SECURITY, STRATEGY, AND ORDER

SEPTEMBER 2019

THE PURPOSE OF MULTILATERALISM

A FRAMEWORK FOR DEMOCRACIES IN A GEOPOLITICALLY COMPETITIVE WORLD

WILL MORELAND

Foreign Policy at BROOKINGS

THE PURPOSE OF MULTILATERALISM

A FRAMEWORK FOR DEMOCRACIES IN A GEOPOLITICALLY COMPETITIVE WORLD

WILL MORELAND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across the globe, multilateralism appears in crisis. Skepticism of the benefits of a multilateral order grounded in underlying liberal principles is manifesting throughout the Western world. The United States, the system's imperfect cornerstone, scorns a growing number of multilateral institutions and norms each day. Within Europe, Brexit and discord over the European Union's (EU) future is undercutting the EU as a regional multilateral pillar, alongside the supranational bloc's capacity as a global actor. Simultaneously, a more assertive China and Russia are seeking to reshape multilateralism, challenging the foundational liberal principles that have guided the post-Cold War multilateral order to which the world has become accustomed.

The post-Cold War moment witnessed a tremendous flourishing in multilateral cooperation. Nations employed multilateral architectures with unprecedented success to manage and reduce real shared global problems. Individuals, understandably, are rallying to defend this multilateral order against rising strains. However, multilateralism can only operate in the geopolitical context within which it exists. The unfortunate return of great-power competition, so noticeably dampened during the preceding decades, is eroding the very foundations on which the multilateralism of the post-Cold War era stood.

While the United States is currently the most noticeable disruptor, authoritarian countries are actively contesting the underpinnings of the multilateral order. Russia and China increasingly are working to bring multilateral architectures into closer alignment with their own authoritarian norms. Such a transformation is not in the interests of nations around the globe that seek to maintain democratic governance against the growing reach of authoritarian influence. Globalization's ties have created deep interconnections and vulnerabilities between democratic and authoritarian states. As states continue to "weaponize" those channels, and China presents a true global economic challenge to the market democracies, the United States and other democratic countries must move toward a conception of multilateralism that defends democratic interests within existing, and even new, architectures.

A relearning of the history of multilateralism is central to this process. Decades ago, multilateral arrangements born amidst post-war hopes of cooperation quickly learned to function in divided environments throughout the Cold War. As great-power competition casts a shadow over today's multilateral systems, we must recall lessons from beyond the past quarter-century. To meet rising geopolitical challenges, democratic countries ought to approach multilateral architectures through a framework along three complementary lines:

- Continue to support measured collaboration on shared challenges;
- Create or revitalize fora to provide for deconfliction and crisis off-ramps; and
- Compete selectively both within existing institutions and via new ones to better defend democratic values against authoritarian rivals.

A strategic outlook of *competitive multilateralism* seeks a rebalance among these three dimensions so that democratic governments are best positioned to strive to avert the specter of conflict without sacrificing their publics' liberty and prosperity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rarely a year goes by where the international order is not declared in crisis. These calls have swelled to a new crescendo since the beginning of the Trump administration. Yet, from the Suez Crisis to the invasion of Iraq, and from the Berlin airlift to the invasion of Ukraine, the international order has weathered crises from within and without. So when French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas assert that "the multilateral order is experiencing its perhaps gravest crisis since its emergence," is this time different?[1]

The international landscape certainly is undergoing profound structural shifts. Increased American unilateralism and rising Western nationalism are combining with changing geopolitical circumstances to transform the international environment in which we have lived since the Cold War's end. Developments from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's expanding illiberal influence in international organizations, to the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, resort to trade wars, and growing resentment toward both the U.N. system and Washington's traditional allies, seem to imperil the "multilateral order" that Le Drian and Mass describe.

The world's capacity for mobilizing cooperation around shared global challenges is indeed endangered. Multilateral order, to Le Drian and Mass, relies on robust "trust and commitment within the framework of international cooperation, the quest for joint solutions, [and] strong and effective institutions," which are now "at risk of losing their impact."[2] Multilateral cooperation, once assumed to be ever expanding, is indeed now under growing strain. Multilateralism — operating through architectures of organizations, institutions, and bespoke mechanisms, often based in treaties and international law and grounded, fundamentally, in the U.N. Charter — has been crucial to preserving peace, increasing prosperity, addressing common threats, and even defending democratic values in both the Cold War and post-Cold War eras.

Defense of multilateral cooperation is an admirable objective. To this end, France and Germany, now partially joined by Japan and Canada, already have inaugurated an "Alliance for Multilateralism." However, of equal importance is a recognition that facilitating

international cooperation is not the sole purpose of multilateralism. In an environment of increasing competition among great powers, an exclusive focus on cooperation is gravely misguided. While we have become accustomed to the multilateralism of the post-Cold War, unipolar world — universal in scope and largely free of the constraints of geopolitical rivalry — multilateralism's future is not limited to this paradigm.

As the post-Cold War geopolitical respite yields to the force of resurgent great-power competition, so must our post-Cold War conception of multilateralism reflect these changing dynamics. Architectures designed solely to address shared challenges are insufficient if states are contesting core issues, and — unlike in the unipolar moment — possess the power to oppose the United States. Despite a desire to preserve post-Cold War institutions and practices, geopolitical rivalries loom as a challenge with the potential to alter the foundations of multilateral order.

To defend multilateralism, one cannot preserve it in amber; rather, those architectures must be adapted to, and adaptable within, the prevailing geopolitical environment.

Multilateral cooperation cannot be deployed to tame great-power rivalries. To defend multilateralism, one cannot preserve it in amber; rather, those architectures must be adapted to, and adaptable within, the prevailing geopolitical environment. A relearning of the history of multilateralism is central to this process. Multilateral architectures boast a rich past of operating in contested environments throughout the Cold War. The architects of the multilateral systems built after World War II purposefully constructed *multiple* layers in order to pursue *multiple* ends as geopolitical concerns undercut their early universal visions. Today, as great-power competition casts a shadow over the post-Cold War multilateral systems, we must recall aims and methods that stretch beyond the past quarter-century. Multilateral architectures are tools for states to pursue their national interests. To meet these rising geopolitical challenges, stemming in large part from an inherent tension between authoritarianism and the liberal principles that undergird both democratic governance and the multilateral order, democratic countries can act selectively through these architectures to:

- Continue to support measured collaboration on shared challenges;
- Create or revitalize fora to provide for deconfliction and crisis off-ramps; and
- Compete selectively both within existing institutions and via new ones to better defend democratic values against authoritarian rivals.

Presently, the focus rests far too heavily on the first of those three. A new, "competitive multilateralism"[3] does not ignore that first element, but it seeks to rebalance among all three dimensions as democratic governments strive to prevent war without sacrificing their publics' liberty and prosperity. It recognizes that where Le Drian and Maas call for the Alliance for Multilateralism "to stabilize the rules-based world order, to uphold its principles and to adapt it to new challenges where necessary," adaptation is critical.[4] Even before a resurgence of great-power competition, multilateral institutions required reform. Today, calls to protect multilateralism cannot crowd out the need for reflection and innovation. Multilateralism's value is not exhausted; but a failure to adapt could lead to obsolescence.

II. MULTILATERALISM UNDER ATTACK

1. Something to be desired: American behavior in the unipolar moment

Given the United States' key role in creating and, largely, upholding the multilateral order, it is not surprising that considerable international concern over multilateralism's future has been framed, explicitly or implicitly, around changing U.S. rhetoric and policy under the Trump administration. Voices from around the globe have offered a robust riposte on the importance of preserving multilateral outlooks and institutions. Le Drian and Maas have lamented that, "unfortunately, it can no longer be taken for granted that an international rules-based system is seen by all as the best guarantor of our security and prosperity."[5] Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale has cautioned against "unilateral tendencies" that are "coming to the fore, be they in rising trade protectionism or in the disregard for established international mechanisms governing the global commons."[6] Even China, a troublesome actor in its own right, has capitalized on the new American rhetoric to bemoan "international rules and multilateral mechanisms [that] are under attack."[7]

Fears of more unilateralist U.S. behavior are not unprecedented. Americans have long been simultaneously both the lynchpin of multilateral order and deeply skeptical of the project. Other nations often have feared the U.S. abandonment of multilateralism for a more unilateralist posture. These concerns only grew as the Cold War's constraints fell away. As G. John Ikenberry wrote in 2003 amidst international tumult over the U.S. invasion of Iraq, unilateralism "is not a new feature of American foreign policy. In every historical era, the United States has shown a willingness to reject treaties, violate rules, ignore allies, and use military force on its own."[8] "Assertive unilateralism," in the words of Timothy Garton Ash, was a "hallmark of the second Bush presidency from the outset."[9] Even coming off the relative calm of the Clinton years, some Europeans desired a greater "multilateralizing" of U.S. foreign policy.[10] The bond between multilateralism and Washington always has been less robust than some would desire.

In part, this uncertainty stems from the fact that the American commitment to multilateralism is a voluntary self-constraint on the United States' own power. As either the most powerful state among a set of countries (as in the Cold War) or as the most powerful state within the entire system (as in the post-Cold War), the bare truth is that the United States has invested in multilateral systems by its own choice and its own choice alone. That choice was strategic. Support for international institutions and norms was perceived to advance American interests. Following a sense of enlightened self-interest, American support for a multilateral order sacrificed some policy autonomy but facilitated "functional demands for cooperation," "hegemonic power management" (especially the legitimation of U.S. power predominance), and the projection of the "American legal-institutional political tradition" out into the world.[11] The United States, the calculus went, got more than it gave.

By exercising a measure of strategic restraint — a respect for certain core rules (most importantly, restraint on the use of force) — the United States and other nations opened space for the expansion beyond the West of a multilateral order in which cooperation could flourish. In a time defined by belief in convergence theory and American military dominance, it was easy to assume — especially in the West — that great-power rivalries were obsolete. States were marching toward the same sets of goals. [12] With traditional security concerns seemingly off the table, common objectives and shared threats could take precedence. But if those underlying rules were broken, and faith in cooperation

undercut, then nations would have no choice but to hedge against potential threats, undermining the foundational sense of security that enabled the more cooperative order to function. Unfortunately, it was not long before those rules were being eroded from several directions.

Looking back, it is easy to depict American foreign policy as increasingly divergent from multilateral principles since the Cold War's end (if not even before then). Undoubtedly, U.S. adherence to multilateral rules and institutional processes was far from perfect. Lacking external constraints in the unipolar moment, Washington had the least incentive to follow through on the promise of restraint. Yet, it is worth remembering that the scope and depth of the multilateral order was not static. As Ikenberry argues, the proliferation of post-Cold War architectures requires distinguishing newer multilateral "contracts" as distinct "from the older foundational agreements that give the basic order its multilateral form."[13] U.S. compliance with the host of multilateral norms, institutions, and processes is more accurately seen as a mixed bag — as it is for most nations. Realistically, "all nations are selective in their choices from the menu of multilateral groupings available to them."[14] The United States simply attracted extra scrutiny since, as the largest power and system leader, the order's survival depended on it.

This is neither to excuse nor obscure the cases where the United States fell short of the multilateral order's ideals. The United States remained willing, and at times quick, to ignore or alter rules — even concerning the use of force — when it deemed necessary. From the NATO intervention in Kosovo to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Washington was willing to sidestep multilateral institutions not aligned with its policies. Few, if any, of these actions were truly unilateral. Allies and partners consistently joined the United States in varying numbers. Nonetheless, these decisions troubled not only putative rivals, but also allies. American "hyperpower" was worrisome at best, threatening at worst.[15] Rather than reinforce the multilateral order, U.S. leaders sought to transform it by "making a grand offer" in which Washington "would serve as the unipolar provider of global security," but "would not be obliged to play by the same rules as other states."[16] The world was not inclined to accept.

2. The terrible teens: Troubles expand in the 2010s

Though serious, U.S. behavior did not provide the only crack in the faith supporting the multilateral order. While American actions in the 2000s receive considerable and justifiable attention, Russia and China did not hesitate to dismiss their own commitments to the multilateral order's core rules — particularly the prohibition on the use of force — when the circumstances arose. As the power differential between Beijing, Moscow, and Washington diminished, so did Russian and Chinese interest in strategic restraint. As early as 2007, Russia sought to intimidate Estonia via a cyberattack. Twice in under a decade, Moscow intervened militarily in a neighboring state — Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, the latter marking the first alteration of borders by force in Europe since World War II.[17] The message was that clear, blatant coercion was back on the menu for Russia to achieve its aims in its "near abroad."

In East Asia, Beijing has more assertively pursued its interests at the expense of its neighbors. From disputes with Vietnam over off-shore oil drilling to disagreements with the Philippines over fishing rights, China increasingly has deployed harassment and intimidation against its neighbors. In doing so, it has not hesitated to flout international institutions. Beijing's increased scope of island-building in the South China Sea not

only has come at the expense of other maritime states but ignores the 2016 ruling of a tribunal under the Permanent Court of Arbitration. China "is, in effect, using military force to try to extort concessions from its neighbours."[18] Further compounding this situation, China has militarized those maritime features, in contradiction to a seeming 2015 commitment by President Xi Jinping.[19] As Beijing's power grows, Chinese Communist Party leaders seek to reclaim a perceived rightful sphere of influence in East Asia; rules that stand in the way cannot be allowed to hinder the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."[20]

This negative trajectory only accelerated in the latter half of the 2010s. The resurgence of geopolitical tensions with Russia and China began to coincide with a severe weakening of support for multilateralism in its traditional transatlantic bastion. Brexit continues to damage European regional multilateralism within the European Union (EU) and consumes political bandwidth. The broader EU remains wracked by nationalist and anti-integrationist currents that are undercutting the supranational bloc's capabilities as a global actor.[21] Russian influence operations throughout the West stoke internal fissures to both hobble and divide the historical defenders of multilateral order. Meanwhile in Washington, if the multilateral order that defined the post-Cold War was grounded in a set of "rules, institutions, partnerships, and political norms about how states do business with each other," the Trump administration has had little interest in it.[22]

The resurgence of geopolitical tensions with Russia and China began to coincide with a severe weakening of support for multilateralism in its traditional transatlantic bastion.

3. America unbound

Since his election campaign, Donald Trump has appeared to oppose the multilateral order itself, rather than specific policies designed within its framework. On the campaign trial, Trump decried "surrender[ing] this country, or its people, to the false song of globalism," professing hostility toward "international unions that tie us up and bring America down." As president, he promised, he would "never enter America into any agreement that reduces our ability to control our own affairs."[23] Since assuming office, his rhetoric has, at times, nodded at multilateral cooperation. However, that cooperation is almost always incompatible with multilateralism in practice. He has railed against NATO and the World Trade Organization. Standing before the U.N. General Assembly in 2018, Trump has contrasted "independence and cooperation" against "global governance, control, and domination."[24] Explaining the rejection of a treaty intended to set standards for trade in conventional arms, the administration asserted it would "never surrender America's sovereignty to an unelected, unaccountable, global bureaucracy."[25] For Trump, the idea of any international system that places constraints on the United States is anathema.

This outlook is particularly concerning for proponents of the multilateral order. Despite the United States' past challenges to multilateralism, it never rejected the system itself. Washington did work to alter or revise rules, even core ones; however, it previously consistently supported the existence of the order as a framework within which to operate. Successive administrations sought to justify their actions under its norms. Even amidst the high frictions over the invasion of Iraq, the George W. Bush administration

did not declare the international system obsolete, but worked to engage the relevant institutions and portray its policies as operating under the existing rules. While those architectures did not deter the ultimate U.S. decision, the Bush administration did strive to "place its anti-Saddam [Hussein] policy in a multilateral framework."[26] Though not always deferring to the order, the United States did value it.

The same cannot be said today of President Trump, nor a growing cohort of followers. Within the administration, more unilateralist voices, such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and now-former National Security Advisor John Bolton, have been empowered. Indeed, speaking in March 2019, Pompeo warned that over the preceding decades, "the institutions we built to defend the free world against the Soviet menace, had drifted from their original mission set. Indeed, some of them had become directly antagonistic to our interests."[27] Similarly, just prior to assuming office in 2018, Bolton supported a leaked proposal to make U.S. foreign aid significantly more contingent on alignment with American policy positions within the United Nations; in short, "votes in the United Nations should cost people, cost countries that vote against us."[28]

Outside government, a nationalist-unilateralist strand exists in the broader American body politic. A May 2019 Center for American Progress survey classified 33% of respondents as "Trump nationalists," prioritizing high military spending, a focus on the homefront, and countering immigration and "others taking advantage of us on trade." This demographic outnumbers either "traditional internationalists" (18%) or "global activists" (28%).[29] While strongest among older voters, this segment of the population is not a fleeting phenomenon. Pompeo is "more political than any other recent secretary, with the exception, perhaps, of Hillary Clinton," approaching his post "like a future Presidential candidate."[30] A generation younger, Senator Tom Cotton has been heralded as the potential "future of Trumpism."[31] Though the current president brought this nationalist-unilateralism to the fore, these views will remain a lasting dimension in American politics, shaping the formulation of foreign policy for decades to come.

III. THE GEOPOLITICS OF MULTILATERALISM

As these rising unilateralist currents in the United States intermix with growing Russian and Chinese assertiveness internationally, the future of a cooperative multilateral order seems increasingly tenuous. In response, multilateral proponents such as Le Drian and Maas seek "to stabilize the rules-based world order, to uphold its principles and to adapt it to new challenges where necessary."[32] But how much adaptation is necessary, and what does it look like?

Here the critical question centers on one's view of the relationship between multilateralism and geopolitical competition. Is great-power competition a structural condition of the international environment — a constraint within which multilateral tools must function — or is great-power competition a challenge that multilateralism should aim to overcome?

Some hope that multilateral institutions can subdue geopolitical rivalries. Le Drian and Maas hint at this potential in asserting that "some [international] players are increasingly engaging in power politics, thus undermining the idea of a rules-based order with a view to enforcing the law of the strong."[33] If the return of geopolitical competition is a choice made by states, then investing in multilateral systems could stymie power politics — it just requires rallying the determination to collectively will our way out of the adversarial mindset.[34]

Unfortunately, this is a misdiagnosis. Great-power politics, particularly their relative absence, always have been the foundation underlying the multilateral order. If great-power competition is returning, reshaping states' baseline assumptions, then it is a driving, structural force in international politics to which nations must respond. Multilateral tools must adapt to function within those parameters, not try to master them. A danger, therefore, lurks for those advocates of multilateralism who try to preserve the post-Cold War multilateral order in amber. Relying on multilateralism defined by the hallmarks of the post-Cold War era — universal in membership, focused on existing institutions, and centered primarily on maintaining broad cooperation on shared challenges — falsely assumes the past quarter-century as the historical norm, rather than an aberration.[35]

Faith in the capacity of multilateral institutions to tame geopolitics is not new. Such a belief was once distinctly American. As Stewart Patrick details, U.S. post-war planning during the 1940s drew on an optimism that "just as the New Deal innovations had helped to stabilize the U.S. domestic political economy by bolstering democracy and market capitalism, so new international agencies could assist nations in managing practical social, economic, and political problems and avoiding the descent into political extremism, geopolitical rivalry, and zero-sum economic competition."[36] The hope that "functional agencies" in international organizations could "help de-politicize controversial issues by treating these as neutral, technical challenges" was not entirely unfounded; but nor could it eliminate the frictions of international high politics.[37] As Bruce Jones and I recount in "The Marshall Plan and the Shaping of American Strategy," rising tensions between the Soviet Union and Western nations soon scuttled this universalist, cooperative vision.[38] Similarly today, seemingly "neutral technical challenges," such as the spread and advancement of telecommunications standards and technologies, are proving to harbor deeply politicized questions — ones with considerable consequences for the future of the liberal democratic model.[39]

This argument for neutralizing geopolitics by reframing challenges as "technical issues" retains understandable currency in Europe. For many, the heart of the European Union project has been just that. As former European Commission President Romano Prodi once highlighted, the "genius of the [EU] founding fathers lay in translating extremely high political ambitions...into a series of more specific, almost technical decisions.[40] Presently, Maas speaks of a multilateralism that "is not directed against anyone, but instead strives to reach joint solutions to global problems."[41] However, such rhetoric should be employed cautiously. While preserving space for multilateral cooperation is a worthy, and necessary, objective, any suggestion that multilateralism can overcome great-power rivalry risks fueling a perception that multilateral advocates are falling prey to the same illusions that confounded post-war statesmen.

Allies of President Trump's unilateralist agenda feed on oversimplifications and caricatures. They cast proponents of multilateral approaches as misguidedly reifying institutions as a "higher purpose of international politics," a "foreign policy goal, not just a means."[42] Space opens for spurious charges, like those from Secretary Pompeo, that multilateralism has "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."[43] If the defense of multilateral systems centers solely on the need for cooperation as the world appears increasingly competitive, then arguments like that of Michael Anton, former White House deputy national security advisor for communications, resonate more with the public: An "underappreciated danger is that, in declining to act in their interests, Western and democratic countries create opportunities for unfriendly powers,

unashamed to act in their interests, to exploit what they see as Western naiveté." Or, as Anton quotes the president's own "inelegant," but even more relatable way of phrasing it: "Don't be a chump."[44] To many Americans, a commitment to cooperation via multilateralism when Moscow and Beijing seem to be pursuing "Russia/China First" appears to leave the United States holding the bag.

With multilaterally-inclined Democratic leaders and foreign policy experts warning of the challenges posed by China and Russia, Americans balk at what they see as a trading away of their interests in the name of cooperation.[45] This framing is undoubtedly a false dichotomy of cooperation set against "American interests." Nonetheless, the message remains powerful. Multilateralism is depicted as a cause that is divorced from *true* American interests, unsuited for an era of geopolitical rivalry.

IV. RECOVERING THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUES IN MULTILATERALISM

Why the rules matter

Driving that rivalry, in large part, is a clash of governance systems between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Authoritarianism is inherently in tension with many of the foundational, liberal rules that have undergirded the multilateral order. The post-Cold War moment obscured this reality for many in the West. Globalization amidst the "end of history" spurred the impression that the world was converging on a set of common norms — neutral, standardized, best practices to address shared challenges. However, this process effectively entailed exporting Western, liberal principles, including often via multilateral institutions, across the globe.[46]

This post-Cold War "'era of convergence' came to an end," Thomas Wright explains, "because Russian and Chinese leaders concluded that if the liberal order succeeded globally, it would pose an existential threat to their regimes." From the vantage point in Moscow and Beijing, regardless of the official policies of the United States or any Western government, it was evident that the free press "published material that destabilized their regimes," while Western private sector actors like "Google and social-media companies [could be] aiding dissenters in their own societies."[47] Fundamentally, the expansion of liberal values internationally threatened illiberal regimes' survival.

Authoritarian leaders have perceived the presence of those liberal principles underlying multilateral architectures as threatening. As Melanie Hart and Blaine Johnson describe: "The current global governance system is rules-based, and it privileges liberal democratic values and standards; [China's] alternative vision is a system based on authoritarian governance principles in which nations negotiate issues bilaterally instead of following common rules and standards."[48] Chinese and Russian discontent is understandable. "National security," as Tarun Chhabra reminds, "is ultimately the defense of political identity and core values from external threats."[49] It is unsurprising that Chinese and Russian elites would view a multilateral order conducive to democracy as inimical to their interests. Unfortunately, that truth places illiberal regimes' efforts to "make the world safe for authoritarianism" directly at odds with the security of liberal states seeking to do likewise for democracy.

This authoritarian response is normal, even defensive in nature.[50] But that does not make it beneficial to the democratic world. This reality can be difficult for democratic publics. As Robert Cooper noted over a decade ago, "we value pluralism and the rule of law domestically, and it is difficult for democratic societies — including the USA — to

escape from the idea that they are desirable internationally as well."[51] Making space for *illiberal* actors at the table appears as the *liberal* course. Yet, doing so can risk the core principles of that very system; and, after decades of Western democratic preponderance, it is easy to forget how important the underlying value set is in defining the rules that guide multilateralism.

Historical amnesia makes it easy to assume the positive dynamics within recent multilateralism are intrinsic. Today, multilateral structures can be viewed as inherently democratizing and equalizing as "small countries and marginalized or powerless groups can gain a voice that they may not otherwise have and — *thanks to the self-restraining nature of multilateralism* [italics added] — help mitigate the discriminatory exercise of arbitrary power."[52] Yet, as John Ruggie has argued, a "nominal definition of multilateralism misses the *qualitative* [italics original] dimensions of the phenomenon that makes it distinct." That qualitative dimension "immediately comes into focus, however, if we return to an older institutionalist discourse, one informed by the post-war aims of the United States to restructure the international order."[53] Multilateralism in process may reinforce liberal ends of inclusion and equality among states, moderation in policy, and legitimation of outcomes. Nonetheless, it does not guarantee it. The presence or absence of baseline liberal rules — principles of reciprocity and rules-based interactions — is critical. At the core, the character the of multilateral order rests on the values of the leading power to shape the composition of that system.[54] As Ruggie puts it, "it was less the fact of American *hegemony* that accounts for the explosion of multilateral arrangements [after World War II] than it was the fact of *American* hegemony."[55]

At the core, the character the of multilateral order rests on the values of the leading power to shape the composition of that system.

The new rule-makers

Just as with the internet or social media, it cannot be assumed that multilateralism in *any form* inexorably bends the arc of history toward justice. While the exact relationship between illiberalism and multilateralism requires further study, the evidence today illustrates a campaign by authoritarian states to redefine the rules undergirding the multilateral order — whether by assertive action within institutions or the creation of parallel structures. Here China's ambitions loom large. As Eswar Prasad writes, it is "fashioning a new form of multilateralism, one in which it sets the tone and defines the rules of the game."[56]

Chinese President Xi Jinping, as Liza Tobin has articulated, "intends to realign global governance across at least five major dimensions: politics, development (to include economics, society, and technology), security, culture, and the environment."[57] A May 2019 Center for a New American Security report describes how China's approach to global governance reflects a "hybrid strategy in which it both unilaterally offers its own institutions (and corresponding norms) and introduces them to legacy international organizations to reshape preexisting norms and activities to conform more closely to its own interests."[58] To see the immediate impact of this shift, one need look no further than the domain of human rights. There, Ted Piccone details, China "has shifted from its traditionally more defensive posture to a more activist role" at the U.N. Human

Rights Council. While not a new actor in this space, Beijing's actions appear increasingly forward-leaning as it seeks to "block criticism" and "promote Chinese interpretation of principles on sovereignty and human rights."[59]

Similarly, efforts to block the accreditation of select non-governmental organizations to the U.N. system or to promote state-centered norms in the International Telecommunication Union are not simply about gaining a larger voice at the table.[60] Instead, these efforts aim to redefine the table itself, based in a "long-term vision for transforming the international environment to make it compatible with China's governance model and emergence as a global leader."[61] Beijing is not hiding these ambitions. Yang Jiechi, director of the Office of Foreign Affairs of the Communist Party of China, opined openly in November 2017 that it has become "increasingly difficult for Western governance concepts, systems, and models to keep up with the new international situation," arguing for an alternative to a system "beyond redemption."[62] Similarly, Russian President Vladimir Putin has little qualm in asserting that "the liberal idea" has "outlived its purpose."[63]

Those seeking to uphold multilateralism, consequently, cannot ignore the central role of values in shaping the order's very operating system. At a moment when authoritarian regimes in China and Russia are pressuring liberal democracy from without and illiberal populism is challenging liberal democracy from within, supporters of multilateral order must recognize that its foundations are under siege. [64] Failure to bolster those values, both domestically and as the principles guiding multilateral architectures, is to cede influence to authoritarians attempting to reshape the multilateral order in their own image. For advocates of a multilateral order grounded in liberal rules, it becomes critical to not just defend multilateralism in any form, but to speak of a version that serves the defense of democracy.

V. RECOVERING HISTORY: TOWARD COMPETITIVE MULTILATERALISM

Defending democracy does not entail the wholesale abandonment of post-Cold War multilateralism. Instead, an approach of competitive multilateralism prizes the return of values as a central consideration in determining how democracies engage multilaterally. It harkens back to the original inclinations behind the post-war architectures. Then, as now, the builders of those systems understood that while their values may be universal, those values were not universally embraced by governments. Active consideration of how a multilateral institution or forum can bolster or undermine democratic governance recalls a key lesson from modern multilateralism's founding at the Cold War's onset: in contested international environments, layered and flexible institutions yield results.

As the post-war statesmen found their efforts to build a set of institutions to preserve peace complicated by mounting tensions with the Soviet Union, Western policymakers led in adapting the universal U.N. system to a multi-tiered architecture.[65] The creation of the Marshall Plan and NATO were the first steps toward a broader set of transatlantic multilateral institutions (some of which later became codified as alliances) that actively contributed to democracy's defense throughout the Cold War.

Crucially, this choice to adopt a multi-track architecture stemmed from a belief in complementarity, not exclusivity. Creating a set of multilateral structures centered on the democratic world did not result in abandoning the U.N. system. Instead, American leaders appreciated the need for both. In his 1949 inaugural address, President Harry Truman thus declared that the United States "will continue to give unfaltering support

to the United Nations and related agencies, and we will continue to search for ways to strengthen their authority and increase their effectiveness" while simultaneously, keeping "full weight behind the European recovery program [Marshall Plan]" and negotiating NATO.[66] This approach sought to deepen avenues for cooperation and coordination among liberal states to reinforce democratic governments, while also preserving forums to engage with illiberal powers on matters from conflict prevention to cooperation on shared threats.

A modern strategy of "competitive multilateralism" recognizes that the return of great-power competition necessitates a similar balance today. Rather than focus exclusively on protecting the cooperative dynamics that defined the post-Cold War moment, this approach seeks to expand the scope of multilateralism to recover Cold War lessons of international institutions as tools for conflict prevention and arenas for competition. Part restoration and part innovation — appreciating how technological advances are reshaping the international landscape — this approach offers a more sustainable path for preserving multilateralism.

While forthcoming Brookings research will delve more deeply into specific applicable lessons and strategies, the remainder of this paper outlines a framework elaborating the three dimensions of competitive multilateralism.

1. Multilateralism as facilitating cooperation

The resurgence of great-power competition does not extinguish the real transnational challenges confronting the world. Issues such as counterterrorism, combatting infectious disease, poverty alleviation, and — most importantly of all — climate change will still bedevil humanity. Any sufficient response to these transnational threats, as Jake Sullivan writes, "needs to be global, bringing the U.S. together with its rivals — including China — to face shared challenges" as "none of [these threats] can be effectively confronted by the United States alone."[67] The need persists for vehicles to catalyze that cooperation.

This cooperation will be difficult, but not impossible. The American strategic community is in the midst of reshaping its views of China and Russia along significantly more competitive lines.[68] Yet, even in articulating a U.S. strategy that would divide the world between "positive-sum logic" among "America's allies, close partners, and fellow democracies" and "something nearer to zero-sum" for rivals, Hal Brands urges Americans to "remember that cooperation can occur even amid the bitterest rivalries."[69] Competition, at least for the moment, is not so all-encompassing as to preclude any cooperation.

Transnational challenges may threaten all, but they do not exist in a geopolitical vacuum.

There should be no illusion that these areas of cooperation are fully hived off from the influences of great-power politics. Transnational challenges may threaten all, but they do not exist in a geopolitical vacuum. Chinese and Russian pursuit of political dissidents through INTERPOL illustrates that even an issue as "shared and neutral" as combatting international crime retains a geopolitical vector.[70] Similarly, one need look no further than Russian behavior in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons surrounding chemical weapons attacks in Syria or the ability of Russian leadership in the U.N. Counterterrorism Office to stymie investigations into

Chinese repression of Uighur minorities in Xinjiang styled as counterterror efforts.[71] Even negotiations on climate change have the potential to be intertwined in great-power dynamics between Beijing and Washington.[72] Policymakers should approach such issues ready to collaborate, but never forgetful that these challenges exist in a geopolitical context shaped by the interests and values of involved states.

Though complete insulation from these dynamics is likely impossible, space for cooperation does remain. In forging a path forward, many institutions can benefit from learning, or relearning, the lessons of their older counterparts born in the Cold War era. From the prosaic matter of delivering mail (the Universal Postal Union) to the hazardous issues of nuclear proliferation (the International Atomic Energy Agency — IAEA), cooperation could still occur. Domains such as health and, later, space, also developed a degree of shielding from geopolitical winds. Consequently, the study of open archives and accounts of organizational histories can help current policymakers see how past leaders charted those currents. As Elisabeth Roehrlich notes, the IAEA successfully "created a transnational community of experts to build the foundations of nuclear technology exchange, safety measures, and safeguards," despite nuclear issues being core to the U.S.-Soviet rivalry. [73] Similar action today could stake out as much cooperative space as possible to address the serious range of "problems without passports."[74]

Nor is recent history devoid of relevant experiences on which to draw. Cooperative aspects currently have continued despite the deteriorating geopolitical environment. Tensions earlier in the decade did not preclude the United States and China from working with the U.N. and an array of other actors to respond to the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Similarly, the case of American and Russian coordination around the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS offers insights into maintaining a measure of coordination and conflict avoidance despite distinct aims and contentious relations.[75]

Through proactive engagement by those within relevant institutions, combined with forward-leaning diplomacy from the great powers, democracies may be able to chart a course to preserve select domains of multilateral cooperation. Democratic vigilance against potential geopolitical machinations will remain essential. Nonetheless, as Ngaire Woods argues, "creative thinking and perhaps a series of narrower agreements," may be able to "breathe life back into the system" where multilateral cooperation is needed.[76]

2. Multilateralism as supporting conflict prevention

Looking to more contentious situations, if used adroitly, multilateral institutions can remain a significant force in conflict prevention. This is particularly true vis-à-vis prevention's original form: Among the major powers. While rarely sufficient on their own, multilateral fora historically have served as tools to assist key states in deescalating and containing spiraling crises.

Deconfliction of serious conflict among the great powers receded for much of the post-Cold War era — with a few exceptions, such as the 1999 confrontation between NATO and Russia over the Pristina Airport in Kosovo. During these decades, conflict prevention was more a cooperative aspect of multilateralism. Salient countries engaged with — and argued against — the United States in forums like the U.N. Security Council on methods of managing regional challengers from North Korea to Libya. Beyond this more immediate experience, however, rests a deeper tradition. Throughout the Cold

War, despite the formulation of alliance blocs, the U.N. architecture, alongside regional institutions, served as channels for responding to rising geopolitical tensions and creating off-ramps from crises.

At the prompting of the great powers, international organizations served at critical moments as tools to help walk the superpowers back from the brink. These cases ranged from proxy wars in the Middle East, where the U.N. Security Council "was used by the United States and the Soviets to avoid having wars between their proxies spiral into direct clashes between the superpowers," to the lesser known efforts of U.N. Secretary General U Thant's good offices during the Cuban Missile Crisis.[77] A resuscitation of these cases, married to the lessons from a few post-Cold War instances, such as the joint U.N. and OSCE monitoring mission in Georgia, can offer insights into how to stabilize crises in a fractious international environment. Such lessons would not only help provide vehicles for the largest powers — the United States, China, and Russia — but also to those escalating regional rivalries with substantial global impacts — such as India and Pakistan.

Multilateral deconfliction initiatives also must consider the implications of technological developments altering the international landscape. This is particularly urgent in two respects. First, many emerging domains lack robust, or even existent, international architectures to respond to a crisis involving new technologies. Cyberwarfare, drone warfare, advances in biotechnology, space, and artificial intelligence (AI) all reflect critical new competitive arenas among not only great powers but also potentially smaller states and non-state actors as barriers to entry decrease. It remains an open question whether existing multilateral fora can manage potential conflict in these spaces or if the world requires original institutions to mitigate these threats.

Second, in addition to the impact in their respective domains (e.g. a denial of service cyberattack), these technological advances are increasingly interwoven both with each other and with more traditional areas of conflict. The evolution of AI particularly elevates concerns as it will accelerate the speeds at which a crisis unfolds.[78] As countries survey the technological developments at their disposal, dangerous new first strike incentives are spurring troubling escalation dynamics, especially between China and the United States. In light of continuing U.S. military technological superiority, former Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work and Gregory Grant note that "surprise strikes therefore play a central role in PLA [People's Liberation Army] doctrine."[79] Lacking platforms to deescalate situations, these dynamics push the world closer to a precipice.

As time horizons narrow, space for diplomacy and crisis response increasingly seems to shrink. Properly prepared, multilateral architectures could play a critical role in holding back the scourge of conflict.

3. Multilateralism as spaces for competition

Lastly, democratic policymakers and publics must grapple with the reality of authoritarian powers with malign, or at least clashing, intentions that are already inside the proverbial tent. Cold War history demonstrates such a dynamic is not inherently untenable. From the post-war beginnings, multilateral systems have included authoritarian, and even totalitarian, actors. What differs today, however, is an international environment defined by globalization's deepening of interconnections and interdependence of economies, information, and technology between democratic and authoritarian societies. As these interdependencies create vectors for influence and points of leverage to further a new,

"digital authoritarianism," then the related multilateral architectures cannot help but be intermeshed in geopolitical struggles between democratic and authoritarian regimes.[80] What remains to be seen is whether they will be utilized to expand authoritarianism's reach or coordinate democratic push back.

Competition within

Authoritarianism's challenge to both democratic governance at home and the principles underlying the multilateral order abroad necessitates preparedness for sustained competition involving multilateral institutions. Some would counsel retrenchment to a purely "democratic world" to meet the threat of authoritarianism. Secretary Pompeo, for instance, has argued that "international bodies must help facilitate cooperation that bolsters the security and values of the free world…or they must be reformed or eliminated."[81] Pompeo is not incorrect to set the "security and values of the free world" as a guiding star. Nonetheless, his course holds great potential for misstep.

Authoritarianism's challenge to both democratic governance at home and the principles underlying the multilateral order abroad necessitates preparedness for sustained competition involving multilateral institutions.

In addition to the fact that the Trump administration's approach, when it is forced to engage multilaterally, is to praise authoritarian regimes and belittle fellow democracies, Pompeo's proposal places Washington in a position where to follow through on the threat would result in a strategic "own goal."[82] Withdrawal, threatened or actual, from multilateral architectures with authoritarian powers as members may seem a calculated regrouping to rally democratic resources against illiberal economic, technological, and political challenges. Nevertheless, such a move, particularly by the United States, would alienate partners and allies from the start. Other countries — democratic and non-democratic alike — want to continue investing in the existing institutions. The publics of these nations, including many American allies, still believe in these fora. While confidence in the United Nations is traditionally low in the United States (44% in the latest annual Gallup poll), international bodies still command popularity around the globe.[83]

Additionally, so long as Beijing values these standing institutions — because it enjoys clout within them — then countries around the world are unlikely to abandon them. They have little interest in jeopardizing lucrative economic relations with China. Ignoring that reality is likely to lead the United States to "force nations to choose" between Washington and Beijing — an outcome that many states have warned would be a blunder.[84] American policymakers may not like that fact. Nonetheless, these architectures will remain where the competition is waged. Withdrawal only cedes battlefields without contest.

Rather than seeking to convince, or more likely pressure, nations to abandon multilateral institutions, Washington and other like-minded nations should engage to build common causes in favor of democratic aims within select existing institutions. That task will not be easy. Policymakers first must recognize that not every institution or organization is worth competing in; and then, even more difficultly, adjudicate among differing views on which are those worth committing resources to. This challenge is compounded by the necessity of engaging democracies beyond the West, a difficult task even before the decline in transatlantic relations under the Trump administration.

Yet, maintaining engagement in existing institutions need not stymie innovation either within or around those architectures. Efforts could include formalizing caucusing and coordination among democratic states on particular issues. Furthermore, while the creation of new institutions is discussed more below, there is potential in layering new, pro-democratic mechanisms over contested old ones, rather than replace them. As Jake Sullivan and Kurt Campbell recently have argued regarding the increasingly fraught domain of international economics:

> Washington should work with like-minded nations to define a new set of standards on issues that the World Trade Organization does not currently address, from state-owned enterprises to indigenous innovation policies to digital trade. Ideally, these standards would connect Asia and Europe. To this end, *the United States should consider starting a rules-setting initiative of market democracies layered over the WTO system* [italics added], which would fill these gaps.[85]

Competition within existing systems does not seek to destroy or undermine from within, but rather to increase leverage to protect democratic interests. By engaging, policymakers become better positioned to collaborate via sustainable, coordinated coalitions to push back against authoritarian threats to the democratic model — through influence campaigns, intellectual property theft, state-capital market distortions, and even hybrid operations — that permeate the architectures that govern and channel the conduct of commerce and much of daily life.

Competition without

Simultaneously, policymakers should consider the development of new fora, caucuses, and even institutions with the specific purpose of coordinating efforts to bolster liberal democracy in the face of the preceding threats.

This idea is neither unprecedented nor without real challenges. Even the thought of forming a “coalition” instead of utilizing the U.N. system is tainted by the stigma of the legacy of the Iraq War’s “coalition of the willing.” America’s previous post-Cold War track record may well have soured the world on anything that seems like an “alliance of democracies,” with the current administration completing the poisoning of the well.[86] Certainly, there is already skepticism from close American partners. Foreign Minister Maas already has asserted that the Alliance for Multilateralism does not “need any new organizations or formats. The aim is to support a cornerstone of the order by working more closely together in existing institutions.”[87]

The same principle of complementarity that guided U.S. policy in creating the Marshall Plan and NATO without abandoning the U.N. system should guide any efforts today as well.

It is important then to emphasize that the same principle of complementarity that guided U.S. policy in creating the Marshall Plan and NATO without abandoning the U.N. system should guide any efforts today as well. Just as in the late 1940s “the United States adapted its multilateral ideals to the reality of a bifurcated world, shifting from universalist internationalism to consensual coalition-building,” so now could the United States work alongside likeminded partners to establish architectures designed to reinforce democracy at home and within international institutions.[88]

The rise of authoritarian states weaponizing global trade and finance, technological advances like AI, data and privacy, and transnational corruption/kleptocracy necessitates additional effort to build greater interconnections, consultation, and coordination among democratic powers to manage these challenges to open, liberal polities. These matters, what Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman have described as the "weaponization of interdependence," cut to the heart of 21st century democratic security while extending beyond the traditional security space.[89] Democracies are not innocent here. As Farrell and Newman outline, the United States, with European cooperation, were the first-movers in weaponizing the "plumbing" underlying globalization. Nonetheless, as authoritarian regimes embrace and enhance these tactics, democratic states must develop multilateral mechanisms to better understand and respond to challenges that often inherently transcend a single nation's borders or ability to control alone — barring the adoption of truly imperial policies. Without the capacity for standing coordination, it is unclear how an individual democratic nation will be able to cope with the emerging authoritarian capacity to manipulate these domains in order to undercut democratic societies.[90]

That synchronization need not require a return to global bifurcation. It need not necessitate widespread economic decoupling nor the erection of an entirely parallel set of democratic institutions. Flexible coalitions and arrangements may fill this coordination/implementation gap without seeking to upend existing architectures lock, stock, and barrel. As Roland Paris outlines in a recent paper on the role of middle powers in this uncertain geopolitical moment, coordination can function "through informal consultations, not a formal body;" and, at times, it may be sufficient for "regular, informal consultations among a core group of countries [to] enable them to clarify shared priorities and hold each other accountable for previous commitments."[91]

Here too, wise policy has a thin line to walk. The advantages of looser arrangements should be weighed against Stewart Patrick's admonition that "multilateralism cannot simply mean 'acting with others'; it must also mean 'acting through rule-based institutions.'"[92] Already the limits of ad hoc, hub-and-spoke methods are evident in the legitimacy difficulties confronting the Trump administration's campaigns to convince American allies of the dangers of Huawei as 5G provider.[93] A more multilateral approach may have proven more convincing. Had the United States, as Sullivan and Campbell advocate, "coordinated with allies and partners in advance and tried some creative policymaking — for example, establishing a multilateral lending initiative to subsidize the purchase of alternatives to Huawei's equipment — it might have had more success in convincing states to consider other vendors."[94] Dense 21st century challenges surrounding technological, economic, and informational domains may well respond better to standing mechanisms among democracies. Such arrangements, from narrower models such as the "Democracies 10" (D10) to a broader "concert of democracies," could retain the flexibility to act on their own or operate as a caucus within universal institutions.[95]

Standing supplemental architectures also could be crucial to responding to the fact that globalization's interconnections have placed private sector and civil society at the front lines of geostrategic competition, rather than solely governments. Western-led multilateralism has a rich history of extending beyond state actors from the beginning, when Washington accredited 42 U.S. domestic groups to participate in the San Francisco Conference.[96] In the post-Cold War moment, that space grew as the United States supported civil society and private actors taking the lead in select international domains,

such as ICANN. Today, those domains largely house the technological advances that increasingly are redefining the field of great-power competition, including cyber, artificial intelligence, and the flow of data.[97]

Democratic nations face difficult choices in seeking to preserve the role of nongovernmental actors in these domains. While authoritarian states seek to control or exclude many of these non-state actors, democratic governments confront a conundrum in striving to protect their voice and independence, as their very freedom provides latitude that could put them at odds with governmental policy. As Washington and other democracies seek to thread that needle, they can draw on the more open and inclusive multi-stakeholder models that marked the 1990s and early 2000s. But they should not be lulled into thinking that standard will be sufficient for a more geopolitically charged time. Instead, democracies will require multi-stakeholder forums that can convene democratic governments, civil society, and the private sector to create and promote norms for open societies. States likely will desire to do this unilaterally, asserting their sovereign rights to regulate; however, it is far from certain any single government has the long-run capacity to successfully do so unilaterally, even the United States.[98] In this tradeoff between sovereign authority/autonomy and exercising effective influence, policymakers would be wise to lean toward the latter, building mechanisms that stretch beyond their own narrow borders.[99]

In technology and beyond, therefore, "competitive multilateralism" explores and embraces opportunities for multilateral and "mini-lateral" cooperation in the defense of democratic aims. For instance, infrastructure initiatives such as U.S.-Japanese-Australian funding collaboration demonstrate how three democracies can engage in a multilateral, even if not universal, effort to bolster rules and norms in the development space.[100] Ideally such a venture could even harness some of the positive aspects of competition to encourage a "race to the top" in infrastructure development in the Asia-Pacific.[101] Such efforts can even impact the new architectures that non-Western states are developing; the 2019 Osaka G20 summit illustrates how years of rigorous Japanese diplomacy — first bilateral and then more multilateral — laid the foundations to advocate for and then secure the standard of "quality infrastructure" as a way to shape China's expanding Belt and Road Initiative.[102]

Looking forward at these efforts, innovation and flexibility in design will be critical. Competitive multilateralism aims to provide options for those nations that wish to protect democratic values, rather than lock them into rigid blocs. By offering a variety of formats and venues at differing depths of engagement, democratic countries can strive to avoid falling prey to "making states choose." Rather than succumbing to the bloc logic of the Cold War, policymakers can promote a malleable model of multi-tiered multilateral systems. This flexibility, rather than rigidity, coupled with the purpose of defense of democracy — rather than democracy promotion — may serve to liberate the notion of stronger, standing democratic coalitions from the post-Iraq War "alliance of democracies" baggage.

VI. CONCLUSION

Today, the jungle of great-power competition is encroaching, reshaping the geopolitical environment that we have known for over a quarter century.[103] Multilateralism, and the United States' unique role in a post-Cold War multilateral order, is under increasing strain as geopolitical tensions weigh on the existing architectures.

Yet, the world of 2019 is not that of 1929. It possesses a robust network of institutions absent a century ago to help combat international challenges to peace and security. Though they may be under pressure, they are not beyond refurbishment. If mobilized for these new structural conditions, multilateralism can help stave off the horrors of war and help reinforce ties among liberal partners to defend democracy — but that requires being clear eyed about multilateralism and what it can and cannot do.

With the troubling resurgence of great-power competition, multilateralism cannot "solve" geopolitics. Nor can it return us to an idealized version of a harmonious post-Cold War moment. Efforts to preserve the system as it exists — seeking to rally the globe around shared transnational challenges and taking the political rivalries out of these problems — may be well intentioned. However, as the United States discovered when it attempted to follow such a path in founding the U.N. system in the 1940s, harsh geopolitical realities cut through good intentions.

What multilateralism can do, when properly directed, is to serve as an effective tool for democratic governments within a geopolitical environment. If refocused away from the post-Cold War extensive emphasis on enhancing cooperation, a retooled multilateralism can be a powerful force to:

- Continue some collaboration on shared challenges;
- Create off-ramps for crises that risk spiraling into conflict; and
- Compete with authoritarian regimes selectively within existing institutions and via new ones to uphold democracy.

To do so, policymakers must recognize that multilateralism exists within a geopolitical framework. Values must be restored as a core consideration for how democratic nations consider membership and participation in the range of multilateral institutions, foras, and coalitions. Adaptation will not be easy. Moving toward a values-based approach that increases democratic solidarity will run counter to decades of prioritizing cooperation and inclusion regardless of regime type. These currents will challenge those who advocate for change. Though difficult, it will require, as Cooper succinctly puts it, getting "used to the idea of double standards."[104]

Support for a competitive approach can provide space for a reinvigoration of multilateralism, particularly in the United States. As Heather Hurlburt notes in a recent survey of changing perspectives in the American strategic community: "Perhaps surprisingly, writers from hard-bitten realists to anti-war liberals to internationalist conservatives nearly all see a continuing role for at least some parts of the alliances and multilateral organizations against which Trump and his enablers have successfully rallied their supporters."[105]

Beyond the foreign policy establishment, there is also bipartisan political support for a renewed commitment to multilateral institutions — provided that engagement is grounded in strategic reform. While Senator Ben Sasse cautions that "many of the institutions America helped to create or has used to safeguard its interests abroad, such as the U.N. Security Council, have grown sclerotic," he also tempers that "the solution is not to scrap institutional solutions altogether."[106] On the other side of the aisle, Mayor Pete Buttigieg has spoken of the need for "America to update the institutions through which we engage in the world ensuring that they reflect the fact our world is closer to 2054 than 1945."[107]

While that world of 30 years from now is even further from the era when the multilateral architectures were created, navigating toward it does not entail rejecting either the Cold War's lessons or the existing systems. Instead, a future for multilateralism necessitates embracing the history of institutions in a contested environment and employing it to build on today's architectures for tomorrow. The multilateralism we currently have should not be taken for granted; but nor should it, as Robert Keohane once argued, "be beyond our capability to design superior multilateral institutions to protect the security of the world's people."[108] That work can, and must, begin today.

REFERENCES

1 Jean-Yves Le Drian and Heiko Maas, "Who, if not us?: An alliance for multilateralism," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, February 14, 2019, https://franceintheus.org/spip.php?article9019#1.

2 Jean-Yves Le Drian and Heiko Maas, "Who, if not us?".

3 The term "competitive multilateralism" in this paper stems from my experience assisting Thomas Wright with his 2017 book, *All Measures Short of War*, in which he laid out a framework of "responsible competition." However, the term's previous uses, both similar and dissimilar, should be acknowledged.

In 2005, Ruth Wedgwood employed the term to describe an approach designed to spur institutional reform within the U.N. system. Wedgwood's "competitive multilateralism" is similar to its use in this paper in that it argues for a willingness to turn to other institutions when the U.N. system proves inimical to U.S./Western pursuit of values or interests. However, the geopolitical context of the writing differs starkly from present day; the purpose of Wedgwood's sense of competition seems to center more on forcing institutional reform through the threat of forum shopping, rather than reorienting the U.S. strategic approach toward multilateral architectures for great-power competition. See: Ruth Wedgwood, "Give the United Nations a Little Competition," *The New York Times*, December 5, 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/05/opinion/give-the-united-nations-a-little-competition.html.

More recently, the term has been used by Oliver Stuenkel in 2016. Drawing on Wedgwood, Stuenkel describes a competitive multilateralism more similar to that outlined in this paper. Stuenkel sees that approach as pioneered by the United States, but increasingly pursued more by rising powers, especially the BRICS, in response to American/Western hegemony of the international system. See in particular Chapter 5 in: Oliver Stuenkel, *Post-Western World: How Emerging Powers are Remaking Global Order* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2016).

Finally, in a 2018 piece for a compilation from the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Yeo Lay Hwee sketches a "competitive multilateralism" approach for the EU and ASEAN. Yeo's "competitive multilateralism" draws on John Ruggie's "principled multilateralism" filtered through the lens of Jürgen Rüland's notion of "diminished multilateralism," outlined in the same volume, due to shifting geopolitical circumstances. Though I learned of this paper only while making later revisions, I would be remiss in not highlighting the piece as a similar and insightful work, see: Yeo Lay Hwee, "The EU's and ASEAN's Responses to 'Multilateralism in a Changing World,'" in *Multilateralism in a Changing World Order*, ed. Christian Echle, (Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, June 26, 2018), https://www.kas.de/single-title/-/content/multilateralism-in-a-changing-world-order, 49-58.

4 Jean-Yves Le Drian and Heiko Maas, "Who, if not us?".

5 Jean-Yves Le Drian and Heiko Maas, "Who, if not us?".

6 Quoted in Roland Paris, *Can Middle Powers Save the Liberal World Order?* (London: Chatham House, June 2019), https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/can-middle-powers-save-liberal-world-order, 4.

7 Wang Yi, "Multilateralism, Shared Peace and Development," (statement at the General Debate of the 73rd Session of the U.N. General Assembly, New York, NY, September 28, 2018).

8 G. John Ikenberry, "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 3 (September 2003): 533-550, 533.

9 Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West* (New York: Random House, 2004), 105.

10 Steven Everts quoted in Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review* 113 (June and July 2002), 3-28, 11.

11 G. John Ikenberry, “Is American Multilateralism in Decline?,” 534.

12 For an elegant account of convergence theory and its failings in the post-Cold War era, see Chapter 1 in Thomas Wright, *All Measures Short of War: The Contest for the 21st Century and the Future of American Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

13 G. John Ikenberry, “Is American Multilateralism in Decline?,” 537.

14 Charles E. Morrison, “Tradition, Trump, and the Future of US Participation in Multilateralism,” in *Multilateralism in a Changing World Order*, ed. Christian Echle, (Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, June 26, 2018), https://www.kas.de/single-title/-/content/multilateralism-in-a-changing-world-order, 27-37, 27.

15 Two key cases of castigating U.S. “hyperpower” come from French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine in 1999 concerning the Clinton administration and Russian President Vladimir Putin in his famous 2007 Munich Security Conference Speech concerning the George W. Bush administration. See: “To Paris, U.S. Looks Like a ‘Hyperpower,’” *International Herald Tribune*, February 5, 1999, https://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/05/news/to-paris-us-looks-like-a-hyperpower.html; and Thom Shanker and Mark Landler, “Putin Says U.S. is Undermining Global Stability,” *The New York Times*, February 11, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/11/world/europe/11munich.html.

16 G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 255-6.

17 Steven Pifer, “Five years after Crimea’s illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution,” *The Brookings Institution*, March 18, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/03/18/five-years-after-crimeas-illegal-annexation-the-issue-is-no-closer-to-resolution/.

18 Bill Hayton, “Two Years On, South China Sea Ruling Remains a Battleground for the Rules-Based Order,” *Chatham House*, July 11, 2018, https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/two-years-south-china-sea-ruling-remains-battleground-rules-based-order.

19 It should be noted that Xi’s pledge was seen, to a degree, as ambiguous at the time: Jeremy Page, Carol E. Lee, and Gordon Lubold, “China’s President Pledges No Militarization in Disputed Islands,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 25, 2015, https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-completes-runway-on-artificial-island-in-south-china-sea-1443184818/.

20 For an overview of Xi Jinping’s use of this term at the 19th Party Congress, see: Charlie Campbell, “Xi Jinping’s Party Congress Speech Leaves No Doubts Over His Leadership Role,” *Time*, October 18, 2017, https://time.com/4986999/xi-jinping-china-19th-congress-ccp/.

21 For a comprehensive overview of the set of challenges confronting both the EU and key individual European states, see the collected papers “Europe’s Debate” within Foreign Policy at Brookings’s broader “Democracy and Disorder” project. Papers are available at: https://www.brookings.edu/product/democracy-and-disorder/.

22 G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 238.

23 Donald Trump, “Trump on Foreign Policy,” (speech, Washington, DC, April 27, 2016, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/trump-foreign-policy-15960.

24 Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly," (speech, New York, NY, September 25, 2018), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-73rd-session-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-ny/.

25 "President Donald J. Trump is Defending Our Sovereignty and Constitutional Rights From the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty," The White House, April 26, 2019, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-is-defending-our-sovereignty-and-constitutional-rights-from-the-united-nations-arms-trade-treaty/.

26 G. John Ikenberry, "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?," 542.

27 Michael Pompeo, "A Foreign Policy from the Founding," (speech, Upland, CA, May 11, 2019), https://americanmind.org/essays/a-foreign-policy-from-the-founding/.

28 Bolton quoted in Colum Lynch, "Haley: Vote With U.S. at U.N. or We'll Cut Your Aid," *Foreign Policy*, March 15, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/15/haley-vote-with-u-s-at-u-n-or-well-cut-your-aid/.

29 John Halpin et al., "America Adrift: How the U.S. Foreign Policy Debate Misses What Voters Really Want," (Washington, DC, Center for American Progress, May 5, 2019), https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2019/05/05/469218/america-adrift/.

30 Susan Glasser, "Mike Pompeo, the Secretary of Trump," *The New Yorker*, August 26, 2019, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/08/26/mike-pompeo-the-secretary-of-trump.

31 Jeffrey Toobin, "Is Tom Cotton the Future of Trumpism?," *The New Yorker*, November 6, 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/11/13/is-tom-cotton-the-future-of-trumpism.

32 Jean-Yves Le Drian and Heiko Maas, "Who, if not us?."

33 Jean-Yves Le Drian and Heiko Maas, "Who, if not us?."

34 The irony here is palpable given (valid) criticisms of the American foreign policy establishment for never-ceasing policy recommendations that only require "leaders summon the necessary political will."

35 For deeper accounts of how the post-Cold War quarter century as aberration rather than norm, see: Robert Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back: American and Our Imperiled World* (New York: Knopf, 2018); and Thomas Wright, *All Measures Short of War*.

36 Stewart Patrick, *Best Laid Plans: The Origins of American Multilateralism and the Dawn of the Cold War* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 54.

37 Stewart Patrick, *Best Laid Plans*, 54.

38 Bruce Jones and Will Moreland, "Of Statecraft and War," in *The Marshall Plan and the Shaping of American Strategy*, ed. Bruce Jones (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 93-132.

39 For additional information, see Senator Mark Warner's remarks at Brookings: "Global China: Assessing China's Growing Role in the World," (speech, Washington, DC, May 9, 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/events/global-china-assessing-chinas-growing-role-in-the-world/.

40 Romano Prodi quoted in Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," 17.

41 Heiko Maas, "Speech at the opening of the 16th Ambassadors Conference at the Federal Foreign Office," (speech, Berlin, Germany, August 27, 2018), https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-freeland-ambassadors-conference/2130332.

42 Jakub Grygiel, “The EU Can’t Fulfill Its Purpose,” *The American Interest*, December 30, 2018, https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/12/30/the-eu-cant-fulfill-its-purpose/.

43 Michael Pompeo, “Restoring the Role of the Nation-State in the Liberal International Order,” (speech, Brussels, Belgium, December 4, 2018), https://www.state.gov/restoring-the-role-of-the-nation-state-in-the-liberal-international-order-2/.

44 Michael Anton, “The Trump Doctrine,” *Foreign Policy*, April 20, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/20/the-trump-doctrine-big-think-america-first-nationalism/.

45 For instances of Democratic political and policy views on China, see the previously mentioned remarks by Senator Mark Warner at Brookings and Melanie Hart and Kelly Magsamen, “Limit, Leverage, and Compete: A New Strategy on China,” (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, April 3, 2019), https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2019/04/03/468136/limit-leverage-compete-new-strategy-china/.

46 Chapter 1 in Thomas Wright’s *All Measures Short of War* explains this period. I am also indebted to Bruce Jones for the point on Western nations using multilateral institutions to export their values and norms to the former Soviet bloc and Global South.

47 Thomas Wright, “The Return to Great-Power Rivalry Was Inevitable,” *The Atlantic,* September 12, 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/liberal-international-order-free-world-trump-authoritarianism/569881/.

48 Melanie Hart and Blaine Johnson, “Mapping China’s Global Governance Ambitions: Democracies Still Have Leverage to Shape Beijing’s Reform Agenda,” (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, February 2019), https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2019/02/27121616/China-Global-Governance-2.pdf.

49 Tarun Chhabra, “The China challenge, democracy, and US grand strategy,” (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, February 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-china-challenge-democracy-and-u-s-grand-strategy/, 1.

50 Chapter 1 in Thomas Wright’s *All Measures Short of War* details this dynamic.

51 Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 164.

52 Vincent Pouliot, “Multilateralism as an End in Itself” *International Studies Perspectives* 12, no. 1 (Feb 2011): 18-26, 20.

53 John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organizations* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 561-98, 566.

54 For an in-depth version of this argument, see Robert Kagan, *The World America Made* (New York: Knopf, 2012).

55 John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism,” 568.

56 Eswar Prasad, “How China Aims to Limit the West’s Global Influence,” *The New York Times*, September 1, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/01/opinion/china-west-democracy.html.

57 Liza Tobin, “Xi’s Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies,” *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 1 (November 2018), https://tnsr.org/2018/11/xis-vision-for-transforming-global-governance-a-strategic-challenge-for-washington-and-its-allies/.

58 Kristine Lee and Alexander Sullivan, "People's Republic of the United Nations: China's Emerging Revisionism in International Organizations," (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, May 14, 2019), https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/peoples-republic-of-the-united-nations, 2.

59 Ted Piccone, "China's long game on human rights at the United Nations," (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, September 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/research/chinas-long-game-on-human-rights-at-the-united-nations/, 1-4.

60 Kristine Lee and Alexander Sullivan, "People's Republic of the United Nations," 11-14.

61 Liza Tobin, "Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance."

62 Yang Jiechi quoted in Timothy Heath, "China Prepares for an International Order After U.S. Leadership," *Lawfare*, August 1, 2018, https://www.lawfareblog.com/china-prepares-international-order-after-us-leadership.

63 Lionel Barber, Henry Foy, and Alex Barker, "Vladimir Putin says liberalism has 'become obsolete,'" *The Financial Times,* June 27, 2019, https://www.ft.com/content/670039ec-98f3-11e9-9573-ee5cbb98ed36.

64 For an overview of the pressures on democracy, see: Bruce Jones and Torrey Taussig, "Democracy and Disorder: The Struggle for Influence in the New Geopolitics," (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, February 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/research/democracy-disorder-the-struggle-for-influence-in-the-new-geopolitics/.

65 Jones and Moreland, "Of Statecraft and War."

66 Harry S. Truman, "Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman," Delivered in Washington, DC, January 20, 1949, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/truman.asp.

67 Jake Sullivan, "What Donald Trump and Dick Cheney Got Wrong about America," *The Atlantic* (January/February 2019), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/01/yes-america-can-still-lead-the-world/576427/.

68 A milestone of this realignment is seen in the 2017 National Security Strategy: "National Security Strategy of the United States," The White House, December 18, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf.

69 Hal Brands, "Grand Strategy for a New Twilight Struggle," in *New Voices in Grand Strategy*, ed. Richard Fontaine and Loren DeJonge Schulman, (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Strategy, April 2019), https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/new-voices-in-grand-strategy, 13-22, 17-18.

70 On Russia's recent behavior in INTERPOL, see: Matt Apuzzo, "How Strongmen Turned INTERPOL into Their Personal Weapon," *The New York Times*, March 22, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/world/europe/interpol-most-wanted-red-notices.html; for a deeper account of China and Russia's running efforts to exert greater control of INTERPOL's leadership, see: Robbie Gramer, "China and Russia Take the Helm of INTERPOL," *Foreign Policy*, November 10, 2016, https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/10/china-and-russia-take-the-helm-of-interpol/.

71 On Russia's actions in the OPCW, see: Josh Rogin, "How Russia is Corrupting the Liberal World Order," *The Washington Post*, January 31, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-russia-is-corrupting-the-liberal-world-order/2019/01/31/b38ca20c-259c-11e9-90cd-dedb0c92dc17_story.html?utm_term=.e0990ce2027b; On Russian activities in the U.N.'s counterterrorism office around the issue of Chinese internment of ethnic Uighurs, see: Ben Blanchard, "China Says Reached 'Broad Consensus' with U.N. After Xinjiang Visit," *Reuters*, June 15, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-un-idUSKCN1TH00T.

72 On the challenge of the intersection of climate change and geopolitics, see pages 17-19 in Bruce Jones and Will Moreland, eds., "Rethinking US-China Competition: Next Generation Perspectives," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, June 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/research/rethinking-us-china-competition-next-generation-perspectives/.

73 Elisabeth Roehrlich, "International Organizations During the Cold War," Woodrow Wilson Center, February 23, 2017, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/international-organizations-during-the-cold-war.

74 "Problems without passports" is attributed to the late Kofi Annan. For example, see: Kofi Annan, "Environmental Threats are Quintessential 'Problems Without Passports,' Secretary-General Tells European Environment Ministers," United Nations, Press Release SG/SM6609, June 23, 1998, https://www.un.org/press/en/1998/19980623.sgsm6609.html.

75 For an account of the lessons and limits of this cooperation, see: Andrew S. Weiss and Nicole Ng, "Collision Avoidance: The Lessons of U.S. and Russian Operations in Syria," (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 20, 2019), https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/20/collision-avoidance-lessons-of-u.s.-and-russian-operations-in-syria-pub-78571.

76 Ngaire Woods, "Can Multilateralism Survive the Sino-American Rivalry," *Project Syndicate*, July 8, 2019, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/can-multilateralism-survive-china-american-rivalry-by-ngaire-woods-2019-07.

77 Bruce Jones, "The Security Council and the Changing Distribution of Power," in *The U.N. Security Council in the 21st Century*, ed. Sebastian von Einsiedel, David M. Malone, and Bruno Stagno Ugarte (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2015), 793-4.

78 For an example of a scenario of this "hyperwar," see: John R. Allen and Amir Husain, "On Hyperwar," *Proceedings* 143, no. 7 (July 2017), https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2017/july/hyperwar.

79 Robert O. Work and Gregory Grant, "Beating the Americans at Their Own Game: An Offset Strategy with Chinese Characteristics," (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, June 2019), https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/beating-the-americans-at-their-own-game, 12.

80 On the emerging challenge of technology-fueled authoritarianism, see: Nicholas Wright, "How Artificial Intelligence Will Reshape the Global Order," *Foreign Affairs*, July 10, 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-07-10/how-artificial-intelligence-will-reshape-global-order?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axiosfutureofwork&stream=future; and Alina Polyakova and Chris Messerole, "Exporting Digital Authoritarianism," (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, August 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/research/exporting-digital-authoritarianism/.

81 Michael Pompeo, "Restoring the Role of the Nation-State..."

82 I am grateful to my Brookings colleague Constanze Stelzenmüller for this point. For an example of such behavior from the Trump administration, look no further than efforts to bring Russia back into the G7/G8 at the 2019 Biarritz Summit. See: "EU's Tusk Sees Even More Reasons to Keep Russia Out of the G7," *Reuters*, August 24, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-g7-summit-tusk-russia/eus-tusk-sees-even-more-reasons-to-keep-russia-out-of-g7-idUSKCN1VE0K7.

83 For 2019 U.S. figures, see: Gallup, "United Nations," February 2019, https://news.gallup.com/poll/116347/united-nations.aspx; for recent European and Allied figures, see Jacob Poushter, "Favorable views of the UN prevail in Europe, Asia and U.S.," *Pew Research Center*, September 20, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/20/favorable-views-of-the-un-prevail-in-europe-asia-and-u-s/.

84 For an example of this warning to Washington, see: Primrose Riordan, "China, US told 'don't make us choose,'" *The Australian*, January 27, 2019, https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/china-us-told-dont-make-us-choose/news-story/b3ee8dd6f2e32738650a53bd98cd0ac7.

85 Kurt M. Campbell and Jake Sullivan, "Competition Without Catastrophe: How America Can Both Challenge and Coexist with China," *Foreign Affairs* 98, no. 5 (September/October 2019): 96-111, 106.

86 On past skepticism of an "alliance of democracy," see: Charles Kupchan, "Minor League, Major Problems: The Case Against a League of Democracies," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (November/December 2008), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2008-11-01/minor-league-major-problems; for an account of more recent skepticism among non-Western states, see: Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order,* 2nd edition (Washington, DC: Polity, 2018), 62.

87 Heiko Maas, "Speech at the opening of the 16th Ambassadors Conference..."

88 Stewart Patrick, *Best Laid Plans*, 214.

89 Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, "Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion," *International Security* 44, no. 1 (Summer 2019): 42-79, https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/full/10.1162/isec_a_00351.

90 Farrell and Newman's in-progress research considers how, after a period of, largely, American dominance of the "plumbing" of globalization, authoritarian powers like China and Russia are emerging as active players. An early view is available at: Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, "America's Misuse of its Financial Infrastructure," *The National Interest*, April 15, 2019, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america%E2%80%99s-misuse-its-financial-infrastructure-52707.

91 Roland Paris, *Can Middle Powers Save the Liberal World Order?*, 7.

92 Stewart Patrick, "'The Mission Determines the Coalition:' The United States and Multilateral Cooperation after 9/11," in *Cooperation for Peace and Security: Evolving Institutions and Arrangements in a Context of Changing U.S. Security Policy*, ed. Bruce Jones, Shepard Forman, and Richard Gowan, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20-44, 44.

93 Julian E. Barnes and Adam Satariano, "U.S. Campaign to Ban Huawei Overseas Stumbles as Allies Resist," *The New York Times*, March 17, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/17/us/politics/huawei-ban.html.

94 Kurt M. Campbell and Jake Sullivan, "Competition Without Catastrophe," 107.

95 On the D10, see Ash Jain, "Like-minded and Capable Democracies: A New Framework for Advancing a Liberal World Order," (New York, NY, Council on Foreign Relations, January 3, 2013), https://www.cfr.org/report/minded-and-capable-democracies; on the concert of democracies, see: Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay, "Democracies of the World, Unite!" *Public Policy Research* 14, no. 1 (March/May 2007).

96 Stewart Patrick, *Best Laid Plans,* 91.

97 On the importance of data and information as "the world's most consequential and contested geopolitical resource," see: Eric Rosenbach and Katherine Mansted, "The Geopolitics of Information," (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, May 2019), https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/geopolitics-information.

98 I am grateful to my Brookings colleague Constanze Stelzenmüller for this raising this issue.

99 For an insightful account of the trilateral nature of sovereignty encompassing authority, autonomy, and influence, see Stewart Patrick, *The Sovereignty Wars: Reconciling America with the World* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018).

100 Junichi Sugihara, "US, Japan and Australia team on Financing Indo-Pacific Infrastructure," *Nikkei Asian Review*, November 11, 2018, https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/US-Japan-and-Australia-team-on-financing-Indo-Pacific-infrastructure.

101 Thoughts on the possibility of "races to the top" in these competitions are credited to the work of Bruce Jones.

102 On the G20 Osaka summit, see: Tomohiro Osaki, "In Blow to China, Japan's 'Quality Infrastructure' to Get Endorsement at Osaka G20," *The Japan Times*, June 25, 2019, https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/06/25/business/economy-business/blow-china-japans-quality-infrastructure-get-endorsement-osaka-g20/#.XSpmF1NKjOQ; for a longer account of Japan's "quality infrastructure" campaign, see: Tobias Harris, "'Quality Infrastructure': Japan's Robust Challenge to China's Belt and Road," *War on the Rocks*, April 9, 2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/quality-infrastructure-japans-robust-challenge-to-chinas-belt-and-road/.

103 Robert Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back*.

104 Robert Cooper, 61-2.

105 Heather Hurlburt, "More Diplomacy, Less Intervention, but for What? Making Sense of the Grand Strategy Debate," *Lawfare,* June 7, 2019, https://www.lawfareblog.com/more-diplomacy-less-intervention-what-making-sense-grand-strategy-debate.

106 Ben Sasse, "The End of the End of History: Reimagining U.S. Foreign Policy for the 21st Century," *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 2 (February 2019), https://tnsr.org/2019/02/the-end-of-the-end-of-history-reimagining-u-s-foreign-policy-for-the-21st-century/.

107 Pete Buttigieg, "America and the World: National Security for a New Era," (speech, Bloomington, Indiana, June 11, 2019), https://peteforamerica.com/national-security-for-a-new-era/#transcript.

108 Robert O. Keohane, "The Contingent Legitimacy of Multilateralism," Garnet Working Paper No. 09/06, (Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, September 2006), https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/csgr/garnet/workingpapers/0906.pdf, 21.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Will Moreland is a research analyst with Foreign Policy at Brookings. His work focuses on American strategy in a geopolitically competitive world, particularly the future of U.S. alliances and multilateralism. Previously, he managed Brookings's debate series "America in the World," which convenes conversations in cities across the country on the United States' global role.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to Tom Wright, Bob Kagan, Tarun Chhabra, and, most of all, Bruce Jones for the mentorship that made this paper possible.

Sincere thanks are given to Bruce Jones, Tom Wright, Constanze Stelzenmüller, Ben Sohl, and an anonymous reviewer for comments on drafts on this paper. Any errors or omissions are the author's alone.

The editorial and design work of Anna Newby, Ashley Miller, and Rachel Slattery are also most appreciated.

This paper was made possible by funding from the Foreign Ministries of Norway and Sweden.

This paper reflects the author's view point alone, consistent with Brookings commitment to independent research.

The Brookings Institution is a nonprofit organization devoted to independent research and policy solutions. Its mission is to conduct high-quality, independent research and, based on that research, to provide innovative, practical recommendations for policymakers and the public. The conclusions and recommendations of any Brookings publication are solely those of its author(s), and do not reflect the views of the Institution, its management, or its other scholars.

BROOKINGS

The Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
brookings.edu