



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL ORDER
A RAND Project to Explore U.S. Strategy in a Changing World

A large, semi-transparent background image of a globe with latitude and longitude lines, overlaid with a complex, overlapping structure of white, curved lines that resemble a globe's internal framework or a network of paths.

Summary OF THE Building a Sustainable International Order Project



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An Imperiled International Order

As the Second World War drew to a close, U.S. officials discussed ways of preventing such conflicts in the future. They reviewed the war's leading causes: the economic chaos of the Great Depression; the failure to confront aggressive revisionist states; and the rise of a hostile and paranoid nationalism within several major powers. They concluded that the United States should work to shape the postwar settlement, and the character of international politics going forward, in more structured, collaborative and rule-bound ways. And they conceived of a number of specific organizations—notably the United Nations (UN); what became the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); and, eventually, the network of U.S. alliances—to promote collective problem-solving; avert protectionist impulses; and stabilize the world economy, whose health would represent the bedrock of any stable arrangement.

The resulting institutions, processes, habits, rules, and norms became what we now know as the postwar international order. It was founded on both realist and normative grounds: None of its founders were under any illusions about the relative importance of the great powers, and the UN Security Council reflected the sort of great-power leadership that has been part of every notable modern international order. When the hoped-for global consensus gave way to a bipolar Cold War, moreover, these institutions provided the rallying point against Soviet coercion and aggression. But the U.S. architects of the order also

held idealistic assumptions about the future of world politics—in particular, the spread of liberal values, both economic and political. In the process, they hoped to establish a foundation for collective problem-solving while locking in U.S. involvement in world politics in a way that would contribute to peace.

The resulting multilateral sensibility, as well as the concrete institutions, norms, rules, and processes of the order, have underwritten an incomplete but still meaningful form of international community. Even the realist scholar and practitioner Henry Kissinger has portrayed the postwar rise of an “inexorably expanding cooperative order of states observing common rules and norms, embracing common economic systems, forswearing territorial conquest, respecting national sovereignty, and adopting participatory and democratic systems of governance.”¹

U.S. national security strategies since the 1950s have reflected these same themes and placed a shared order at the top of U.S. global priorities. As long ago as 1953, and in a document as unsentimental and hawkish as National Security Council (NSC) Paper 68—which laid out an aggressive global application of the containment doctrine—there was a clear recognition of the value of a shared order. “Even if there were no Soviet Union,” it argued, the United States would still “face the great problem of the free society . . . of reconciling order, security, the need for participation, with the requirement of freedom. We would face the fact that in a shrinking world the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable.”²

There are limits on the power of any multilateral order: International institutions and norms cannot decisively shape the international system or deter aggressive states on their own.

The question today is whether this case for the strategic value of a shared order remains valid, and whether such a vision of a shared order can or should continue playing a leading role in U.S. strategy. A RAND Corporation research team, assisted by scholars and policymakers from around the country and the world, undertook a two-year project, sponsored by the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment, to examine the issue in depth.³ The project was inspired by a concern that the post-1945 order has come under unprecedented strain from the ambitions of increasingly revisionist powers, challenges to the underlying neoliberal ideology of the order, and more.

The resulting project began with an assessment of the character of international order and the elements and nature of the postwar version in particular. The team examined the historical context for international orders, the status and health of the current order, the relationship between the postwar order and U.S. grand strategy, possible alternative

constructs for order over the coming decades, and the specific approach to order taken by Russia and China.⁴

This essay reflects both a summation of these analyses and a restatement and collation of key lessons that flow from those analyses. On their own, international institutions and norms cannot decisively shape the international system, nor can they deter aggressive states. Nonetheless, **the overall study concluded that the postwar order has boosted the effectiveness of other instruments of U.S. statecraft, such as diplomacy and military strength, and helped to advance specific U.S. interests in identifiable and sometimes measurable ways. In short, a strong international order is strongly beneficial for the United States.** Our research also suggests that the seven-decade rise of a shared order has had identifiable socialization effects, and that incomplete but important hints of a lasting international community have emerged among the order's leading member states. This is partly in evidence today; nations around the world show staunch support for the concept of a rule-based order as the best international structure through which to pursue their individual national interests. One implication, which we discuss later, is that if international politics is indeed headed for an era of intensified competition, the U.S. role as architect and leader of a multilateral order is a profound competitive advantage.

Yet those conclusions must be counterbalanced by another: **The U.S. predominance so characteristic of the postwar order must give way to a more truly multilateral order,** one that takes seriously the sometimes-differing perspectives of other major powers. We do not envision agreeing to every one of Beijing's interpretations of rules or ignoring Russian efforts to undermine key institutions;

a more multilateral and shared order would simply be one in which decisionmaking in leading institutions is more evenly shared, new institutions reflecting the voice of rising powers can join established institutions to shape the order, urgent challenges are handled through multilateral processes where many states have a voice, and use of force to advance liberal values is predicated on truly international endorsement. Revisionist pressure against the order today, we find, is not opposed to the idea of multilateral rules and institutions *per se* as much as it is opposed to U.S. hegemony over key aspects of the international order. Our research on the perspectives of other leading nations suggests that, if the United States clings too tightly to a particular vision of specific norms, it is likely to accelerate the order's decay.

The study reaffirmed the idea that, apart from the United States, one country—China—will have a disproportionate effect on the fate of a shared order. Its rapidly growing power and influence mean that any order will have difficulty surviving without Beijing's supportive engagement. The picture of China's posture is mixed: Our study of its attitude and behavior toward the postwar order revealed many areas of progress, but any hopes that it would simply step into U.S.-led institutions and play by their rules have not been borne out. China's determination to extend its influence beyond its borders and predatory trade practices imply that it might not be willing to respect the rules and norms of the order over time. Both history and theory argue that such a risk enhances, rather than undermines, the relevance of a multilateral, rule-based order: It lays out the standards we expect countries like China to uphold, and it offers the most powerful tool available to rally multilateral pressure for shaping China's behavior.

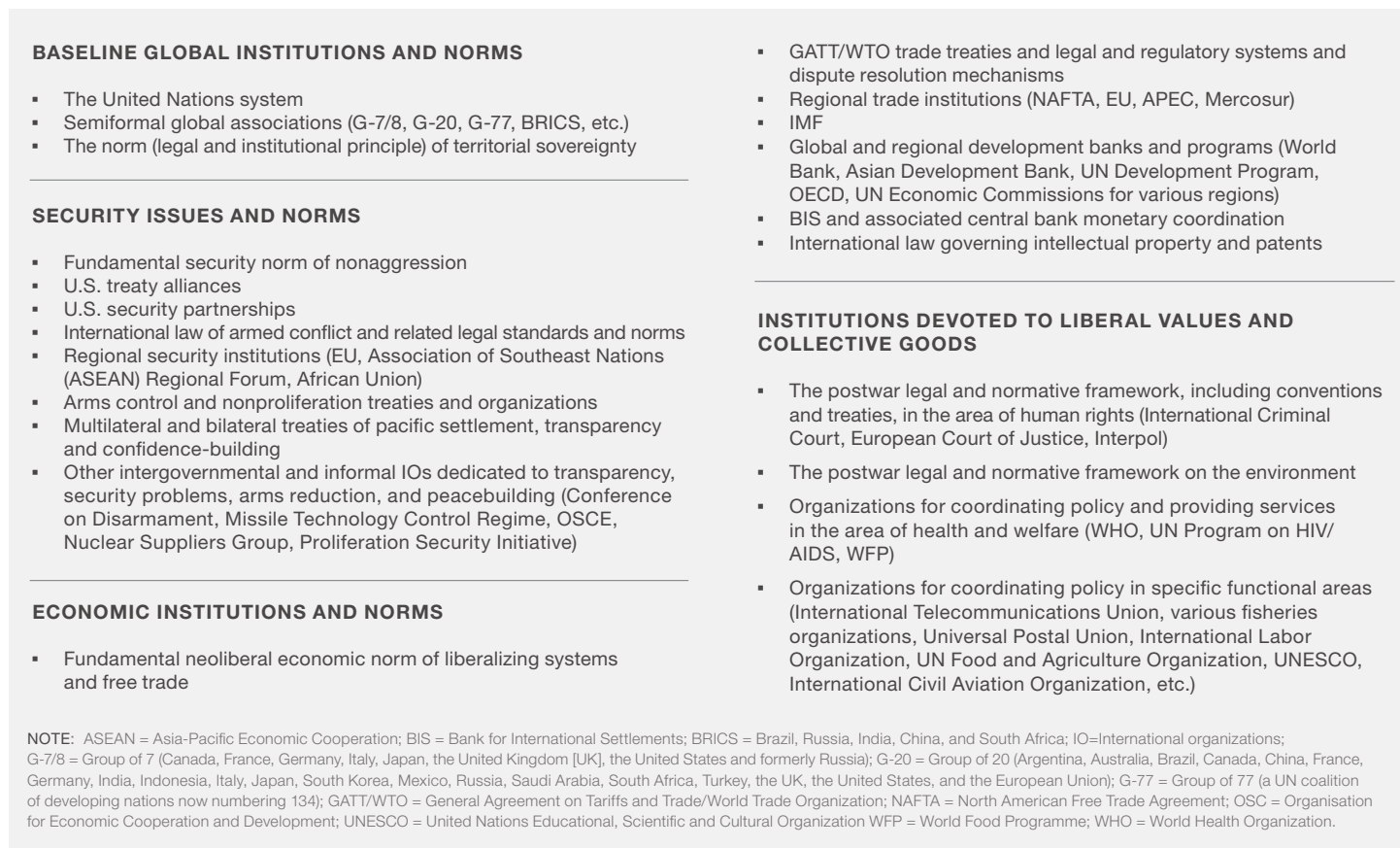
Defining the Order

This project initially conceived of international order as *the body of rules, norms, and institutions that govern relations among the key players in the international environment*. We refer to this as the “institutional order,” and Figure 1 outlines its major components.

While there is a tendency to equate the postwar order with a list of its most significant institutions, it is more than the sum of these parts. The order also embodies and promotes two other factors, reflected in Figure 2. The first is the habit and practice of multilateralism. It reflects a growing recognition that the prospects of states and peoples are interlinked, that sustainable prosperity can only be built in concert, and that action to promote national interests is much more effective if coordinated among many countries. The habit of multilateralism remains radically incomplete, and shapes only a portion of national choices and policies. But the impulse toward shared problem-solving is now a significant feature of the international system, and in its current guise it is inextricably bound up with the postwar order.

Second, and more importantly, our research suggests that the institutional and multilateral aspects of the postwar order rely upon a common foundation: an informal but strongly interlinked “guiding coalition” of states at the heart of the order that recognize the value of postwar order and behave in largely order-promoting ways.⁵ This coalition is not expressed in any single, discrete organization, but its members share many interests and preferences and it has been formalized and regulated by the institutions and rules of the postwar order. Many members view themselves as

Figure 1. Components of the Postwar International Order



part of a *de facto* community. The resulting combination—a critical mass of like-minded states that form the center of gravity in international politics; a broader global community—is a precondition for the success and sustainability of the institutional order.

The resulting order represents the aggregation of a number of important suborders, each with its own rules,

institutions, norms, and levels of adherence. These include the international trade order, the financial and monetary order, the order built around liberal values and human rights, and the security order. States express starkly different attitudes and behaviors depending on the suborder they are dealing with, and these complexities must be kept in mind when conceiving of the larger development we refer to as the postwar order.

Figure 2. Conceiving “International Order”



THE GUIDING COALITION – first tier: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and United States.

Second tier, less integrated but still deeply engaged in order: Algeria, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Estonia, Israel, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Taiwan, Ukraine.

^a Measured across nine indexes of engagement, including exports/imports, level of trade integration, level of globalization, institutional participation, and foreign aid amounts.

^b These countries collectively represent roughly 73% of global GDP and 71% of global defense expenditure.

Major Findings of the Study

The study's five major research reports, three smaller reports or workshop proceedings, and multiple essays generated a number of overarching insights about the character and condition of the postwar international order.

The order is under unprecedented strain—but retains areas of persistent strength.

This project stemmed from the concern that the postwar order was under significant pressure. Figure 3 summarizes the health of the order based on a number of leading indicators surveyed for this study. Our research confirmed that the postwar order is indeed facing strong headwinds.

Other great powers, most notably China and Russia, are openly challenging the pattern of U.S. predominance. At the same time, long-term economic stagnation and globalization's persistent assault on national cultures have sparked intense populist and nationalist reactions against the order's basic neoliberal economic model. The essential bargain of the order was always built on collective self-interest. If key states and populaces come to doubt that the habits, norms, and institutions of the order offer strategic and, especially, economic value, it is likely to collapse.

An important finding of the study, in fact, is that the most significant overarching threat to the postwar order comes not from direct challenges by states but from rising grievances against the order's underlying socioeconomic consensus. Historical cases suggest that orders must rest upon some normative and teleological foundation, a shared vision among the societies and governments of a critical

mass of leading powers. If that fades, there is no basis for a multilateral order.

But the study also suggests, as also reflected in Figure 3, that the order retains powerful elements of stability. Until recently, measurable indicators of the rules-based order remained broadly stable in such areas as trade, institutional participation, and conflict. In the categories we assessed, we did not see any notable declines until the last several years: Trend lines remained relatively positive (apart from the financial crisis in 2008) through about 2010, when trends in trade integration, democratic governance, and conflict began to show backsliding.

In geopolitical terms, what we are seeing is *not yet* an outright revisionist rebellion against the order. Major powers are competing for status, influence, and economic primacy. But direct military competition on irresolvable interests remains very limited. It is notable that both China and Russia have been pursuing strategies of limited coercion designed to *avoid* a direct clash with the norms of the order. These major powers (and others) are pushing back on U.S. domination of rule-setting and enforcement. That can lead to fragmentation—but is also a natural concomitant to a more multipolar system.

In particular, we should not underestimate the importance of the core coalition supporting the order. These states constitute a stabilizing center of gravity in world politics. The tightly interlinked global economy that they share exercises an intense gravitational pull on all states concerned about prosperity and constrains the degree of their hostile acts. So far, most remain committed to a strong multilateral order—as evident in the numerous efforts to sustain key elements of that order in recent months, such as the Paris

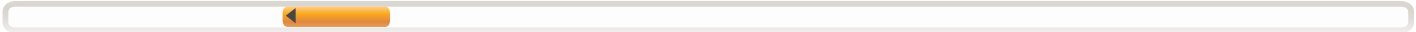
Figure 3. The Postwar Order—Areas of Peril and Strength

A review of 19 separate indicators of trends and measurements associated with the postwar order confirms the view that it is under unprecedented threat—but also turns up surprising areas of resilience and does not paint a picture of generalized collapse.

Order indicates the importance of each area to the stability of the order.

1 TRADE — WORSENING/HIGH RISK

Integration drops in 2008–2009, recovers, then slows or reverses again; collapse of new regional trade accords; populist movements.



2 CONFLICT — WORSENING/MODERATE RISK

Number of high-fatality conflicts initiated rises from 4 in 2006 to 11–12 in 2014–2015; gray zone aggression on the rise.



3 ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP — STABLE/IMPROVING

U.S. ties with Japan and Korea stronger in face of North Korea challenge; NATO responding to Russia challenge.



4 OFFICIAL SIGNALING — STABLE/GROWING RISK

Many countries continue to endorse multilateral solutions; China signals support for globalization; essential U.S. role as nexus of official support for order in question.



5 DEMOCRACY — WORSENING/MODERATE RISK

Backsliding in global democratic ratings and emergence of specific illiberal regimes; ebbing popular support for democratic principles.



6 PUBLIC ATTITUDES — STABLE

More Americans think UN is doing a good job in 2017 than in 2008; trade opinion indicators stable; strong support for NATO; EU attitudes recovering.



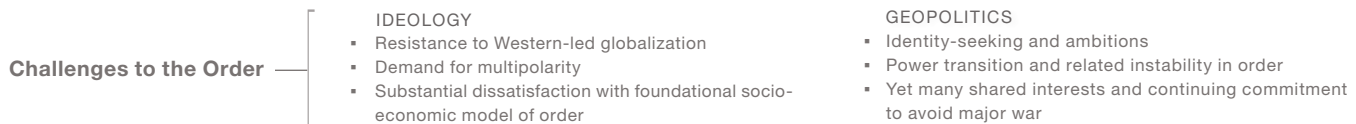
7 INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS — STABLE

Membership remains steady; functioning of institutions persists; concern for future of regional institutions (EU, NAFTA).



8 FOREIGN AID/PEACEKEEPING — IMPROVING

Contributions of emerging powers growing; global coordination deepening.



NOTE: The 19 indicators are defined and described in detail in Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Measuring the Health of the Liberal International Order*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1994-OSD, 2017 (https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1994.html).

If Western and global populaces continue to lose faith in the political and economic values and systems that have been central to the order, it will be hollowed out from within and sustain a fatal blow.

climate accord, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the wider global trade regime.⁶

In sum, our basic finding is that key institutions, rules, and norms of the postwar order, at least as of early 2017, remained robust enough to continue to exercise influence on the preferences of leading states. The current level of security challenges, such as Russian actions in Ukraine and Chinese territorial claims in Asia, does not yet imperil the heart of the order. **The most serious hazard is actually social and economic:** If Western and global populaces continue to lose faith in the political and economic values and systems that have been central to the order, it will be hollowed out from within and lose much of its influence.

The order has value for U.S. interests and constitutes a significant form of U.S. competitive advantage.

A second major finding is that the postwar order has had significant value—both for the world community as a whole, in promoting such shared goals as peace and prosperity, and for the United States in particular.

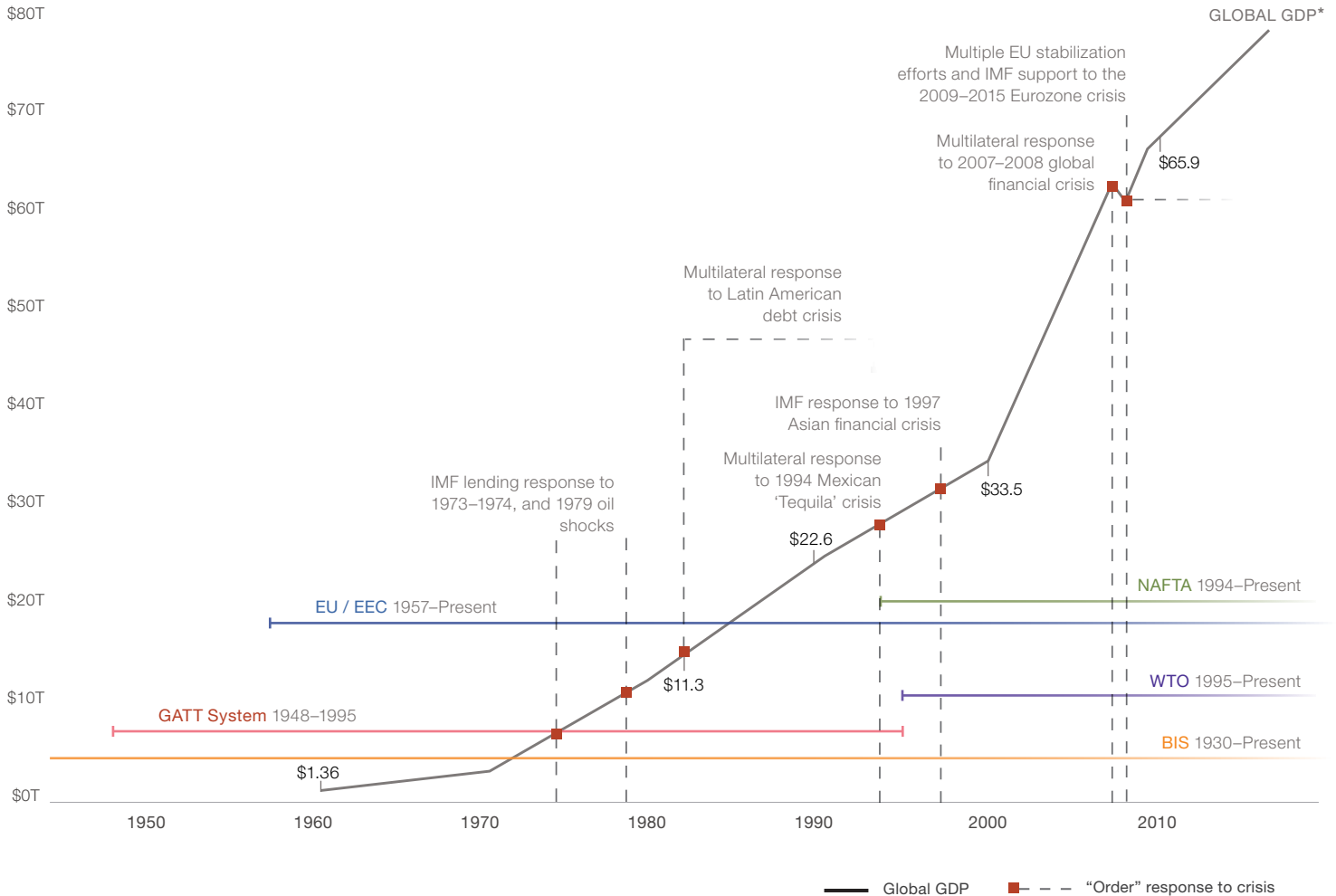
Evaluating the effects of the postwar order is a challenging task. Many factors conspire to produce the results sought by the order—global economic growth, peace and stability, democratization—and it can be difficult to separate out the effect of specific institutions or actions. In fact, our research suggests that the components of the postwar order *can only* have significant effects when pooled with other factors, ranging from U.S. power to supportive international opinion to associated macroeconomic trends.

With this qualification, a combination of quantitative evidence, case studies, and expert validation suggests that the postwar order has had important value in legitimizing and strengthening U.S. influence and in institutionalizing and accelerating positive trends. Combined with the role of other factors, such as U.S. power, and global trends, such as democratization and economic liberalization, the postwar order has helped to produce a form of equilibrium that has promoted stability and reduced uncertainty. As an example of this process, Figure 4 outlines the mechanisms by which the order supported postwar developments in one issue area—international economics.

Beyond such qualitative factors, we also evaluated the possible quantitative, measurable value of the order across a number of issue areas. In one of our study reports,⁷ we examined value estimates for such issues as allied contributions to military and peacekeeping operations, moderating the effect of major economic crises, and forestalling

Figure 4. The Value of the Shared Order—Underwriting Post-War Progress

While national economic policies provided the most important spurs to economic growth since 1945, the international economic order has played a very useful—and, at certain moments, critical—role in providing a support system for national policies. It has done this through a number of means and mechanisms, from a shared global system of trade rules to coordination and emergency lending in crises.



NOTE: BIS = Bank for International Settlements; ECC = European Economic Community; GATT = General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; IMF = International Monetary Fund; GDP = gross domestic product; NAFTA = North American Free Trade Agreement; WTO = World Trade Organization.

*GDP measured in trillions of current USD; World Bank figures

trade wars in the aftermath of such crises. **The resulting estimates are necessarily suggestive, but the sum total is significant:** In each of these examples, we find specific causal evidence that the elements of the order were either a necessary condition or a strongly contributing variable to realizing values ranging from tens of billions of dollars in some cases to hundreds of billions in others. Sustaining postwar tariff reductions, for example, may have contributed an additional 2 percent to U.S. GDP for a number of years and been associated with more than 300,000 jobs; international collaboration after the 2008 financial crisis may have avoided an additional loss of 5 to 10 percent of U.S. GDP for two or more years; and allied contributions to peacekeeping in the Balkans provided \$10 billion to \$15 billion in support, including the presence of up to 5,000 peacekeepers. Meantime, the *direct* costs of U.S. contributions to the institutions and processes of the order total less than \$15 billion annually. America's investment in the postwar order has therefore been a relative bargain, considering the U.S. interests at stake.

More broadly, the U.S.-led order has served as an important source of U.S. competitive advantage in the postwar world. As the leader and sponsor of a multilateral order, the United States has not been merely another great power. It has been the architect of a system of mutual advantage, a role that has allowed the United States to tie its power to a broadly endorsed purpose. This legitimizing function has had very specific benefits for the United States. Most notably, it has meant that few, if any, states have perceived a need to undertake classic balancing of U.S. power—thus potentially saving the United States tens of billions of dollars in additional defense expenditures that would have been necessary had others sought to balance its power more aggressively.

The issues likely to dominate the U.S. agenda in coming years include managing stable strategic competitions, dealing with climate change, building a more just economy, and countering terrorism.

Looking ahead, the issues likely to dominate the U.S. agenda in coming years include managing stable strategic competitions, dealing with climate change, building a more just economy, and countering terrorism. It will be far more difficult to address such issues outside the context of an effective multilateral order. More broadly, we find that, at a time of growing rivalry, nationalism, and uncertainty, a functioning multilateral order will be essential to providing stabilizing ballast to an increasingly unruly global environment.

The international economic order has been the engine of the broader geopolitical and security order.

Our analysis of the progress of the order since 1945 led us to conclude that the economic components of the order are the essential foundation on which all the other pieces rest. A dominant early focus of the order was generating economic prosperity and avoiding the sort of beggar-thy-neighbor instability that helped bring about

the Great Depression. The GATT, and later WTO—along with regional trade treaties and economic institutions, the IMF, World Bank, BIS, and, most recently, the economically focused G-20—form the institutional centerpiece of the economic order. These global and regional economic mechanisms are the most established in the order—and in terms of national interests, the order’s leading offer to states is prosperity: Participation in its trade and investment structures and the accompanying institutions and rules has been an essential support system to most states.

This conclusion has two leading policy implications, somewhat in tension with one another. The first speaks to preservation: Keeping the international economic order effective and coherent is the *sine qua non* for a meaningful multilateral order. But the second demands reform: The models and theories of the liberal international order have produced significant inequality and slowing growth.⁸ Those models and theories must be refreshed and reformed if the overall order is to survive.

Orders grow out of broader realities in world politics, such as the degree of shared interests and values among leading states—but once institutionalized, the structure and habits of an order can shape state preferences and behavior.

This conclusion stems from the study’s historical analysis and assessment of the current health of the postwar order. Like all previous international orders, the postwar order is a *function* of states’ perceptions of their interests more than the *cause* of those perceptions. States have joined, invested in, and supported the emergence of institutions, rules, and norms because they saw the process as being in their

interests— both material and otherwise—and as a product of their willingness to cooperate with other countries.

As a result, international orders tend to reflect the degree of community on the part of participating nations, especially the great powers of the era. One implication is that order is easiest to create and has its greatest effects among states that share significant norms and values—today, the global community of democracies. This finding also emphasizes the critical role of the guiding coalition at the heart of the order: If the coalition were to fragment, the order’s institutions, rules, and norms could not survive on their own.

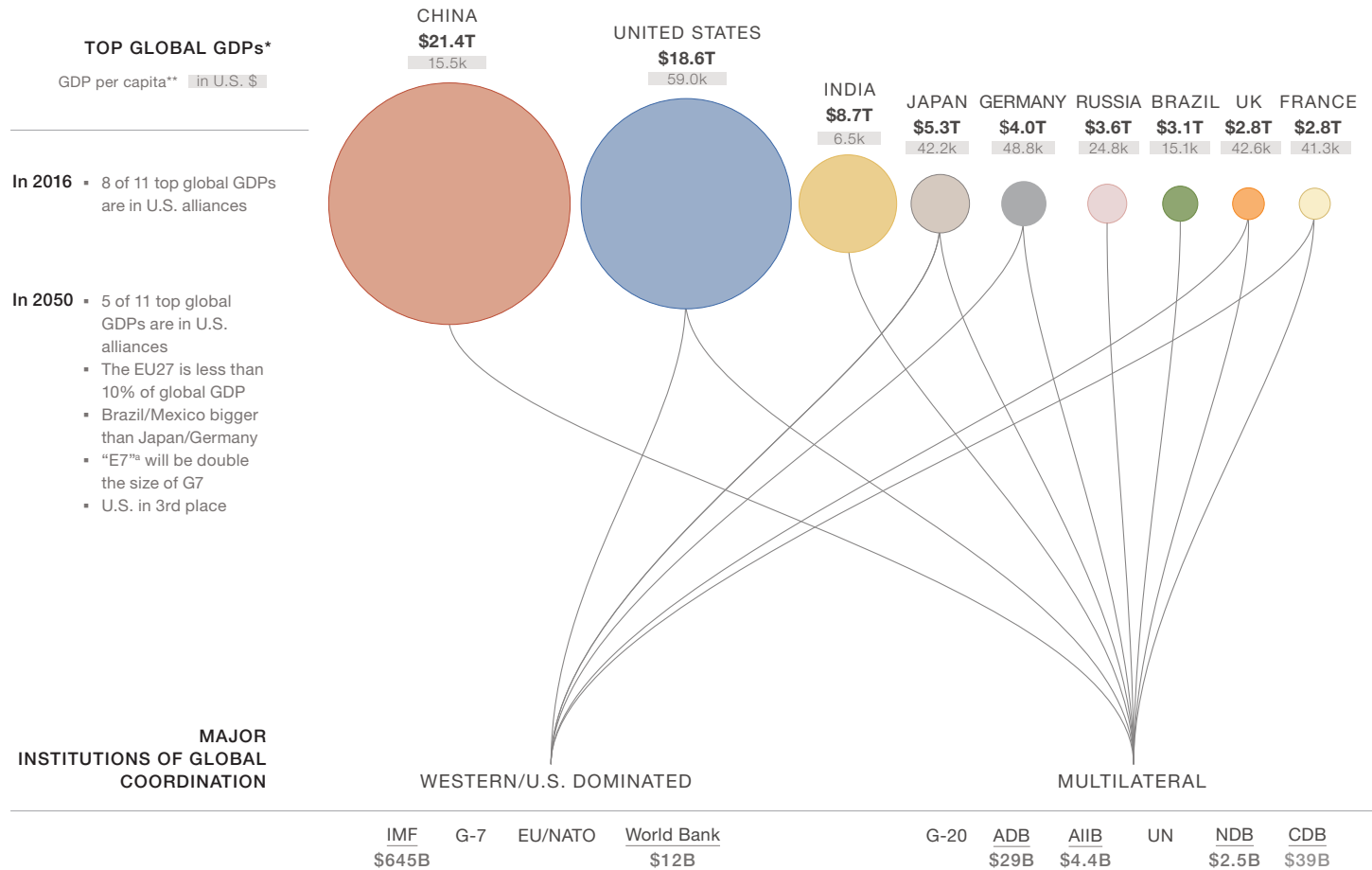
Yet there is limited but powerful evidence that the principles and habits of an international order can become socialized among member states and thus, at a certain point, self-reinforcing. As just one example, the norm against outright territorial aggression embedded in the postwar order is now deeply socialized in the societies and leadership classes of dozens of major countries.

The order will be more robust and sustainable if it becomes more multilateral and shared.

The level of U.S. dominance of the international order must give way to a more equitable multilateral governance process.

Figure 5a. Power and a Changing International Order—From G-7 to E-7 (2016)

Between 2016 and 2050, the landscape of the world’s economic powers will shift considerably—and with it, the list of states that will play leading roles in setting and enforcing global rules.

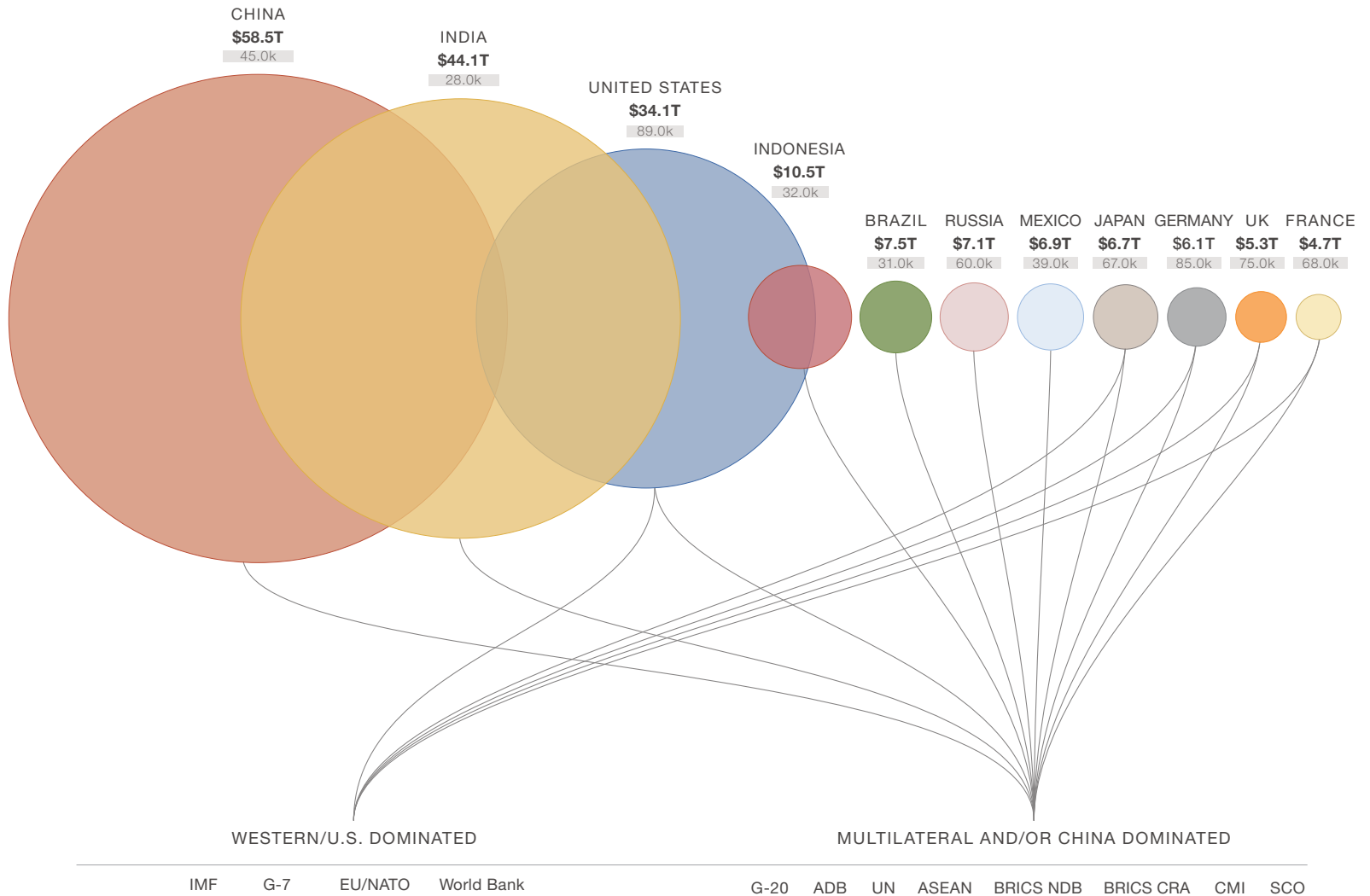


* 2016 measurements from World Bank data, in current international dollars; all GDP figures in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms. Amounts for multilateral institutions reflect most recent year total commitments; in case of IMF figure is total quota resources.

** GDP per capita in PPP terms; 2016 figures from World Bank.

^a E-7 includes China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia, Mexico and Turkey.

Figure 5b. Power and a Changing International Order—From G-7 to E-7 (2050)



NOTE: ADB = Asian Development Bank; AIIB = Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; CRA = Contingency Reserve Arrangement; CDB = China Development Bank; CMI = Chiang Mai Initiative; NDB = New Development Bank; SCO = Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

SOURCES: All data for 2050 are drawn from Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLC, "The World in 2050: The Long View: How Will the Global Economic Order Change by 2050?" February 2017 (as of March 7, 2018: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/economy/the-world-in-2050.html>). National economic data: World Bank, "GDP (Current US\$)," webpage, undated (as of February 12, 2018: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>); International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, October 2017 (as of February 12, 2018: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2017/09/19/world-economic-outlook-october-2017>).

A number of analyses in the study point to the conclusion that the level of U.S. dominance of the international order must give way to a more equitable multilateral governance process. **Part of the reason stems from changing power dynamics in the international system:** As suggested in Figure 5, the world on which the order is built is becoming less U.S.- and Western-centric. Moreover, the United States arguably does not possess the will or ability to continue enforcing all the rules in the same way that it has. Increasingly, the question is which order will be appropriate for the *emerging* distribution of power and influence as the world heads toward a more multipolar future. The full economic and geopolitical ramifications of this trend will take decades to emerge—but already, the perceptions of major powers are changing as a result of the expectation of such shifts.

Therefore, our research suggests that a **revised order has to bridge a critical dilemma** if it is to retain the commitment of many great and rising powers: The order must become more flexible, multispeed, and shared without losing so much coherence that it falls apart.⁹ Henry Kissinger has argued that sustaining a “more stable world order” demands fostering “a perception of a joint enterprise that is not just about buying into an American project.”¹⁰

This finding points to the importance of continued reforms of major international institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank and some UN agencies, designed to share authority more broadly among leading member states. It suggests that the United States must be willing to allow for the setting and enforcement of rules by others, including through the means of regional institutions that parallel global ones—such as China’s Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. It emphasizes the value of bilateral diplomatic initiatives to strengthen understanding and ties

with emerging powers such as India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Brazil. It suggests that the United States would be well-served to seek opportunities for other states to take multilateral leadership roles on significant but not vital policy issues—even if their ideas and approaches differ somewhat from those of the United States. And it highlights the fact that the United States will need to demonstrate restraint in unilateral interpretations of rules and norms.

China is not an outright foe of the order—but it is ignoring or sidestepping key rules and norms, and its future trajectory relative to the order is unclear.

The dominant actor in determining the future of the order, apart from the United States, will be China. If the United States and China can come to some sort of broad agreement on a critical mass of ordering mechanisms, the order is likely to survive in some meaningful form. If they cannot, it is far more likely to fragment.

China’s engagement with the order has been and remains a complex, often contradictory work in progress. The full picture of what it desires in a changed order, and the degree to which those aspirations can be accommodated in a truly shared system, are unclear and will remain so for some time.¹¹

Broadly speaking, though, China should be viewed not as an opponent or saboteur of the postwar international order but as a conditional supporter. Since China undertook a new policy of international engagement in the 1980s—and putting aside the one area, liberal values and human rights, where Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has the greatest degree of conflict with the U.S.-led order—the level and quality of its participation in the order rivals

that of most other states. It has come to see multilateral institutions and processes as important if not essential for the achievement of its interests. Like the United States and other major powers, it has demanded exceptions to rules and norms when it saw vital interests at stake, but those cases do not invalidate the impressive level of participation it has achieved.

But China's attitude and behavior, especially over the last decade, has also demonstrated a willingness to challenge and revise aspects of the existing order. Its norm-evading behavior is especially evident in certain competitive economic practices, such as its techniques of predatory technology transfer, and in coercive actions to stake contested territorial claims. **Perhaps the biggest wild card is the question of where China's policy is headed over the medium term, roughly the next decade:** Whether a growing competition for influence and leadership with the United States in shaping the terms of the international order escalates into conflict remains to be determined. Moreover, any concessions granted to China to provide it a sense of ownership over the international order will be watched closely by others for evidence of whether nondiscriminatory rules and regimes continue to hold sway.

To sustain a broad, inclusive, and legitimate order, leading democracies might need to adjust the strategies for liberal value promotion.

The liberalism of the order is increasingly in tension with its reach. As indicated in Figure 6, questions about the legitimacy of the Western liberal model have been rising even as the order's value promotion has become more aggressive. Key states such as China, Russia, and even Brazil and Turkey

have growing issues with liberal principles that demand violation of state sovereignty to promote certain values. The central dilemma in U.S. policy may be that sustaining the order demands *both* stronger enforcement of key norms *and* a more inclusive—and, at times, relaxed—approach to those same norms to earn the support of leading states.

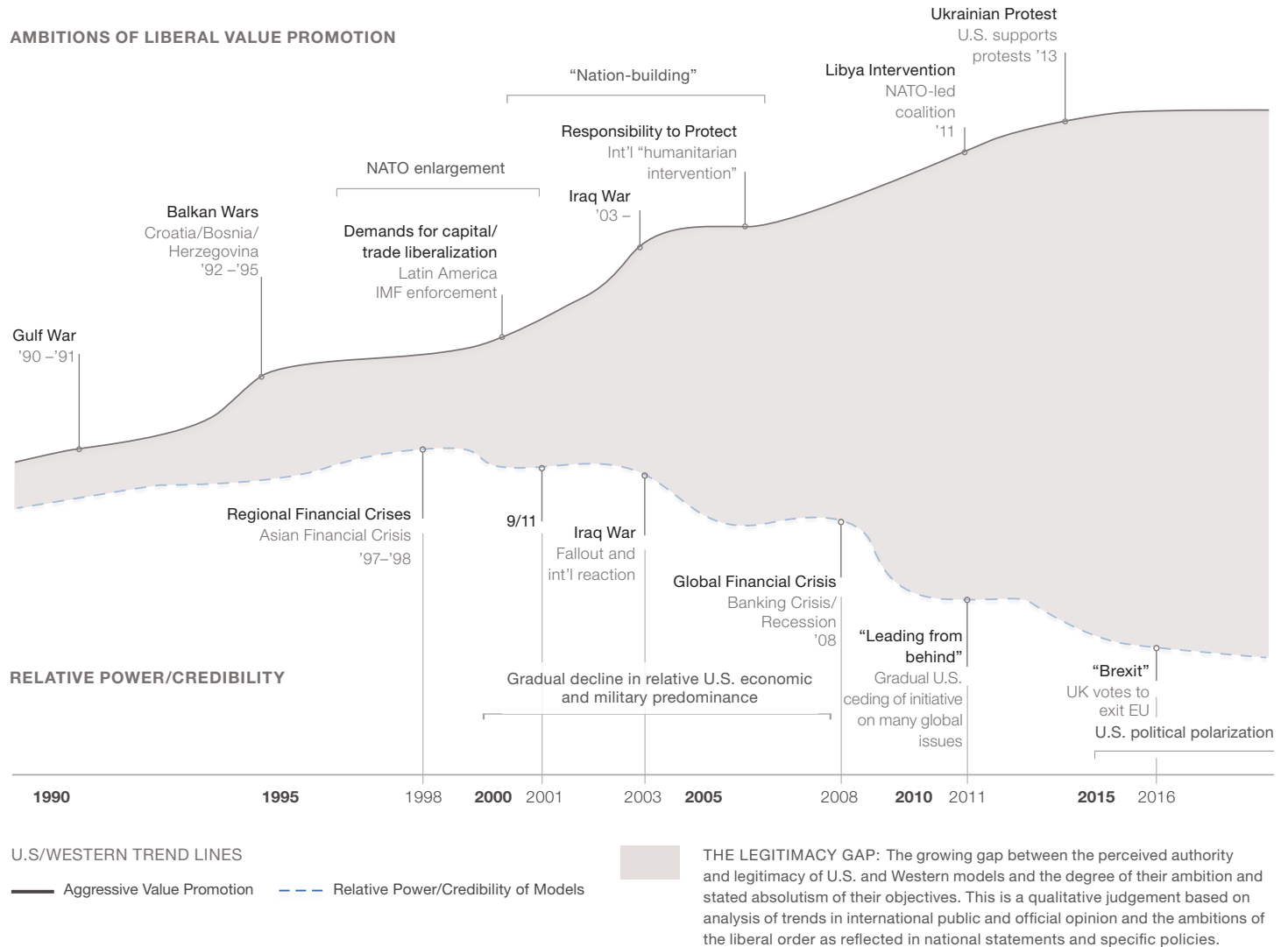
The order is in the most danger in areas where—and, in some cases, partly as a result of the fact that—it has been pushed to the far edges of plausibility. On issues such as liberal interventionism, the reach and extent of EU bureaucracy, and the speed of global trade integration, the evidence suggests that overly ambitious efforts to advance such elements of the order could be destabilizing. In two areas, nonaggression and trade, our findings suggest that rules and norms must be rigorously enforced. But the history of the current and previous orders suggests that the United States could afford to compromise in the aggressive promotion of specific liberal values without fracturing the order.

Sustaining a Viable Multilateral Order: Lessons and Implications

On the basis of the findings listed here, as well as the broader analysis in its multiple reports and essays, this study has produced a number of broad lessons and implications that could help inform U.S. national security policy choices. Whatever specific means and ways are selected, this study suggests that **a revised and sustained approach must continue to reflect the two most important foundational elements of the current order:** a shared global economic system and a

Figure 6. A Growing Legitimacy Gap

Even as more states have indicated concern about the postwar order's interventionist promotion of liberal values, that tendency has become more aggressive. The order is becoming more ambitious even as emerging powers with more influential voices are questioning its ambitions.



clear and powerfully enforced rule against territorial aggression—including activities below the threshold of major war, a growing challenge to global stability. **The order’s foundational promise is growing economic prosperity:** If public and governmental audiences perceive that the order no longer underwrites this goal, support for its rules, norms, and institutions could be fatally weakened, in part because so many other variables are affected by economic ones. **And the order’s foundational rule is a prohibition on unprovoked, large-scale territorial aggression,** without which the security elements of the order would have little meaning.

The findings of this study suggest that a healthy, sustainable multilateral order may end up being more mixed, shared, and multipolar than the current one, but that if it is to be meaningful, it must remain committed to those two cardinal principles. Such an order is also likely to remain a system led—though less dominated—by the United States. For the foreseeable future, America will remain the hub around which the values, goals, and power of any order must revolve. Without that leadership and binding role, these various parts could spin off into chaos, and the management of its multiple layers would become far more difficult.

A General Approach to Order-Building

Figure 7 offers the results of one of the study’s analyses about alternative designs for international order. That analysis laid out four ideal types of order, noted in the figure, and tested their advantages and disadvantages. That analysis held a number of leading implications.

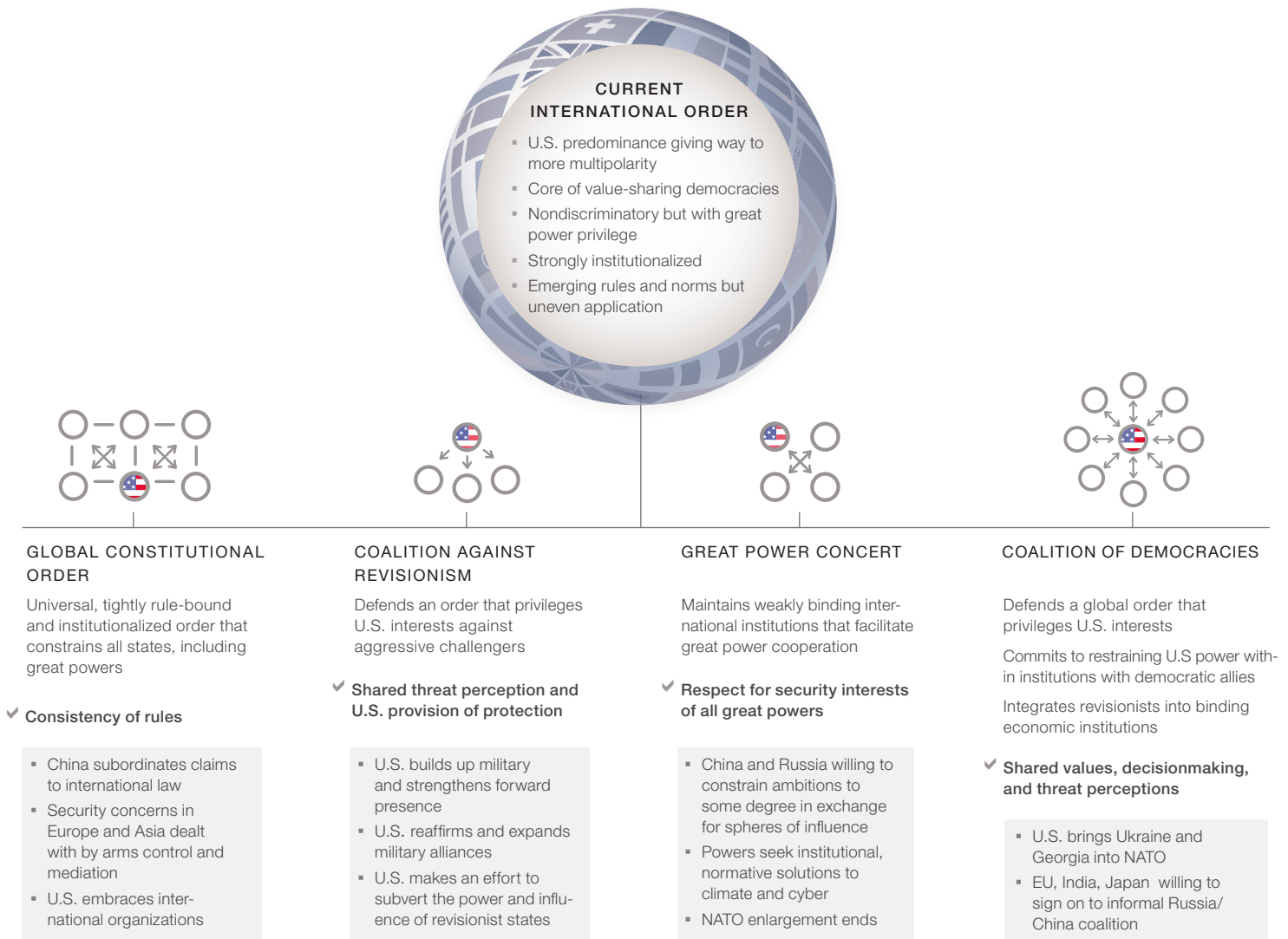
First, **models of order that imply either tense divisions of world politics into hostile camps or a rigidly unified and**

Active efforts to cultivate ties among democracies would continue to knit together a critical mass of status quo powers, creating a basic stabilizing anchor to keep world politics from drifting too far from its moorings.

rule-bound order are equally infeasible and undesirable. It may be that levels of aggressive hostility from Russia and China make a truly shared order impossible, but the United States should strive to avoid that outcome even at significant cost. At the same time, idealistic post-Cold War assumption about the potential for a rapidly expanding order committed to liberal values must give way to more complex and nuanced models.

Second, **in a more competitive era, when other major powers self-consciously work to undermine some U.S.-led institutions, the United States needs a strategy that can sustain as much multilateral cooperation as possible—while also hedging against the failure of that approach.** Of the various possible future orders, an antagonistic stand-off between a smaller U.S.-led order and a range of adversarial states would pose the greatest threats to U.S. interests. But our research emphasizes that Russia and China’s challenge to the order could indeed become much more

Figure 7. International Orders—Alternative Models



History and theory highlight at least four broad models of international order that might provide an alternative to the current conception—but each comes with significant risks and costs, and the most promising option is likely to be some combination of them.

aggressive. Emerging trends related to postwar order call for policies that aim to both sustain order and hedge against the potential for increasingly belligerent challenges.

Third, and finally, **the role for U.S. defense policy and military capabilities is similar across all variants of likely orders.** That role is twofold: to underwrite strong networks of cooperation and mutual security among value-sharing democracies and other partners, and to serve as the core military capability of a global veto on interstate aggression.

The lessons of this analysis of alternative possible orders support an approach that is global rather than exclusionary, is grounded in the twin pillars of a shared economic order and a nonaggression norm, builds outward from a core group of value-sharing democracies but does not limit itself to them, and seeks different forms and levels of cooperation depending on the issue and suborder at stake. What is called for is an eclectic, multilayer order rather than a simple one built around a single idea. The resulting order will be untidier and more dispersed than before, but such a design can still serve U.S. interests.¹²

Our analysis, and in particular the emphasis on a guiding coalition of states as providing the center of gravity of the order, points to one overriding objective: To nourish the informal coalition at the heart of the order and thus sustain its geopolitical effects. An order with the leading global democracies—including India, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, and other linchpin states—and other important, order-producing partners at its core could be resilient against pressures from regional revisionist states, nonstate extremists, and other dangers. But if that core group fragments, the hope for a truly global order will

be lost. Sustaining and deepening partnerships within the order's guiding coalition ranks as an urgent task for U.S. strategy.

Lesson One:

An Effort to Strengthen Ties Among Value-Sharing Democracies Is Likely to Strengthen and Sustain the Order

One implication of our analysis is that the United States would be well served by a renewed effort to build strong ties among global democracies. **A coalition of democracies need not be the exclusive emphasis of any new order:** The United States has too many important interests at stake with nondemocracies, and democracies differ too sharply in their approach to various issues. But both theory and history suggest that reemphasizing the role of value-sharing democracies as the gravitational core of a persistent order is one of the most feasible and effective ways of preserving its coherence and ability to shape behavior. Our research highlights several reasons why this is true.

The United States shares the most interests and values with full-fledged democracies, and our evaluation of historical systems suggests that successful orders must be built on some degree of shared values. Empirical studies confirm that alliances, trade treaties, human rights conventions, and other forms of multinational coordination achieve their most measurable effects when implemented among democracies.¹³ Democracies tend to respect international commitments, and the role of civil society makes them more subject to international norms. For these and other

reasons, active efforts to cultivate ties among democracies would continue to knit together a critical mass of status quo powers, creating a basic stabilizing anchor to keep world politics from drifting too far from its moorings.

A logical component of any effort to enhance collaboration among democracies could be a U.S. effort to reaffirm, and seek ways to strengthen, its direct treaty alliances with fellow democracies—in NATO, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. **The history of the postwar order, and evidence about the deterrent effect of U.S. military power, suggest that continued collaboration with allies would allow the United States to revalidate a core role it has played in keeping the order stable:** leading collective efforts to deter major aggression. At the same time, an effort to bolster networks of cooperation among democracies could also build on existing diplomatic engagements to develop

Through intensified defense collaboration and some degree of expanded forward presence, the United States can revalidate a core role it has played to keep the order stable: leading collective efforts to deter major aggression.

more-active and more-tailored strategies for a handful of the most important emerging democracies and invite them into more-influential leadership positions in a shared order. Different observers will have distinct ideas of what countries should populate this list. According to one recent PwC projection, the emerging 20 democracies toward the top of the global GDP list by 2050 will include India, Indonesia, Brazil, and Mexico.¹⁴

However, the history of U.S. leadership of the postwar order also indicates that such an emphasis on democracies need not be exclusionary. States that as of this writing do not belong to the community of full democracies have made important contributions to a shared and stable order. But the emphasis on allies and democracies provides one of several mechanisms of hedging built into this strategy for order. If the hope for cooperation with non-democracies fades, and if illiberal states begin to form counter-alliances and orders, the United States will be able to fall back on the shared interests and values, and tight collaboration, it had been cultivating with global democracies.

Lesson Two:

Prioritize the Global Economic Order

A leading implication of our research is that the economic components of the postwar order—the baseline networks of trade, institutions such as the WTO and IMF, and the generally accepted norms and values of a neoliberal economic model—represent the load-bearing foundation for the larger order. It is the promise of prosperity, as well as technological advances essential to national strength and security, that has bound states together, and the

often-implicit leverage of the postwar economic order has played a critical role in shaping preferences on many other issues. To the extent that this order has helped to prevent worst-case outcomes in the international economy, moreover, it has played a critical role in avoiding depression-fueled nationalism and conflict on the scale of the 1930s.

Yet many assumptions of the postwar order are now being challenged, and some of its key institutions are flagging. The WTO's trade rounds have stagnated for some time. The European Union appears to be in near-permanent crisis. Regional trade agreements involving the United States—e.g., the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the U.S.-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, the future of NAFTA—are under growing pressure, in many cases from the United States itself. China is vigorously pursuing state-led trade and industrial practices that flout the spirit—and, in many cases, the rules—of the postwar international economic order. Most broadly, populaces throughout the world are losing faith that the order and its associated ideas, values, and institutions can deliver equitable prosperity for their societies.

These findings produce a lesson that is straightforward in theory but will be exceedingly complex to put into practice: If the economic order is not refreshed and revalidated, the broader geopolitical and security order could be in mortal danger. Yet while support for the general benefits of international economic collaboration remains strong, rising skepticism, stalled large-scale trade deals, and evidence of growing inequality highlight the need to address its perceived socioeconomic costs and restore the faith that major elements of the order work to enhance prosperity.¹⁵ It is likely that any sustainable revalidation of the global economic order will have to include a meaningful dialogue on

mechanisms to enhance equality and fairness in economic outcomes. Most of the ultimate policy solutions to this problem would have to be implemented at the national level. But the dialogue could produce ideas for elements of future trade agreements that would support this objective, as well as unearthing multilateral initiatives that could promote equality. Any effort to sustain a stable economic order will also have to address China's predatory trade practices, which, if left unchecked, have the potential to undermine the norms at the heart of the current international economic order.

Lesson Three:

A Revised Strategy for Liberal Value Promotion Will Help Sustain a Truly Multilateral Order

The postwar order has included significant components related to liberal value promotion, from the foundational human rights conventions to more-recent notions of humanitarian intervention and the “responsibility to protect.” As important as the normative aspects of the order are, our research suggests two conclusions. First, the normative aspects of the order have always been more qualified than the two leading issue areas of economics and security. Second, in recent years the pursuit of those norms has created a sort of “liberal overreach” that threatens the consensus underlying the order.

The concerns (and, in some cases, outright opposition) of some states to parts of the order—not only Russia and China but also India, Brazil, and others—has focused on these sovereignty-challenging liberal initiatives. In some

cases, as in Iraq and Libya, the value-enforcing elements of the order are perceived to have generated huge instability and even worse suffering for the nations involved. In other cases, such as the “color revolutions” in Eastern Europe, U.S. value promotion has run up directly against the interests of other major powers with the potential to play dangerous spoiler roles in the order. The United States must find a less provocative and at times destabilizing means of promoting liberal values if the overall order is to be sustained.

The answer cannot be to abandon liberal values, or even to formally downgrade them relative to other interests. For many states, the normative promise of the order represents a critical part of its attraction, and value promotion is inherent in the U.S. national character and global role. But there are many options available that would compose a powerful, noninterventionist agenda for liberal value promotion that is more likely to sustain multilateral support. Such an agenda could include continued statements of support for liberal values; redoubled efforts in the area of humanitarian assistance and relief; more significant support, in terms of advice and direct assistance, to major liberal nations in trouble—whether in the form of economic or political crises or natural disasters; and expanded programs of human capacity-building, direct assistance, and sponsored private-sector investment in countries that have already made the difficult internal choices and reforms to put themselves on the road to liberal-value outcomes. Such an approach would have a much smaller role for large-scale interventions in imposing a more liberal political system on an undemocratic or unstable situation. There is substantial evidence that such interventions represent one of the fault lines in support for the postwar order.

Lesson Four:

Mechanisms of Intergovernmental Collective Action and Nongovernmental Organizations Can Be Surprisingly Important to a Strong Order

Any strategy for strengthening the international order can place strong emphasis on apolitical and technical issues. This is an important lesson of historical orders— often, the most important long-term effects were achieved by the cooperation that took place among technical and functional groups and mechanisms that operated largely below the radar of international attention but that build strong networks of global collaboration and interdependence. The lessons of history, therefore, suggest that investments in a range of issue-specific organizations and processes can have surprising levels of long-term impact.

There are many opportunities today for U.S. and multilateral investments in such mechanisms of collaboration.

The United States must find a less provocative and at times destabilizing means of promoting liberal values if the overall order is to be sustained.

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One is for the United States to redouble investments in and diplomatic engagement with a range of regional organizations—such as the EU, the African Union, and ASEAN. Global, issue-specific organizations, such as the Nonproliferation Treaty, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the International Court of Justice, have proven useful in a number of contexts and could benefit from continued U.S. support.

The United States can also strengthen the connective tissue of society-to-society relationships underpinning the more-official order by working to deepen and strengthen informal networks of global coordination, whether intergovernmental or private. Anne-Marie Slaughter has argued for the growing role of nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations as catalysts for action across a number of issues. Other scholars have described the

result as a form of “complex internationalism.”¹⁶ **In particular, the United States should not underestimate the importance of personal relationships in building trust and forming the basis for collective action:** Networks of judges, legislators, regulators, and other government officials can intensify the connective tissue among members of the order. The United States can expand support for dozens of Track 2 and other exchange programs—for example, U.S.-ASEAN Connect, which links private sectors and the Young Southeast Asia Leaders Initiative.

Lesson Five:

At Turbulent Moments, It Is Important to Clarify—and Prioritize—Baseline Rules

A more complex and nuanced order might appear to imply greater flexibility about the red lines of behavior the United States will enforce. **In fact, the study’s theoretical and historical research suggests that the opposite may be closer to the truth:** At a time when international orders are undergoing significant change, it can become more important, rather than less, for the leading states to be precise about what rules they will and will not enforce, and more generally for a multilateral order to be clearer about what is and is not allowed under the terms of that order. At a time when many states will be determining how far they can stretch agreed-upon rules and get away with actions in their own self-interest, the potential for a breakdown of any sense of shared rules becomes very real.

And yet, neither global consensus nor U.S. willpower are likely to be sufficient to enforce every violation: Some

We do find persistent hope for a meaningfully shared order among the major powers.

prioritization will be required. Nor does history suggest that it is necessary to combat every violation of every rule to sustain an order: Every historical example of such orders, including the postwar, U.S.-led version, have reflected exceptions to many rules and imperfect enforcement. The challenge is to identify the rules and norms whose health is fundamental to the order. The analysis in this study points to two such rule sets that are likely to be of critical importance to sustaining the postwar order and that deserve priority emphasis in U.S. national security strategy. Figure 8 summarizes these.

The history of prior orders highlights a related danger: the destabilizing effects that can occur when the leader of an order routinely flouts its rules. Any order can absorb a certain number of violations—as the postwar order has sustained U.S. refusal to participate in certain institutions, such as the International Criminal Court. But a broad-based U.S. flouting of the norms of the order would undermine its key structural effects—the socialization and acculturation by which it holds some of its most profound long-term influence.

Lesson Six:

The Normative and Gravitational Power of an Order Can Underwrite Efforts to Shape the Behavior of Revisionist States

The health of any ordering mechanism will depend first and foremost on relations among the great powers. In this connection, the dominant analytical question facing the architects of a future order is the nature of Russia's and China's ambitions and whether the United States can build a meaningful order *with* them, or will ultimately end up needing to build an order *in opposition* to them. Perhaps the single overriding test for a future order is whether it can meet the status and identity demands of these great powers in a fashion that does not disrupt the coherence of international politics.¹⁷

Such an outcome might not be possible, and this study is clear about the need to hedge against that possibility—in ways that do not spark dynamics, such as arms races and security dilemmas, that bring about the very hostility that the hedging strategies are trying to avoid. We do find persistent hope for a meaningfully shared order among the major powers. Our studies of both China and Russia suggest that, despite their aggressive actions, each continues to see value in a stable global system and in some specific components of the current order. It remains possible that each could be persuaded to pursue its objectives in ways that do not become full-scope assaults on that order.

This remains an open question. But our research suggests that the potential for rising challenges from aggressive states such as Russia and China makes the U.S.-led order more

Figure 8. Priority Rule Sets for Enforcement

RULE SET	POLICY IMPLICATION
Nonaggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustain multilateral support for territorial integrity norm, UN Charter, regional nonaggression pacts ▪ Sustain deterrence of major aggression in regions ▪ Respond decisively to large-scale territorial aggrandizement ▪ Develop new norms on gray-zone measures to prevent slow-motion collapse of nonaggression norm
Fair trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustain WTO and regional trade agreements ▪ Make new effort to constrain gradual growth of nontariff barriers since 2008 ▪ Major diplomatic engagement to address China's predatory trade practices

relevant rather than less so. It is precisely in its leadership of a global community of order-promoting states that the United States enjoys its dominant competitive advantage against any challenger. Others look to the United States to coordinate and galvanize multilateral responses to violations of many norms, from predatory trade practices to territorial

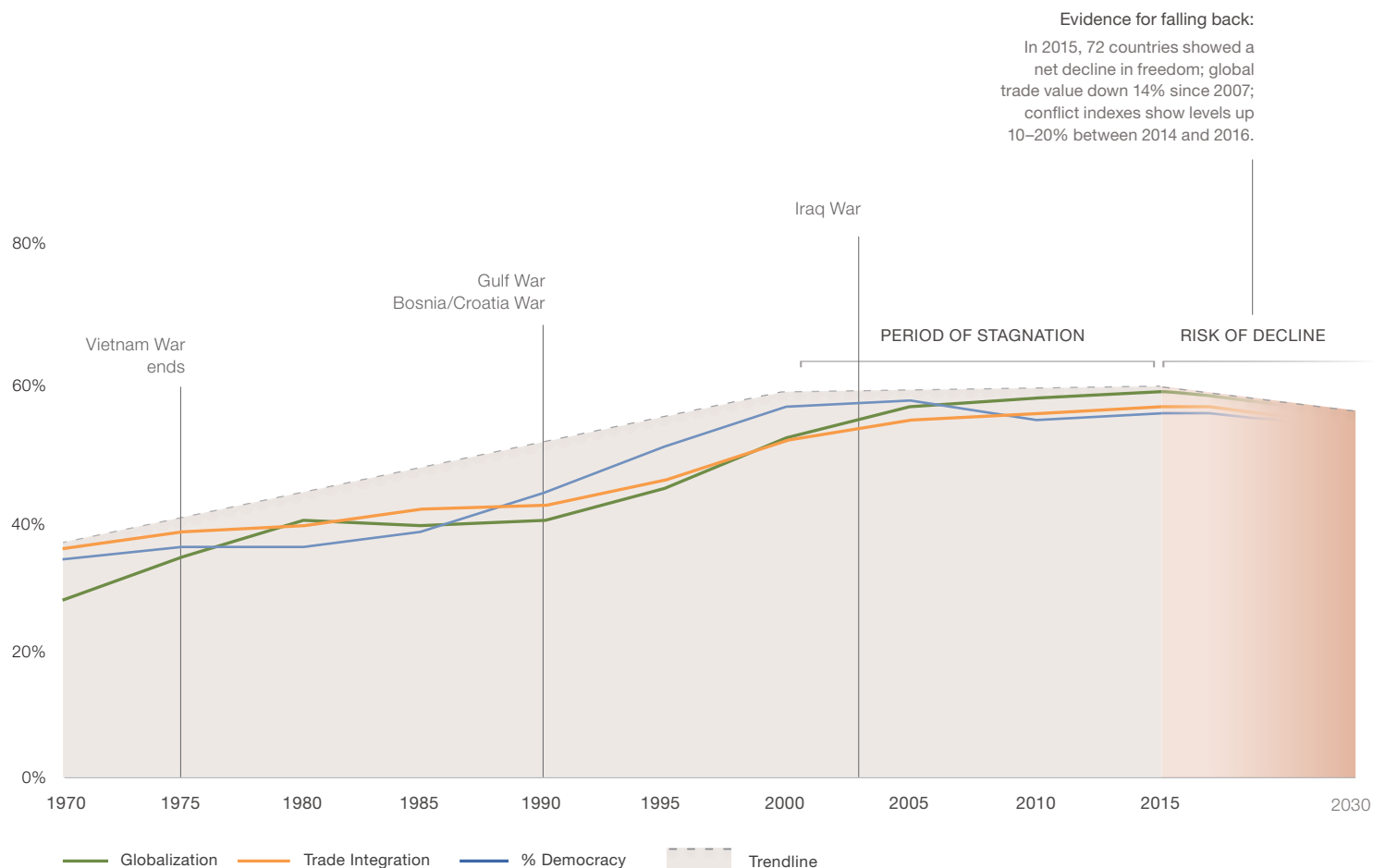
aggression. The study highlighted a number of ways in which U.S. investment in a shared order can support efforts to shape Russian and Chinese behavior in favorable ways. These include coercive, competitive, and cooperative initiatives:

- using international organizations to reinforce—and, in some cases, enforce—the fundamental norm of nonaggression (These include the UN, U.S. alliance systems, and international legal institutions.)
- deepening and expanding the global trading community of open economies to reinforce the critical mass of states committed to the liberal economic order, and building a multilateral effort to combat predatory trade policies (This includes reaffirming support for the WTO and regional trade agreements and investing in such shared institutions as the IMF, Bank of International Settlements, and G-20.)
- recruiting Chinese and Russian engagement with cooperative efforts through international institutions, such as UN peacekeeping and regional development.

Elements of a shared order can also contribute to an essential objective in managing these relationships: Sidestepping territorial and sphere-of-influence claims by these two states. Strengthening regional and global institutions and norms of a shared order can provide the critical foundation for U.S. policy on these issues, demanding that China and Russia resolve their claims in peaceful means. In both cases, there are opportunities to expand U.S. work with local partners, both states and regional institutions, to create a mediated, rule-based solution as the default outcome.

Figure 9. The Postwar Order Stagnates

After decades of consistent upward momentum on key measures associated with the effects of a multilateral order—such things as trade integration, conflict, and democratic governance—all of those measurements began to level off by the mid-2000s and continue to stagnate today.



SOURCES: Globalization: Savina Gygli, Florian Haelg, and Jan-Egbert Sturm, "KOF Globalisation Index," KOF Working Paper, No. 439, 2018 (as of February 12, 2018: <https://www.kof.ethz.ch/en/forecasts-and-indicators/indicators/kof-globalisation-index.html>). Trade Integration: World Bank, "Trade," webpage, undated (as of February 12, 2018: <https://data.worldbank.org/topic/trade>). Percentage in Democracy: Center for Systemic Peace, "The Polity Project," webpage, undated (as of February 12, 2018: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>).

Conclusion

International Order and U.S. National Security Strategy

The MIT professor Barry Posen has defined *grand strategy* as “a nation-state’s theory about how to provide security for itself.”¹⁸ By this definition, building and then leading a shared order has served as the focus of U.S. grand strategy since 1945—and participating in that order (and its key institutions, such as alliances) has become the leading grand strategy of dozens of other countries.

This study sought to evaluate whether that approach remains viable. We conclude that there is at least a chance that it does—and that leading a revised, more complex, and more fractious multilateral order continues to represent the grand strategy that would best serve U.S. national interests. Yet, as noted in Figure 9, there is clear evidence that the momentum behind the indicators of a shared order is ebbing, and, in some cases, has begun to turn toward a gradual decline. If participants believe that their interests will be served by arresting this pattern, the United States and other supporters of a shared multilateral order will need to take significant, coordinated action.

If the United States were to adopt a radically different global posture—for example, a form of retrenchment—the cost-benefit equation of a shared order might change. Even in that case, some components of the current order—such as a multilateral economic system—would remain valuable in advancing U.S. interests. But an important finding of this analysis is that *if* the United States wants to continue to lead globally, a functioning international

order is indispensable. Without the benefits and legitimacy conferred by such an order, vibrant U.S. leadership would become financially and strategically unaffordable.

Indeed, support for some form of world order, both as an instrumental tool to safeguard American interests and as a collective effort to shape a better future, has become more than a strategy. It is now part of the American ethos. While the form of the U.S. global role has evolved, these principles have reflected a particularly American expression of international interests. That the postwar variety of this endeavor has measurably contributed to those interests reemphasizes the continuing relevance of this quintessentially American vision.

Notes

¹ Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, New York: Penguin, 2014, p. 1.

² Executive Secretary, *A Report to the National Security Council*, NSC-68, April 14, 1950, p. 34, accessed from the Truman Library online collection (as of January 16, 2018: https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf).

³ A large number of RAND analysts contributed to the project. Andrew Radin, Miranda Priebe, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos played crucial roles on the core project team. Other RAND scholars who offered significant support are James Dobbins, Stephen J. Flanagan, Timothy R. Heath, Clinton Bruce Reach, Ashley L. Rhoades, Julia A. Thompson, Jordan Willcox, Kathleen Reedy, and Alexander D. Rothenberg. We benefited from the participation of a world-class Core Study Group of outside scholars and practitioners; those who offered especially generous assistance included Ash Jain, Bruce Jones, Robert Keohane, Steven Krasner, Lisa Martin, Stewart Patrick, Gideon Rose, William Wohlforth, and Thomas Wright. The project team would like to extend its warmest thanks to Seth G. Jones, director of the International Security and Defense Program in the National Defense Research Institute at the time of this project, for his boundless energy and good cheer in supporting the research. Responsibility for the specific findings and recommendations in this report lies with its authors.

⁴ The reports that arose from this project are: Michael J. Mazarr, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, *Understanding the Current International Order*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1598-OSD, 2016 (as of February 7, 2018: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1598.html); Michael J. Mazarr, Astrid Stuth Cevallos, Andrew Radin, and Miranda Priebe, *Building a Sustainable International Order: Summary of the First Workshop in the International Order Project Series*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, CF-347-OSD, 2016 (as of February 7, 2018: https://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF347.html); Hal Brands, *American Grand Strategy and the Liberal Order:*

Continuity, Change, and Options for the Future, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, PE-209-OSD, 2016 (as of February 7, 2018: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE209.html>); Kyle Lascurettes, *The Concert of Europe and Great-Power Governance Today: What Can the Order of 19th-Century Europe Teach Policymakers About International Order in the 21st Century?* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, PE-226-OSD, 2017 (as of February 7, 2018: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE226.html>); Andrew Radin and Clinton Bruce Reach, *Russian Views of the International Order*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1826-OSD, 2017 (as of February 7, 2018: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1826.html); Michael J. Mazarr, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, *Alternative Options for U.S. Policy Toward the International Order*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2011-OSD, 2017 (as of February 7, 2018: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2011.html); Michael J. Mazarr, Astrid Stuth Cevallos, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, Kathleen Reedy, Alexander D. Rothenberg, Julia A. Thompson, and Jordan Willcox, *Measuring the Health of the Liberal International Order*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1994-OSD, 2017 (as of February 7, 2018: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1994.html); and Michael J. Mazarr and Ashley L. Rhoades, *Testing the Value of the Postwar International Order*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2226-OSD, 2018 (as of February 7, 2018: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2226.html).

⁵ Michael J. Mazarr, “Preserving the Post-War Order,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 2, Summer 2017.

⁶ See Shawn Donnan, “Globalization Marches on Without Trump,” *Financial Times*, November 6, 2017; and “Repair Job,” *The Economist*, November 18, 2017, p. 63.

⁷ The methodology for these calculations is spelled out in Mazarr and Rhoades, 2018. We reached these estimates through a series of counterfactual analyses that aimed to identify the role that elements of the order play in

supporting economic- or security-related outcomes. We then identified estimates of value for those outcomes and what financial or budgetary value the United States might have lost in the absence of mechanisms of the order. In the resulting analysis, we can demonstrate two steps in the causal chain with a high degree of reliability: the value at stake (such as the specific amounts of budgetary support offered by allies in times of war), and the fact that elements of order played some role in achieving a positive outcome (through case histories, for example). The estimates are necessarily more subjective in the interpretation of what *proportion* of that value can be attributed to the elements of international order.

⁸ Jeff D. Colgan and Robert O. Keohane, “The Liberal Order Is Rigged: Fix It Now or Watch It Wither,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 17, 2017.

⁹ Important recent studies that make the case for a necessary transition to a more polycentric order include Flockart et al., 2014; and Oliver Stuenkel, *Post-Western World: How Emerging Powers Are Remaking Global Order*, London: Polity Press, 2016.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Goldberg, “World Chaos and World Order: Conversations with Henry Kissinger,” *The Atlantic*, November 10, 2016 (as of February 12, 2018: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/11/kissinger-order-and-chaos/506876/>).

¹¹ An excellent recent discussion of China’s attitude toward the order can be found in Evan A. Feigenbaum, “China and the World: Dealing with a Reluctant Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, December 2017.

¹² Trine Flockart, Charles A. Kupchan, Christina Lin, Bartlomiej E. Nowak, Patrick W. Quirk, and Lanxin Xiang, *Liberal Order in a Post-Western World*, Washington, D.C.: German Marshall Fund of the United States, May 5, 2014, p. 161.

¹³ On this point, see, for example, Tod Lindberg, *Making Sense of the ‘International Community,’* Council on Foreign Relations Working Paper,

January 2014; Andreas Hasenclever and Brigitte Weiffen, “International Institutions Are the Key: A New Perspective on the Democratic Peace,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4, October 2006; Ethan A. Nadelmann, “Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society,” *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Autumn 1990; Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 159, 1999; and Jon C. Pevehouse, “Democracy from the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization,” *International Organization*, Vol. 56, No. 3, 2002.

¹⁴ PwC, “The World in 2050: Will the Shift in Global Economic Power Continue?” February 2015 (as of February 12, 2018: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/economy/the-world-in-2050.html>).

¹⁵ Lawrence Summers has argued for a program of “responsible nationalism” and a new trade agenda long these lines, but his concept remains embryonic. See, for example, Lawrence Summers, “Voters Deserve Responsible Nationalism, Not Reflex Globalism,” *Financial Times*, July 10, 2016.

¹⁶ Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005; Bilahari Kausikan, “Asia in the Trump Era,” *Foreign Affairs*, May-June 2017.

¹⁷ Bruce Jones and Thomas Wright, *The State of the International Order*, Brookings Institution Policy Paper, No. 33, February 2014, pp. 1–2.

¹⁸ Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014, p. 1.

The growing threat to the rules-based postwar order has become a defining feature of current discussions about world politics. Over the last two years, a RAND project team, working with outside experts, has sought to understand the existing international order, assess current challenges to the order, and recommend future U.S. policies to advance U.S. interests in the context of a multilateral order. This report is the summary of that project, *Building a Sustainable International Order*, and outlines the overall project's basic findings and lessons. For more information on the project, visit www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/international-order.

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