar**

#### **2.1.3.1 The Breton Woods System**

The post-World War Two period saw the beginning of what *TIME* magazine termed “the American Century.” The United States had emerged as the most powerful, industrialized country with the most stable economy, being backed up by the largest gold reserves of any nation. As such, the world turned to the US to achieve economic stability and diplomatic cohesion, resulting in the Bretton Woods agreement 1944-45, laying the foundation for an international monetary system that rested on the stable value of the US dollar. Among the provisions of said agreement are the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), aimed for the reconstruction of European and East Asian societies, and perhaps most importantly, placing the gold standard at 35 dollars per ounce, with the US dollar as the backbone of international exchange system. This system came to be a successful one, not only in bringing about the revival of Europe but also by given a dominant stance to American companies in global market. However, by late 1960s, this global financial system was beginning to crumble. Affected by the rising military expenditure in Vietnam, and exacerbated by the economic growth of Europe as an exporting competitor, concerns over the value of the US dollar prompted several European countries to claim their dollar exports for gold from the US federal reserve. By 1971, out of fears of the collapse of US gold reserves, Nixon had no choice but to abandon what was once the pillar of US global economic hegemony (Clark 17-19).

### **2.1.3.2 The Petrodollar Recycling System**

In the 1970s, the antecedent breakdown of the Bretton Woods agreement ushered in the beginning of a new monetary system, one, that for a brief period of time, saw various currencies around the world being rendered into unbacked paper, i.e., fiat currencies. The urging need for a new global financial system, coupled with geopolitical upheaval in the Middle East- the 1973 Ramadan War and the ensuing OPEC oil embargo- laid the groundwork for a new geoeconomic

rapprochement between the United States and Saudi Arabia, one that would place the US dollar as the global exchange currency once again. Under this agreement, Saudi Arabia and other OPEC members were to sell their oil exclusively in US dollars. The US, in return, was to offer its blue water-navy, military might and technology for protection and cooperation. As such, the petrodollar recycling system was born, one where the US dollar is backed by oil, without explicitly being pegged to it at a fixed ratio in the same way it was with gold (Alden).

By cementing this new monetary system on a global stage, the US managed to preserve its economic, financial, technological and military pre-eminence by prolonging the global dominance of the dollar via the increasing demand for dollar-based international investments (Thiha Tun). As such, the petrodollar system which represents “the heart of American power” (Frisani), became one of the main forces shaping US foreign policy, if not the most singular one. The global significance of such a system to US interests was expressed by various economists and geopolitical scholars, one of which was the American financial writer, publisher, and filmmaker, Addison Wiggin:

The petrodollar system breaking down, where oil is no longer paid for in Dollars internationally, essentially would be the death knell to the US Dollar as the reserve currency. It means the US can't borrow with 'exorbitant privilege' anymore, and it means the US Treasury market is set for an out-of-control interest rate spiral. (Wiggin)

Subsequently, the end of the Cold War saw the first on the ground testing of American resolve in guarding the lifeline of its economic hegemony. Its interventions in the Middle East, first during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait 1990 and its invasion of Iraq 2003, were seen by several experts as an attempt to protect and secure the continuous flow of oil exports and by default, the



sustained global demand for US dollars as well as the reversal of Saddam Hussein's government decision to sell its oil in Euros.

## **2.2 The Unipolar Moment**

The date was December 25, 1991: the Soviet flag was being lowered over the Kremlin for the last time, the day after, COMECON (The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) was dissolved and six months earlier the Warsaw Pact had been disbanded (The Collapse of the Soviet Union). This was a geopolitical milestone that ushered in the beginning of a third phase in human evolution of global politics and a sign of the effectiveness and steadfastness of U.S. Containment policy throughout the protracted Cold War. As the Soviet-led Communist System was falling apart from Poland to Vietnam, it carried with it the resurgence of several territorial disputes that had remained dormant during the Cold War, such as the strife between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, the fighting in Chechnya as well as the secessionist movements in India, Sri Lanka, and Sudan (Yilmaz 2). Therefore, faced with a world where balance of power politics and realist logic have become obsolete, where the United States is the global unipole and where anarchy became ubiquitous across the former Soviet Bloc, US foreign policy planners sought to expand their former bounded realist order of the Cold War into an international liberal one where former communist countries join western created institutions, where free market economics would sweep across the world and where liberal democracy becomes the pinnacle of human political evolution (Mearshiemer 22, 23).

### **2.2.1 NATO Enlargement and EU Expansion**

As German crowds were cheering for the imminent reunification of their country in early 1990, then US Secretary of State James Baker met with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to secure

a mutual understanding of the situation at hand, and to obtain a Soviet assent for the reunification—given that East Germany was still a de facto Soviet satellite state. The result was the historic “not one inch eastward” agreement, a quid pro quo where the Soviets would relinquish their dominion over the eastern part of Germany—allowing for the process of reunification to take place— and in response NATO is not to expand beyond that demarcation line, i.e., the newly reunified Germany (NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard).

Still, the rapid and unexpected disintegration of the USSR a year later was proven to be a gamechanger. The demise of its archnemesis meant that, for Washington and its Western European allies, realist concepts of achieving continental security such as ‘the security dilemma’ are to be supplanted by “liberal concepts of liberal institutionalism, economic interdependence and democratic peace theory” (Mearsheimer 33). As communist regimes in central and eastern European countries began to collapse, generating a sense of elation among western and American officials which was further reinforced by those countries’ aspiration of joining EU and western institutions, Western policymakers adopted the liberal approach in their new task of ensuring a unified, peaceful and prosperous continent, modeled after its Western democratic and capitalist part.

In essence, “the goal was to consolidate democracy across the eastern half of the continent,” writes Ronald D. Asmus, former U.S. diplomat and political analyst, “by anchoring central and eastern European countries to the West” (97). With that objective in mind and with a pervading post-Cold War liberal view of global politics, the U.S. abandoned its formerly established understanding with the USSR, initiating the first round of NATO enlargement in 1999 which incorporated Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into the union. The second round took place in 2004 with the Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia being the newest

members in the alliance (see fig.2). By expanding NATO membership to former Soviet republics, the U.S. had managed to transform its Cold War realist order into a liberal global one while mitigating Russia's security concerns "by an unparalleled effort to engage Moscow and work for Russia's own democratic transformation, while still taking what were seen as its legitimate interests into account" (Asmus 98).



Fig.2. The Gradual Eastward Enlargement of NATO Since Its Inception in 1949. Sherina, Patel. "Putin's Russia, Part III: Western Encroachment." *Richmond World Affairs Council*, 14 Nov 2018, <http://www.richmondworldaffairs.org/putins-russia-part-iii-western-encroachment/>

The eastward enlargement of the transatlantic security umbrella can be objectively seen as the next logical step in building a wholesome and peaceful Europe, one that does not have to concern itself with a hostile nuclear communist neighbor. However, as liberal thinkers such as Ronald D. Asmus praised the expansion as "a triumph of statesmanship and an example of successful crisis prevention," scholars of realism such as Russia expert Stephen Cohen criticized

the encroachment into the former Soviet orbit, arguing that “by bringing in countries on Russia’s borders [into NATO] with historical grievances against Russia we [the West] are going to diminish everybody’s national security.” As such, the argument can be made that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe had emboldened the West with a euphoric liberal impetus, in which economic interdependence and democratic institutionalism were seen as a tool of establishing continental peace, a safeguard against the notion of great power competition and under which “Moscow would eventually evolve into a partner and perhaps even a de facto ally” (Asmus 98).

Whereas NATO enlargement served to secure the European periphery by bringing central and eastern European countries into the Western fold, it was further accompanied by EU expansion as a way of transforming former communist countries into liberal democratic ones (see fig.3). By seeking integration into EU political and economic institutions, central and eastern Europeans had to meet certain criteria in regard to their domestic policies, known as the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’, which includes “free-market economy, a stable democracy and the rule of law, as well as the acceptance of all EU legislation” (How Countries Become New EU Members: Rules, Criteria & Procedures Explained).

By becoming EU members, former communist countries gained economic and social benefits, including access to European markets, the possibility of labor immigration into the rest of EU members and access to structural and other EU funds (Jovanovic 9,10). By insisting on the implementation of liberal and democratic reforms within the candidate countries, the EU has helped fostering a peaceful and prosperous Europe through economic interdependence and democratic institutionalism.

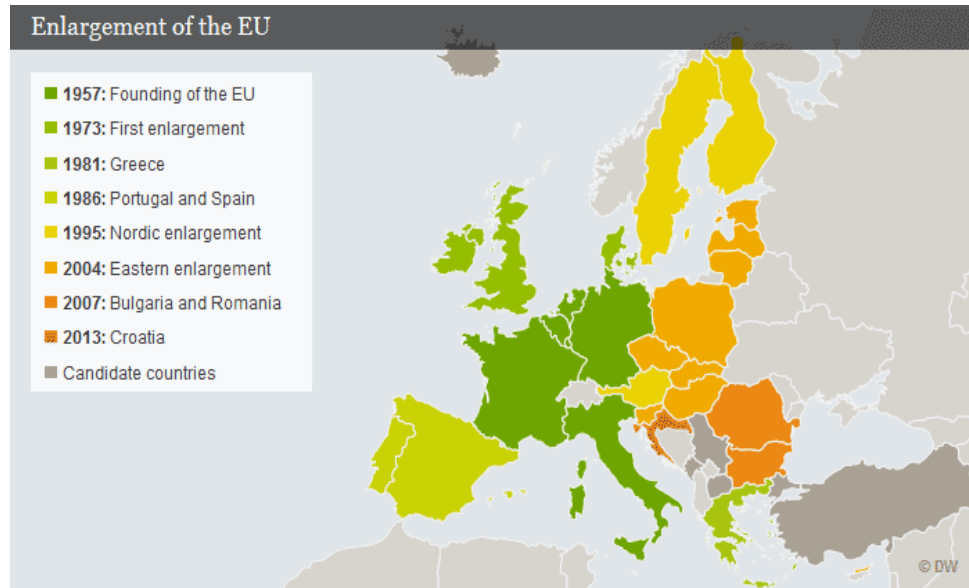


Fig.3. European Union Eastward Expansion. Benjamin, Pargan. “German Minister Roth: 'EU expansion is also in our interest'.” *Deutsche Welle*, 23 Oct 2015, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-minister-roth-eu-expansion-is-also-in-our-interest/a-18369610>

### 2.2.2 The Bush Doctrine: Democracy in The Middle East

As the hijacked planes crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, it became clear to the Bush administration that the US-led liberal international order was being threatened by two main issues: terrorism and proliferation. As such, the conclusion was made that in order to secure the new paradigm of post-Cold War global politics, the US had to embark on a mission of counterterrorism which also correlated with toppling ‘rogue regimes’ and combating ‘state-sponsored terrorism’ in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Syria. The key assumption was that by turning the Greater Middle East into a liberal democratic oasis, the U.S. would be able to quell the peril of nuclear proliferation and the spread of Islamic militarism

“because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. They encourage the peaceful pursuit of a better life” as it was expressed by President Bush (Mearsheimer 24,25).

To say that the Bush administration wanted to foster democracy and peace in the Greater Middle East is not simply to say that it was acting on altruistic motives. As the First Gulf War and the ensuing Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had shown, US global supremacy rested upon its economic lifeline to the Persian Gulf oil and its sway over that area of the world. In other words, even though the Bush doctrine aimed at curbing the threat of terrorism by attempting to turn Middle Eastern countries into western-style liberal democracies, it, however, also sought to secure US economic interests and by extension prolonging the US-led liberal order. Such a belief was held by key Bush administration neocons, argued George Soros, and articulated in the 1997 mission statement of the Project for the New American Century, a neoconservative think tank and advocacy group, which stated:

1. We need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values.
2. We need to promote the cause of political and economic free market abroad.
3. We need to accept responsibility for America’s unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity and our principles. (Soros 4-7)

Subsequently, however, the Bush doctrine of spreading democracy in the Middle East through ‘regime change’ was proven to be short of a geopolitical disaster. As the pervading notion at the time among American policy makers, as stated by Brian C. Schmidt & Michael C. Williams, was “that the United States economic and security interests are advanced by the spread of liberal values and democratic institutions abroad” (199). This approach, nonetheless, was doomed to

failure from the start as it collided with realist notions of nationalism such as sovereignty and national identity, especially in a region where “western democracy strengthens anti-western political forces” and in a period of time during which the absence of the common threat of Communism led the West and Islam to perceive each other as enemies, a perception only exacerbated by increased communication and interaction between the two civilizations (Huntington 211).

### **2.2.3 An Engagement Policy with China**

After its split with the Soviet Union during the 1960s, China had had a rather constructive relationship with the United States, which continued after the collapse of its former ally. As the end of the Cold War saw the United States attempting to expand its Western order into a liberal international one by incorporating more countries into its international institutions, its entente with China not only continued but rather intensified. As “population size and wealth are the main building blocks of military power,” writes Prof. Mearsheimer, “there was a serious possibility that China might become dramatically stronger in the decades to come.” However, as US policy makers had abandoned realist logic for good, an engagement policy was adopted, one that was supposed to turn China into a ‘responsible stakeholder’ in a US-led global order. The assumption was that by engaging, rather than containing China, opening global markets to Chinese goods and businesses, the Chinese society will grow richer and prosperous, which will eventually lead to the democratization of the Chinese state (Mearsheimer).

The early signs of a continued US-Sino rapprochement manifested itself when president Clinton updated China’s “most favored nation” status to become permanent, laying the groundwork for its ensuing accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and

leading to an influx of Chinese goods into global markets, making China grow stronger, richer and more influential (see fig .4) (U.S. Relations With China). This policy of economic-based détente further continued under later administrations, believing that, in the words of George W. Bush, “trade with China will promote freedom,” a view which was also shared by his successor Barack Obama who stated in 2015:

Since I’ve been president, my goal has been to consistently engage with China in a way that is constructive, to manage our differences and to maximize opportunities for cooperation. And I’ve repeatedly said that I believe it is in the interests of the United States to see China grow. (Obama)

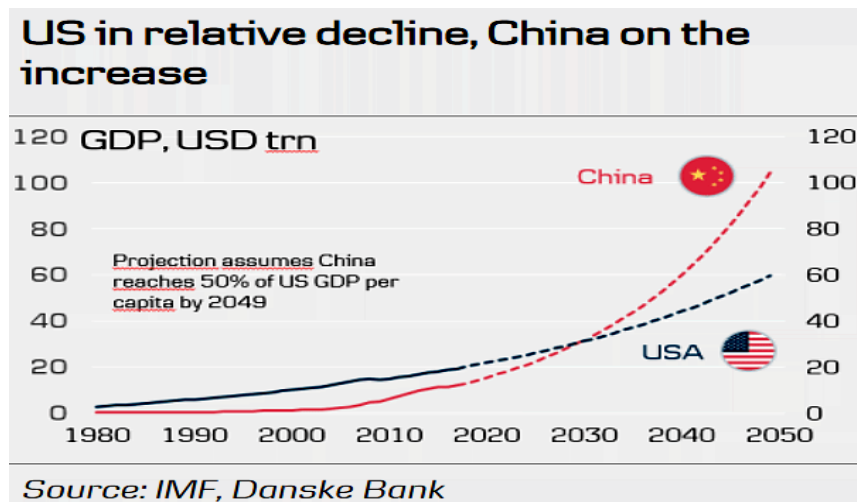


Fig.4. Chinese Economic Growth vis-à-vis Its American Competitor. Danske Bank. “U.S. GDP vs. China GDP.” *ISABELNET*, 23 Nov 2019, <https://www.isabelnet.com/u-s-gdp-vs-china-gdp/>

Obama’s remarks during his joint press conference with Chinese president Xi Jinping were later reiterated by his Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a *Foreign Policy* article, emphasizing the need for further cooperation with China as “a thriving China is good for America,” she wrote,



especially during an era when “the future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action.”

Beguiled by the liberal triumphalism of the 1990s, US engagement policy with China has been proven to be more detrimental than benign to US interests. Nowhere in the history books was there ever a comparable example of a great power actively fostering the rise of a peer competitor which only hastened the demise of the liberal order. As Chinese-led organizations and transcontinental projects with the likes of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the One Belt, One Road (BRI) started to emerge, China seeks to assert itself not as a player in a US-led order, but as a rival seeking to establish an order for itself.

## **Conclusion**

During its almost half a century standoff with the USSR, the US focused on building and securing its own Western order, helping to stabilize friendly democracies, building military alliances and signing security partnerships, all while following the realist notion of balance of power politics in its attempt to contain the Soviet-led bloc. To achieve its endeavor of defeating Communism, the US also focused on winning the hearts and minds of peoples of the world through the dissemination of its pop culture on a global stage while also maintaining its economic advantage over the USSR by pegging its currency to oil. However, the end of the Cold War witnessed the emergence of a US-led international order. In a world where there were no serious competitors, the US worked to expand and solidify its liberal international order by incorporating more countries into its Cold War Western institutions, establishing an international economy dominated by free market capitalism and embarking on a mission of promoting liberal democracy and Western notions of human rights.

## **Chapter Three**

### **A New International Order in the Making**

## Introduction

When we look back at human history, one cannot help but notice the similar trends that took place in the event of the decline of a superpower. Whether a regional, continental or global hegemon, great powers create and dictate the rules and conventions of the systems they end up establishing. Subsequently, however, the decline of the hegemonic entity, as well as its possible and ensuing demise, will have historical and geopolitical ramifications on the political order it had created. The decline will entail, as history has shown, two possible scenarios: the disintegration of the political entity into smaller and weaker elements or the rise of a new hegemonic power that would incorporate the former one into its new political system, with the fall of the Roman Empire and the fragmentation of the USSR being examples of the former while the incorporation of Britain into the U.S-led Cold War order being an example of the latter.

Since the end of the first decade of the new century, the decline of the United States as a global hegemon has become more evident via its inability to sustain the international order it had created at the end of the Cold War, the rise of ever more belligerent competitors and the increasing state of internal cultural division among a wide spectrum of the American population. As such, these internal and global upheavals can be seen as signs of not only America's national decline as the dominant global power, but also ushering in a new international order in the making.

This chapter dives into the geopolitical earthquakes that took place in the international arena since the beginning of the new millennium and attempts to highlight the role of new geopolitical forces that are at play for the ultimate endeavor of producing a plausible schematic for the emerging global order.

### 3.1 The Challenging Nations

In his 1996 interview with Charlie Rose, renowned American political scientist, Samuel P. Huntington, presented his reading for the contours of the new international order that seemed to be shaping, regarding the relative power of the West vis-à-vis non-western nations. In his observation, Huntington noted:

I think the influence of the West has been declining for some while now during this current century and it will continue to decline because other nations are modernizing and developing, acquiring economic wealth and power and after that will come military power and political influence, and this is, of course, like I have said, most notable with respect to East Asian societies. (Huntington)

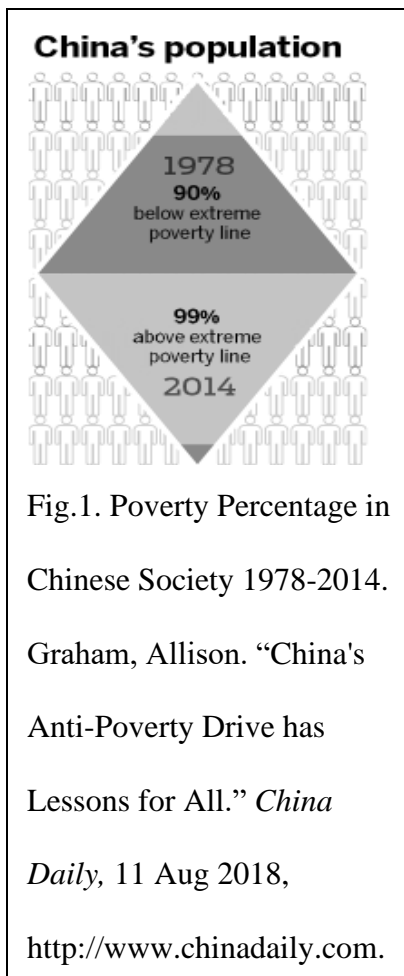
As we have entered the second decade of the new century, Huntington's words could not have been any more insightful. By attempting to enforce its idealistically driven image of a global order, the U.S. not only failed to sustain such a system, but helped to embolden and reinvigorate old rivals and changed to geopolitical significance of the world's regions.

#### 3.1.1 China: The Opposing Pole

China's role in international affairs is, as history shows, ancient and globally influential. China is the cradle of many of humanity's earliest scientific innovations, as "printing was invented in China in the eighth century A.D. [...] Paper was introduced into China in the second century A.D. [...] Another Chinese invention, gunpowder, made in the ninth century" (Huntington 49). When it comes to states' national identity, China is, in the words of Lucian Pye, "a civilization pretending to be a state" (qtd. in Huntington 44). Still, starting with the Europeans, the Americans and then the Japanese, the period between 1839 and 1949 represented, what the Chinese call, 'The

Century of National Humiliation’ where China was subjugated and penetrated by the aforementioned powers. As such, the argument can be made that the combination of ancient hegemony, national pride and the success of the Chinese model of development stand behind China’s global steadfastness.

China’s modern assertiveness can be traced back to the success of its hybrid model of authoritarianism and economic development. “China’s economy grew at nearly 10% a year for thirty years,” noted Richard N. Cooper, “... this gave families real choices in life for the first time, not only for themselves but especially for their children” (see fig.1.). The result of this economic miracle manifested itself in 2010 when China’s economy displaced Japan’s as the second largest in the world by GDP, according to the BBC, and the first by GNP, according to the World Bank.



Prior to that, “the 2008 financial crisis, the seeming downfall of the “Washington consensus” and the seeming vindication of the “Beijing consensus,” Edward N. Luttwak argued, “greatly emboldened the Chinese ruling elite, inducing a veritable behavioral shift that became manifest in 2009– 2010” (8).

Meanwhile, as China’s economy was experiencing this unprecedented boom, America’s was going through a phase of prolonged retraction, as it was explained by Graham Allison:

National GDP creates the substructure of international power. America’s share of global GDP has shrunk from half in 1950 to a quarter at the end of the Cold War in 1991; it is one-seventh today [2020] and is on a trajectory to be one-tenth by midcentury. (Allison)

In addition, Allison has listed several areas where China has already surpassed the U.S., becoming the leading number one nation in the number of billionaires in 2016, largest economy by GDP in 2014, the largest middle class in 2015 and the number one trading nation, globally, in 2012.

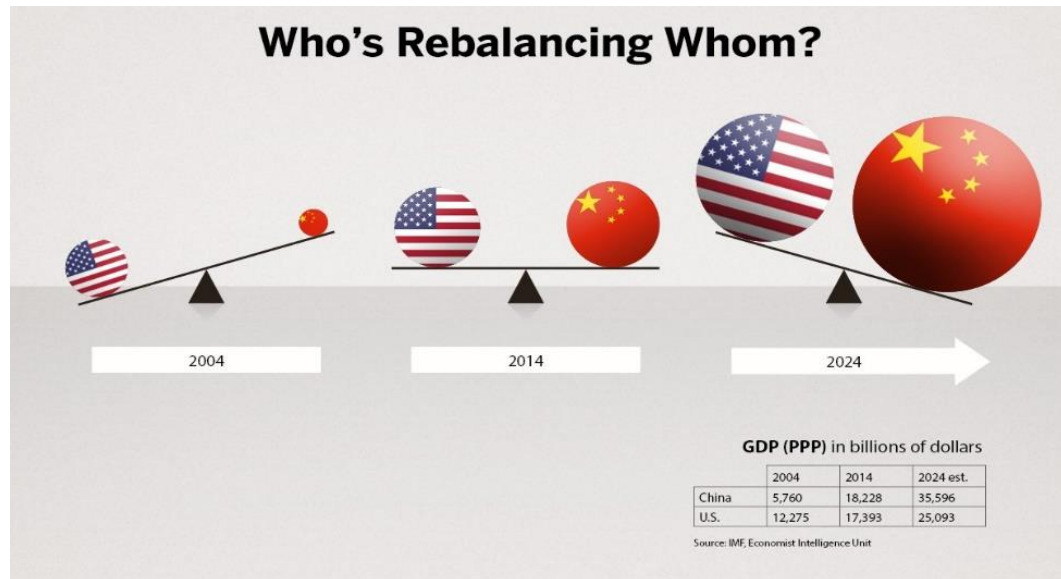


Fig.2. The Shift in Economic Power between the US and China 2004-2024. Graham, Allison. “The U.S.-China Strategic Competition: Clues from History.” *BELFER CENTER for Science and International Affairs*, Feb 2020, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/us-china-strategic-competition-clues-history#ttl>

As China has grown ever more assertive in terms of its outward look on the region and the world, it attempts to reestablish its hegemony, especially over East Asia, through the projection of economic power and incentives, not through military interventions, at least not for now. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by president Xi Jinping in 2013, has been labeled as ‘Asia’s Marshal Plan.’ This mega transcontinental project of trade infrastructure, ports, railroads, highways and energy pipelines comprises 68 countries, encompassing 65% of the world’s population and 40% of the global GDP embodies China’s geopolitical aspirations of becoming

Asia's hegemon, again. As such a plan cannot take place without political calculations, "some analysts see the project as an unsettling extension of China's rising power, significantly expanding China's economic and political influence," write Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, and perhaps more importantly in terms of its relations with the U.S., "experts see the BRI as one of the main planks of a bolder Chinese statecraft under Xi," which for the Chinese leader, "the BRI serves as pushback against the much-touted U.S. 'pivot to Asia,'" they added.

Graham Allison's coinage of the term 'Thucydides' Trap,' a measurement to the likelihood of war when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power stand as a testament to how fragile bilateral relations have become between China (rising power) and the U.S., a declining dominant power attempting to preserve the status quo. By attempting to carry out what some call 'revisionist policies' in the Asia-Pacific, and by de fault projecting influence over key U.S. allies such as Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, experts fear that would put the two nations on a collision course. "According to The New York Times," however, "in eighteen of the last eighteen Pentagon war games involving China in the Taiwan Strait, the U.S. lost," Allison writes. "These results raise questions about the utility of America's recent combat experience, which has never been against a near-peer competitor or in a contested battlespace since WWII," he commented.

Still, there are those who downplay the implications and multitude of such an ongoing shift in the global balance of power, one of those being the leading geopolitical forecaster George Friedman, who expressed the shortcomings of China's global status vis-à-vis that of the U.S., by stating:

Yes, China has grown, but its growth has made it a hostage to its foreign customers.

Nearly 20 percent of China's gross domestic product is generated from exports, 5 percent of which are bought by its largest customer, the United States... If the U.S. simply

bought fewer Chinese products, Washington would damage China without firing a shot. If China is a rising power, it is rising on a very slippery slope without recourse to warfare...but as I said, it's rising from the Maoist era. It has a significant military, but that military's hands are tied until China eliminates its existential vulnerability: dependence on exports...More than perhaps any country in the world, China cannot risk a breakdown in the global trading system. Doing so might hurt the U.S. but not existentially. (Friedman)

Still, like Athens, Germany, Japan and the U.S. before, China's rise is undisputed and cannot be dismissed as a mere say. The global significance and trajectorial impact of such a rise on the other hand is yet to be seen. As international orders rise and collapse based on an array of denominators, the geopolitical weight of China as a civilizational state, however, might just be the overweighing one.

### **3.1.2 Post-Soviet Russian Resurrection (Syria & Ukraine)**

In the modern and postmodern eras, Russia's history can be divided into three phases: imperial (1721-1917), communist (1917-1991) and post-Soviet Russia (1991-the present). Despite the varying forms of governance, between the monarch, the party and the head of state, Russia remained influential on the European stage and a contributing architect to European security, that is until the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the demise of communism throughout eastern Europe and the ensuing state of economic trepidation significantly diminished Russia's political influence in Europe and emboldened former breakaway states on its periphery.

The first incident to substantiate the new reality on the ground was when Russia could not prevent NATO forces from intervening in former Yugoslavia against its kin Orthodox Serbs. The



second was NATO's two rounds of enlargement in 1999 and 2004, with neighboring Baltic states becoming part of a once, and probably still is, a hostile Western alliance. During the next two decades, Russia found itself outside the table of global politics in a US-led order, one that was denounced by Russian president Vladimir Putin in 2007 when he stated that "the United States has over stepped its borders. It is imposing its will on other states in the economy, in politics and in the humanitarian sphere. And who likes this? Who likes it?" he added (Belton 586). Finally, during its 2008 Bucharest summit, NATO extended its invitation for Georgia and Ukraine to join the alliance, deepening Putin's suspicions of the West, and as Russia's global geopolitical interests were being ignored and its regional security concerns were being rebuffed, Russia went on the offensive.

### **3.1.2.1 Syria**

Russia's 2015 military intervention in Syria represented the comeback of a 'rising power' on a regional level, if not a global one. One contributing factor was the stability of the region. The Western intervention in Libya under the auspices of NATO, under the pretext of protecting civilian lives, was a scenario Russia had no intention of seeing it being replicated in the Levant. The ensuing toppling of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, which produced a power vacuum that later resulted in a civil war and the Mediterranean immigration crisis meant that, for Russia, the stability of the Fertile Crescent, and by extension, its adjacent Caucasus region, was contingent upon securing a stable and secular government against the threat of a radical Islamist insurgency (Averre and Davie 818).

Intertwined in Russian policymakers' thinking, the preservation of the Assad regime also translated into counterterrorism. "The influx of Islamist terrorism into Syria," argued Maria Freire

and Regina Heller, “the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and its military successes throughout 2014–2015 dramatically altered the context of the Syria conflict” (18). As Russia had already fought two wars with Islamists in Chechnya and Afghanistan and with an indigenous Muslim population of 16 million (11% of the population), “it fears [ed] the Syrian conflict will become more radicalized and spread further (Trenin). Based on that historical context and geographical proximity, the line of reasoning in Moscow was that “the Kremlin equated Assad’s defeat with a Sunni extremist takeover of Syria, which represented a threat that could not be contained within Syria’s borders” (Samuel et al. 3).

The prospect of Syria’s utilization as a playing card to hit back at the West was also plausible as it came one year after the Russian takeover of Crimea and the ensuing wave of economic sanctions by the West. As it was “set against the background of the political fallout between Russia and the West over clashing foreign policies in Ukraine,” Moritz Pieper wrote, “Russia’s intervention in Syria meant that world attention was diverted from the conflict in Ukraine” (13). By becoming the military hegemon in Syria, Russia also became the de facto broker of peace in the region, giving it a degree of leverage over its European neighbors, especially when it came to the European Refugees Crisis, as it was stated by Maria Raquel Freire & Regina Heller in their article titled, ‘*Russia’s Power Politics in Ukraine and Syria: Status-seeking between Identity, Opportunity and Costs*’, that:

[...] the European refugee crisis had the potential to put the European Union under pressure and undermine the sanctions regime. There had been strong disagreement among the EU members on whether to continue or to lift the EU sanctions on Russia: the refugee crisis intensified intra-European conflicts and, as a consequence, the EU’s position on Russia became less coherent or stable. (Freire and Heller 19)

The outcome of Russia's geopolitical maneuver in Syria resulted in a change in the balance of power and political influence between it and the U.S. in the Middle East and a reminder of the extension of Russian leverage over Europe. By preserving the legitimacy and livelihood of the Syrian regime and thwarting Western aspirations for a regime change, Russia made her voice heard again in international affairs (Souleimanov113). "Putin's long-standing objective," Andrei Tsygankov notes, "has been to establish Russia as a nation that acts in accordance with formal and informal norms of traditional great power politics and is recognized as a major state by the outside world." Russia's ability to secure its interests while simultaneously catering to those of Sunni Turkey, Shia Iran and even Israel, three regional powers with adversarial agendas, serves as evidence to Russia's preeminent role as an influential interlocuter in global politics and the diminishing role of the U.S., notably in the Middle East.

### 3.1.2.2 Ukraine: The Putin Doctrine

[...] at the moment as we talk [2018] we are eyeball to eyeball in a new cold war with Russia. Putin was one of the few leaders in the world that stood up to the Americans, and the main manifestation of that was the Ukraine Crisis. (Mearsheimer and Cohen)

With these comments made to *Vice News*, political realist Prof. John J. Mearsheimer and Russia expert Prof. Steven Cohen explained the situation in Ukraine in the midst of unprecedented tensions between Russia and the West. Ukraine's geostrategic significance to Russia has been proven throughout European history, being "a huge expanse of flat land that Napoleonic France, Imperial Germany and Nazi Germany all crossed to strike at Russia itself" (Mearsheimer 3). "Thus is the strategic value of Ukraine to Russia," George Friedman argues, "if Ukraine remains intact, and if it becomes a part of NATO, Moscow would be less than 300 miles (480 kilometers) from

the attackers.” In addition to security considerations, though being the overriding ones, Russia’s view of Ukraine is also impacted by the fact that the latter is what Samuel Huntington called a ‘cleft country’ (see fig.3). “By Huntington’s civilizational standard, Ukraine is a severely cleft country,” writes William S. Smith, “divided internally along historical, geographic and religious lines, with western Ukraine firmly in the European corner and eastern Ukraine and Crimea firmly in the orbit of Orthodox Russia.”

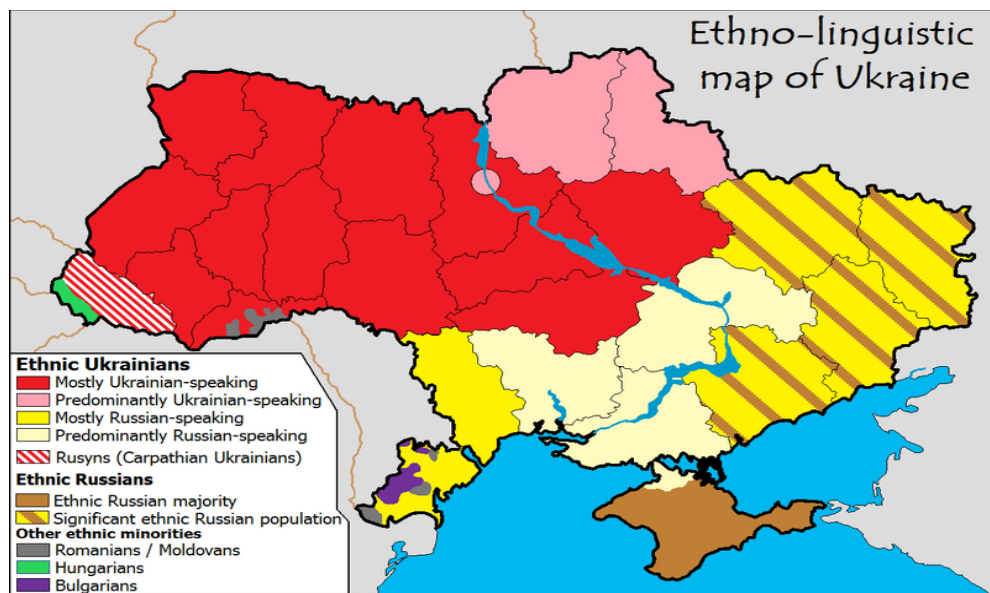


Fig.3. The Cultural Division of Ukraine. Yerevanci. “Ethnolinguistic map of Ukraine.” *Wikimedia Commons*, 11 Dec 2011, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnolinguistic\\_map\\_of\\_ukraine.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnolinguistic_map_of_ukraine.png)

As it was explained in chapter two, at the end the cold war, the U.S. attempted to turn the rest of Europe-former Soviet sphere of influence- into liberal democracies via its package of EU expansion, NATO enlargement and democracy promotion. However, as history had shown with the Cuban missile Crisis, great powers-democratic or authoritarian- tend to be intolerant of distant great powers encroaching on their territory and will go to great length to protect their security

interests (Walt). Just as America has the Monroe Doctrine, Russia now has the Putin Doctrine. Even though the reason behind trying to incorporate Ukraine into the Western fold may- and that is a big may- have been benign, “it was also deeply rooted in Washington that if you take Ukraine, bring it into the West, militarily, economically, through the EU, through NATO, Russia would be nothing more than what Obama called ‘a weak regional power’” (Cohen). Therefore, we argue that the Ukraine Crisis has emerged as result of ignoring Russia’s security concerns, Western hubristic liberalism and a lack of realpolitik knowledge on the part of Ukraine’s elite.

The February 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 invasion of Ukraine can be seen as the pinnacle of Russia’s efforts to neutralize Ukraine’s NATO endeavor. Just as it was the case with Georgia-the other former NATO candidate member, Russia followed a two-way strategy: long-term internal subversion and military incursion. By relying on its cultural affinity with the population of eastern Ukraine, Russia managed to align itself with separatist factions in the Donbass region, turning the enclave into a de-facto Russian zone and undermining Ukraine’s stability. Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea, a Ukrainian peninsula with a Russian majority, represented both a reactive and preemptive move. The latter came after pro-Russian Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovich, fled to Russia in the midst of the famous Maidan protests, prompting Russian concerns over the utilization of the peninsula in hosting a NATO naval base. The geopolitical implications and motives that underpinned such a situation were articulated by Angela E. Stent, who pointed out that:

The events of 2014 were a turning point, precipitating a breakdown of the post-Cold War consensus that accepted the borders of former Soviet republics...the Kremlin views Ukraine’s international orientation as an existential question. It claims that if Ukraine were to join the West, this would represent a direct threat to Russia’s heartland. (Stent 274,275)



At the micro level, Russia’s military incursion seems, and might be, about its security concerns that included, “a guarantee that Ukraine would never join NATO, that NATO draw down its forces in the Eastern European countries that have already joined, and that the 2015 cease-fire in Ukraine be implemented” (Bilefsky et al.). On the macro level, however, Russia has overturned Europe’s post-Cold War security architecture and is now in a new geopolitical quarrel with the West, in which Kiev, not Berlin, is its epicenter (see fig.4.). This geopolitical realization was also enunciated by U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milly, warning that, “if Russia gets away with this [Ukraine’s invasion] cost-free, then so goes the so-called international order, and if that happens, then we’re entering into an era of seriously increased instability,” Milly told CNN.

Milly’s comments about the status of the global order were reiterated by the international response to Russia’s military incursion, as it was explained by Colum Lynch:

Besides the United States’ closest friends and military allies in the West and East Asia, most of the world is not interested in joining the US-led campaign to isolate Russia...Behind this show of unity [of the West] is a world that is largely adjusting to a new multipolar era, where the United States is no longer the lone superpower. (Lynch)

Therefore, “a new architecture for global relations must be built,” writes David Ignatius, “and its shape will depend on whether Putin’s brutal campaign succeeds or fails.”

### **3.1.3 Islamic Resurgence (Turkey & Iran)**

The end of the Cold War brought about a Middle Eastern domino effect of geopolitical upheavals that upended the established power dynamics in the region. There was the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the ensuing Iraq-Iran War 1980-1988, the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the Gulf War 1991 and the American Invasion of Iraq in 2003. While countries fell and others were wrecked, some capitalized on the situation and, over time, rose to fill in the power vacuum that was formed, among those were the two adversarial states of Turkey and Iran.

#### **3.1.3.1 Turkey**

Turkey’s Post-Cold War rise came with the ascension of the Development and Justice Party (AKP) to power in 2002. By understanding Turkey’s geographical advantage, being a civilizational link between the Muslim World and Europe, the AKP succeeded in drafting a balanced economic approach based on combining “traditional connections to European and other economies situated within the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] with the dynamism of the emerging markets, especially Muslim majority societies in nearby nations.” As such, turning Turkey into an economic powerhouse rested upon a two-way strategy: the openness of Turkish economy to European investment, and the redirection of trade towards developing countries and Muslim societies in the Middle East as well as North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Subsequently, “this outreach has shaped Ankara’s rise, both economically and politically. While the EU grew at an average 1.3 percent in the past decade, Turkey has grown at a whopping 5.3 percent” (Cagaptay 5,6).

Turkey's geopolitical weight was further illustrated by U.S. ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns, stating that:

Turkey is the only European country that has grown in power since the financial crisis and the start of the Arab uprisings... Turkey may even now be more powerful in the Middle East than Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. (Burns)

Thus, over the past years, Turkey's military assertiveness started to take a brazen tone. Turkish military industry took off, reducing the nation's dependence on foreign suppliers, resulting in Turkey "moving from being the world's third-biggest receiver of weapons to the 14th-biggest arms exporter." In the midst of the volatile political landscape surrounding it, the Turkish government seeks to meet the needs of its armed forces and to achieve geostrategic autonomy. Furthermore, as a result of Turkish rising military ingenuity and the assertion of its military technology in regions such as Syria, Libya, the Caucasus and Ukraine, "more countries are willing to offer Ankara a foothold in the form of an alliance or a forward military base on their soil," in exchange for Turkish weaponry (Bakir).

To counter any policy disagreements with the West, however, Turkey will/is using its composite of geographical advantage, cultural affinity with the Muslim World and its recent rapprochement with Russia to secure its interests and guarantee its national security (see fig.5.).

The gravity of the geopolitical influence that Turkey exerts upon Western interests in the region was first manifested during its involvement in the Syrian Conflict. Resting upon mutual interests regarding Kurdish separatism, Syria's territorial integrity and the refugee crisis, Turkey's policies pivoted towards that of Iran and Russia. "Like Moscow and Tehran, Ankara is now more anti-Western than at any point in recent memory," argued Colin P. Clarke and Ariane M.



Tabatabai. “In that sense, Turkey is pivoting away from NATO and toward the two revisionist powers,” they added. The Syrian conflagration had shown just how adversarial Ankara’s and its Western partners’ visions were regarding the preferred outcome, as the former emphasized stability and curbing the Kurdish threat, while the latter aspired for regime change and counterterrorism.

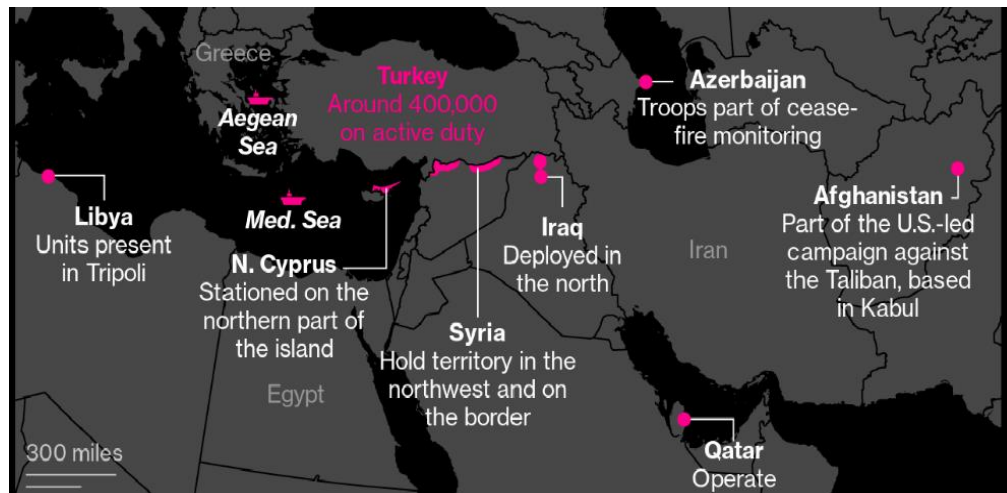


Fig.5. Turkey’s Regional Military Presence. Selcan, Hacaoglu. ‘Mapping the Turkish Military’s Expanding Footprint.’ *The Washington Post*, 31 Aug 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/mapping-the-turkish-militarys-expanding-footprint/2020/08/28/0ac8a114-e8e3-11ea-bf44-0d31c85838a5\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/mapping-the-turkish-militarys-expanding-footprint/2020/08/28/0ac8a114-e8e3-11ea-bf44-0d31c85838a5_story.html)

Besides Syria, other flashing points of Turkish geopolitical impetus included its involvement in Libya January 2020, and its decisive support to its kin country Azerbaijan against Armenia of that same year. Turkey’s military assistance for the UN recognized government in Tripoli was an extension of its efforts to secure its energy interests in the eastern Mediterranean and a preemptive move against its regional competitors, as “Turkey has used its maritime boundary agreement with the GNA to renew its pursuit of rights to conduct exploration and drilling activities

in disputed waters in the eastern Mediterranean,” Writes Ahmed Helal for the *Atlantic Council*, a Washington based think tank of international affairs.

The dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh was another display of Turkish resolve as Ankara came to Azerbaijan’s aid in its 30-year-old standoff with Armenia. “Turkey’s indigenously produced drones, which, coupled with Turkish training and tactics, significantly bolstered Azerbaijan’s ability to inflict damage on Armenian forces,” stated Nicholas Danforth. “Turkey also transported hundreds of Syrian rebel fighters to the front lines to fight for Azerbaijan,” he added. By actively getting involved in the Caucasus, a region historically known as ‘Russia’s backyard’, Turkey had signaled a new Russia policy, shaped by competitiveness yet coordination as well.

As such, what we can observe from the three aforementioned examples is that despite the geopolitical rapprochement which Turkey had established with Russia in Syria, in effect undermining Western interests there, it, however, did not prevent it from challenging Russia’s own interests in Libya and the Caucasus. This approach can be better explained through Nicholas Danforth’s comments about Turkey’s new vision of global affairs, stating that:

Convinced that the world is becoming more chaotic and more multipolar, Ankara has emphasized its willingness to act independently of, or even in direct opposition to, its former Western allies while building a relationship with Russia that is simultaneously cooperative and competitive. (Danforth)

### **3.1.3.2 Iran**

Since its 1979 Revolution, Iran moved from a secular western-backed monarchy to a belligerent theocracy, impacting the country’s global status and its regional foreign policy.

Tehran's influence in the region was further amplified, primarily due to America's destabilization of the region via its 2003 Invasion of Iraq and the ensuing turmoil that followed. Iran's growing influence in the region as well as its expansionist tendencies correspond to the ideology of its Mullahs, the demographic tone of its neighbors which correlate to protecting its national security. Tehran's regional assertiveness resides in the regime's adoption of a "forward defense" strategy that rests upon an array of geostrategic objectives, which were articulated by Philip Loft, which include:

1. Protect the legacy of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when the Shah was overthrown. The country fought an eight-year war with Iraq from 1980. Iraq had the backing of most Arab states.
2. Protect Shia Muslims (Iran is a Shia-majority state, most other Middle Eastern states have Sunni Muslim rulers and majority Sunni populations).
3. Compensate for relatively weak conventional military capabilities and instead build up a network of affiliates and proxies to protect it. This is called the "forward defense" strategy, whereby it combats enemies in weak states such as Lebanon and Iraq.
4. To combat US and Israel and competitors such as Saudi Arabia.
5. Obtain allies abroad to end its isolation (Iran is one of the most sanctioned countries in the world). (Loft 4,6)

As such, over the past two decades, Iran has managed to guard its interests in the region while securing its western flank by establishing the 'Shia Crescent', a geo-demographic term signifying the countries that have fallen under Iranian influence: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, all with significant Shia population, all with fragile political systems. By capitalizing on the power

vacuum that resulted from prolonged turmoil in those countries, Tehran has managed to cultivate close ties with Shia political figures, established militant proxies and had effectively infiltrated their political institutions (Muñoz) (see fig.6.).

In Iraq, “Iran’s single most important foreign-policy brief,” Tehran’s strategy, since 2003, has been one of a geostrategic duality: undermining America’s military and political presence and establishing influence over the new Iraqi government. Iraq’s geopolitical significance came from its shared borders with Iran, its historical enmity to the regime and its significant Shia population. Subsequently, Iran has established a Shia proxy militancy that paralleled and even shadowed the weight of the Iraqi army, such as the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), protecting Iranian interests and projecting Iran’s influence over the Iraqi society, to which “by 2011, Iran’s forces and political allies were entrenched in Iraq, and Tehran’s influence there acknowledged by the international community.” (*Iran’s Networks of Influence in the Middle East* 11, 121)

One of the oldest strongholds of Iranian regional influence is Lebanon, where Tehran exerts formidable sway via its Shia proxy group, Hezbollah. “Founded by Iran’s Revolutionary Guards in 1982 and heavily armed,” writes Tom Perry and Laila Bassam, “Hezbollah has long been Lebanon’s strongest faction, gradually establishing the country as one of several Arab states where Iran’s Shi’ite Islamist government wields major sway.” Of all of Iran’s Shia proxies, “Hezbollah is the world’s most heavily armed non-state actor” (Katz). Hezbollah’s value as a strategic asset to Tehran was shown during the latter’s involvement in the Syrian Civil War in 2013, when the group sent thousands of its troops to join Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in supporting the Assad regime (Robinson). Via Hezbollah, and by extension, Lebanon, Iran has been able to obtain a remote and highly valuable bastion on the Mediterranean coast, one that overlooks Israel’s northern borders.

Ruled by the Alawites- a breakaway faction of Shia Islam- Damascus has been a longstanding ally of the Iranian regime, with whom it shares a similar regional view. As such, Iran's 2013 intervention came at a decisive moment, "culminating in the 2016 capture of Aleppo, the axis turned the tide of the war," writes Brian Katz, "preserving Assad in Damascus, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Iran's power projection in the Levant." Tehran was able to procure such results by employing and entrenching its wide net of regional Shia militias (see fig.7.) while integrating Iranian personnel into the ranks of the Syrian army and its security apparatus. Such approaches came as precautionary moves "to ensure its survival in Syria—especially in the event that an international agreement is made to neutralize its military presence" (Saban).

Upon closer examination of the three aforementioned cases, we observe the way Iran was able to make use of its neighbors' internal divisions in order to further its own geopolitical agenda. By becoming politically and militarily entrenched in those countries, primarily through empowering its Shia proxies and supporting its partners, Tehran had formed a 'land corridor' that stretches from its western borders to the Mediterranean, giving it formidable strategic depth, which correlates to offensive and defensive advantages in the possible scenario of direct armed conflict with Israel, explaining the latter's intermittent airstrikes against what were deemed Iranian military installations in southern Syria.

As Yemen sank into the flames of internal strife in 2014, Iranian policymakers saw an opportunity to have a strategic foothold that overlooks the Strait of Aden, the Red Sea and borders their ideological rival, Saudi Arabia. In 2015, as the Saudi-led coalition started to undermine the territorial gains made by the Houthis-a Shia militia-Iran stepped in to provide military assistance, finance, training and ammunition to the group, enabling them to target Saudi assets and energy installations while expanding their and Iran's sway around the Arabian Peninsula (Katz).

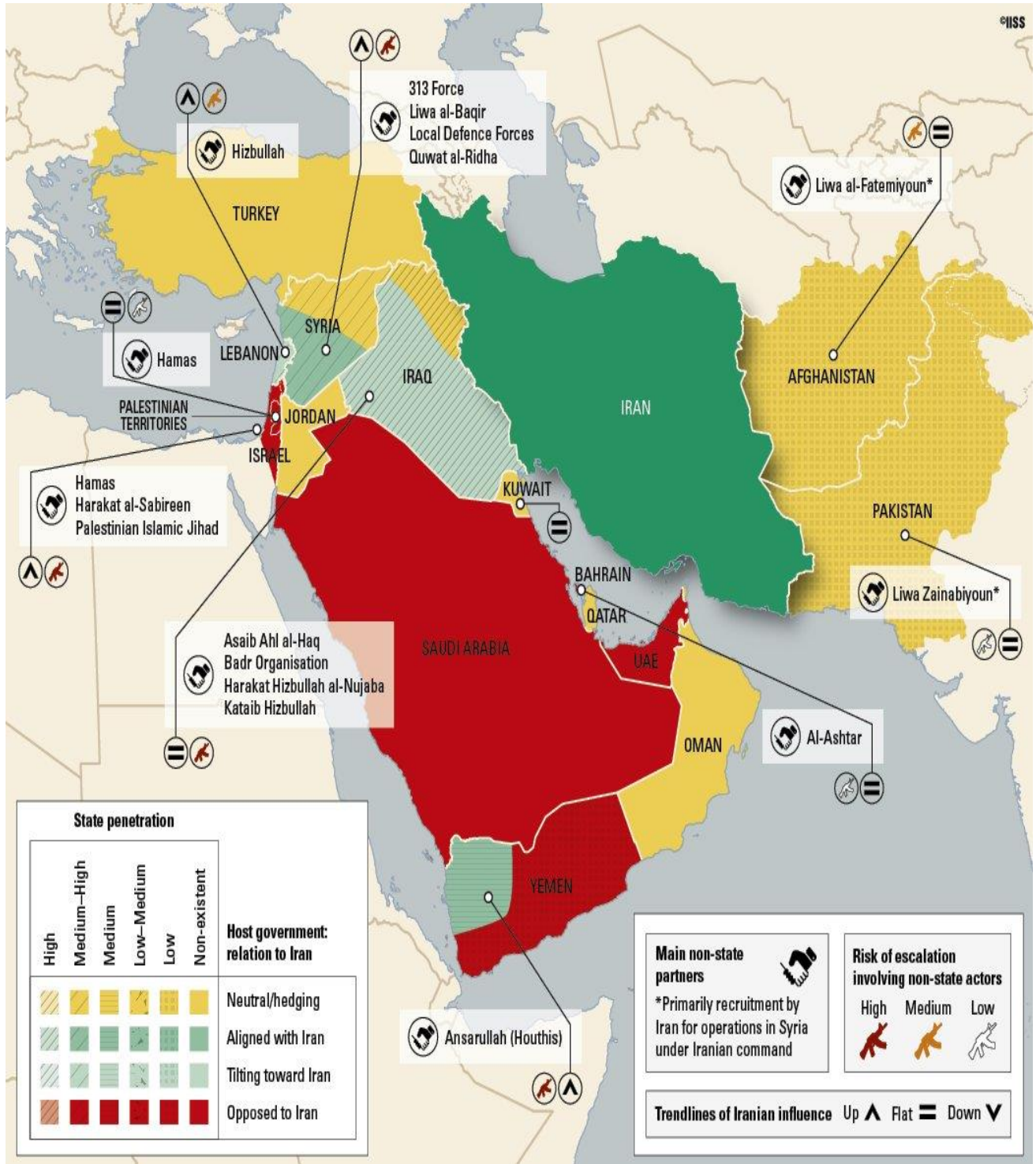


Fig.6. Iran’s Networks of Influence in the Middle East. *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, Nov 2019, <https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/iran-dossier/iran-19-03-ch-1-tehrans-strategic-intent>

## 3.2 America's Global Adjustments

As new geopolitical challenges continue to arise around the world, America finds itself in need to recalibrate its foreign policy and strategic interests in order to preserve whatever supremacy it has left. Washington's number one global priority no longer resides in Europe, but in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific region for the ultimate goal of checking and curbing China's growing assertiveness. Despite its diminished role in the region, Washington also managed to sponsor a new regional rapprochement in the Middle East, considering the latter's significance to China's energy needs as well as thwarting Iran's belligerent activities.

### 3.2.1 The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

The Quad or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue represents a strategic security dialogue between the countries of India, Australia, Japan and the United States which was created in 2007 and later revived in 2017 after a decade long hiatus (Rai 139). Ostensibly, this transcontinental entente is about fostering closer relations between the four countries, which are "all democracies and vibrant economies," that seek to, writes Sheila A. Smith, "work on a far broader agenda, which includes tackling security, economic, and health issues." However, despite it not being a formal alliance, the Quad could not have gone unnoticed in China, where Chinese media outlets have labeled it as an 'Asian NATO', seeking to contain Beijing's growing regional ambitions. These suspicions are not groundless, as the Quad's March 12, 2021 Joint Statement, "The Spirit of the Quad," expressed the four countries' commitment "to meet challenges to the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas" (Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad").

Behind this diplomatic dialogue, thus, lies the four countries', especially Washington's, shared worrisome of China's regional belligerency, as "the Quad countries understandably worry

about China's growing commercial ties with Southeast Asian States and its militarization of territorial disputes in the South China Sea," explains Michael Kugelman. Subsequently, to secure its regional interests regarding China's policies, the U.S. uses the Quad "to signal unified resolve against China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific without directly antagonizing Beijing," argues Derek Grossman, and as the two countries' relations might further deteriorate due to China's nationalist agenda regarding Taiwan, a U.S. ally, or its encroachment on its neighbors' maritime zones, "Washington will likely increasingly look to the Quad—and specifically the military dimension of the cooperation," he added.

Though the Quad is still a mere forum of dialogue between the four states, we cannot help but notice the plausible and effective utilization of it against Chinese interests in the region. The commonalities that we can observe between Washington, Canberra, Tokyo and New Delhi, all liberal democracies, all with substantial economies and with three of them having been on the opposite side to that of China during the Cold War give the Quad the prospect of becoming a deterrence force. Based on their geographical positioning, we can also see how the Quad members can encircle and limit Chinese naval activities, in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific and East China Seas.

### **3.2.2 U.S. Middle East Retrenchment**

America's historically unequivocal interest in the region resided in its, and its allies, reliance on the Persian Gulf oil. In addition, following the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. expanded its political and military presence in the Middle East, leading to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, consecutively. However, as America became one of the major crude oil producers in the world by 2018, the significance of the Persian Gulf oil, to the Washington, became less existential.



Moreover, since 2001, “there has been only a single successful attack seemingly directed by a jihadi terror organization at the continental United States.” As such, with a domestic hydrocarbon industry and a semi-perished Al-Qaeda, America’s assertive interest in the Middle East has been redirected towards an array of more pressing priorities that include, “an adversarial China flexing its muscles throughout the Asia-Pacific region and an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry for military, economic and technological supremacy; Russia’s continued rogue behavior and the rise of homegrown white-nationalist terrorism” (Miller and Sokolsky).

Even though a paralleled diminishment in Washington’s direct involvement in the Middle East has taken place vis-à-vis its ‘Pivot to Asia’ strategy, we argue that the U.S. is still ‘leading from behind’ in Middle Eastern affairs for two reasons. The first one being the security of its regional allies. “The cornerstone of U.S. influence in the Middle East,” argues Noam Chomsky, “has been its formidable military presence in the Gulf countries and its close ties with Israel.” With American policy makers shifting their attention to the Indo-Pacific region, however, a strategy had to be formulated to curb Iran’s expansionist ambitions. That strategy came in the form of the Abraham Accords 2020: a U.S. sponsored Arab-Israeli entente that signaled the policy convergence of Israel and four other Arab states (UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco), ostensibly out of their shared security concerns towards Iran. The second reason is the geostrategic location of the Middle East-located between the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe- and the leverage it bears on China’s economy, due to the latter’s heavy reliance on the region’s oil, as “roughly 85 percent of Persian Gulf oil exports are bound for China, India, Japan and South Korea,” as stated by Aaron David Miller and Richard Sokolsky.

### 3.2.3 The Transatlantic Rift and the Prospect of a European Army

At their 1998 North Atlantic Assembly meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, British PM Tony Blair expressed and rallied French and German backing for a new European defense system, which among its key elements being:

1. On the basis of intergovernmental decisions, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.
2. Europe needs strengthened armed forces that can react rapidly to the new risks, and which are supported by a strong and competitive European defense industry and technology. (Sloan 439, 441, 457)

As such, despite NATO remaining the cornerstone of the transatlantic partnership, the utilization of the alliance over the years by the U.S. to pursue its global interests, such as in Afghanistan while rebuffing its European partners' objections over Iraq, meant that European considerations were a secondary theme in NATO's agenda, especially with China's consistent rise, the U.S., in the words of Prof. Mearsheimer, "is basically leaving Europe in the rear-view mirror." As EU interests began to face new threats emanating from Russia's hostility towards Ukraine or Turkey's incursion into Northern Syria, the idea of a new continental defense umbrella started to gain momentum. "A common army among the Europeans would convey to Russia that we are serious about defending the values of the European Union," said Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission. "Such an army would help us design a common foreign and security policy," he added (Keating). It is worth noting that Juncker's comments came one year after NATO failed in preventing Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Reinforcing the need for an independent European force, and to the chagrin of EU leaders, further came the election of Donald Trump, a staunch skeptic of NATO and international institutions as “the U.S. leader hinted that he could leave the 29-member defense bloc without Congressional approval,” wrote Nyshka Chandran for CNBC. Despite Trump’s departure after the 2020 elections, his treatment and outlook to NATO and European security did affect the way EU officials perceive their transatlantic security partnership with their Cold War ally, prompting the French president, Emmanuel Macron, to state that “NATO is experiencing “brain death” because of pressure to reform from Trump and unpredictable military action from Turkey,” added Chandran.

However interesting as the thought of a European army may be, the lack of European military integration for joint operations undermines such a continental vision, as “the fact that EU countries still haven’t mastered the far simple act of joint procurement,” writes Elisabeth Braw, “is typically cited as a case in point.” Still, as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine- a European country- carries on, with NATO’s tacit submission, there might be a shift in the hallways of European decision making, as the war is “turning the European Union into a serious military player,” said Braw, giving a “push to building a more concrete and credible European defense union,” explains Gen Claudio Graziano, Chairman of the European Union Military Committee. “And a defense union is really the only possible answer to this crisis,” he added.

## **Conclusion**

As we have entered the third decade of the new century, the global system of international politics is going through its decisive turning point, and most likely in an irreversible trajectory. The U.S. might still be a superpower, for now, but is no longer the dominant one, as it faces a

multitude of adversarial competitors. China's economic growth has started to translate into military belligerency and political assertiveness while several estimates do anticipate China's economic global leadership by 2030. By focusing on China, however, the U.S. has overlooked Russia's resurrection in Eastern Europe, undermining European security and damaging NATO's deterrence credibility. Finally, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan along with its sponsored Abraham Accord showcase how Washington is now following a 'leading from behind' approach regarding its interests in the region and the security of its allies. As the world is stepping out of Washington's unipolar shadow, new regional ones are emerging across the world, signaling a renewed multinational era.

## **General Conclusion**

By providing a long reflection upon the past and sufficient examination of the present, this thesis sought to dig for the unique national and international traits that enabled the United States to assume its hegemonic role. By conducting such an inquiry, we came to the conclusion that the cultural tenets that once empowered the U.S., as a country and as a society, now serve as a destabilizing force, whereas America's belief in the universality of those values has undermined its own global leadership.

Domestically, America's sense of national singularity is entrenched in its unique past. By enshrining the liberal values of freedom, individualism and equality in its constitution, Americans' sense of being exceptional was born. However, as America continued to be flooded with waves of immigrants, it created subcultures within the American society, forcing the state to accommodate the communities, while prompting a reaction by the conservative elite and European-Americans for what they perceived as a cultural encroachment on their way of life. Globally, America's attempt to universalize its model through unilateral action resulted in an idealistic foreign policy that proved to be imprudent as it collided with realist notions of state sovereignty and nationalism.

The end of the Cold War signaled a historical shift towards a unipolar world, where the U.S. sought to expand its western order into a liberal global one by promoting liberal democracy, enlarging its western financial and political institutions, by even incorporating its former rivals, and championing a more liberal and globalized economy. By doing so, however, American foreign policy became an ideological "Marxist-Leninist" one, residing in the conviction that through the collapse of Communism, the world will wholeheartedly embrace western liberal democracy.

History, however, did not end with the triumph of the U.S. and the world did not become a liberal democratic oasis. America's sense of exceptionalism and the mission to universalize its model backfired as history is being renewed in a rather old and brutal fashion. By examining the

post-Cold War political literature in correlation with the changing dynamics of global politics, this study highlighted the plausible tenets of the new global order that is taking shape and the multitude of regional and global players in the midst of America's civilizational decline.

As the international system was multipolar yet a unicivilizational one between the years 1500-1900-having global politics been dominated by Europe's global domination, and bipolar between 1947-1991; we posit that the world is now moving towards what many political scientists such as Mearsheimer and Huntington described as a multipolar, multicivilizational world, prompted by the technological, economic, and cultural revolt of the Rest against the West, as America's national decline sits at the forefront of that of the West.

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## الملخص

يتم تصميم وبناء الأنظمة الدولية من قبل القوى العظمى لخدمة وحماية مصالحها الوطنية ، بما في ذلك النظام الذي شيدته الولايات المتحدة وحاربت من أجله. منذ نهاية الحرب العالمية الثانية، برزت أمريكا كقوة عظمى ، تروج لثقافتها الاستثنائية وقيمها السياسية الحميدة ، وتعلم نفوذها ورؤيتها من خلال نهج ثلاثي الأطراف. وبالتالي ، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الخصائص القومية والدولية المتصورة التي مكنت الولايات المتحدة من تمييز نفسها كقوة عظمى لعبت دورًا رئيسيًا في تشكيل السياسة العالمية منذ منتصف القرن العشرين ، وتمكنت في النهاية من بناء نظام عالمي لها. تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء أيضًا على السياسات والأحداث التي وظفتها الولايات المتحدة ومررت بها للحفاظ على تفوقها على منافسيها في الماضي والحاضر ، مع الإشارة أيضًا إلى أخطاءها الجيوسياسية. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف ، تم توظيف المقاربة التاريخية والاستقصائية والتحليلية باتباع المنهج النوعي. تكمن أهمية هذه الدراسة في رسم ملامح معقولة لنظام دولي جديد بدء في البروز في خضم التدهور المستمر لأمريكا ، من خلال فحص الأدبيات السياسية لما بعد الحرب الباردة و ربطها بأحداث اليوم. نتائج هذا التحقيق تفترض نهاية عالم الولايات المتحدة أحادي القطب ، وبالتالي ظهور عالم متعدد الأقطاب ومتعدد الحضارات.

## الكلمات المفتاحية :

الحرب الباردة, التعددية القطبية, الهيمنة الليبرالية, اللحظة احادية القطب, النظام العالمي , الخصوصية الأمريكية.