WHAT IS THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER?
ME IN 2014
ME IN 2019

WORLD WAR III?

This Time Is Different
Why U.S. Foreign Policy Will Never Recover

Daniel W. Drezner
WHAT HAPPENED?
REVISIONISTS FROM WITHOUT AND WITHIN
MY ARGUMENT

• U.S. structural power has been underestimated

• Revisionism from rising powers has been exaggerated

• U.S. control over structural pillars of power persist

• Revisionism from within is the real problem

• It’s not going away anytime soon
THINKING ABOUT POWER

CAPABILITIES
- Resource-based
- Balancing dynamics

STRUCTURES
- Network-based
- Winner-take-all
THE STRANGE STATE OF THE CURRENT ORDER
THE FOUR STRUCTURAL PILLARS OF POWER

- SECURITY
- PRODUCTION AND TRADE
- CREDIT AND FINANCE
- IDEAS AND INFORMATION
HOW TO REVISE A GLOBAL ORDER

• The traditional method is costly

• Concerns about premature exclusion

• Concerns about premature signaling

• Tipping point effects
THE OPTIMAL SEQUENCING

Ideas and information → Production → Security and finance
CHINA IN 2008 vs. 2018
China BRI will potentially span 68 countries and could have implications for each of these countries’ public debt.
CHINA AS RESPONSIBLE STAKEHOLDER
New institutions consistent with old ideas
BACKLASH TO BELT & ROAD

Malaysia
Pakistan
India
WHAT ACTUALLY WORRIES ME
IN REALITY...
• IDEAS AND INFORMATION ➔ “fake news,” “enemy of the people.”

• PRODUCTION ➔ Trade wars!

• SECURITY ➔ Mostly rhetoric

• FINANCE ➔ Hyper-sanctions

REVISIONISM FROM WITHIN
WHY POPULISTS DISLIKE THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER
Populism

Multilateral constraints
EXITING FROM GLOBAL GOVERNANCE
“Multilateralism has too often become viewed as an end unto itself. The more treaties we sign, the safer we supposedly are. The more bureaucrats we have, the better the job gets done. Was that ever really true?”
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
EROSION OF TRUST IN AUTHORITY AND EXPERTISE

Edelman Trust Barometer, 2018: “The public’s confidence in the traditional structures of American leadership is now fully undermined and has been replaced with a strong sense of fear, uncertainty and disillusionment.”
RISE OF POLITICAL POLARIZATION

Democrats and Republicans More Ideologically Divided than in the Past
Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values

1994
- MEDIAN Democrat
- MEDIAN Republican

Consistently liberal  Consistently conservative

2004
- MEDIAN Democrat
- MEDIAN Republican

Consistently liberal  Consistently conservative

2014
- MEDIAN Democrat
- MEDIAN Republican

Consistently liberal  Consistently conservative

Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see Appendix A). The blue area in this chart represents the ideological distribution of Democrats; the red area of Republicans. The overlap of these two distributions is shaded purple. Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
HOW POLARIZATION AFFECTS U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
EBBING OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH CONSTRAINTS

CONGRESS?

JUDICIARY?

WATCHDOGS ON THE HILL
LINDA L. FOWLER

The Travel Ban at the Supreme Court: Deference Seems to Prevail

By Peter Margulies  Wednesday, April 25, 2018, 4:46 PM
AS A RESULT...
CAN THIS BE REVERSED?
Americans View Immigration as a Good Thing

On the whole, do you think immigration is a good thing or a bad thing for this country today?

% Good thing

- All adults
- Republicans/Republican leaners
- Democrats/Democratic leaners

2001: 67% (All adults), 58% (Republicans), 62% (Democrats)
2002: 61% (All adults), 47% (Republicans), 52% (Democrats)
2004: 69% (All adults), 66% (Republicans), 66% (Democrats)
2006: 69% (All adults), 67% (Republicans), 67% (Democrats)
2008: 64% (All adults), 53% (Republicans), 58% (Democrats)
2010: 66% (All adults), 61% (Republicans), 66% (Democrats)
2012: 77% (All adults), 71% (Republicans), 71% (Democrats)
2014: 71% (All adults), 58% (Republicans), 63% (Democrats)
2016: 83% (All adults), 71% (Republicans), 59% (Democrats)
2018: 85% (All adults), 75% (Republicans), 65% (Democrats)

GALLUP
Record High in U.S. See Implications of Trade as Positive for U.S.

What do you think foreign trade means for America? Do you see foreign trade more as an opportunity for economic growth through increased U.S. exports or a threat to the economy from foreign imports?

% Opportunity for growth  % Threat to economy

1993 1995 1997 1999 2001 2003 2005 2007 2009 2011 2013 2015 2017 2019

GALLUP
When dealing with international problems, the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice. (%)

n = 1,008

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

2018 Chicago Council Survey
BUT...
HOW ENGAGED IS THE PUBLIC?

• “When asked what the phrase ‘maintaining the liberal international order’ indicated to them, all but one of the participants in our focus group drew a blank.”

Center for American Progress, “America Adrift,” May 2019
IN CONCLUSION....

• The liberal international order is not dead, but it’s not healthy either.

• The problem is not Russia or China: it’s the United States.

• Domestic political changes will make U.S. maintenance very difficult.