

Fit over Function:
Explaining the Differences in US Strategic Approaches Towards China and Russia in the
Post-Cold War Era

by

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Abstract

Fostering cooperative relations with Russia and China were major goals of the US in the post-Cold War era, but these relationships proceeded down very different trajectories. Russia was largely excluded from the predominant economic and security networks in Europe, which expanded across the continent under US guidance. In contrast, China became tightly embedded within the East Asian economy and was able to grow its power and influence in a largely benign region free from such American hegemonic expansionist proclivities. Mastanduno's Lynchpin theory claims that this difference was a function of China being a necessary partner for the successful preservation of US hegemony in East Asia whereas Russia was not in Europe, an assessment largely based on their diverging power trajectories. There are, however, many theoretical and empirical limitations with this account. Alternatively, this dissertation argues these relationships were influenced by American actions during the early 1990s to ensure their 'networked centrality' in Europe and East Asia following the end of the Cold War. Neither Russia nor China was the principal concern at this time, with much of the American focus on shoring up the continued followership of its existing hegemonic membership. The ways to achieve this goal were different in each region, being informed by distinct regional strategic cultures the US holds towards Europe versus East Asia regarding ordering methods, network forms, and the importance of these regions in the global hegemonic system. The diverging paths relations with Russia and China proceeded down were not simply the product of their functional importance, but primarily due to the differences in their 'fit' alongside American shoring up activities. In demonstrating this connection, this dissertation conducts a multiple case study analysis employing a novel analytical framework to examine the role regional strategic culture played in informing US economic and security activities in Europe versus East Asia in the early 1990s, being the lens through which the US identified and addressed networks concerns in each. These actions in turn largely conditioned the trajectories within which relations with Russia and China proceeded down in the following decades in the post-Cold War era.

List of Abbreviations Used

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUKUS	Australia-UK-US (trilateral security pact)
BOP	Balance of Power
BOT	Balance of Threat
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BUR	Bottom Up Review
CCP	Chinese Communist Power
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CoCOM	The Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls
Comecon	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
DOD	Department of Defense
DPG	Defense Planning Guidance
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EASR	East Asia Strategy Report
EBRD	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
EU	European Union
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSU	Former Soviet Union
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
HI	Historical Institutionalism
HST	Hegemonic Stability Theory
IMF	International Monetary Fund

INF	Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
IPE	International Political Economy
IPEF	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework
IR	International Relations (theory)
LIO	Liberal International Order
LP	Lynchpin Theory
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MFN	Most Favored Nation
MNC	Multinational Corporations
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NC	Networked Centrality
NEC	National Economic Council
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OMP	Outside Major Power
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PNTR	Permanent Normal Trading Relations
PRC	People's Republic of China
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
Quad	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
ROC	Republic of China
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SU	Soviet Union
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Georgia
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WEU	Western European Union
WOT	War on Terror
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States' (US) relationships with both Russia and China¹ currently are primarily defined by enmity and rivalry, reflecting and reinforcing the entrenchment of great power/strategic competition with/against them as the centre of gravity in contemporary US grand strategy.² While largely seen, and treated³, as being different types of challengers (based on their varying capabilities, behaviors, and strategies), both Russia and China are seen as sharing similar revisionist sentiments, namely the desire to erode the power, position and influence of the US in order to produce a global system which is less Western-centric and dominated.⁴ An, if not the most, important avenue to achieving this goal is the erosion of US economic and security hegemonic networks at both the global level and within their respective home regions.⁵ Hegemonic networks, a key concept in this dissertation, are defined as a relational arrangement between actors to develop, pool, and exchange information, resources, and goods and services in ways which stem from and reinforce the centrality of a hegemonic power in being the lead actor in structuring the rules governing and practices defining these relations. Such networks, furthermore, socialize hegemonic supporters into follower roles, diminishing the prospects of alternative strategic alignments forming among them and thus away from the hegemon.

Such a state of affairs is a radical departure from, and effective termination of, the engagement strategy pursued by multiple US administrations, both Democratic and

¹ For this project, 'Russia' refers to the Russian Federation and 'China' refers to the People's Republic of China (PRC).

² Both the 2017 (of the Trump administration) and the 2022 (of the Biden administration) National Security Strategies (NSS) make frequent references to the framing of and relationship with the powers to this effect. For example, the 2017 NSS labels China and Russia as "revisionist powers" (p. 25) and defines the US relationship with both these powers as one of "great power competition" (p. 27). Furthermore, the 2022 NSS states "...the post-Cold War era is definitively over and a competition is underway between the major powers to shape what comes next." (p.6). Furthermore, the primary goal of US grand strategy in this uncertain era to "outcompete" China, which is seen as a peer rival and the most serious long-term challenge to the US, and "constrain" Russia, as a less powerful rival but more acute and immediate threat given its aggression in Europe (pp. 23-26).

³ Whether the ever-deepening relationship between China and Russia will coalesce into a more unified, authoritarian hegemonic bloc against the US and what that would mean for American hegemony moving forward will be explored more in the conclusion.

⁴ James Dobbins, Howard J. Shatz, and Ali Wyne, "Russia is a Rogue, Not a Peer; China is a Peer, No a Rogue," *RAND Corporation*, 2019, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE310.html>.

⁵ Adam P. MacDonald, "Overcoming American Hegemony: The Central Paradox of Chinese and Russian Revisionism," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 22, no. 1 (2022): 64–106.

Republican, throughout the post-Cold War era (1991-2016).⁶ The engagement strategy was portrayed as an approach to foster and further favourable conditions towards Russia and China to ensure their eventual inclusion and (while not overly stated, heavily implied) subordination into American hegemonic networks. The engagement strategy crystallized over a number of years at the beginning of the post-Cold War era with the US, as the world's only remaining superpower, prioritizing the incorporation of Russia and China within its ordering pursuits, including the modification and expansion of existing and development of new economic and security institutions. Despite China and Russia being former adversaries, with uncertain futures both domestically and towards the international environment, there was a belief that a window of opportunity existed for the US to reconstitute relations with both powers in a cooperative way which would serve a number of strategic objectives, most importantly diminishing the prospects of any return to revisionism by them in relation to US hegemony.

Given the evident failure of the engagement strategy⁷, a multi-sided debate has emerged within the US political and academic community arguing over the primary factor(s) leading to such a negative outcome. Some believe the US was far too soft on China and Russia, not appreciating or acting early upon obvious signals that both were increasingly trying to challenge the regional status-quo and US pre-eminence.⁸ Why did the US not take more seriously China's rapid military buildup; industrial theft and espionage activities; entrenchment of its authoritarian system and lack of political and economic liberalization; and use of economic and military behavior to intimidate others to

⁶ The start of this era is pegged at 1991 given the definitive ending of the Cold War with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the extinguishing of communism in Europe and the emergence of liberal regimes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and Russia wanting closer ties to the West. The ending of this era in 2016 under the Trump administration is due to the declaratory framing of China and Russia as revisionist powers and a definite shift towards deterrence, and in some cases containment, towards them versus reassurance. Furthermore, competition/rivalry against these powers became the centre of gravity in US grand strategy, with China and Russia having to be countered far more comprehensively.

⁷ There remain some prominent voices which argue the engagement strategy was not a total failure as it continues to disrupt the effects of Russian and Chinese revisionism with declarations that the Liberal International Order (LIO) will continue, even in the face of these challenges. For example: G. John Ikenberry, "Why the Liberal World Order Will Survive," *Ethics & International Affairs* 32, no. 1 (2018): 17–29. However, in terms of these powers' inclusion and subordination into hegemonic networks, the strategy of engagement has been a failure. It is unclear, also, what the effects rivalry among these powers, specifically the US and China, will have on economic (and other forms of) globalization.

⁸ For example, see: Jeffrey Mankoff, "Russia in the Era of Great Power Competition," *The Washington Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2021): 107–125; and Aaron Friedberg, *Getting China Wrong*. (New York: Polity, 2022).

garner their acquiescence towards Chinese interests, including over disputed maritime boundaries? Furthermore, why did the US allow Europe to become energy dependent on an increasingly authoritarian and assertive Russia, which continued to re-arm, defy global rules and norms, and intimidate its neighbours? Others believe the US was too hard on China and Russia, causing growing security concerns in these states given American actions aimed at maintaining (and in some cases expanding) its alliances along their periphery; endless promotion of Western liberal democracy as the only pathway for states' internal constitution and external orientation; and general unwillingness to understand and treat them as great powers (including constituting a new system reflective of this⁹) who did not, under any circumstance, want to be subordinates within an order defined by American hegemony.¹⁰

Others emphasize that the US influence over these states' trajectories was overstated and overestimated. The US had a limited ability to fundamentally alter the strategic and political cultures of these states, as they were able to do to other former adversaries turned hegemonic allies like Japan, Italy and Germany following the Second World War, given their occupation and entire rebuilding of their polities and economies. Another line of argument is that there would be an inevitable return of great powers, and thus competition among them, given the temporal nature of US unipolarity and the inability to bring all other entities under its hegemonic authority.¹¹ Still others (including many former officials from various administrations) maintain that the US was largely clear eyed about the limits of its abilities to influence the internal and external nature of these powers. Specifically, the engagement strategy was not reckless and based on a deluded liberal ideological belief that the US could turn these states into subordinate, liberal democracies, but a cautious and calculated one that there existed a unique moment in time to cement co-operative relations with these powers without compromising on American security and hegemony.¹²

⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Geostrategy for Eurasia," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997): 50-64.

¹⁰ For example, see: John J. Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); and Stephen M. Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions. America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. 2018).

¹¹ For example, see: Christopher Layne, "This Time It's Real: The End of Unipolarity and the Pax Americana," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2012): 203-213.

¹² For example, Warren Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 249-250, 278-282.

This debate about the fundamental premises and overall nature of the engagement strategy obscures two important aspects of American approaches towards these states in the post-Cold War era. First, the narrow focus on China and Russia largely separates and treats them as distinct from other US hegemonic activities and pursuits within their regional environments. As will be explored throughout this project, the US was not solely focused outwardly on hegemonic expansion but inwardly as well, in ensuring the continued followership of existing allies and the predominance of their institutions in the aftermath of the Cold War. Second, as much as the China and Russia cases are similar in terms of the United States' desired end-states (to bring them into the hegemonic fold) and their current geopolitical dispositions (revisionism towards US hegemony), the trajectory of each was different. Specifically, and as further detailed in Chapter one, China appears to have been far more accommodated than Russia was regarding economic and security interests. In short, whereas China was quickly included in, and overtime became a central component of, regional institutions and processes in East Asia, Russia was increasingly excluded from the dominant institutional forms and thus marginalized in the security and economic ordering processes in Europe.

What makes this difference particularly interesting, both from an academic and policy perspective, is the fact that Russia appeared to be the far more suitable candidate to hegemonic incorporation than China. At the end of the Cold War, Russia was led by a government which wanted to liberalize and develop deep political and economic ties with the US and the West quickly. It was willing to make significant concessions pertaining to its military security; opened up to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to help with, and heavily depended on them for, its reforms; and deeply wanted to be included in the West and shared similar sentiments with the US, and many Western European powers, of making Europe "free and undivided". China at this time remained in pariah status with the West given the Tiananmen Square massacre; was paranoid that the US sought to internally transform China leading to the disintegration of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) political monopoly (as happened to other communist systems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Soviet Union); and faced an uncertain future in terms of whether it could or wanted to continue with its economic transition towards capitalism and its gradual opening up to the world in general.

The Research Question

This project seeks to identify and explain the reason(s) why these relationships proceeded down such different trajectories. It is not focused on the macro-level commonalities in both relationships which typically book-mark the start and end points of many accounts about the engagement strategy. Namely, the US wanted to include both China and Russia as major post-Cold War era objectives and these pursuits ultimately failed with both powers now overtly revisionist states which constitute the greatest national security issue the US currently faces.

Examining this difference is not only important in understanding US approaches to these particular states, but in understanding the broader forces and factors which impacted American hegemonic ordering actions and activities in the post-Cold War era. Of particular importance and interest is exploring the balancing of and intersection between those actions aimed 'inwardly' towards shoring up alignments with existing hegemonic followers, processes, and institutions, and those actions aimed 'outwardly' towards inclusion of Outside Major Powers (OMPs) like China and Russia. Furthermore, China and Russia reside in critically important strategic environments for the US, with East Asia and Europe regularly referred to as 'core regions' whose local concentrations and configurations of power have a major impact on and consequences for the global system and for US national security. In particular, these regions are seen as the most likely source of the emergence of a great power peer rival (like Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan) and/or a site of contestation against a Eurasian land power (like the Soviet Union). If a single power, or counter hegemonic bloc, achieved control over these regions they would possess a major geographic and resource base from which to further their power abroad, influencing the nature of global politics to the detriment of American influence and possibly even threatening the US itself. These core regions occupy a significant, persistent, and central position in US grand strategy, which continued into and throughout the post-Cold War era.¹³

¹³ The importance of these regions is reflected in their prime positions throughout many high-level strategic documents. This is most evident in the various National Security Strategies which were published during the 1990s where they have more extensive overviews and detailed listings of US goals and priorities compared to other regions.

As a result, the relationships with China and Russia do not exist in a vacuum, and our exploration of them must be embedded within these regional environments and their framing within US grand strategy. This requires, therefore, an understanding of American strategic approaches towards the core regions of Europe and East Asia as coherent entities, and not just country specific ones. In order to do this, a larger examination is required, more suited to investigating the interplay between inward and outward features of American hegemonic ordering.

A final consideration, further explored in Chapter Three, is that American hegemonic order and ordering can be delineated into two inter-related but distinct domains. The first is the security domain, principally concerning military security, alliances, and alignments of powers in terms of military support for one another. The second is the economic domain, which is focused on the rules, processes and systems which govern trade and investment between the US, its hegemonic followers and others, including coordination against rival and rogue powers. While these domains intersect in many ways, there is not a perfect overlap of membership, duties, forms and US expectations and behavior in them which warrants their treatment as distinct areas of study.

With these three features in mind - inward versus outward hegemonic actions and activities, the importance of core regions in US grand strategy, and the delineation of American hegemony into security and economic domains - the research question for this project is:

What accounts for the different strategic approaches taken by the US towards China in East Asia and Russia in Europe in the post-Cold War Era?

There is little academic study (and appreciation) of this dimension in the wider engagement strategy literature. Indeed, there appears to be only one major study specifically focused on this question. This is Michael Mastanduno's 'Lynchpin (LP) Theory', which is analyzed in detail throughout this project as the principal rival theory to the one put forth here, which is labelled as 'Networked Centrality' (NC).¹⁴

¹⁴ Michael Mastanduno, "Partner Politics: Russia, China, and the Challenge of Extending US Hegemony after the Cold War," *Security Studies* 28, no. 4 (2019): 479-504.

As detailed further in the concluding section of Chapter Two, Mastanduno's LP theory argues the summation of the US posture, actions and activities towards China and Russia expresses, and reflects, a divergent pattern between the two relationships where-in the former is offered a "favorable bargain" towards entry into hegemonic systems whereas the latter is offered more of a "take it or leave" type of bargain. Put another way, the US offers very accommodating terms to Chinese hegemonic membership whereas Russia is forced to accept whatever Washington offers it, with Moscow occupying a marginal role in American hegemonic ordering pursuits as reflected in their unwillingness to compromise. Mastanduno argues that this is a product of the different positionalities of China and Russia in the post-Cold War era, specifically their *functional importance/non-importance* in the maintenance of American regional hegemony in East Asia and Europe respectively. China is assessed by the US as a lynchpin power in East Asia which must be brought into its hegemonic order, regardless of other priorities or concerns, as their hegemonic followership is vital in ensuring America's continued dominance. Russia is a non-lynchpin power in Europe whose inclusion would be welcome but not vital to continued American hegemonic dominance there. In this context, deepening relations with Moscow regularly lose out to other pursuits and priorities when these come into conflict.

This argument is clear, straightforward, and easy to understand. China is important and thus must be brought into the hegemonic fold, with other ordering pursuits having to support this imperative. Russia is not important and thus its inclusion into the hegemonic fold is not a necessity, especially if that means compromising on other lines of effort. However, as will be demonstrated throughout this project, LP theory has three major limitations which undermine its parsimonious explanation of this comparison. First, theory implies decisions of these states' importance/non-importance are determined first with policy and action following afterwards, being guided by this evaluation. This a priori design driven approach that largely relegates history to an arena within which such processes unfold, void of any causal importance. Second, the theory treats US hegemonic actions and activities in the post-Cold War era as almost exclusively oriented outwardly towards expansionism, incorporating new members into its well-established core of followers and institutions. The linkages between these outward (expansion) and inward (maintenance and repurposing) activities are tenuous and not well defined.

Finally, there is a lack of analysis about the regional environments themselves, specifically the differences between the ones which China and Russia reside. Relatedly, much of the evidence used by LP theory indicates that the critical variable in lynchpin/non-lynchpin determination is not positionality in an environment but the economic (and secondarily) military power these states possess, which is an attributional feature.

Argument of the Dissertation

Seismic changes to the nature of the global system with the ending of the Cold War era reverberated in and through the core regions of East Asia and Europe, raising questions in the US about the future of its hegemony in terms of purpose, form, and function in this newly emerging era without a peer rival to contend with. During this time the US was largely focused on addressing 'network concerns', a new concept designed during this dissertation. Network concerns are defined as developments which could alter strategic alignments among regional powers to the detriment of US leadership and the centrality of its economic and security hegemonic networks in core regions. As will be demonstrated in this dissertation, the US preference in addressing network concerns was ensuring the continued hegemonic followership of its allies and close partners over inclusion of major outside powers. These network concerns are common for both Europe and East Asia in US grand strategy as it maneuvered to maintain 'networked centrality' in these regions, which pertains both to ensuring 1) the centrality of its hegemonic networks as the dominant forms of regional organizing; and 2) the centrality of US leadership in and over these networks. The prominence of and preferred solutions towards these concerns in guiding US actions, however, were different in both regions. This is due not solely to the different effects and impacts the ending of the Cold War had on these regional environments, but more importantly to American sensitivities to network concerns differed for each region due to the unique regional strategic culture the US has towards them.

As elaborated further in Chapter Three, regional strategic culture is a modification to and sub-set of the original concept of strategic culture. There are many different definitions of and theories explaining how strategic culture works, but in general it refers to the study of how states pursue strategy, specifically determining the best ways to

develop and employ power resources to achieve their international interests. For this dissertation, regional strategic culture is defined as:

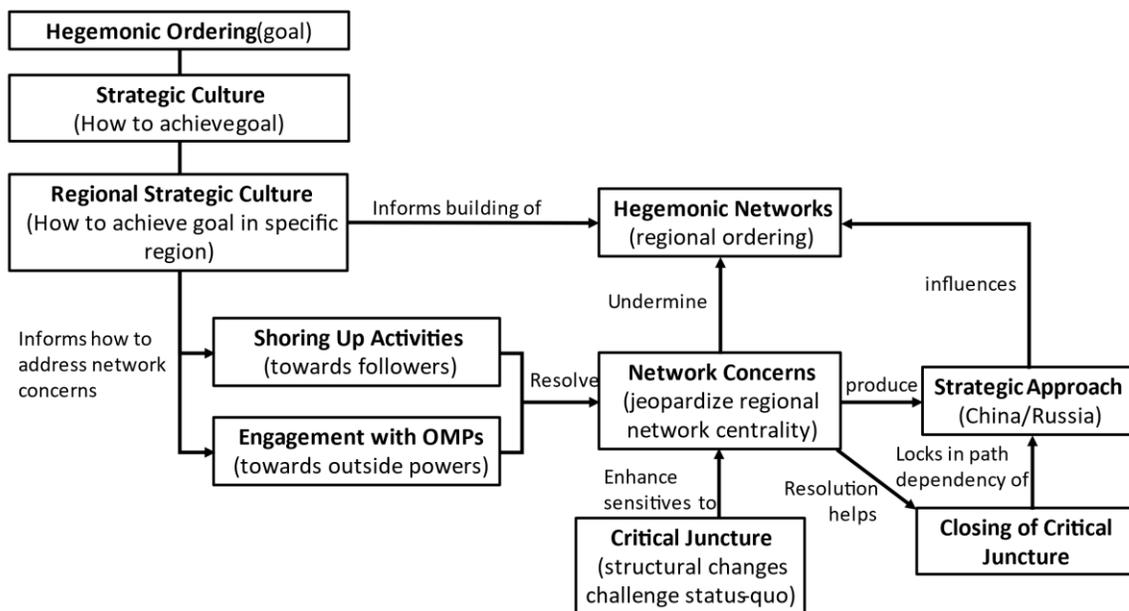
The collection of mental frameworks and habits which constitute regularized patterns of strategic preferences and behaviors that reflect how the US interprets a core region in terms of 1) dominant logics and features, including opportunities and threats; 2) vision for regional ordering; 3) the role of the US, and the deployment of US power, in them; and 4) their connection to US global hegemony.

Regional strategic cultures emerge over time, given the interplay between US dispositions towards and experiences in core regions, creating differentiation in the scope, scale, and ways to achieve networked centrality in these regions. These produce different ordering principles, priorities, and projects for the US in Europe and East Asia, which in turn shape the conditions, opportunities, constraints, and, most importantly, trade-offs between shoring up activities focused on retention of existing followers and engagement with Outside Major Powers (OMPs) informing several crucial US decisions made in the early period of the post-Cold War era. Shoring up activities, another new term developed for this dissertation, refer to actions and efforts to ensure followers remained within US hegemonic networks and supportive of US leadership within these and towards Washington's overall approach to the region. Engagement with OMPs refers to actions and efforts to foster and further cooperative relations with these powers, including their involvement in regional ordering, in order to make them less likely to become revisionist in the future and ideally turn into hegemonic followers one day.

The project focus on this period, 1990/91-1995/96, is because this was a unique, historically sensitive period, defined as a critical juncture, in which a wide variety of options were open regarding the future of the US hegemonic disposition and role in Europe and East Asia in general and towards China and Russia in particular. Alongside the termination of superpower rivalry at the global system level, there were important changes occurring within both Europe and East Asia (including more regional based forms of ordering among its members), China and Russia, and in the US, including growing domestic pressures to refocus American energies and money on the home front in the face of anemic economic growth and worries about its competitiveness, especially in relation to its allies. And while during this period there was some flirting with a new

strategic paradigm - specifically the favouring of geoeconomics over geopolitics - with the Clinton administration in its early period in office, by and large the US retained and furthered the major features of its hegemonic disposition. Furthermore, the specific actions and priorities of the US in the core regions of East Asia and Europe during this time were largely informed by and reflected the regional strategic culture it holds towards each. The regional strategic cultures provided frameworks for the interpretation of and prescriptions for dealing with network concerns during this period. Figure One below depicts the major concepts employed throughout this dissertation and outlines the linkages between them.

Figure 1: Key Concepts and the Relationships Between Them



The US regional strategic culture towards Europe aimed to build a continent free and undivided via a comprehensive integration project spanning the entire continent bringing all powers into institutions and processes under US leadership in support of a transatlantic hegemonic bloc of democratic-capitalist states, which was supported by many of its regional allies. This was an objective pursued via the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) expansion across the continent as a dual-sided hegemonic project. Such a project ensured the maintenance of NATO under US leadership, which increasingly used this institution in news ways beyond its Cold War mission of territorial defence, and ensured Europe's major powers would not become more autonomous in security and economic ordering. Within such a frame, Russia, even

one democratizing and wanting closer ties to the West, was too big, Europe's largest country with a massive conventional military and nuclear forces, and unpredictable, regarding its domestic political future and foreign policy direction, to be included in this hegemonic project at this time. Moscow's inclusion would have dramatically changed the character and nature of the hegemonic networks, caused friction with other hegemonic supporters, and most likely diluted Washington's grip on security and economic ordering norms, preferences, and practices on the continent. The latter point was the biggest issue. Washington remained unsure if Russia, even one led by a liberal, pro-West regime, was willing to fully surrender the trappings of great power status and extinguish its imperialist strategic culture in order to join the ranks of Europe's other major powers as a follower within US hegemony. While Russia wanted to be considered part of the West, it wanted to be treated as an autonomous, separate power and partner in the management of Europe. This was unacceptable to Washington. As a result, Russia was increasingly excluded from the predominant institutions of this regional hegemonic project and marginalized from the regional space given the expansive and all-consuming nature of them.

The US regional strategic culture towards East Asia emphasized acceptance of heterogeneity among regional states with a focus more oriented towards preventing and disrupting Asian regionalism efforts, especially led by major powers, than on creating a regional institutional order given the nature of the region. The region, furthermore, was not treated as an important hegemonic bloc, as was Europe, which motivated the US to pursue important regional relationships bilaterally rather than multilaterally. The US did not have a desired regional 'end state' of its structure and functioning, but rather was focused on preventing an Asian regionalism closed and hostile to non-resident powers from emerging. With these concerns not manifesting, there were no large scale internal or external changes to the membership, function, and forms of US hegemonic networks in East Asia as there were in Europe. Furthering relations with China, including extra-regionally in the economic, fit well within this strategic cultural orientation. Beijing benefitted from the lack of over-arching regional designs held by the US which could have motivated expansionist proclivities as was the case in Europe. China was too big to ignore but not important enough to alter the American regional strategic cultural orientation in terms of causing a fundamental rethink in how and why the US went about

its regional hegemonic pursuits, specifically being more of a leader in regional institution building and promotion.

By the mid-1990s, the US post-Cold War strategic approaches towards China and Russia had largely crystallized, the combination of American efforts in the early years of the decade to simultaneously address shoring up activities and engagement with OMPs, largely informed by regional strategic cultural frames. LP theory's emphasis on the functional importance of OMPs falls short given there is no context offered in terms of what these states would be important for. How is one to determine function and importance without understanding the purpose of the hegemonic project itself? If China was so important, why did the US not rethink its hegemonic networks and posture in the region in order to bring them into a new structure alongside its allies and others? Or adopt more of a leadership role in influencing the institutional development occurring in the region? What is the difference in importance between Russia and Central and Eastern European (CEE) states given the former was excluded but latter included in the hegemonic expansion projects in Europe? Importance as attributes cannot answer these questions.

Rather, the US approaches towards China and Russia are best understood as being the product of and embedded within the larger strategic approaches towards their home regions, which created the opportunities and constraints bearing on their entry into regional hegemonic institutions. In this regard, engagement with Russia was a bad 'fit' with US shoring activities in Europe, with even mild criticism and opposition from Moscow regarding certain aspects of American ordering efforts seen as unacceptable. American hegemony in Europe was a totalizing project to bring the continent within its orbit which left little if any room for Russia to promote and pursue alternative ways to structure continental affairs independent of US control. On the other hand, engagement with China was a good 'fit' with US shoring up activities in East Asia which were not about turning the region into a homogeneous system, as was the desire for Europe, but preserving the status-quo. China, furthermore, was able to avoid getting caught in ordering debates with Washington, a situation Russia could not escape given its history in Europe and with the US as a former superpower. Furthermore, Beijing joining and participating in the nascent web of regional institutions (a development Washington did

not see as threatening) further assisted in their ability to grow their power and influence without drawing Washington's ire.

The approaches towards China and Russia would remain largely unaltered throughout the remainder of the post-Cold War era. This reflected their own self-reinforcing mechanisms and momentum as well as furthering self-assessments of the US as a confident global superpower with no overt peers or rivals since it had rebounded economically (and psychologically) from the mid-1990s onwards. While the US began to slowly shift some of the emphasis in various aspects of these relationships in light of growing uneasiness over Russian and Chinese actions, it was not until the mid-to-late 2010s that these relationships rapidly began to deteriorate, ushering in the current era of enmity and rivalry.

Major Themes and Contributions

This project is focused on understanding the nature of US hegemonic ordering, defined as the pursuit of structuring economic and security relations among states in ways which reinforce and reflect the US leadership position in determining these, specifically the factors underpinning the uneven restructuring and expansion of its economic and security networks in the core regions of East Asia and Europe in the post-Cold War era. While case and time specific to the US in this unique period of global history, the framework used and insights derived from this project may be of relevance for other cases of hegemony, including what drives their specific structuring and functioning and how hegemons identify and respond to revisionist challengers. Applicability to other cases will be further addressed in the conclusion. For the case under examination, however, there are four major thematic issues which run throughout the study. These are: the structuring and functioning of hegemonic ordering; the importance of historical context and timing; the nature of revisionism; and the return of questioning the hegemonic project within the US. The project aims to illuminate the importance of these issues in furthering our understanding of this case as well as contribute to renewed theoretical and scholarly debates about hegemony, US hegemony and hegemonic competition.

1.The Structuring and Functioning of Hegemonic Ordering: This project conceives of American hegemonic ordering as a networking process to orient alignments of other

powers towards them and away from one another, to avoid any clustering of an in-region orientation seeking a less influential and involved American presence and role in regional security and economic dynamics. The Networked Centrality framework allows for an 'inside-outside' study of hegemony by examining the dynamics in US networks and their intersection with the larger regional environment in which they are embedded. This is particularly pertinent to and relevant for understanding the interplay between US shoring up activities and engagement with OMPs. As mentioned above, a key question is what accounts for the sharpness of the trade-offs faced by the US in pursuing these types of actions and their ability (or lack thereof) to resolve them. Furthermore, the Networked Centrality framework assists in understanding, and comparing, networks vertically (regional to global level) as well as horizontally (across different regions) in terms of how they connect and influence one another.

A second key issue in understanding American hegemonic ordering in core regions are the impulses, preferences, and priorities underpinning these developments. American hegemonic ordering does not operate in a purely evolutionary path without any design, but neither is it solely a product completely derived from a well thought out plan. Rather it is a process resulting from the interplay between environmental circumstances and forces (which can never be fully under US influence and control) and the disposition of the US, specifically derived from its regional strategic culture. This project investigates the role and influence of strategic culture in guiding hegemonic practices, specifically during critical periods of change and uncertainty such as the early post-Cold War era. A basic assumption of the project is that while all sufficiently large and powerful states will pursue hegemonic ordering to some degree in their effort to create more favourable external environmental conditions to serve their interests, the structuring of these processes and the forms and functions they take are unique, reflecting and reinforcing the strategic culture of the would-be hegemon in question. In repurposing a famous quote by Colin Gray, hegemony is universal but cultural.¹⁵ In other words, hegemony is a common, universal impulse for larger powers, but how they go about pursuing constructing its specific forms and functions is varied due to the unique strategic culture held by each. The regional strategic culture concept, furthermore, is a useful sub-

¹⁵ The original quote is from Colin Gray who stated, "Strategy is universal but cultural". Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1(1999), 57.

category of strategic culture to understand differences in the local manifestations of hegemonic networks by a single hegemon across various regions.

2.The Early Period of the Post-Cold War Era as a Critical Juncture: The project employs the critical juncture framework, from Historical Institutionalism (HI), to explain and structure the analysis of the early period of the post-Cold War era. This period was a Critical Juncture where there were many paths available to the US regarding its hegemonic future, both in general and within specific regions. However, as opposed to the usual employment of critical junctures to signal and explain the extermination of a historical dominant pathway with the rise of a completely new one coming about during a period of large-scale change, this project focuses on the maintenance and resiliency of the predominant forms of US hegemonic ordering throughout the early 1990s. Such consistency does not undermine the importance of this unique period, as legitimate alternative pathways existed and had a not insignificant level of support, but rather exemplifies the staying power of the regional strategic cultures in informing US hegemonic (re)ordering and maintenance in the core regions during this time.

Such a reality helps dispel two common portrayals of US foreign policy and its hegemonic behavior in the post-Cold War era. The first is that there is a radical change in US foreign policy beginning with the Clinton administration coming to power in 1993 as the first administration in the post-Cold War era, ushering in a new paradigm for US grand strategy focused on hegemonic expansion, engagement with OMPs, and a fixation on human rights and democracy promotion.¹⁶ In reality, there is much continuity between the H Bush administration, which was in power during the transition to and early period this new era, and the Clinton administration, indicating the resiliency of its hegemonic disposition and preferences, including within and towards Europe and East Asia. While there were notable changes, they were in terms of degrees and were not more fundamental transformations. Furthermore, there is a popular portrayal of the US in the post-Cold War era acting as a confident, and sometimes arrogant and unabashed, unipolar power largely unconcerned about the impacts of its actions and pursuits towards allies, other major powers, and the wider system in general. While this is correct for some periods of the era, specifically beginning in the late 1990s and into the War on

¹⁶ For an example of such a demarcation see: Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions*, xi.

Terror (WOT), it is clear in the early-mid 1990s the US was concerned about its hegemonic enterprise in both Europe and East Asia, the possible return of conflict, instability, and peer challengers in the absence of US leadership securing hegemonic followership, and disrupting strategic alignments within and between allies and OMPs.¹⁷

3. Identification of and Response(s) to Revisionism: While this project examines a period when there was no great power revisionist rival to the US¹⁸, it contains important lessons and insights about when and why the US began its gradual strategic shift away from engagement and towards rivalry with respect to China and Russia in the mid-late 2010s. These states' augmenting material power, specifically militarily, did not seem to trigger this change. Rather, it seems the threshold was crossed when this power was employed in deliberate ways to alter the strategic dynamics of core regions, such as through the creation of new institutional networks which were and increasingly are seen as competitors to US-backed ones and/or expansion of its military footprint. Such a threshold, furthermore, helps in understanding the slow shift of the US towards these powers in the post-Cold War era given the difficulties in overcoming the path dependency of the engagement approaches taken towards China and Russia for over two decades. In particular, the US did not appreciate, or take seriously, the strategic-level revisionist dispositions of these powers, primarily seeing their grievances residing at the tactical level, being issue-specific and thus able to be cordoned off from the larger regional environment.

The other aspect of this matter is how the US responded to growing revisionist concerns about China and Russia, specifically the reorientation, and recalibration, of its regional hegemonic networks against these powers. This is of particular interest in East Asia given the nature of regional alignments, the position China occupies, and the

¹⁷ These priorities are evident in their prominent position within the National Security Strategies published throughout the 1990s, which particularly emphasized the centrality of US leadership and the provision of regional goods which no other power or group of powers could provide. For example, in the 1995 *East Asia Strategy Report* (EASR) the US security presence is portrayed as the "oxygen" for the region allowing it to flourish given the stabilizing function it provides (p. 2). Later in the document, this sentiment is unambiguously expressed when it is asserted that that in the absence of US leadership the region would become destabilized (p. 13). Regarding Europe, the 1993 *Regions Strategy* proclaimed there is no substitute for US leadership on ensuring the peaceful transition of the continent into a new era, especially to ward off the emergence of unilateralism, regionalism, and protectionism (p. 11).

¹⁸ Rather, during this era the state threat focus was primarily on 'rogue powers', smaller and weaker states which posed disruptive challenges at the regional but not global level.

structure and functioning of US networks there complicating American, and allied, attempts to restructure and create new relationships, institutions, and capabilities to counter China, seen as the most serious, comprehensive and long-term challenger to US hegemony regionally and possibly globally. By contrast, in Europe the reorientation and equipping of American hegemonic networks, specifically via NATO, is easier as it is a return to a previous form prevalent during the Cold War, with a far stronger alliance and alignment among allied powers against Russia, especially since its 2022 full scale invasion of Ukraine.

There are two major complicating factors, however, with the ability of the US to successfully navigate this transition in its grand strategy. The first is whether it can adapt and update its regional strategic culture preferences to better conform with modern realities in these regions. Again, this is particularly pertinent in East Asia in relation to efforts to create a more homogenous and expansive hegemonic bloc, anchored by security and economic bodies which exclude and are oriented against China. The second, and more serious, issue is whether there is a major, serious rethink among elites, not just the public, in the US about the purpose of its hegemonic project and role, especially if it still 'pays' to pursue them.¹⁹

4. Questioning Hegemony: The final major theme is whether we are witnessing another critical juncture in American hegemony like that of the early 1990s. While the return of great power rivals makes this era distinct from the early period of the post-Cold War era, what is similar between these two eras is the emergence of questions about the nature, role, and purpose of American hegemony within the US itself. The Trump administration was seen as a decisive break from the status-quo on these questions held by various Republican and Democratic Administrations throughout the post-Cold War era, adopting a more assertive posture towards not just China (and to a more limited extent Russia) but allies and close partners as well. This included threatening to end trade deals, participation in global economic organizations and processes, and alliance commitments. By and large these hegemonic structures and processes have remained intact, but it is clear the US is more focused on its economic vitality, competitive strength and ensuring its lead in emerging technologies as well as wanting more alignment and contributions

¹⁹ Carla Norrlof and William C. Wohlforth, "Raison de l'Hégémonie (The Hegemon's Interest): Theory of the Costs and Benefits of Hegemony," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019): 422–450.

from allies. As in the early 1990s, the US has entered a period where it is doubtful of its continued economic dominance and strength, especially against competitors and even some allied states, with unclear implications for its hegemonic posture, positioning and preferences moving forward. Whether the US returns to a state of confidence in its political and economic order and its sense of role and purpose internationally in the foreseeable future, as it did by the mid-1990s, or whether the US begins to embark down a different path, such as that of hegemonic retrenchment and/or becoming an illiberal hegemon, is unclear and will be further explored in the concluding chapter.

Project Outline

This thesis consists of nine chapters and the conclusion. Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant literature before moving into Chapters Three and Four which introduce the theoretical framework and research design employed in this project. Chapters Five to Eight are the four case studies examined. Chapter Nine conducts a comparison of the case studies in order to highlight similarities and differences between them. Chapter Ten, the conclusion, discusses the major findings, future areas of research and relevance to modern developments regarding American hegemony in Europe and East Asia.

Chapter Two, entitled 'Hegemony, American Hegemony, and Post-Cold War Expansionism', begins with a general overview of the study of hegemony. Particular attention is paid to the current 'Third Wave' of hegemonic studies, which this project is embedded in, with a focus on the processes of hegemonic ordering, maintenance, and change. From here, a review of the US as a hegemonic power will be conducted, with particular attention on how it has ordered its hegemonic networks in the core regions of East Asia and Europe throughout the 20th century as it transitioned from a regional to global power. Next, the emergence of the strategy of engagement in the post-Cold War era towards China and Russia is explored, including its dominant characteristics and rationales. Following this, the research question of what accounts for the different trajectories of these relationships under the broad contours of the engagement strategy is raised with possible theoretical explanations for this phenomenon. In particular, the final section introduces Lynchpin theory, as the main counter-theory for the study, laying out its general premises and explanations before ending with an overview of its limitations and omissions.

Chapter Three lays out the conceptual underpinnings of and features defining the project's theoretical framework, entitled Networked Centrality. It begins with a definition of networks and then applies them to the US case in order to understand hegemonic ordering as a networking process. The next section introduces the concept of 'network concerns', alignment patterns among regional members which the US either supports, opposes or is ambivalent about depending on its impact on US network dominance and its position of centrality in these. Network concerns are delineated into three categories: those arising within the network, outside the network, and at the border of the network and its larger regional environment. The next two sections introduce 'overlays' which influence the specific structuring of these networks in terms of domain and region. The domain overlay is based on the argument that US hegemonic ordering can be divided into economic and security domains with distinct, but usually interlinked, logics and processes. The second overlay is the regional strategic culture, which is unique to both East Asia and Europe. In particular, it is argued the US has a regional strategic culture towards Europe defined by specific goals and desires regarding region building whereas in East Asia it possesses a regional strategic culture which is largely ambivalent about region building preferences given the focus on preventing certain patterns from emerging. These two overlays divide US hegemonic ordering and networks into the four cases explored in this project – the China/East Asia security case, Russia/Europe security case, China/East Asia economic case, and Russia/Europe economic case.

After the case determination and selection section, an overview of the critical juncture framework, which is applied to the entire project as well as within each case study, is conducted, delineating key terms and concepts, assigning these to aspects of the cases which will be examined. The framework is divided into three areas- pre-critical juncture, critical juncture and post-critical juncture - with a particular focus on how the domain logics and regional strategic cultures inform US responses and pursuits in these cases. The concluding section provides a quick overview of the crux of the debate between NC and LP theory which is explored throughout the project, specifically the 'fit vs function' framing.

Chapter Four introduces the project research design and methodology. This is a multiple case and cross-case analysis study. As outlined above, there are four cases in

this project. Each case follows the same format. It begins with an overview of LP theory’s account of the case and then discusses its limitations and omissions. From here, the critical juncture framework is employed to map out the changes and continuities to the relevant US regional hegemonic network, the regional environment, and the interplay between the two. This is followed by an analysis of the network concerns of the case and how the US addressed these in accordance with its regional security. Next will be a section on the maintenance of the US strategic approach towards the region and OMP of focus throughout the post-Cold War era, demonstrating the path dependency and institutional ‘stickiness’ these have developed, before detailing when this approach began to erode and where it stands at present. The concluding section reviews the arguments made by LP theory and NC.

An overview of the second component of the research design, the cross-case analysis, is then conducted. The cross-case analysis is specifically designed to showcase the importance of the domain and strategic culture overlays across the cases. In facilitating this, the cases are organized into three groupings: 1) within region cases; 2) cases by domain; and 3) between region cases. Table One below provides further details regarding these groupings. The concluding section details the research sources used in the project.

Table 1: Cross-Case Analysis by Grouping

Grouping	Case Pairings	Examination Focus
Within Region	1. East Asia security vs economic cases 2. Europe security vs economic cases	Regional strategic culture influence on security and economic ordering in same region/OMP
Domain	1. East Asia security vs Europe security cases 2. East Asia economic vs Europe economic cases	Regional strategic culture influence on security and economic ordering in different regions/OMPs

Between Regions	1.East Asia cases vs. Europe cases	Regional strategic culture influence on regions' intersection with larger hegemonic networks/ordering
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As mentioned, Chapters Five to Eight are the case chapters. The two security cases are presented first, followed by the economic ones. These case chapters are self-contained and thus can be read separately, sequentially or in whatever order the reader wishes. Chapter Nine is the cross-case analysis, which was outlined above in Table One. Each case comparison –five in total – is structured in the same way, beginning with the identification and analysis of the primary similarities and differences. This format allows for the demonstration of NC’s utility in explaining specific cases but also the similarities and differences between them. This chapter is more condensed and less detail heavy compared to the case chapters.

The concluding chapter begins with a brief overview of the major findings of the project. In particular, the relationship between the two theories, LP theory and NC, will be examined to better understand the areas of difference, symmetry, and overlap as well as a possible pathway towards a partial convergence of elements of them. Following this, the academic contributions of this study will be explored, including more generic matters such as the nature of hegemonic ordering, strategic culture, and HI, as well as more specific ones to the US in terms of its hegemonic objectives and strategic culture. The next section identifies future areas of research, including application of the framework to other hegemon/hegemony cases. The final section investigates the relevance of this project to the US as a hegemonic power in this emerging era in which it faces external challenges associated with the return of great power competition/strategic rivalry as well as internal ones regarding growing public and especially elite disaffection from the hegemonic project itself.

Chapter 2: Hegemony, American Hegemony, and Post-Cold War Expansionism

This chapter reviews the relevant literature to properly situate this project within the academic landscape. We begin with a general overview of hegemonic studies, with particular attention to the ongoing 'third wave' focused on examining the ordering processes and functions of hegemonies. This project is inspired by, resides in, and seeks to contribute to this emerging body of scholarship. This is followed by a more surgical examination of the study of the US as a hegemonic power given its continued relevance in both world politics and in the evolution of hegemonic studies. While the subfield is beginning to expand to examine other historical hegemonies, the US continues to dominate the field. This project contributes to this trend but is careful to limit its applicability to other cases. The possible relevance of some of the project's theoretical work and implications in relation to other cases is explored in the concluding chapter.

Following this, the main topic of this study – US hegemonic maintenance and expansionist efforts following the end of the Cold War – will be examined, specifically regarding its approach towards former Cold War adversaries Russia and China. While there are many explanations as to why the US pursued this approach, there are few studies which acknowledge and examine the reasons for the different paths the engagement approach pursued in relation to these two powers. A brief exploration of possible explanations is conducted from various theoretical paradigms, highlighting areas meriting consideration but ultimately concluding these are insufficient in addressing this issue. The final section provides an overview of Mastanduno's explanation for this difference, which I label 'Lynchpin Theory' (LP). It is the most direct and compelling attempt to answer this question and in large part formed the motivation for this project. This is because there are several theoretical and empirical limitations and omissions which challenge this theoretical account, leading to the need for an alternative explanation for both US approaches to China and Russia specifically and Europe and East Asia more generally.

Hegemons, Hegemony and Hegemonic Ordering

The last decade has witnessed a revitalization of hegemonic studies across the field of International Relations (IR) theory, with scholars from many theoretical paradigms

exploring this phenomenon. This scholarship, specifically examining state-based forms of hegemony, builds off and moves beyond the work done in previous eras of hegemony studies. These eras primarily examined the systemic effects produced by the establishment (captured in the literature on Hegemonic Stability Theory) and the erosion (captured in the literature on Power Transition Theory and Theory of Hegemonic War) of hegemony.²⁰ In contrast, current theoretical and empirical work looks at identifying and understanding the internal characteristics and logics of hegemony more so than treating hegemony as functionally the same and focusing on the external effects it produces. In focusing on the process of hegemony, many traditional IR paradigms are following in the footsteps of well-established Neo-Gramscian/Marxist approaches to studying to understanding hegemony, which emerged in the 1980s but resided on the edges of the field given the dominance of liberal-institutionalism and neo-realism. Furthermore, contemporary work seeks to develop a more fulsome understanding of hegemony by not solely focusing on the characteristics and nature of hegemonies, the dominant states who are the architects of hegemonies, but rather exploring hegemony as a relational phenomenon, defined by leader-follower relationships, and as a form/process of constructing and maintaining a specific order. Therefore, the field of hegemonic studies currently seeks to understand the relationships between hegemonies, hegemony, and hegemonic orders. In this regard, a key vector of research is on the spatiality of hegemonies, specifically their networked structure where a hegemon exerts influence throughout the order, and those within it, by occupying critical nodes, defined by their density and centrality, within various systems. Such an approach offers a middle ground between focusing on the system level (as previous waves have done) and the dyadic level defined by specific hegemon-follower pairings.²¹

Hegemony has a plethora of definitions. Variation within these definitions is usually a function of different features and aspects being emphasized over others by scholars depending on the larger theoretical framework within which they are embedded. There are, though, some common characteristics of hegemony which most scholars

²⁰ G. John Ikenberry and Daniel H. Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019): 395-421.

²¹ *Ibid.* Such an approach, therefore, does not treat hegemony as entirely produced downwards by a disinterested hegemon, doing whatever it wants without consideration/concern for how others will respond, nor an entirely additive, bottom up 'emergence' of patterns from individual, disaggregated relationships.

agree upon. Most importantly, hegemony is a form of *hierarchy* in international politics that is distinct from empire, sphere of influence, and unipolarity.²² Empire, another form of hierarchy, is largely defined by the complete extinguishing of sovereignty and autonomy of entities within it in terms of organizing their domestic affairs. A sphere of influence is defined as an attempt by a power to exclude the influence of outside powers within a specific region and limiting the foreign (and usually to a certain extent domestic) autonomy of other states within this zone.²³ The goal is to ensure the de facto acquiescence from both outside powers and inside states of this arrangement and by default their dominant position within this space.²⁴ While a sphere of influence can be the result of hegemony/hegemonic ordering, there are many ways this state of affairs can be organized and operated.²⁵ Unipolarity is a structural condition defined by the existence of a materially preponderant power which has no peer but does not speak to how such a power would act internationally. Hegemony, in contrast, is not seen as complete domination of others or simply a natural extension or byproduct of material preponderance.²⁶ Rather, hegemony is defined by authority relations between a dominant power and lesser ones, which remain nominally sovereign equals, where the former seeks leadership in organizing international affairs among them which the latter

²² Daniel H. Nexon and Thomas Wright, "What's At Stake in the American Empire Debate," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 2 (2007): 253–271; Carla Norrlof, "Hegemony, Hierarchy and Unipolarity: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Hegemonic Order Studies," In *Encyclopedia of Empirical International Relations Theory*, ed. W. R. Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

²³ Spheres of Influence are usually defined by geographic proximity to a great power wanting to establish one, such as between Russia and the other, former Soviet republics (see: Stephan Page, "The Creation of a Sphere of Influence: Russia and Central Asia," *International Journal* 49, no. 4 (1994): 788-813). However, other factors such as ideology, history and geopolitics can motivate the creation and maintenance of Spheres of Influence which are not geographically contiguous (for example see: Susanna Halt, *Spheres of Influence in International Relations: History, Theory and Politics* (New York: Routledge: 2014).

²⁴ Van Jackson, "Understanding Spheres of Influence in International Politics," *European Journal of International Security* 5, no. 3 (2019): 1-19.

²⁵ The internal ordering of them can be done via a number of forms including hegemonic and imperial.

²⁶ While theoretically possible, it is unclear if there have been cases of material preponderant powers/unipoles, who have no peers not seeking to shape and lead the construction of specific orders internationally. Such drives could be a function of fear that creates pressures and incentives for such powers to seek positions of authority and leadership. Martha Finnemore, "Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 58-85; Nuno Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

supports. This is the second key feature of hegemony: *the functional differentiation in the roles between the dominant power and follower powers.*²⁷

The dominant power possesses both the ability and the desire to seek such a leadership role. A hegemon is a power that can and wants to lead in organizing and shaping the conditions, institutions, and prominent forms of interaction between entities. While different scholars emphasize the different power bases - economic, military, and/or ideological - which are most important, many agree power preponderance is a necessary but not a sufficient condition if a dominant power is to become a hegemon.²⁸ Rather the dominant power must exercise leadership which is largely captured in the performance of a number of duties and functions. These duties include being: a creator, specifically of the rules and institutions of the order; a defender, protecting the system including militarily; and a stabilizer, the power of last resort to resolve major crises, including economically.²⁹ While other powers can assist in these duties, hegemons are seen as vital given their material and organizational capabilities which position them as the most influential actor in terms of planning and priorities in addressing these matters. There are debates about the nature of the goods produced by these duties, specifically whether they are primarily public goods (which everyone benefits from) or semi-private/club goods (where only some privileged members benefit), and how these arrangements reproduces support for the hegemonic project, both by the hegemon and others.³⁰

²⁷ A major continuing divide within hegemonic studies remains between state-based hegemony studies, where hegemons are defined as materially dominant states, and society-based hegemony studies, where hegemons are defined as dominant social-economic classes which exist within and between many states including dominant and lesser ones. See: Robert Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method," *Millennium* 12, no. 2 (1983): 162–175; Ted Hopf, "Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics," *International Organization* 67, no. 2 (2013): 317–354.

²⁸ One exception is Mearsheimer who argues that hegemony, generally narrowly defined as a system in which the dominant logic is the bandwagoning of smaller powers towards a larger power given fears of opposition, stems directly from material preponderance, specifically militarily, of the larger power. It is important to note, however, that Mearsheimer, according to his theory of Offensive Realism, believes hegemony can only be achieved at regional levels and not across the entire global system given the difficulties of projecting power into other regions. John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

²⁹ Luis L. Schenoni, "Hegemony," (*Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 2019).

³⁰ On public goods from hegemony see: Barry Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security* 28, no. 1 (2003): 5-46. On club/private goods see: David A. Lake, "Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics," *International Security* 32, no. 1 (2007): 47–79.

What motivates a power to pursue a hegemonic ordering project and become its leader? This is a pertinent question given the usually sizable costs associated with maintaining such a project and its privileged position within it. There are several rationales which have been explored in the literature. A hegemon accrues a number of direct material benefits, such as ensuring a favourable economic system which enables and furthers its comparative advantages, and obtaining burden-sharing support from followers in terms of securing and protecting the order, specifically against an antagonistic power or bloc.³¹ Hegemons, however, are not solely focused on transactionalism, that is extracting direct, immediate material benefit from each of its interactions and efforts.³² Rather, long term investments by the hegemon result in the entrenchment of its privileged position within the system, creating environmental effects which it can use to its benefit. For example, the hegemon can become a 'system maker and taker' in terms of leveraging the system to support a number of interests in a way which is not available to others. An example would be the US leveraging its financial hegemony, with the dollar as the world's de facto reserve currency, to run very large budget deficits without raising taxes.³³ Another motivation is to influence the strategic orientations of and relations between other states, specifically powerful ones, so as to preclude balancing probabilities against the hegemon and therefore prevent the emergence of future rivals.³⁴

Another rationale is ideological, with a preponderant power wanting to create/impose its version of order, both in terms of relations between states and possibly within states' domestic political and economic affairs, fostering arrangements it views as inherently 'good' for both the hegemon and its followers. Such ideological efforts, as well, support the prevention of future rivals with their identity and interests becoming embedded within the hegemonic order.³⁵ Hegemonic ordering pursuits require some

³¹ Norrlof and Wohlforth, "Raison De L'Hégémonie."

³² There are, however, accounts that if the system the hegemon builds over time does not entrench its material advantages, and in fact facilitates the power developments of others, the hegemon will take actions to significantly alter, if not abandon, the hegemonic ordering project. See: Stephen Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," *World Politics* 28, no. 3 (1976): 317–347.

³³ Michael Mastanduno, "System Maker and Privilege Taker: U.S. Power and the International Political Economy," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2008): 121-154.

³⁴ Norrlof and Wohlforth, "Raison De L'Hégémonie."

³⁵ An example of this is the demonizing and discouraging of 'greatpowerness' as a norm and practice in global politics by the US which in effect solidifies its hegemonic position within the

level of domestic support, most importantly from elites. Elites can be motivated by different economic, political, social and security rationales, which even if there are tensions between them in general produce a largely coherent strategic culture which embeds the hegemonic ordering project as a long term, durable national priority and legitimates the costs of sustaining these pursuits as essential to the identity, security, and material wellbeing of the hegemon.³⁶

On the other side of the equation, the lesser powers' level of followership can vary in intensity, scope, and rationales but does not reach a point of complete opposition to the organizing project in general nor the hegemon's leading role within it. Therefore, the third feature is hegemony's effect of *limiting the autonomy of follower powers*. As a result, understanding why followers follow (and not just understanding why leaders lead) has become an important area of research in hegemonic studies. Indeed, limiting the autonomy of others is not simply a consequence of hegemony but one of its central goals. Hegemons want support not only for their organizing projects but acceptance of their leading role in shaping these pursuits. This does not necessarily mean the hegemon directly imposes coercive ultimatums to secure followership (though that is an option), or that followers completely abide by and support all of the hegemon's preferences. Rather hegemonic ordering creates environmental conditions which marginalize the ability of other powers, either individually or collectively, from pursuing separate ordering pursuits that challenge the overall structure of the hegemonic order and privileged position of the hegemon within it. Generating and maintaining such support from follower states arises in a number of ways, based on varying material and ideational rationales. These include: fear of retaliation if opposing/non-conforming (especially militarily)³⁷; dependency on hegemonic networks (especially economically and for their security)³⁸; ideational alignment (based on societal and elite socialization which views the hegemonic order as legitimate)³⁹; and a judgement that it is better to live

Liberal International Order. Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

³⁶ Bradley S. Klein, "Hegemony and Strategic Culture: American Power Projection and Alliance Defence Politics," *Review of International Studies* 14, no. 2 (1988): 133-48; Johnston, Alastair I., "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 32-64.

³⁷ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

³⁸ Jackson, "Understanding Spheres of Influence in International Politics."

³⁹ Robert Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Charles A. Kupchan, "The Normative Foundations of

within the hegemonic order than 'under anarchy' thereby allowing for free riding with the hegemon providing beneficial goods which others can access and take advantage of.⁴⁰

The goal of hegemony is the construction of an order, consisting of a set of norms, rules, arrangements, and institutions which inform and guide state relations. Orders, furthermore, create entry and retention requirements, and thus are designed to lock-in support for those that abide by these while excluding, in part or in full, those which do not.⁴¹ Hegemonic ordering, however, is differentiated by other forms of ordering by the specific pattern of and ways in which it pursues the construction and maintenance of them. Hegemonic orders are orders which are developed through and designed to entrench the leader-follower role relationship with the hegemon taking the lead and followers accepting, to varying degrees, this arrangement. While hegemons have some degree, and sometimes a very large degree, of freedom to alter the nature and substance of their ordering pursuits and its position within it, they are not completely free to do as they wish as support/acquiescence from followers as a whole is a necessary condition which needs to be maintained.⁴² Hegemons, furthermore, do not have omnipotence over their external environment, and thus are not always directing/dictating events but also reacting to developments outside their control.⁴³ While disputes and differences will always persist, the main goal of hegemonic ordering projects is to avoid large-scale attempts by others, specifically those deemed necessary to ensure its continued existence, to comprehensively challenge them.

Another key question in hegemonic studies is understanding the causes and consequences of when hegemonies/hegemonic orderings begin to falter and/or collapse. Some argue hegemony will continue until the hegemon becomes over-extended materially, when covering the costs of the order becomes prohibitively expensive and

Hegemony and the Coming Challenge to Pax Americana," *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (2014): 219–257.

⁴⁰ Lake, "Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics."

⁴¹ Kyle M. Lascurettes, *Orders of Exclusion: Great Powers and the Strategic Sources of Foundational Rules in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

⁴² Nexon and Neuman, for example, argue that all hegemons, regardless of how materially powerful they are, reside in and are pressured by social fields, which exist within their domestic sphere and internationally, which speak to questions of legitimacy which affect followership, a key aspect of hegemony. Daniel H. Nexon and Iver Neumann, "Hegemonic-Order Theory: A Field-Theoretic Account," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 3 (2018): 662–686.

⁴³ Hegemons, furthermore, are not just focused on their own interest pursuits, with little attention on recruiting others, but actively want followership/support/compliance.

begins to erode the hegemon's material bases to a significant extent.⁴⁴ Such a condition may be the result of excess adventurism, with a hegemon endlessly trying to extend the hegemonic order which over time dramatically increases costs but with diminishing returns/benefits. Another possible path to hegemonic decline and termination is when the hegemon increasingly comes into rivalry with a rising power, usually taking advantage of the diffusion of technology and economic power and security costs which the existing hegemonic order provides, which emerges and begins to seriously undermine the existing order and offer an alternative.⁴⁵ There are few examples of a rising power peacefully replacing an existing hegemon,⁴⁶ with many of these transitions having been violent. While a new hegemon may not totally erase all elements of the previous order, they invariably craft the hegemonic order around their preferences and principles. A further route comes not externally but internally, with significant changes in the domestic nature and support for the ordering project within the hegemon which changes the nature of its international behavior, specifically limiting goods provisions and security commitments which underpin the hegemonic order. This option is not necessarily a function of the hegemon's power collapsing significantly, which the other routes emphasize as the source of hegemonic decline/termination, but rather a change in the dominant ideologies and elite support. The hegemon could remain a significant power but retrench due to loss of support rather than lack of resources and/or being pushed out by challengers.⁴⁷

Many of these trajectories of hegemonic decline/change associate the demise of the hegemon with the demise of the hegemonic order it has constructed and maintained. Thus, these assessments argue the result is order collapse, usually violently, making room for a new order to emerge. Other accounts, however, such as Keohane and

⁴⁴ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage, 1989).

⁴⁵ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in International Politics* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁴⁶ The most well-known and well-studied exception is between the US and the United Kingdom. Kori Schake, *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

⁴⁷ For example, Michael Beckley argues that the US moving further into the 21st century will most likely retain its preponderant capabilities and favourable strategic environment to maintain its hegemonic standing and position; but its illiberal turn domestically may fundamentally alter the ways in which the US acts internationally in terms of moving away from a liberal-hegemonic power towards a more transactionalist one increasingly indifferent towards alliance and other commitments to its traditional hegemonic followers. Michael Beckley, "Rogue Superpower: Why This Could Be an Illiberal American Century," *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 6 (2020): 73-86.

Snidal's assert an order can be preserved even with the demise of the hegemon if there is a group of secondary powers which are aligned in their desire and ability to pool their resources and efforts to ensure order continuity.⁴⁸ Within such a scenario, the diffusion of power resulting in the emergence of other significant powers does not existentially threaten the hegemon or the hegemonic order as they have been socialized within the order and thus become status-quo supporting. Ikenberry, furthermore, argues that hegemons can be 'far sighted' in creating orders which are 'easy to join but hard to overturn', designed to include rising powers which over time increasingly become embedded in the order and become its standard bearers.⁴⁹ Doing so shares the rewards and develops benefits for these powers in being situated within the order and minimizes their predilections towards serious order revision given it is perceived as very costly and dangerous.

The United States as a Hegemonic Power (in Theory and Practice)

The US is the dominant case study within hegemonic studies.⁵⁰ The reasons are threefold. First, there are few other cases of hegemony in recent world history, and those that do exist are not nearly as well studied as the American case. Second, much of the work on hegemony originates from American universities and academic institutions which are largely focused on and familiar with the US example.⁵¹ Third, US hegemony continues to have a profound effect on the nature of global politics and economics making its study highly relevant both academically and practically. While there is a growing push to expand hegemonic studies to find, compare, and contrast other cases of hegemony to broaden the subfield empirically and theoretically, the study of hegemony will continue to be largely influenced by the US case for the foreseeable future.⁵²

⁴⁸ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization* 39, no. 4 (1985): 579–614.

⁴⁹ G. John Ikenberry, "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order," *International Security* 23, no. 3(1999): 43–78; G. John Ikenberry, G. John, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 1(2008): 23-37.

⁵⁰ Ikenberry and Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders."

⁵¹ While the US academy has had a dominant influence over the nature and evolution of the field of IR theory in general, it is particularly noticeable regarding the study of hegemony as this concept/phenomenon has not been a major area of focus in IR traditions such as the English School which focuses more on great power management and other 'primary institutions' explaining global politics.

⁵² Ikenberry and Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders."

Evidence of this tight linkage between American hegemony and the study of hegemony more broadly can be seen in the variation of interest in hegemonic studies, and specific theoretical and research aspects of hegemony explored⁵³, based on actions and developments regarding the US in global politics. In particular, there is a pattern of increased focus on hegemonic studies during periods of pessimism about the future of the US as a global power. For example, concerns over the US losing its superpower position and the post-war international order it had constructed in the 1970s given its failed military campaign in Vietnam, the OPEC crisis, the semi-collapse of the Bretton Woods accord, and the growing economic power of its followers (specifically West Germany and Japan) which were increasingly being seen as possible competitors sparked the formal creation of International Political Economy (IPE), the academic study of how politics and economics interacted with one another globally. Marxist works had examined these relations long before this, but IPE bridged the gap between politics and economics via a coherent research project for mainstream IR for the first time. Such work, contrary to declinist narratives, argued the US would retain its dominant position and the hegemonic order it had constructed given what Susan Strange called the endurance of American 'structural power'⁵⁴ as well as insights from Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) regarding the continued core financial and security functions the US undertook to preserve the system.⁵⁵

In the 1980s, however, hegemonic studies were pushed to the side with the emergence of updated theories of realism (neo-realism) and liberalism (institutionalism), the central mainstream paradigms at that time within the study of International Relations (IR) theory in the US.⁵⁶ Despite their differences in understanding the dominant logics at

⁵³ These include exploring the three main components of hegemony - capabilities, functions, and hegemon-follower relationships- as well as exploring the ends/goals of hegemony versus the mechanics/mechanisms of hegemonic orders. Schenoni, "Hegemony."

⁵⁴ Susan Strange, "The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony," *International Organization* 41, no. 4(1987): 551–574.

⁵⁵ Charles Kindleberger, "Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy: Exploitation, Public Goods, and Free Rides," *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (1981): 242–254; Gilpin, *War and Change in International Politics*.; Posen, "Command of the Commons."

⁵⁶ Hegemonic studies would continue within the Marxist paradigm during this time, with important developments being made in the understanding of the process of hegemonic formation and staying power via its adaptability to adjust to changing circumstances. In particular, the rise of Neo-Gramscian works pushed the subfield away from interpreting hegemony as simply the deterministic product of how technological economic development ordered social relations

play, both paradigms largely dismissed the importance of hegemony and instead focused on other organizing principles and mechanisms to explain the functioning of international politics (balance of power pressures stemming the nature of the international system for neo-realism and the use of institutions as coordinating mechanisms to foster cooperation in an increasingly interdependent world for institutionalism).⁵⁷ The ending of the Cold War, the non-return to multipolarity in its aftermath and the US's emergence as the sole superpower, however, caused major rethinks in these IR paradigms, specifically realism. Rather than a revival of hegemonic studies in the 1990s, realism morphed into the study of unipolarity as a structural condition in and of itself while institutionalism continued to focus on the endurance and expansion of the 'Liberal International Order' to explain the nature of global politics to the detriment of examining the continued central role and leadership position of the US in global politics not just as a superpower but a hegemonic power.⁵⁸

Over the past decade, however, there has been growing convergence among these and other research paradigms in IR around American hegemony as a dominant force in global politics.⁵⁹ As with other periods of heightened interest noted above, this current resurgence in hegemonic studies comes at a time of growing concerns about the future of American power and influence. In particular, new research is focusing on how rising great power challengers, alternative institutional ordering, and wavering American domestic support for its global role are undermining US hegemony.⁶⁰ Others, however, argue that there remain strong material, ideational, and institutional elements

towards interpreting hegemony as a more socially produced phenomenon where the consent of various classes played a major role in its perpetuation.

⁵⁷ Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security* 20, no. 1(1995): 39-51; William C. Wohlforth, "Gilpinian Realism and International Relations," *International Relations* 25, no. 4 (2011): 499-511.

⁵⁸ Ikenberry's arguments in the 1990s that the US was pursuing a constitutional order was contrasted with two other ordering types - a balance of power system and a hegemonic system. However, his treatment of hegemony was like Mearsheimer's in that it was simply synonymous with, and an epiphenomenal development stemming from, material preponderance, resulting in dominance/compellence of support from others. Over time, however, Ikenberry's works have treated hegemony as a far more complex phenomenon in which, despite efforts to extend the Liberal International Order, the US retains its hegemonic standing and uses its hegemonic networks as privileged vehicles in its international dealings and pursuits. G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ Ikenberry and Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders."

⁶⁰ For example, see: Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon, *Exit From Hegemony: The Unravelling of the American Global Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

underpinning American hegemony, and the Liberal International Order (LIO) it has constructed, that will persist even with decreasing American power and domestic support.⁶¹ These pursuits, furthermore, raise questions about whether and how American relative decline (assessed as its decreased percentage of material capabilities compared to other great powers) is translating into meaningful decline in terms of creating an unfavourable strategic environment and the diminishment of its hegemonic position.⁶²

Such matters underpin ongoing debates about the future of American grand strategy, specifically between 'restrainers' who argue the US should retrench somewhat from the world and focus on a more limited set of 'core interests' and 'containers' which argue for a grand strategy focused on great power competition against China and Russia, the two most serious rivals to American hegemony in Europe and Asia, including elements of the Containment strategy pursued during the Cold War.⁶³ Exploring the foundations and mechanisms of American hegemonic ordering, and determining whether and how they are being undermined, is a critical element of this new wave of research. It requires an (re)examination of the origins of American hegemony in the 20th century, specifically its dominant logics and components.

Core Regions, Balances of Power and Hegemonic Ordering in US Grand Strategy

The US emerged as a hegemonic power throughout the 20th century, increasingly building its material power capabilities, conducting a number of functions and duties to shape the nature of the international environment, and most importantly seeking support and followership from other powers. From a position of seeking the exclusion of European powers' presence and influence throughout the Americas, the US increasingly became more interested and involved in the security and economic systems

⁶¹ For example, see: G. John Ikenberry, "Why the Liberal World Order Will Survive," *Ethics & International Affairs* 32, no. 1 (2018): 17-29.

⁶² Others argue that assessments of inevitable US relative decline are overrated, both due to overestimation of the material power trajectories of rival powers (specifically China) and underestimation of the latent power bases the US possesses. For example, see: Michael Beckley, *Unrivaled: Why America Will Remain the World's Sole Superpower* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

⁶³ For example: Christopher Layne, "Preventing the China-U.S. Cold War from Turning Hot," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 13, no. 3 (2020): 343-85; Hal Brands, *The Twilight Struggle: What the Cold War Teaches Us About Great-Power Rivalry Today* (New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press, 2022).

of other regions, most notably Europe and East Asia.⁶⁴ As a result of the world wars, in particular, the US emerged as the centre of global finance, a military superpower and a state with a growing desire to establish an institutionalized order to regulate international affairs, specifically pertaining to the use of force and trade, which other powers were part of and abided by.⁶⁵ These ordering efforts were primarily pursued through its emerging hegemonic relations with key powers in Europe and Asia. While the US aimed to establish a global order with universal acceptance, its central priority was the support and followership of major powers both in terms of security, specifically through regionally based alliance systems, and economically, through their support of a larger trading and investment regime, to prevent the regionalization of closed economic-security blocs in the core regions of Europe and East Asia.⁶⁶

The US became interested and involved in influencing balances of power via alliance relations and structures throughout the Eurasian supercontinent during and after the world wars, specifically the 'rimlands' of Europe and East Asia. There was a concern that if any one power or group of hostile powers was able to control these regions, with its industrial strengths and geography, they would then be able to develop and deploy significant power abroad, including towards and into the Americas.⁶⁷ As a result, the US has consistently pursued a number of goals in its grand strategy regarding the geopolitical nature of these regions. These include ensuring: no hegemon/hegemonic bloc emerges; continued economic access to and forward deployment of military forces in these regions; the building of favourable relationships with like-minded/democratic

⁶⁴ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁶⁵ Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War, America and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916-1931* (New York, New York: Penguin, 2015).

⁶⁶ Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁶⁷ Nicholas J. Spykman and Helen R. Nicholl, *The Geography of the Peace* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1969).

powers⁶⁸; and ascertaining these powers' support regionally and in some cases globally.⁶⁹

After the wars, concern about the Soviet Union becoming a Eurasian hegemon was the major impetus for the US's continental commitment - militarily, economically and politically – in these rimlands as a bulwark against any Russian expansionism.⁷⁰ However, these processes were also motivated by a desire to remake Germany and Japan into allies and to lock in its war time allies, most importantly Great Britain and France, as perpetual followers with the US taking the lead role in organizing security relations on the continent. Germany and Japan became 'trading states' rather than returning to 'normal (great) powers' that built up their military power and pursued an independent foreign policy. They were, also, vital access points facilitating American power and influence into these core regions and important partners of the US' international efforts to create and extend an international order.⁷¹ Alliances were not solely collective-action devices to pool resources and coordinate against a mutual threat, but also controlling devices to limit the autonomy of and collaboration between other

⁶⁸ The idea of 'like-minded' can refer to a variety of commonalities between the US and other states which can be differentiated by differences in time and place during American hegemonic ordering efforts. For example, anti-communism was a major interest alignment factor in US grand strategy during the Cold War more so than states being democratic. In the post-Cold War era, furthermore, there seems to have been greater focus and effort on supporting democratization efforts in Europe versus Asia. Michael W. Fowler, "A Brief Survey of Democracy Promotion in US Foreign Policy," *Democracy and Security* 11, no. 3 (2015): 227-47.

⁶⁹ Michael Green, *By More Than Providence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Patrick Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment," *International Security* 42, no. 4(2018): 9–46.

⁷⁰ The Soviet Union was a 'heartland' power, as defined by Halford Mackinder, which could become a Eurasian hegemon, occupying a vast landmass in which to resource and lines of communication to move its large armies throughout Eurasia, which occupied Eastern Europe and parts of Northeast Asia following WWII. Later in his career, Mackinder realized the North Atlantic as a heartland region as well with large resources, lines of communication and major industrial centres in which a power – the US- who controlled this space would be able to deploy and project power throughout the world system. Torbjorn L. Knutsen, "Halford J. Mackinder, Geopolitics, and the Heartland Thesis," *International History Review* 36, no. 5 (2014): 835-57; Brian Blouet, ed., *Global Geostrategy: Mackinder and the Defence of the West* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

⁷¹ Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic, 1986). Rosecrance's work entails normative advocacy that the US should shift towards becoming a trading state/power and away from being a military one in response to changes in the nature of global power, following in the footsteps of Germany and Japan in the post-War world; the transformation of the latter being a function of the US reconstituting the domestic political nature of these powers following their defeat and occupation by the US and allied powers. See also, Katzenstein, *A World of Regions*.

powers.⁷² Preventing a hegemonic rival from emerging in/taking over these core regions, therefore, was pursued through a strategy of hegemonic ordering, binding major regional powers into American anchored networks, rather than a strategy of offshore balancing where the US would only intervene to maintain a pluralist balance of power system denying the ability of one power or bloc to become hegemonic by materially supporting the weaker side(s).⁷³

The US aimed to eliminate balance of power as a political practice among great powers regionally and globally, and instead bring about an institutional order, commonly referred to as the Liberal International Order (LIO), based on liberal principles and norms pertaining to sovereign equality, trade, human rights (and to some degree democracy promotion) which was conducive to its superpower position, leading role and domestic ideology.⁷⁴ The realities of superpower competition during the Cold War stymied but did not extinguish these desires. While the US worked to construct and expand the LIO, centred on the United Nations (UN), which included non-allied powers, this did not come at the expense of the hegemonic core it was building via its tight security and economic relations with its allies and close partners as the privileged vehicle to structure regional realities.

American hegemony, however, was and is not a territorial empire or composed of subject satellite allies.⁷⁵ It enjoys a high degree of willing compliance and support from its followers, though the US was never able to ensure complete alignment with its

⁷² For a take on alliance as an autonomy limiting approach see: John D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (1991): 904-33. See also: Daniel H. Nexon, "The Balance of Power in the Balance," *World Politics* 61, no. 2 (2009): 330-59.

⁷³ On offshore balancing see: John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (2016): 70-83.

⁷⁴ Layne, "The Peace of Illusions."

⁷⁵ US hegemonic actions vary across time and space, including those which were imperial such as the removal or overthrowing of governments and in general extensive intervention in states' domestic affairs. These actions are particularly pronounced in Central and South America and not as much in Europe and Northeast Asia, though the US was extensively involved in remaking the internal dynamics of Germany and Japan to turn them into allies and working to eliminate communist forces in Western European states. The US, also, has had and retains some overseas, imperial possessions which were/are not afforded full inclusion in the Union such as the Philippines, Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico. Nexon and Wright, "What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate." Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Picador, 2020).

preferences on some strategic matters.⁷⁶ Such support stems from many different forces and rationales. This includes the development and maintenance of deep normative and relationship linkages between elites and their larger publics around the hegemonic ordering project, specifically during and in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Second World War;⁷⁷ American provision of number of semi-public/club goods, including security, which benefit and in some cases are a necessity for these powers⁷⁸; and in general maintenance of a benevolent/non-hostile posture towards them which engenders continued consent even without the condition of a common external threat which existed in the emerging post-Cold War era. While the US has at times been unsuccessful in extending its hegemonic networks,⁷⁹ its efforts have been, on the whole, successful in pruning alternative arrangements forming among or between its allies, partners, and outside/adversarial powers specifically regarding alternative geopolitical cores.

The extent and nature of hegemonic systems, specifically alliance structures, differ significantly in Europe and Asia.⁸⁰ In the former, the US created and facilitated multilateral institutional structures bringing together the leading regional powers under the same 'tent' to further regional ordering, while in the latter these systems were largely bilaterally based with direct relations between the US and its hegemonic partners in a hub-and-spoke configuration. These differences are important (and will be explored further in Chapter Three) but the main commonality is the perpetuation of American

⁷⁶ This included regular push back by allies to reduce the number of items on the export restriction list to the Soviet Union and Comecon states (see: Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the Politics of East-West Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press:1992). Other examples include trade with Maoist China in the 1960s by allies like Canada, and many allies' refusal to send military forces during the Vietnam War.

⁷⁷ Kupchan, "The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and the Coming Challenge to Pax Americana."

⁷⁸ Lake, "Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics."

⁷⁹ One of the more prominent examples is the US to create multilateral security organizations throughout Asia, most notably the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). These efforts failed to take hold in any meaningful way, with many members contributing little.

⁸⁰ There are a number of rationales for the differences in hegemonic structures between these regions, including variation in US commitment to defend certain partners compared to others (based on cultural/identity affiliation), the ability of binding local powers together given pre-existing tensions, and varying concern about the risk of and ability to balance Soviet/Communist expansionism. See: Charles Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Why Is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism," *International Organization* 56, no. 3 (2002): 575-607; Victor Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security* 34, no. 3 (2009): 158-96; Kei He and Huiyun Feng, "Why Is There No NATO in Asia? Revisited: Prospect Theory, Balance of Threat, and US Alliance Strategies," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 2 (2012): 227-50.

constructed and led hegemonic structures in these regions as the dominant security architectures.

Economically, American hegemonic moves were based on building and expanding a larger international trading, investment, and most importantly financial system which others operated within. While over time other powers, especially allies such as Germany and Japan, became economically powerful, and intra-regional trade decreased America's share in local trading and investment flows, at the system level the US retained its prime position, based on the dominance of the US dollar, in the international economic network.⁸¹ A position within which it was successful in ensuring continued support from other major power allies and able to be a 'privilege taker' in terms of growing government spending without raising taxes due to its control of the supply of American dollars and the demand from other powers to buy US treasury bonds to promote US spending and consumption.⁸² American political economic interests in the core regions, therefore, were not about suppressing the economic growth of other powers but rather ensuring the region remained economically open and that major regional powers remained supporters of the larger economic-financial system. Over time, the US has changed specific economic approaches and priorities, such as ending its support for the gold standard and acceptance of trade deficits with the rise of finance over exports as a main vehicle and conduit for American global economic power, but the commonality throughout was getting secondary powers' support to maintain the system and US leadership within it.⁸³

Throughout the 20th century, the US increasingly occupied a favourable position to pursue its hegemonic ordering projects given its insularity (being separated from other powers via large bodies of water), favourable home region geopolitically, and strong demographic and other latent power bases allowing it to build and deploy material

⁸¹ Carla Norrlof, "Dollar Hegemony: A Power Analysis," *Review of International Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (2014): 1042-070.

⁸² Mastanduno, "System Maker and Privilege Taker."

⁸³ Examples include continued allied support for the major institutions of Bretton Woods even with the US ending its backing of the gold standards in the 1970s and the major capitalist economies signing a series of agreements – including the Plaza and Louvre Accords – in the 1980s to adjust their currencies to help alleviate American concerns about its growing trade deficit. Matias Vernengo, "The Consolidation of Dollar Hegemony After the Collapse of Bretton Woods: Bringing Power Back in," *Review of Political Economy* 33, no. 4 (2021): 529-51.

capabilities both globally and within these core regions.⁸⁴ As well, strong domestic support, specifically among elites, for the US leading role in the post-Cold War era assisted in the maintenance of hegemonic pursuits.⁸⁵ This constituency was not homogeneous but rather a confluence of different but mutually supporting rationales including military security (counteracting the Soviet Union and their allies via alliances), economic benefits (from open trade and investment regimes) and ideological (anti-communist sentiment/belief in the superiority of democracy). Therefore, strong support stemmed from both outward (opposing the Soviet Union/Communism) and inward (trade, finance, and support ordering projects) functions of American hegemony.

Transition to and Early Period of Post-Cold War Era

Despite the removal of superpower rivalry with the ending of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the US in the late 1980s and early 1990s maneuvered to ensure the maintenance of its hegemonic networks at regional, specifically in Europe and East Asia, and international levels. The continuation of such networks and America's leading role within them, furthermore, demonstrated that these were not simply functional devices to compete against a peer in a bipolar world which would be discarded once that condition had ended. Such a determination, encapsulated in a series of decisions and actions during both the Bush and Clinton administrations in the early to mid-1990s, was simply one of many strategic paths which the US could have pursued during this period of transition.

At one extreme, the US could have significantly reduced its global footprint via retrenchment away from its hegemonic initiatives and responsibilities, specifically in terms of defence commitments, and increasingly treated allies as more rivals than partners in what was predicted to be an emerging era of geoeconomic competition between leading economic powers.⁸⁶ This could have also included a move towards building a 'concert' system with other major powers, specifically in Europe and Asia, as a

⁸⁴ John Schuessler, Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson, and David Blagden, "Revisiting Insularity and Expansion: A Theory Note," *Perspectives on Politics* (2021): 1-15; Beckley, *Unrivaled*.

⁸⁵ Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed". Inderjeet Parmar, "Transnational Elite Knowledge Networks: Managing American Hegemony in Turbulent Times," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019): 532-64.

⁸⁶ Edward Luttwak, "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce," *The National Interest* 20 (1990): 17-23.

more accommodating form of ordering to these powers compared to US anchored systems. At the other extreme, the US could have pursued a strategy of aggressive hegemonic expansion to compel others to join its economic and defence networks, with implications for the domestic nature of states given entry requirements to certain organizations, both within the core regions of Europe and East Asia and beyond.⁸⁷ In between, the US could have pursued a strategy of re-negotiation ensuring more equitable burden sharing with its hegemonic partners to secure greater contributions from them in terms of the maintenance of security and economic systems and expand these systems where conditions were favourable.

Unlike many realists who expected the US to move 'offshore' from these regions with the removal of their only peer competitor in the Soviet Union⁸⁸, the US not only retained its alliances and overseas commitments but expanded these in certain cases over the recent decades. The US, also, did not seek to divest its leadership roles or duties onto its allies as regional managers as liberal institutionalism would expect.⁸⁹ While the US focused on expanding key normative, specifically democracy promotion, and institutional elements of the LIO in the post-Cold War world this did not come at the expense of retaining its hegemonic core, prioritizing major European and Asian allies remaining committed to these US anchored networks to prevent alternative regional networks from forming. In the post-Cold War era, the US had become a unipolar hegemonic power which received large scale support, or at least acquiescence, from both its traditional allies and partners and other major powers in relation to its ordering pursuits and leadership activities.⁹⁰

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Bush administration set about trying to establish a new anchor for American grand strategy with the removal of their superpower rivalry with the Soviet Union. The main efforts were to preserve the US hegemonic standing and posture, specifically via emphasizing the indispensability of US international leadership and the need to prevent the emergence of future rivals,

⁸⁷ Strobe Talbott, "The New Geopolitics: Defending Democracy in the Post-Cold War Era," *World Today* 51, no. 1 (1995): 7-10.

⁸⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 5-56.

⁸⁹ Brzezinski, "A Geostrategy for Eurasia."

⁹⁰ Thomas Wright, "The Rise and Fall of the Unipolar Concert," *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2014): 7-24.

especially in Europe and East Asia. This required a continued presence and involvement in regional matters in these two core regions. While wanting and encouraging allies and other emerging powers to do more, there was an assessment that for the foreseeable future the US would be the only power able to lead internationally, specifically as it pertained to major economic and security issues. This, however, required the continued support of and coordination with allied powers. Second, while there were no more peer rivals to deter and defend against,⁹¹ the US would act to prevent the emergence of a future peer rival or hegemonic bloc, specifically in East Asia and Europe.⁹²

The Clinton administration is usually seen as the first post-Cold War American presidency, marking a distinctively new era of American foreign policy and grand strategy. In particular, with the shedding of its superpower rivalry drivers and pressures during the Cold War the US adopted an entirely new grand strategy focused on expanding its hegemonic networks and liberal-democracy promotion given its unipolar position. However, the Clinton administration, after an initial period of flirting with a new economics-first approach (as will be explored in more detail in various chapters of this dissertation), largely retained, and expanded on, the Bush administration's dual strategic anchors – maintenance of allied followership and prevention of rivals emerging in core regions. In achieving these goals, the US in the transition to and early period of the post-Cold War era pursued activities which can be divided into two categories. First, those which aimed to 'shore up' its hegemonic networks and standing in East Asia and Europe, specifically regarding its allies. Second, pursuing a strategy of engagement with former adversarial powers to further include them in security and economic frameworks. This dual-pronged approach would remain at the heart of American grand strategy over the next two decades.

⁹¹ With the lack of any real peer competitor on the horizon, throughout the 1990s, the US increasingly became focused on containing 'rogue' powers, such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq, which were seen as serious regional threats to peace and stability, motivating working with allies and other regional partners to coordinate military, economic and diplomatic approaches.

⁹² This is clear from the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance (PDG) and the 1993 Regions Strategy (which the PDG informed). These documents declared: the US would not allow a hegemon or hegemonic bloc to emerge in the core regions of Europe, Northeast Asia, Central and South America and the Middle East; stressed the indispensability of American leadership globally and regionally, specifically in relation to security matters; and portrayed the world as entering a very dangerous, unpredictable security environment. National Security Council, *Defense Planning Guidance*, 1992; Secretary of Defense, *Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy*, January 1993.

Regarding the second category, China and Russia were the key countries of interest for the US given they reside within core regions to US hegemony, existed outside its hegemonic structure, and had (at different times and intensities) been fierce rivals and adversaries of the US geopolitically and ideologically during the Cold War. China and Russia, thus, are best conceptualized as 'Outside Major Powers' (OMPs). 'Outside' in that they did not reside within US hegemonic networks and had loose connections to international and regional institutions, and 'major' in that while they were not system-level great powers they still had sufficient aggregate power to be regional ones.

The Strategy of Engagement with China and Russia

American relationships with both Russia and China during the transition to and early period of the post-Cold War era were affected by large scale changes at both the global system level and developments within each. At the system level, the emergence of unipolarity with the end of bipolarity and superpower competition removed realist-based balancing logics for the US against Russia, the much weaker successor state of the Soviet Union, and alignment with China against this common rival which had now disappeared.⁹³ At the state level, Russia was struggling to transition away from communist rule and towards building a market-based, democratic system amidst a large-scale economic contraction and loss of its great power status and system of allies. China was continuing its economic liberalization which had begun in the 1970s, but the Communist regime was dealing with the domestic and international aftermath of its violent suppression of protests during the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. This event generated Western condemnation and the imposition of sanctions but not a full-scale rupture in these relationships.⁹⁴ As with larger decisions pertaining to the maintenance of a global footprint and commitments associated with its hegemonic networks, during this time a number of paths were open to the US in determining the trajectory of its relationships with these powers.

⁹³ On Structural Realism balancing logics based on the distribution of material capabilities among states, specifically 'great powers' see: Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

⁹⁴ Warren Cohen, *America's Response to China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 232-62.

The most common assessment from scholars and official policy pronouncements by various US governments is that the overall approach taken by Washington towards both powers in the post-Cold War era was one of 'engagement'.⁹⁵ As opposed to other alternatives - such as balancing, containment or simply a more distant relationship - the US pursued an approach of actively encouraging and working towards the inclusion of both powers into the major institutions and systems commonly associated with the LIO as well as fostering conditions in each to promote their development towards becoming economically and, ideally, increasingly politically liberal states. This included admittance in premiere economic forums, major regional institutions, and regular head of state summity with both powers by the US.

Economically, Russia became a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 1992, the G7 in 1997, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2012. In terms of regional security, it joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP), an organization facilitating cooperation between NATO and other European states, in 1994 and was a founding member of the Six Party Talks in 2003 aimed at arresting North Korean nuclear proliferation. In the early 1990s, furthermore, a number of programs and investments by the US and its partners aimed at assisting in Russia's economic recovery, ensuring nuclear weapons in the possession of other newly independent Soviet republics were returned to Russia, and upgrading the safety standards and security of Russia's nuclear weapons arsenal.⁹⁶

Unlike the seismic change in the approach towards Russia versus the Soviet Union, the American approach to China during this time was one of continuity. Relations between the two had improved significantly since their normalization in the 1970s. Normalization was largely based on a strategic calculus by the Nixon and successive administrations that China was a useful partner in balancing the Soviet Union. As well, China's tentative steps towards economic liberalization were also seen as a beneficial

⁹⁵ Craig Campbell, Benjamin H. Friedman, Brendan Rittenhouse Green, Justin Logan, Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry and William C. Wohlforth, "Debating American Engagement: The Future of U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security* 38, no. 2 (2013): 181-199.

⁹⁶ James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After the Cold War* (Washington DC: Brookings Institute, 2003); George Maclean, *Clinton's Foreign Policy in Russia: From Deterrence and Isolation to Democratization and Engagement* (Burlington, Vt: Asghate, 2006).

development both to American business and geopolitically with the anticipated reduction in ideological competition between the two. The American -and others' - recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC) facilitated its entry into both the WB and IMF in 1980, replacing the Republic of China (ROC). Despite the setback in relations following the Tiananmen Square massacre, inclusion of China into the LIO accelerated in the post-Cold War era.⁹⁷ Trade increased significantly between China and the world, including the US, with China joining the WTO in 2001. During this time, China embarked on a successful campaign of joining as many international organizations as possible.⁹⁸ Like Russia, they participated in a number of regional institutions and groupings such as APEC and the Six Party Talks. By the early 2000s, furthermore, there were growing calls by the US for China to become a 'responsible stakeholder' in international affairs, contributing more to the provision and defence of the LIO which it has greatly benefited from.⁹⁹

A number of theoretical explanations have been developed to answer why the engagement approach was chosen and maintained throughout various US administrations in the post-Cold War era. There is common agreement that American efforts in the post-Cold War era towards Russia and China were primarily designed to turn them into status-quo states.¹⁰⁰ However, status-quo can refer to a number of different components of the international environment - towards the LIO, the centrality of US-anchored hegemonic networks, and/or the US superpower position. While each paradigm emphasizes a different element, in reality their logics are mutually-reinforcing

⁹⁷ Anne F. Thurston, ed., *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

⁹⁸ Alastair I. Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?" *International Security* 27, no. 4 (2003): 5-56.

⁹⁹ Robert Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" Remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, 21 September 2005, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm>

¹⁰⁰ 'Status-quo' is a difficult term to conceptually define and operationalize. There is a gradation in terms of the degree of status-quo (or reversely revisionist) a state can be. Applying Gilpin's tri-level conceptualization of status-quo/revisionist in terms of the material balance of power, status, and 'rules' of the system, it appears engagement is based on the premise that China, Russia, and others can want to change the first two but in so doing cannot alter the third. Rules of the system, though, is also a murky concept in general and it is unclear what the referent is - key principles of the LIO (such as multilateralism, human rights, democracy development) and/or the centrality of the US in structuring institutions and processes defining inter-state interactions in economic and security affairs - with respect to the US assessment of China and Russia being status-quo or not. Gilpin, *War and Change in International Politics*, 9-49.

towards ensuring Chinese and Russian acceptance of the US as the lead power in ordering regional and international affairs.

Liberal Institutionalism emphasizes active inclusion of these powers in the LIO to bind them to it, lowering the probability that in the future these states will be motivated and able to oppose it. As Ikenberry states, the LIO is “easy to join, yet hard to overturn”.¹⁰¹ Binding in this context does not only refer to a reluctant acquiescence by these powers, but ideally to engendering greater commitment to and support for the Order from their leaderships and wider publics given the benefits received from it. These include access to international economic, finance and trade markets; representation in leading international and regional institutions; and security benefits of stable regional and global environments allowing these states to focus on internal development.¹⁰² As a result, the benefits received from, and the difficulty in trying to untangle and oppose once embedded in, the Order diminish the prospects of them developing revisionist predilections later. Furthermore, the US would continue to promote external conditions, and dialogue with their leaderships and societies, which fostered economic and political liberalization in these states but would not orient its hegemonic networks against these powers in a targeted, exclusionary, and punitive way to force internal change. The strategy of engagement was not premised or designed to achieve rapid change in these states but rather to promote and facilitate their evolution in a liberal direction while entrenching them in the current Order.¹⁰³

There are realist arguments as well for a strategy of engagement. In contrast to Liberal Institutionalism’s focus on ensuring order maintenance, Monteiro argues that unipoles, like the US in the post-Cold War era, should be motivated to retain their superpower position by precluding balancing possibilities forming against them by other powers who are fearful of the preponderance of power they possess. A strategy of defensive accommodation, allowing other powers to grow economically, is a prudent choice for a unipole which reduces the risk of such possibilities forming without having to

¹⁰¹ Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West.”

¹⁰² G. John Ikenberry, “The Liberal International Order and Its Discontents,” *Millennium* 38, no. 3 (2010): 509-21.

¹⁰³ Kathryn Stoner and Michael McFaul, “Who Lost Russia (This Time)? Vladimir Putin,” *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2015): 167-87; James B. Steinberg, “What Went Wrong? U.S.-China Relations From Tiananmen to Trump,” *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 1(2019): 119-133.

compromise on its superpower position. Monteiro, furthermore, cautions against unipoles pursuing strategies of containment or offensive accommodation, trying to radically secure a more favourable balance of power, as these will ultimately cause targeted and affected states to militarize and organize in an accelerated manner against them.¹⁰⁴

A third theoretical perspective argues the strategy of engagement with China and Russia was the product of a sustained and aggressive pursuit of 'Liberal Hegemonism' by the US. With system-level balances of power pressures erased with its emergence as a unipole, US grand strategy became entirely based on domestic forces, specifically the belief in liberal ideology, advocated and advanced by its political and security elites, to create a world entirely populated by liberal democratic states.¹⁰⁵ According to this view, the US acted as an unrestrained power, largely basing its decisions on relations with Russia and China on how quickly they could transform these powers into liberal democracies. At the core of such a strategy is an ingrained desire to eliminate great powerness, transforming all other powers into subordinate followers. Such homogeneity in terms of followership internationally requires homogeneity internally within outside major powers as liberal democracies¹⁰⁶; a project the US believed was not only morally righteous but achievable. Therefore, the US was not focused on furthering an ever-favourable balance of power against other major powers but the complete absorption of all powers into its hegemonic order.¹⁰⁷

Despite offering important insights into the motivations underpinning and nature of US relations with both China and Russia in the post-Cold War era, each perspective, in different ways, suffers from focusing too much on the commonalities of approaches taken towards both to the detriment of appreciating and understanding the differences in

¹⁰⁴ Monteiro, *Theory of International Politics*.

¹⁰⁵ Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion*; Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions*.

¹⁰⁶ Core to this line of thinking is the belief in the power of the Democratic Peace theory, which posits that democracies do not go to war to each other; a perspective held by many post-Cold War American presidents. Inderjeet, Parmar, "The 'knowledge Politics' of Democratic Peace Theory," *International Politics* 50, no. 2 (2013): 231–256.

¹⁰⁷ Walt and Mearsheimer, both realists, are some of the strongest proponents of this Liberal Hegemony perspective (but not endorsing this as a good development for US grand strategy) arguing the assumption of the US to a position of unipolarity has eliminated structural pressures and constraints associated with the balance of power of American foreign policy which is in the post-Cold War era entirely based on and motivated by domestic considerations and factors. As a result, these scholars have abandoned the application of their original theories - Balance of Threat and Offensive Realism respectively - as having any utility in the post-Cold War era in explaining US behavior.

them. Furthermore, there remain unresolved theoretical and empirical questions regarding the engagement approach, specifically the degrees of and relationship between the concept of inclusion, in terms of entry into varying political processes, and that of accommodation, satisfying the interests of other powers and in the process sometimes having to restrain or adjust one's own interests, to develop and advance cooperative relations.

Looking past the criteria of entry into and membership of international institutions, it is clear there are major differences between the US approaches towards both of these powers in terms of direct relations, and indirectly in terms of (in)actions in their home regions. Russia during the early 1990s was a democratizing and economically liberalizing country, traits that aligned with American values and interests including developing a more cordial relationship between the two former rivals. On the other hand, China remained solidly an authoritarian power, using force to suppress peaceful protests during the Tiananmen Square massacre and appearing impervious to becoming a more democratic and politically liberal state despite deepening economic ties between the two since the 1970s. Nevertheless, the US actively pursued the acceleration and deepening of political and economic relations with China while limiting such relations with Russia, including a lack of support towards its economic and political liberalization efforts.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the US moved quickly to radically alter the security environment in Europe, via NATO maintenance and expansion, despite Russian concerns. No such plans, however, to expand or transform its alliance system in Asia were pursued, greatly benefiting China in maintaining a predictable and (while not a completely benign) more favourable geopolitical environment compared to Russia. Overall, these actions across political, economic and security domains lead to the conclusion that the US strategic approach towards China was far more favourable and accommodative than towards Russia; but this does not provide an unambiguous and self-evident *explanation* for why this was so.

Liberal Institutional perspectives could argue that these differences were a function of specific political-economic situations of each power legitimating different strategies be taken towards each. It simply was a case of figuring out how best to fit

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Cohen. *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2000).

them into the LIO and help them on their liberalizing journeys. While this was true to a certain extent, it still assumes the US was operating from an overarching approach which prioritized both relationships evenly in terms of accommodating their interests. This does not stand up to scrutiny, especially pertaining to security preferences and the incongruence of assistance to Russian liberalizing efforts compared to China's. Furthermore, and more problematic for Liberal Institutional arguments, there is little acknowledgement of the differences in joining more inclusive based aspects of the LIO but having limited entry/being denied entry into core US based hegemonic networks as the main vehicle of regional and international ordering.

For Monteiro's theory of unipolarity, there is no explanation offered, in general or in the specific contexts of Russia and China, as when or why the US would choose a strategy of defensive accommodation in the case with China and in a strategy of offensive accommodation in the case of Russia. For Liberal Hegemonism, beyond the general critiques around whether liberal-democratic promotion is really the dominant factor in US grand strategy¹⁰⁹, it does not offer an adequate explanation for why the US is not more aggressive towards China, as the more autocratic regime, compared to Russia, as the democratizing one, in ensuring their transformation into liberal democratic states.¹¹⁰ The inability to explain not just these differences in general but the fact that that they are occurring simultaneously indicates other factors must be at play.

Explaining the Differences

How are we to make sense of these differences? Many contemporary accounts exploring these relationships largely fixate on how the US and the West got China and Russia 'wrong' during the post-Cold War era, specifically due to the fact both are becoming increasingly revisionist against American hegemony currently.¹¹¹ While this is

¹⁰⁹ There is also a critique about whether this only became a dominant powerful force in the post-Cold War era rather than a continuation, and acceleration, of long-standing trends. Robert Jervis, Christopher Layne, Jennifer Pitts, Jack Snyder, William C. Wohlforth, and John J. Mearsheimer, "H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable 11-2 on The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities," *H-Diplo*, 23 September 2019, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/4768948/h-diploissf-roundtable-11-2-great-delusion-liberal-dreams-and>

¹¹⁰ Robert Jervis, "Liberalism, the Blob, and American Foreign Policy: Evidence and Methodology," *Security Studies* 29, no. 3 (2020): 434-56.

¹¹¹ Aaron Friedberg, "How the West Got Russia and China Wrong: The Failed Strategy of Engagement," *IAI News*, 05 April 2022, <https://iai.tv/articles/how-the-west-got-russia-and-china->

an important phenomenon to explore, with major relevance to global politics, the work around why engagement failed shares a common property with the work on why engagement was proposed in the first place - there is a pull towards explaining American interests and rationales in these relationships as being largely homogenous which underappreciates the variations within and between them. These are important in furthering our understanding of American hegemony and hegemonic ordering in general and particularly during the post-Cold War era in East Asia and Europe. There are several possible explanations which can be extrapolated from various theoretical paradigms. Four of these – rising versus declining powers; balance of threat; elite political relations; and Neo-Gramscian/Marxist accounts - will be explored below. All of them, however, can be seen as inadequate in providing a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon. Reviewing them, however, is important, including highlighting the different factor(s) each approach emphasizes as the most causally important, in clearing this explanatory landscape to set up the focus on the two theories which will be examined and compared in this dissertation: Lynchpin theory and Networked Centrality.

Rising versus Declining Powers

There are a number of realist-based theoretical accounts which imply the US would act differently towards China and Russia as a function of assessments of these powers being rising or declining. In the aftermath of the Cold War, China was largely seen as a rising power, likely to become a great power given its growth in economic power, especially within Asia, which would fuel its development into a military power. Russia, on the other hand, was largely seen as a declining power, the rump successor state of the Soviet Union which despite retaining a large nuclear arsenal was facing a severe economic contraction, shrinking conventional military power, the loss of its great power status and Warsaw Pact allies, and an unstable domestic political situation.

Waltzian realism posits that balancing behavior is oriented against and between the most powerful states in the international system.¹¹² Waltz argued in the early 1990s

[wrong-auid-2094](#). Beside each powers' own revisionism against US hegemony, another criticism of the engagement strategy is that it increasingly drew China and Russia into strategic alignment which is becoming a serious challenge to the US. Timothy Crawford, "How to Distance Russia from China," *The Washington Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2021): 175-94.

¹¹² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. Balancing, according to Waltz and many realists, is primarily in reference to military activities and postures.

that the post-Cold War era was still bi-polar and thus the US and Russia, as the world's great powers, would continue to balance one another.¹¹³ However, in the early 1990s the US assessed that Russia was in a far more weakened state, that bi-polarity and superpower competition which heavily influenced the Cold War no longer existed and thus that the US should not be containing Russia.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, while relations with China were developing, it was clear that post-Tiananmen the US was not treating military relations as moving towards any sort of alignment.¹¹⁵ More fundamentally, given the absence of any other great power peers, realist-based balance of power logics were erased given the world had moved into a structural condition of unipolarity with the US as the sole superpower.¹¹⁶ Therefore, it is hard to understand why the balance of power would matter at all in US relationships with either China or Russia given there was such a discrepancy between them regardless of whether one was growing materially in power and the other one was declining.

Waltz and other realists, however, expected the balance of power would return to international politics with the rise of other great powers which would bring back balancing behavior between these powers and the US. In this regard, China was seen, based on its accelerated economic growth, to eventually become a great power whereas Russia's future remained uncertain given its internal challenges.¹¹⁷ Therefore, there is an argument that could be made that based on this forecasting the US would make moves to balance against China preemptively as a rising power more so than Russia which was a declining power.¹¹⁸ However, Waltzian realism does not emphasize foresight as

¹¹³ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): 44-79.

¹¹⁴ *The National Security Strategy* (1991), 1; *The Defence Planning Guidance* (1992), 5.

¹¹⁵ Kurt Campbell and Richard Weitz, "The Limits of U.S.-China Military Cooperation: Lessons from 1995-1999," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2005): 169-86; Phillip C. Saunderson and Julia G. Bowie, "US-China Military Relations: Competition and Cooperation," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 39, no. 5-6 (2016): 662-84.

¹¹⁶ If anything, all the other powers should be balancing against the US to 'right' the balance of power away from such singularity. There are realist-based accounts, focused on the structural effects of unipolarity as a novel international condition, which offer explanations as to why this counterbalance against US hegemony did not emerge. Specifically, due to coordination challenges no power is willing to be a first-mover to outright oppose the unipole and risk being targeted by them. Randall Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu. "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline," *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 41-72.

¹¹⁷ Waltz, Kenneth N. "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 5-41.

¹¹⁸ Indeed Mearsheimer, Friedberg and others have argued that by not treating China as a soon to be peer rival, and indeed taking actions to materially support them, the US facilitated the emergence of a great power challenger 'of its own making'. G. John Ikenberry, Andrew J. Nathan,

contributing to balancing pressures and logics as states' balancing behavior is influenced by the current distribution of power, not a prediction or expectation of a future configuration.¹¹⁹

In contrast to opposing other powers, Paul and others have argued about the importance of accommodating rising powers to ensure the international system, including the current balance of power, remains stable. Doing so requires adjustment from established powers to make space for these powers and their interests, including demonstrating strategic restraint against any maximalist attempt to frustrate these up and coming powers' own interests, which may or may not be aligned with those of the established power(s).¹²⁰ This sentiment is emphasized in Liberal Institutionalism in binding these powers into the existing order and Monteiro's Theory of Unipolar Politics as the optimal strategy in preventing balancing coalitions forming against the unipole and thus threatening its superpower position. Accommodation, however, can also be present in relationships involving an established power and a declining one, specifically with the former creating international conditions which alleviate the latter's concern over their loss of power and status and any impulse to act aggressively to stall or reverse their downward trajectory.¹²¹

There are coherent arguments for a superpower like the US trying to accommodate both a rising power like China and a declining power like Russia in the post-Cold War era. A common point is the continued socialization of these powers in order to avoid them becoming revisionist, but whether that rests more on changing these states' interests or making room to accept these to some degree is unclear. It remains

Susan Thornton, Sun Zhe, and John J. Mearsheimer "A Rival of America's Making? The Debate Over Washington's China Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 101, no. 2 (2022): 172-188.

¹¹⁹ Such a conceptualization of how a power can interact in this way with systemic forces is compatible with Neoclassical Realism, specifically how domestic factors, including elites' perceptions, affect how they understand and respond to the balance of power in their foreign calculations and actions. However, in a unipolar configuration does the global balance of power matter at all for a superpower like the US or is its foreign policy and behavior entirely reducible to domestic considerations? Davide Fiammenghi, Sebastian Rosato, Joseph M. Parent, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Kevin Narizny. "Correspondence: Neoclassical Realism and Its Critics," *International Security* 43, no. 2 (2018): 193-95.

¹²⁰ T.V. Paul, *Accommodating Rising Powers: Past, Present, and Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹²¹ William C. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1995): 91-129.

unclear, furthermore, what accounts for the highly accommodationist orientation to China versus Russia.

Investigating relationships between established and declining powers, Shiffrinson argues that depending on the declining power's usefulness as a balancing partner and their military power capabilities an established power may pursue a predation strategy against them or try to help prop them up materially. In the case of the decline of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, he argues the US pursued a predation strategy against them as there were no other peer competitors in the emerging unipolar world which warranted trying to prop up the Soviet Union as a counterbalancing partner. This resulted in the US aggressively negotiating with the Soviet Union to accept its version of a new security order.¹²² While this argument explains why the US did not make serious efforts to accommodate many of the Soviet Union's perspectives on and interests in European security, especially between 1989 and 1991, in the post-Cold War era the US was not entirely oppositional to all Russian ordering projects such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) among the former Soviet Republic states. Furthermore, as with Waltzian balance of power ideas, it is difficult to figure out what the role of Predation Theory plays in a structural world of one superpower with no peers. In such a scenario, declining and rising power differences could be seen as irrelevant and thus whether the US pursues a more predatory or accommodationist strategy against these powers cannot be explained by their usefulness as balancing partners against others.

Balance of Threat

Feng recommends, but does not extensively explore, Balance of Threat (BOT) theory, developed by Walt, as a good explanation for the different levels of accommodation towards China and Russia by the US.¹²³ In contrast to Waltzian realism, Walt argues that material power alone could not explain the imbalance of power between the respective US and Soviet alliance systems. Rather, the decisive causal force is not

¹²² Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrinson, *Rising Titans, Falling Giants* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

¹²³ Huiyun Feng, "H-Diplo/ISSF Article Review 130 on 'Partner Politics: Russia, China, and the Challenge of Extending US Hegemony after the Cold War'," *H-Diplo/ISSF*, 20 December 2019, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/5548491/h-diploissf-article-review-130-%E2%80%9Cpartner-politics-russia-china-and>

the distribution of material power, but *the determination of threat* in influencing alliance patterns and choices. In short, states do not balance against the most materially preponderant states, but rather the most threatening ones.¹²⁴

Walt lists four key factors in ascertaining threat: aggregate power (a state's economic and military power); geographic proximity; offensive military capabilities; and offensive intentions. Material power, therefore, is not dismissed entirely as a factor, but Walt asserts intentions are the crucial factor in determining threat.¹²⁵ Walt somewhat underexplains what exactly is meant by threatening intentions, but given the listed examples of threatening powers (such as Napoleonic France and Nazi Germany) these consist of both pronouncements by powers which others views as threatening (particularly with respect to trying to dominate them) and their actions, past and present (witnessing how the threatening power treats other states). The Soviet Union, therefore, given its large economy (second in the world) and military (aggregate power); presence in Europe (proximity); large standing and mobile armies on the continent (offensive capabilities); and occupation and transformation of a number of Eastern European states in communist satellites, including violently suppressing uprisings and a desire to spread communism to others (threatening intentions) led Western European states to see it as the more threatening power and thus prompted them to align with the US, regardless of the actual, global material balance of power.

Walt himself does not believe BOT theory explains US strategic behavior in general and in relation to China and Russia in the post-Cold War era, preferring instead to focus on domestic factors as the driving force in US grand strategy.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, BOT can be applied to these cases. In particular, Feng argues that American alliance expansion in Europe but not in Asia is because the US viewed Russia as still potentially threatening militarily but China as not posing a military in the early 1990s.¹²⁷ Despite Russia being a materially weakened power, which was democratizing and economically liberalizing, Moscow's significant forces and history of military power projection in Eastern Europe entrenched the US' view of Russia as a threat and moved it to preclude

¹²⁴ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): 3-43, p. 9.

¹²⁵ Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," 13.

¹²⁶ Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions*.

¹²⁷ Feng, "H-Diplo/ISSF Article Review 130."

the possibility of it being able to return to a revisionist military posture.¹²⁸ China, on the other hand, was not seen as a threatening power. Though its suppression of peaceful protests in 1989 did cause consternation in the US and other Western states, this was not seen as threatening in terms of regional and global stability, and thus the US could pursue a more accommodative policy towards them in contrast to Russia.

During the timeline of this study, the US continued to view Russia as a potential threat, motivating the decision to keep American forces on the continent and maintain the regional security order anchored by NATO, excluding any role for Russia and shutting down Moscow's attempts to gain support for the development of new security arrangements on the continent.¹²⁹ As well, there were several countries within Europe - represented by the Visegrád (Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia; this group became a quartet after the break-up of the latter in the Czech Republic and Slovakia) and Vilnius (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) Groups - advocating for NATO membership and expansion to inhibit any Russian attempt to reclaim its empire and sphere of influence. Such concerns were fueled in the early 1990s by Russian military interventions internally (in Chechnya) and externally (fighting in Transnistria/Moldova and Abkhazia/Georgia).¹³⁰ While Russia was in decline in the early 1990s, it is unclear what the impacts of this were on regional security and/or whether it would return once again as a great power able to exert its influence in the near future. Russian decline, as well, was seen by some in the US as potentially increasing the threat it posed by them, specifically in terms of concerns over Russia becoming another 'Weimar republic' at risk of being taken over by nationalist-fascist forces determined to restore the country to 'greatness' via imperialist drives and revanchism.¹³¹

In Asia, while there were concerns about China's long-term rise as a great power, many regional states, most importantly Japan, wanted to see a quick return to normality in these relationships in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre.¹³² America's

¹²⁸ Madeline Albright, Testimony before the U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, NATO: Report on the Group of Experts, 111th Congress, 2nd session, 20 May 2010.

¹²⁹ Lascurettes, *Orders of Exclusion*, 214.

¹³⁰ Kimberly Marten, "Reconsidering NATO Expansion: A Counterfactual Analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s," *European Journal of International Security* 3, no. 2(2018): 135-61.

¹³¹ Gregory Freidin, "Weimar Russia?" *LA Times*, 1996, <https://web.stanford.edu/~gfreidin/Publications/columns/weimar.htm>; Madeleine Albright *Madam Secretary: A Memoir* (London: Macmillan, 2003), 437.

¹³² K.V. Kesavan, "Japan and the Tiananmen Square Incident: Aspects of the Bilateral Relationship," *Asian Survey* 30, no. 7(1990): 669-81.

presence in the region, via security guarantees to several states such as South Korea and Japan and continued arms support to Taiwan, was important in precluding any Chinese revisionism and fostering a period of economic growth and development across the region. The rapprochement between China and the US in the 1970s, as well, cemented a turn in China's strategic approach of autarky and coercive communist exportation towards economic liberalization and retracting its support for insurgent movements in other states. Thus, in the 1990s, China was not seen as a threatening power to the US or regional states, though there were concerns about its future rise as a great power and impact on regional order. With that said, China was on a mutually beneficial trajectory given its economic liberalization and termination of its early-Cold War revisionist foreign policy and therefore there existed no need to augment or introduce new alliance systems against them.¹³³

Despite the coherence of such an account, there are a number of limitations with BOT theory in general and in its application to the China and Russia cases. First, BOT theory, like many realist theories, is narrowly focused on the military domain, having little to say about political and economic domains. Relatedly, BOT largely sees alliances and other political relations among states as functional solutions towards a common goal - balancing a threat to preserve their autonomy and survival. For Walt, therefore, retention of American alliances in the post-Cold War world is puzzling given the absence of system-level great power rivals coupled with the fact they live in a benign regional environment in North America. Even if local states are concerned about the military power and threatening intentions of China and Russia and want US support, Walt argues these powers are not system-level peers and thus the US should not retain its alliance system in the absence of a mutual threat.¹³⁴ Furthermore, even if one assumes the US did see Russia as a threat as Walt defines it, what accounts for the discrepancy in American support for furthering alliance relations with some states in Central and

¹³³ Alistair I. Johnston, "The Failures of the 'Failure of Engagement with China.'" *Washington Quarterly* 42, no. 2(2019): 99–114.

¹³⁴ Rather, Walt argues the US should reduce its continental military footprint and alliance relationships in Asia and Europe, adopting an 'offshore balancing' approach of supporting whichever states can maintain an overall balance of power without becoming too dominant, and if need be re-assert themselves in these regions to do so. Remaining involved in continental security in these regions, as well, will simply lead to easy/free riding by these states who would, if the US was not present, spend more on military power to balance any threats in their region. Stephen M. Walt, "US Grand Strategy after the Cold War: Can Realism Explain It? Should Realism Guide It?" *International Relations* 32, no. 1 (2018): 3-22.

Eastern Europe like Poland and the Baltics but not others like Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia? American security concerns in Eastern Europe during the early years of the post-Cold War era were not focused on Russian revanchism, but rather civil wars and ethnic conflicts with the collapse of states like Yugoslavia.¹³⁵

Most limiting is the that the concept of threat is quite narrow in its focus on direct survival. Walt, and other realists, cannot explain the resiliency of American hegemony since the end of the Cold War. Threat mitigation, though, is argued by many hegemonic studies scholars to play a key role in American hegemony in the post-Cold War era, specifically ensuring the subordination of major secondary powers as allies who could be challengers and rivals. Hegemonic studies, as well, offer better explanations as to why smaller powers continue to align with a hegemon and why hegemons continue to underwrite and participate in alliances in the absence of a common threat.¹³⁶ The idea of threat in a broadened sense both temporally (thinking of future trajectories) and in terms of referents to be protected (physical survival to hegemonic networks) may therefore be useful in understanding American approaches towards China and Russia in the post-Cold War world.

Elite Political Relations

With the beginning of the post-Cold War world, an argument could be made that China benefited from having closer political relations with the US given the normalization of relations in the 1970s compared to Russia which did not have such a connection. Two decades of ever expanding political, security and economic relations between the two could have created deep buy-in from both states to maintain relations even with the ending of the Cold War and the turmoil of the Tiananmen Square massacre. On the other side, the American political and security establishment, which had been trained and socialized to confront the Soviet Union for half a century, may have been very suspicious and reluctant to alter their views, assessments, and approaches to Russia during this time.

¹³⁵ Interview with David Gompert, 26 July 2021; Interview with Frank Wisner, 03 August 2021; Interview with Dr. James Goldgeier, 04 October 2021.

¹³⁶ Ikenberry and Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0."

While there were some inter-organizational conflicts over how punitive and aggressive the US should be towards Russia in the early 1990s¹³⁷, in general both states had support within various US administrations and good relations with US presidents. For example, President Bush was supportive of Deng in China and Yeltsin in Russia, working to further relations with both. The Bush administration worked hard to minimize the degree of sanctions and political fallout from the Tiananmen Square massacre while also maneuvering to give Yeltsin political legitimacy when it became clear the Soviet Union was in terminal decline, and to restrain predatory impulses towards the new Russian state even in its weakened state.¹³⁸ Despite initial indications of adopting a new position towards both OMPs, the Clinton administration overcame such tensions to develop more robust relations including in the 1990s regular head of state summitry with China and a close relationship with President Jiang.¹³⁹ China, also, benefitted from voices in the National Economic Council (NEC) in the early 1990s which wanted the US to focus more on China than Japan in Asia given growing concerns about the trade relationship and economic practices of Tokyo.¹⁴⁰ President Clinton, also, maintained close relations with Yeltsin, appeared sympathetic to his security concerns about the changes occurring in Europe, and worked hard to ensure he remained in power during turbulent times in the 1990s.¹⁴¹

While leader and government relations were important, in general there did not seem to be a major difference in the level of government support from the US in the 1990s towards China and Russia, especially at the White House level. Moreover, military relations with these two powers remained largely limited. Examining support within the US towards these states beyond Washington, however, did show larger variation. Furthermore, China was consistently seen in an unfavourable light by a majority of the

¹³⁷ Interview with David Gompert.

¹³⁸ While President H Bush was upset with the ouster of Gorbachev and delayed formally having contact with Russian President Yeltsin until Soviet Union dies, once this did occur the administration moved quickly to develop a relationship with Yeltsin and begin discussions on several sensitive strategic issues such as arms control. George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf/Random House, 1998), 89.

¹³⁹ Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Knopf, 2004), 794.

¹⁴⁰ I.M. Destler, *The National Economic Council: A Work in Progress*. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1996), 37-39.

¹⁴¹ Clinton, *My Life*, 637; interview with Dr. James Goldgeier.

US public whereas Russia was viewed largely favourably.¹⁴² These sentiments, though, did not seem to have had a major impact on inter-state relations in general. Another area where there may be more importance was the level of business support and lobbying towards furthering ties with China as compared to Russia.

(Neo) Marxist/Gramscian Explanations

Variation can also be explained as a function of the differences in their desirability as partners of China and Russia in the global economic system. Neo-Marxist/Gramscian perspectives, such as those of Harvey and Agnew, argue American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era is largely defined by consolidation and extension of the neo-liberal economic system developed throughout the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁴³ This includes continued integration efforts, which had been ongoing for two decades, of China and aggressive efforts to bring Russia and other states from the former Communist/Soviet space into neo-liberal economic order. Given, however, the difference of their assessed economic value, China was pursued in a more accelerated manner by the US in terms of tethering them into the world economic system quickly compared to Russia.

Given the manufacturing power potential, and one day a large domestic market, China was courted by the US and the capitalist world which were eager to do business there, specifically in terms of the establishment of transnational supply chains for multinational corporations. Russia, on the other hand, was facing a large-scale economic contraction while simultaneously attempting to transition from a command to a market economy. Major investors and capitalist governments were reluctant to offer large scale aid, especially in a form comparable to the Marshall program undertaken in the aftermath of the Second World War, and instead Russia was forced into a structural adjustment program run by the IMF.¹⁴⁴ While there was external capitalist interest in cannibalizing some industries in Russia, these were largely independent pursuits without the full-

¹⁴² "China, Historical Trends," GALLUP, accessed May 05, 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1627/china.aspx>; "Russia, Historical Trends," GALLUP, accessed May 05, 2022 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1642/russia.aspx>

¹⁴³ John A. Agnew, *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁴ Peter Rutland, "Neoliberalism and the Russian Transition," *Review of International Political Economy* 20, no. 2 (2013): 332-362.

fledged backing of state governments as was the case with China. Such realities reinforced the logic that economic, specifically capitalist interests, drove political decisions to the marginalization of other considerations. While the paradigm that economic liberalization will engender and ultimately lead to political liberalization ties neo-liberalism and democracy in elite thinking and discourse, in reality economic priorities were privileged over other concerns like building stable democracies and human rights.¹⁴⁵ This was why relations with China were strengthened despite the entrenchment of its authoritarian rule and why aid to Russia was so limited took the form of extractive-based neo-liberal arrangements. Furthermore, the economic desirability of China created a far larger, more cohesive, and active constituency of elite supporters, in US business and government than that directed towards Russia, which heavily influenced government decision-making.¹⁴⁶

Neo-Marxist/Gramscian perspectives offer a powerful explanation for the variation in American approaches to China and Russia in the post-Cold War world. While there were efforts to expand neo-liberalism into both states, including socialization of their elites, given their position and potential in the global economy China was favored for incorporation into the economic order whereas Russia remained on the margins, relegated to 'developing country' status to be dealt with by the IMF and international creditors.¹⁴⁷ China was far more valuable, especially based on predictions about its future growth and development, to the capitalist global economy in general and American economic interests in particular compared to Russia. The rush of cheap and readily available Chinese manufactured goods, for example, created pliant domestic political communities amidst growing wealth inequality and the acceleration of the financialization of the American and global economy.¹⁴⁸ The primacy of capitalist logics over other geopolitical interests was dominant in American grand strategy.

During the post-Cold War era, especially the initial years of the 1990s when major economic policy and orientations towards these powers were developed and

¹⁴⁵ John Marangos, "Was Shock Therapy Consistent with Democracy?" *Review of Social Economy* 62, no. 2 (2004): 221-243; Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

¹⁴⁶ Ho-fung Hung, "The Periphery in the Making of Globalization: The China Lobby and the Reversal of Clinton's China Trade Policy, 1993-1994," *Review of International Political Economy* 28, no. 4 (2021): 1004-1027.

¹⁴⁷ Marangos, "Was Shock Therapy Consistent with Democracy?"

¹⁴⁸ David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 26-86.

solidified, however, did the US sacrifice geopolitical goals in the name of capitalist economic ones? There does not appear to be any major trade offs in this regard during this time. For example, despite the desire to further trade relations with China, the US maintained its policy towards Taiwan and did not play a major role in facilitating maritime disputes involving China.¹⁴⁹ The US, furthermore, was not reluctant to deploy military power during crises and tensions to deter China even amidst growing economic connections. The existence of a condition where economic and geopolitical interests can co-exist, and possibly be mutually-reinforcing, should not be confused for a condition where there is a tradeoff involved in which economic interests overrode geopolitical ones, which a Marxist approach to political economy would suggest.¹⁵⁰ Neo-Marxism/ Gramscian logics, however, are an important contribution towards the need to understand the US as a hegemonic power in terms of its motivations and actions between and within both security and economic systems. Were hegemonic logics and behavior the same within each, and how were they connected? Furthermore, the placement and entrenchment of China and Russia within the economic system illuminates how (non)decisions and processes at specific moments in time, such as during the early period of the post-Cold War world, created path dependencies in which other logics and constituents became supporters of this emerging status quo. In this case, China became a major economic power embedded within the Asian and global economy while Russia remained largely detached except for resource development.

While legitimate explanations can be derived from these approaches, none adequately explains the phenomenon under investigation. They do, however, highlight important factors to consider, including assessments of power trends; determination of threats; linkages between state elites; and economic pressures and incentives. In general, however, these factors, either on their own and/or in some sort of amalgamation, do not add up to a powerful explanation for the deviation in the trajectories of US engagement approaches towards Russia and China. There is, however, one recent theoretical account - Lynchpin Theory – which stands out as an effort to specifically address this issue in a direct way.

¹⁴⁹ Robert S. Ross, "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (2000): 87-123.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Gilpin, "The Political Economy of the Multinational Corporation: Three Contrasting Perspectives," *American Political Science Review* 70, no. 1 (1976): 184-191.

Lynchpin Theory

Michael Mastanduno's theory, which I call Lynchpin (LP) theory, directly tackles the difference in the United States' treatment towards of China compared to Russia in the post-Cold War era by arguing it was a function of the difference in their importance to the maintenance of American regional hegemony. Importance is determined by the positions these powers occupy in regional economic and security systems. China was considered a 'lynchpin power' given its vital importance in East Asia whereas Russia was considered a 'non-lynchpin power' given its non-vital importance in Europe. As a result, Mastanduno argues China was offered a more favourable bargain within American hegemonic systems given that its inclusion and subordination into these systems is critical to their continuation compared with Russia whose inclusion and subordination was not as critical.

The central premise of LP theory is that American hegemony is primarily anchored on and exercised by relationships the US has with lynchpin powers. Lynchpins are states within the core-regions of American hegemony - Europe and East Asia - which are instrumental in the maintenance and extension to this project. Mastanduno lists these key partnerships as one of the four foundational features of American hegemony (alongside it being regional, liberal, and institutional) as these actors can assist in the 'meaningful management of hegemony'.¹⁵¹ Expanding on the definition provided by Katzenstein, Mastanduno argues lynchpin states are vital in linking core regions with the larger American hegemonic project at the global level.¹⁵²

After the Second World War, the US decided to entrench its preponderance in Europe and Asia, rather than retrench back to North America and return to a more isolationist foreign policy disposition, to prevent the rise of future revisionist powers from these regions as well prevent their domination by the Soviet Union. The latter logic held particular importance as it became clear in the years following 1945 that the US and the Soviet Union were engaged in an increasingly multi-regional and global contest for power and influence. Given this dual interest- preventing the return of challengers in these regions and inhibiting Soviet domination of these regions- the US set out to rebuild

¹⁵¹ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics", 486.

¹⁵² Katzenstein, *A World of Regions*.

and transform its defeated adversaries in Germany and Japan into economically liberal, politically democratic, and security aligned states who become its lynchpin partners in these regions. These processes were the result of and reflected the ability of the US to impose its will on these states, given that it was occupying them at the end of the war and thus had direct control over the domestic and foreign features of these powers.

Therefore, what motivated the US in pursuing these partnerships was the assessment that Germany and Japan were large and important countries who had to become status-quo powers for the US to retain its influence in these core regions.¹⁵³ These determinations were based on and reflected the ways in which the US decided which regional states were prioritized for recruitment/inclusion, retention, and subordination into American hegemonic systems. Mastanduno constructs a four-quadrant typology showcasing the logic underpinning this process. States are assessed according to two criteria: whether they are status-quo or revisionist towards US hegemony¹⁵⁴ and whether they are lynchpin powers (essential to the success of US hegemonic efforts in these regions) or non-lynchpin powers. Four possibilities are produced: hegemonic supporter (status-quo, lynchpin state); hegemonic follower (status-quo, non-lynchpin state); hegemonic challenger (revisionist, lynchpin) and hegemonic spoiler (revisionist, non-lynchpin).¹⁵⁵ Based on this typology, he argues that the US is more determined to convert lynchpin powers into hegemonic supporters than to convert non-lynchpin powers into hegemonic followers.

According to Mastanduno, after the conclusion of the Second World War the US quickly assessed that Germany and Japan were lynchpin states and, given its occupation, was determined to turn them into status-quo states by changing their domestic political and economic character in order to prevent them from becoming hegemonic challengers and/or allies of the Soviet Union. While the US was receptive to other powers joining its hegemonic order in these regions, Washington was never as

¹⁵³ Michael Schaller, *Altered States: The United States and Japan Since the Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Beverly Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹⁵⁴ These determinations are based on Gilpin's tri-level typology of assessing the type and degree of revisionism – that against the distribution of material power; variation in status; and most fundamentally opposition to the 'rules of the game' influencing the nature of state (specifically great power) relations in the international system.

¹⁵⁵ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 487.

concerned about repairing relations with non-lynchpin powers should there be a significant fallout or exit of them from the predominant hegemonic institutions. Examples of such cases included the muted US responses to France leaving NATO's unified command structure in 1966 and the UK leaving the EU in the 2010s.¹⁵⁶

In the post-Cold War era, Mastanduno argues the US focused on extending its hegemony in these core regions rather than extending it to new ones, with the Middle East being a partial exception.¹⁵⁷ China and Russia were the two largest powers in these core regions which were not part of American hegemonic alliances. With the end of the grand strategy of containment and system-level balancing logics of the Cold War leaving American hegemony as the 'only game in town', the US set out to extend its hegemony to include these powers.

Mastanduno makes clear the process of trying to turn China and Russia into hegemonic supporters was far different than its experience with Germany and Japan since: 1) these powers were not being occupied; and 2) they possessed nuclear weapons making any forced political and/or economic change to their internal system a non-starter. As a result, the US had to offer bargains to both China and Russia rather than impose them by force.¹⁵⁸ The US, however, offered a largely "favorable" bargain to China in contrast to a "harsh" bargain to Russia.¹⁵⁹ The reason for this difference was because China was assessed to be a lynchpin power in East Asia whereas Russia was seen as a non-lynchpin power in Europe. In other words, China was a vital partner in the maintenance and extension of American hegemony in East Asia whereas Russia was not vital for these goals in Europe. Therefore, while the US would ideally have liked both powers to come into its hegemonic fold, it offered more accommodating terms to China since it had the potential to become a hegemonic challenger, severely threatening American hegemony in the region. As a result, The US attempted to create conditions to make China a status-quo power either by tethering them economically to global economic institutions (securing its interests as order affirming) and/or setting the conditions for it to liberalize politically (deeper ideological support for the order). Doing so might work, but if it did not it could also have assisted its authoritarianism and possible

¹⁵⁶ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 488.

¹⁵⁷ Katzenstein, *A World of Regions*; Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 484.

¹⁵⁸ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 492.

¹⁵⁹ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 480.

challenge the US hegemony.¹⁶⁰ The US took this gamble given China's lynchpin status, legitimating these efforts by a liberal ideological belief that engagement with China would, over time, induce it to become more liberal and therefore more accepting of American hegemonic systems and leadership. As for Russia, as it was not assessed as a lynchpin power so that if it did not accept the offer of incorporation it would simply become a hegemonic spoiler - a security challenger but one that did not threaten the foundations and operations of American hegemony in Europe.

As a result, Mastanduno argues China was offered a "favorable bargain", accommodating it within hegemonic economic order, particularly through its membership in the WTO in 2001, which furthered its rise and importance to the regional and global economy, replacing Japan by 2010 as the largest holder of US treasury bonds and government debt. Such moves were symbiotic as this relationship served both China's and the US' "economic addictions": exporting and lending by the former, and consumption and borrowing by the latter.¹⁶¹ China also faced a relatively benign security environment with the US not building new alliances in proximity to it and ensuring Japan did not pursue an independent path by securing them within the American hegemonic order.¹⁶² The US, Mastanduno asserts, attempted to create a dual-lynchpin regional system in Asia with China and Japan due to the bilateral/hub-and-spoke nature of American regional hegemony.¹⁶³ As for Russia, despite its political democratization and economic liberalization at this time making it an ideal candidate for inclusion within American hegemony, the US did not accommodate it economically or with respect to its security interests. Russia was left to deal with the IMF and its restrictive and intrusive austerity conditions for financial relief, alongside persistent efforts by the US and its European allies to expand NATO at the expense of Soviet/Russian alternative security order proposals.¹⁶⁴ Mastanduno argued that while these efforts were not necessarily designed to contain or exclude Russia, the US was unwilling to accommodate them in the extension of its regional hegemonic order which was not dependent on, nor could be seriously undermined by, Moscow¹⁶⁵. In the end, Russia rejected the harsh conditions on

¹⁶⁰ James Mann, *The China Fantasy: Why Capitalism Will Not Bring Democracy to China* (London: Penguin Books, 2007).

¹⁶¹ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 497.

¹⁶² Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 498.

¹⁶³ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 499.

¹⁶⁴ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 494.

¹⁶⁵ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 493-494.

offer by the US early on, but China accepted the accommodating ones offered for over twenty years. Only recently has China increasingly moved away from a hegemonic supporter and towards a hegemonic challenger in Mastanduno's view, which has prompted a more aggressive response by the US via more overtly balancing against, and by some indications introducing a new containment approach towards, Beijing.¹⁶⁶

LP theory offers the first dedicated account explaining the differences in American approaches to China and Russia in the post-Cold War era. It is an important corrective to the homogeneity in the approaches and rationales underpinning relations with these powers as purported by the policy of engagement and various theoretical explanations provided for. In particular, the main difference is the 'bargain' type the US offered both powers to hegemonic entry as determined by their (non)lynchpin status. It was not determined by other attributes, such as their political system or nature of the regime. If that were so, Russia should have been far more readily accommodated given it was weakening power but democratizing and liberalizing political and economic orientations, whereas China should have been offered a harsher bargain given that it remained an authoritarian state with a poor human rights record with the potential to become a rising challenger.

Limitations

While LP theory offers an elegant and easy to understand explanation of the different strategic approaches the US adopted towards China versus Russia, there are a number of theoretical and empirical flaws and limitations which undermine this parsimonious account. Four major critiques are explored here. These are: 1) the post-hoc rationalized nature of Lynchpin Theory; 2) the lack of acknowledgment of and explanation for variation in the patterns of inclusion and accommodation within, and not simply between, the China and Russia cases; 3) the excessively narrow focus on Chinese and Russian attributes, specifically their material capabilities and trajectories, which overlooks the differences between home regions, specifically within US grand strategy, as a causal factor; and 4) the failure to consider the impacts on relations with China and Russia stemming from larger issues and actions by the US within the regions during a period of change and uncertainty in the early-mid 1990s.

¹⁶⁶ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 503. See, also, Michael Mastanduno, "Biden's China Dilemma," *China International Strategy Review* 3, no. 2 (2021): 217-233.

Feng argues that Mastanduno's rationale for the different approaches towards China and Russia seems to be an after the fact explanation to make sense of US-China and US-Russia relations over the past three decades rather than a clear demonstration of lynchpin status guiding US decision-making and action throughout these processes.¹⁶⁷ LP theory stitches together data points across this large timeline which reinforce its central premises but produces an ahistorical methodology that neglects exploring and interrogating evidence which is contrary to its theory throughout this period. Furthermore, many of the "harsh" bargains Mastanduno cites as being offered to Russia occurred in the early 1990s whereas China's "favorable" bargains stem from the 2000s, thus creating a temporal incongruence. Did the US decide at the same time on the status of both China and Russia, or did these occur at different intervals? And if so, what accounts for such variation? Such queries focus on whether determining the lynchpin status of these states is an a priori requirement before pursuing policy options which make them into effective lynchpin states or whether these states' positionality as non/lynchpin powers emerged over time from US decision-making which may not be connected to such questions? Mastanduno is unclear on this point. The theoretical rationale and narrative account provided suggest the nature of US approaches to each of these powers was largely set in stone early on and pursued consistently throughout the post-Cold War period. This, furthermore, is a highly formulaic take on US grand strategy in which policy and action stem from (non)lynchpin determinations regarding China and Russia. At other times, though, he argues that China "emerged" as a lynchpin power in East Asia with the US realizing only later in the 2010s just how important China was, suggesting the US was almost caught by surprise by this new development.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Feng, "H-Diplo/ISSF Article Review 130 on "Partner Politics."

¹⁶⁸ A further complication is the lack of a more thorough, direct connection between and evaluation of Germany/Japan and Russia/China experiences in US grand strategy which would be beneficial in determining whether American leaders think and act in each set based on common factors of assessment. Did the US see in 1945 that Germany and Japan would anchor its regional hegemonies as lynchpin partners, or did this emerge over time as these states and the US relationship with each evolved? Such questions address whether the US was operating from a position of hegemonic foresight - enacting a well-crafted plan with China as a central, and Russia a marginal, component - or whether China grew into such a position based on larger American decisions which it benefited from (and conversely stifled). Furthermore, Mastanduno does not address whether the US hegemonic extension plans are in part based on learning from its experience with Germany and Japan as lynchpin states and whether and how these influenced its approaches to China and Russia in its regional hegemonic plans.

Second, while Mastanduno's argument helps explain the divergent pattern in American relations towards China and Russia, it does not offer within-case set divergence pertaining to economic and security systems and practices associated with its regional hegemonic orders. Mastanduno's account implies a high level of homogeneity within each case – China is accommodated across the board while Russia is not – which does not stand up under scrutiny. As will be explored in the case chapters, there are many examples, specifically in the security domain, where China was not accommodated (such as Taiwan) but where Russia was (exercising leadership in the former Soviet space). This variation speaks to differences in the ways in which the US goes about ordering its hegemonic systems in economic and security domains in general and within East Asia and Europe in particular. Furthermore, while the main purpose of Lynchpin theory is to offer an explanation for the relative levels of accommodation between China as a lynchpin power and Russia as a non-lynchpin power, it does not explain how the US decides on accommodation issues between a set of lynchpin powers (i.e. China and Japan) or a set of non-lynchpin powers (i.e. Russia and Central and Eastern European states). This is of relevance in the European context where the US seemed very willing to accommodate the security interests of some non-lynchpin powers in Central and Eastern Europe but not Russia.

Third, Mastanduno's account fixates on the attributes of China and Russia in explaining US strategic approaches, neglecting the importance of the differences in both the nature of their respective home regions and the structure and functioning of US hegemonic systems within each as explanatory factors. Mastanduno does not entirely dismiss these factors but simply makes descriptive statements about them as if there are unchanging background features which form a static arena instead of considering them as causal forces which impact US strategic approaches towards China and Russia. Mastanduno acknowledges that the US pursued a posture of overall reactivity to regional developments in East Asia, and instead focuses on building a dual-lynchpin system with Japan and China via separate bilateral relationships, as opposed to Europe which was defined by more comprehensive and multilateral efforts, pursued through NATO and the EU, in terms of economic and security organizing. But he does so without explaining why this was so and if it had an impact on the overall relationships with China and Russia. As well, LP theory affords little to no importance to the influence of its allies and other

regional states positions and activities in American determination of accommodation efforts towards China and Russia.

Furthermore, given the structural determinacy underpinning the theory the interests, actions and views of China and Russia are also not important, save for if the US believed these states are legitimate threats and challenges which must be confronted. Therefore, the agency of both the US' hegemonic partners as well as China and Russia in terms of their ability to alter US thinking and action plays a minimal role in this framework. The structural positions of China and Russia overly determined the US strategic approaches taken towards each in supporting their hegemonic extension plans regardless of what these states did or did not do. This raises the issue of the assumed rigid but distinct nature of American hegemonic plans in Asia and Europe, specifically with respect to Russia where they constantly lose out to Washington's other extension goals according to Mastanduno; but it is left unclear what was driving the particular forms of hegemonic extension in Europe versus East Asia. As well, much of Mastanduno's argument of the differences between approaches to China and Russia has less to do with their positionality than with their material capabilities and expected trajectories, thus the theory is less 'network' based than advertised and more based on a thin materialist-rationalist ontology: China is a rising power and thus important while Russia is a declining power and thus not important.

Finally, beyond the non-consideration of regional environmental factors there is an inherent intentionality which underlies LP theory which draws a straight line between the determination of (non)lynchpin status of powers and US approaches towards them. This undermines the variability within US grand strategy in the early period of the post-Cold War era, including major aspects of American presence, activities and approaches to East Asia and Europe. Furthermore, there is an absence of consideration of if and how decisions of, (re)actions by and dominant strategic frameworks informing the US during this time which were not directly about China or Russia nevertheless could have had major impacts on these relationships in the post-Cold War era, with varied, unintentional consequences, both negative and positive, for Beijing and Moscow.

Conclusion

While LP theory makes an important contribution to answering the question of the variation in US strategic approaches towards China and Russia (and indeed raising it in the first place), the critiques above challenge its overall explanatory power. As a result, this project proposes an alternative approach to exploring this question from a newly developed theory entitled Networked Centrality (NC). As opposed to LP theory's focus on the attributional qualities of China and Russia in guiding US approaches towards them, NC examines the differences in the ordering preferences of the US towards East Asia and Europe which influenced how the US identified and responded to 'network concerns' within the historically sensitive period of the early-mid 1990s as the US sought to place its hegemonic networks under new foundations in the post-Cold War era. These actions, in turn, heavily influenced their approaches to China and Russia, creating and denying spaces for these relationships to develop based on their complementarity within existing US hegemonic designs.

The 'functionalist' approach of LP theory and the 'fit' approach advanced by NC will be compared throughout this project. This will better determine the importance of and relationship between certain factors in informing the differences between US approaches to Russia and China in the post-Cold War world. These include attributes vs positionality; bilateral relationships vs larger regional environments; economic vs security hegemonic logics; and material vs social influences. Such a process will map areas of complementarity and divergence between these two theories in terms of their preferences among these factors as causally important, producing a more direct comparison between them. Before doing so, the theory of NC will be outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: American Hegemonic Ordering as a Networking Project

This thesis introduces a new theoretical framework entitled 'Networked Centrality' (NC) to explain the forces influencing the nature of American hegemonic ordering within and between the core regions of East Asia and Europe in the post-Cold War era, with a particular focus on the early-mid 1990s as a critical juncture in which the decisions and actions enacted by the US during this time established long lasting trajectories of its presence in, focus on and relationship with these regions for the decades to come. Specifically, in this crucial period the US maneuvered to address 'network concerns' which emerged following the end of the Cold War within each region that challenged the centrality of its hegemonic networks within the larger regional environments and/or its centrality within the networks themselves. The differences in US hegemonic approaches, however, between these core regions were not simply a function of the variation in the presence/absence of network concerns within each. Rather, these concerns reflected the unique regional strategic culture the US has towards East Asia and Europe which framed the nature of the network concerns it confronted and informed how best to address them. To reiterate, network concerns are actions, trends, and/or developments that the hegemon assesses as possibly altering alignments among states in a way which undermines the centrality of the hegemon in exercising leadership over ordering pursuits.

The post-Cold War era strategic approaches towards Russia and China emerged during this period, heavily conditioned by the ways in which the US interpreted and addressed network concerns in each region. Many of the concerns during this period, furthermore, were more focused on and motivated by 'inward' facing ones, specifically 'shoring up activities' designed to ensure the retention of its hegemonic followers within existing networks, than 'outward' facing ones, specifically engagement with Outside Major Powers (OMPs) in terms of expansion and change of these networks to include them (as outlined in Chapter Two). Furthermore, the level of congruency, and the sharpness of trade-offs, between shoring up activities and engagement with OMPs was largely defined by the relevant American regional strategic culture. Rather than being a product of a determination of their functional importance to the continuation of American hegemony as argued by Lynchpin (LP) theory, American strategic approaches towards Russia and China were principally defined by their 'fit' within existing dominant

logics, practices, and conceptualizations of the region stemming from the distinct regional strategic cultures the US has towards these core regions.

This chapter highlights the logic of and connections between the multi-layered nature of the NC framework; its use within a Critical Juncture (CJ) approach to trace its influence and pathway within each case in the early-mid 1990s in ultimately producing the US strategic approaches to East Asia and Europe; and how these developments influenced relations towards Russia and China. The first section details the conceptualization of American hegemony as a networking phenomenon, and the influence networked centrality plays in the production and changes to these networks. The second section provides a definition of a network concern and a typology of the various types of network concerns which could undermine US networked centrality. These concerns provide a map to help locate and explore where and how the US acted to address these and the changes observed in the networks of focus. The third section outlines differences in economic and security forms of networking. The fourth section introduces the concept of the regional strategic culture and details the different regional strategic cultures the US hold towards East Asia versus Europe and how this influences their interpretation and reaction to both economic and security network concerns in each. The fifth section introduces the CJ framework to map the changes to American regional networks during the time of study and employ the NC framework to explain these changes. The final section provides a summary of the main differences between LP theory and NC.

Hegemony via Network Building

This study posits that in general any large power to some degree pursues hegemonic ordering in its environment, but how this is done – their extent, structure, and functioning - is unique, being the product of the interplay between external (of the environment) and internal (of the aspiring hegemonic power) factors which are historically contextual and contingent. Of particular importance for this project is the concept of 'strategic culture' which, as will be explained below, is the development of a frame of reference for how a state views its larger environment, its placement and role in it, and the ways in which it can and should go about developing and using its power bases to achieve its interests. Strategic culture is a persistent feature of a state, emerging out of formative experiences and periods leading to its rise, which involve the

development and use of social, material, and ideational power elements in its hegemonic pursuits.¹⁶⁹

Throughout the 20th century, the US increasingly became involved in developing international institutions to regulate military and economic affairs, especially among major powers. These became particularly evident and entrenched following the Second World War, with the US establishing a plethora of global and regional security and economic organizations not only reflective of its power preponderance but demonstrative of its commitment to playing a leading role globally. Of particular focus were the 'core regions' of the Eurasian supercontinent, specifically Europe and East Asia given that these were home to a number of major powers, including the recently defeated Axis powers, its wartime allies, and a growing Soviet Union challenger. During and since this time, the goals of and ways in which the US pursued hegemonic ordering came into clearer focus.

Partnerships with key regional powers were a central element of US hegemony, specifically in the core regions of Europe and East Asia.¹⁷⁰ These, however, were elements of a larger networked structure of American hegemony which was not just the additive total of these dyadic relationships but of an overall pattern of security and economic organization in these regions which controlled points of entry for those outside of them, precluded deep strategic connections forming between regional powers, and in general inhibited alternative network structures and regional alignment logics from emerging. As will be explained below in further detail, the specific configuration of these networks in each region was conditioned by the historical interplay between American preferences and priorities, which stemmed from their unique regional strategic culture towards each, and regional realities and developments which were not entirely under American influence or control. The US, furthermore, did not expend all its energies and efforts towards the singular goal of ensuring all regional actors and processes fall under their influence at any expense. Rather they were particularly focused on ensuring American anchored hegemonic networks are the dominant forms of security and economic organizing in these regions.

¹⁶⁹ Colin S. Gray, "Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture," *Comparative Strategy* 26, no. 1(2007): 1-20.

¹⁷⁰ Katzenstein, *A World of Regions*.

These networks became the mechanism within which the US pursued the central goal of its grand strategy regarding core regions in the post-Second World War era: preventing a rival hegemon or hegemonic bloc from controlling them. Over time, additional interests buttressed this initial goal, with the US increasingly becoming interested in and able to leverage its central position in these networks for economic and security benefits beyond preventing the emergence of peers. One prominent example was beginning in the 1970s the increasing leveraging of other states', specifically allies rebounding economically after the Second World War, buying US treasuries and securities to bolster American financial power, and enabling Washington to finance its foreign and military capabilities without raising taxes.¹⁷¹ This radical change in economic operation for the US, emerging from the Nixon administration's decision to de-link the US dollar and gold standard, demonstrated two key reinforcing feedbacks which further solidified American hegemonic pursuits within a networked form of hegemony.¹⁷² First, the US received tangible benefits – materially, socially, and ideationally – from these networks.¹⁷³ Second, being in a unique and central location in these networks gave it greater ability to influence them, including reorienting/organizing them towards new functions, operations, and relations.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Mastanduno, "System Maker and Privilege Taker."

¹⁷² It is important to keep in mind that this decision made by the Nixon administration was not based on the assessment that it would lead the US to transform from the world's largest creditor to debtor country in a decade. It was motivated by an assessment of the unsustainability of the US to back a global currency via gold and was part of a larger collection of 'Nixon Shocks' based on sentiments that allies and others were not doing enough to support the current order and therefore the US had to radically change the way it pursued international security and economic arrangements with them. Given his second tenure was cut short, it is unclear if the Nixon administration would have pursued additional 'shocks' in relations with hegemonic partners, specifically to an extent which questioned the continuation of hegemonic ordering as the cornerstone of American grand strategy in general, or if these would have been tempered by hegemonic maintenance interests and prerogatives which were observed during other administrations including those of Reagan, Clinton and George W Bush. Another unknown in this regard is what would have been the priorities and actions of a second Trump term if he had won the 2020 election (and/or could win the 2024 election if he is the Republican candidate) given his disruptive first term which challenged and undermined a number of core foundations of US hegemony and grand strategy. Michael Mastanduno, "Liberal Hegemony, International Order, and US Foreign Policy: A Reconsideration," *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 21, no. 1 (2019): 47–54.

¹⁷³ Norrlof and Wohlforth, "*Raison de l'Hégémonie (The Hegemon's Interest)*".

¹⁷⁴ Emilie Hafner-Burton, Miles Kahler, and Alexander H Montgomery. "Network Analysis for International Relations," *International Organization* 63, no. 3 (2009), 573-574.

Before moving on, it is important to define some key concepts associated with Networked Centrality and the relationship between them. To begin, a network is a structure composed of various linkages between actors into an arrangement to share and access information, resources, and other flows of goods and services. Such a structure is not necessarily isomorphic where the linkages between the actors are even and common among them.¹⁷⁵ Instead, usually there are densities which form and depending on their central position can become cores which have important positions within the overall structure of the network. Furthermore, such a core or central node serves critical functions which impact the structuring and operation of the entire network. They serve as access and connection points between other actors which preclude/disincentive the development of direct links between them. As a result, networks are built through and maintained by them which influence their overall structure, flow, and functions. Cores emerge due the importance of an actor given its attributional and positional power sources in constructing and servicing the flows of goods and services which the network provides.¹⁷⁶ The development of cores/central nodes leads to the growing functional differentiation between these central/core actor(s) and others within the network in terms of roles, duties, and expectations. Doing so creates varying patterns in terms of dependencies and interest reifications towards maintenance for actors, including their position, in the network and its specific structuring in and around core/central nodes.¹⁷⁷

As applied to American hegemonic ordering, an additional important feature of the networks underpinning it is that these are not entirely the product of naturalizing events without agency or direction. Instead, the construction and evolution of these networks is a product of both material, relational, and ideological developments as well as specific American efforts to influence the contours, operations, and extension of them. Of particular relevance to this project are interventions by the US during periods of heightened concerns about these matters. As these networks became established over time, particularly in a formalized fashion in the post-Second World War era, the US

¹⁷⁵ Indeed, a common criticism of the use of networks as frameworks in IR theory is that they undervalue the structure and role of hierarchy within them. Paul K. MacDonald, "Embedded Authority: A Relational Network Approach to Hierarchy in World Politics," *Review of International Studies* 44, no. 1 (2018): 131.

¹⁷⁶ Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, "Network Analysis for International Relations," 574.

¹⁷⁷ MacDonald, "Embedded Authority", 143-144.

increasingly sought and assumed greater leadership functions, which heavily influenced the socialization between it and its allies and close partners in terms of their commitment to these networks and their varying roles and positions within them.¹⁷⁸ An example is the unified command structure underpinning NATO, one largely dominated by US personnel and strategic thought and preferences. As a result, a confluence of self-reinforcing mechanisms in terms of dependency on, interest alignment with, and normative association to these networks created environmental conditions which precluded other links and ties forming between these members away from the growing centrality of the American position in terms of shaping the overall security-economic landscape of the core regions.¹⁷⁹

The position and role of the US in these networks speaks to the second concept associated with Networked Centrality: centrality. Not only does the US focus on building networks which others join and remain committed to but want them to accept and support the American role as a leader and organizer. In this way, networks are not just built and adjusted to recruit and maintain membership but more importantly to ensure the centrality of the US as the core/central node through which the most important links are connected. Such a position orients actors in the networks towards the US, decreasing the likelihood of significant links and ties between them from forming which would exclude or come at the expense of the US and its central position. For example, the development of US alliance systems in both East Asia and Europe, while significantly different in terms of structure and function, serve the same purpose: the alignment of regional powers towards them strategically and/or weakening the possibility of alignments among these powers on their own as continental order managers. As a result, American hegemonic ordering is pursued through the construction of US-centred networks not simply by virtue of its material disposition but desire to shape the large-scale structure of them to become the dominant force in security and economic environments. These efforts, furthermore, limit the possibilities available for alternative

¹⁷⁸ Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy*. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020).

¹⁷⁹ MacDonald, "Overcoming American Hegemony," 68-77.

forms of networks to emerge, especially those which place it in a less central position.¹⁸⁰
The US builds and maintains hegemony through a networked form of ordering.¹⁸¹

Since the end of the Second World War, these means - hegemonic ordering via networked centrality - have become a foundational pillar in the grand strategic practice of the US. This does not mean that American decision making is always and entirely dominated by 'network thinking', but more conscious consideration of and specific actions taken towards it are elevated during moments of possible change due to changing environmental circumstances where interventions to reform, extend, and/or shore up these networks are likely. In particular, these actions are directed towards 'network concerns' whose salience rises during such periods of uncertainty as they present risks to the centrality of the network in a core region and/or the centrality of the US in a network. In this way, the US can be conceived of as a 'network manager' reacting to 'bugs', 'defects' and 'viruses' affecting the configuration and functioning of the network. This managerial characteristic is an emergent pattern of habits as much as, if not more than, systemic and systematic thinking and planning.

Network Concerns

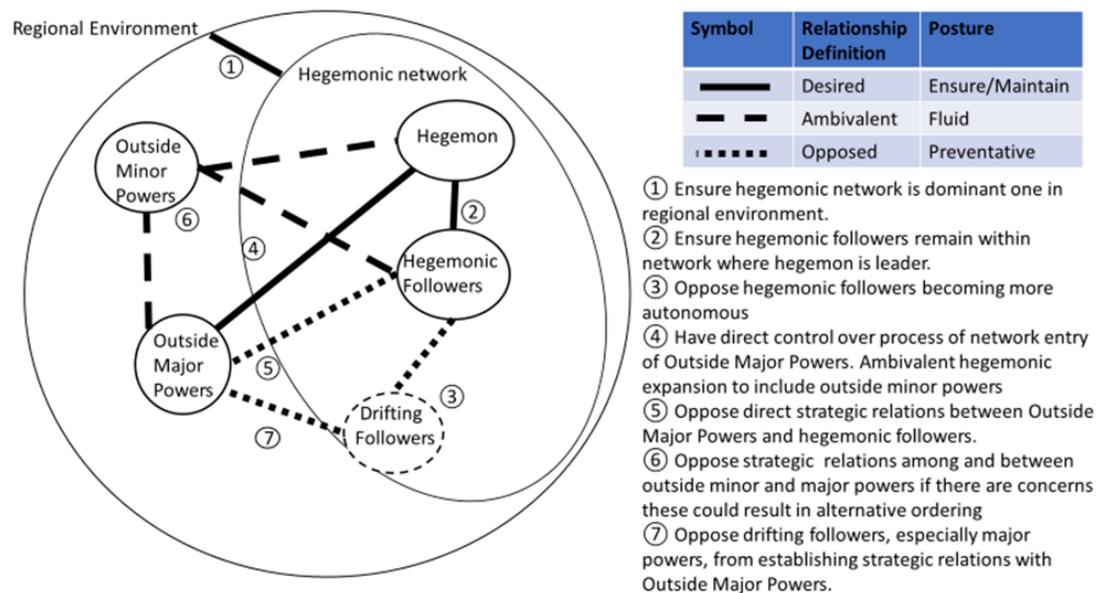
A network concern refers to strategic re-alignments – possible, emerging, and/or in existence– between different collections of states in a core region which jeopardize the centrality of American hegemonic networks within the regional environment and/or the centrality of the US within them. Strategic re-alignments refer to both the growing autonomy between states to redefine their security and economic relations with one another and of greater control over ordering processes over their home region beyond

¹⁸⁰ MacDonald Paul K, "Embedded Authority", pp. 149-150.

¹⁸¹ Networks are conceived of differently than regimes. Whereas networks do include organizations and rules to shape state behavior as regime theory emphasizes, this body of work does not capture nor explain core aspects of networks such as the asymmetry of linkages, functional differentiation of, and relationship between actors based on their positions within them. Networks are more in line with the English School concept of an institution, that is a long-term practice among states to explain relationships between them beyond just looking at specific bureaucratic nature and functional logics of specific organizations created. It is only recently, however, that English School scholars have begun work on accepting and understanding hegemony as an institution in international affairs. A major challenge, though, is trying to deconflict how this phenomenon is possible with the existence of great power management as a dominant institution within this paradigm. See: Stephen Krasner, *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) and Ian Clark, "Towards an English School Theory of Hegemony," *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 2 (2009): 203–228.

those prescribe and desired by the hegemon. Periods of change and uncertainty make such re-alignments more plausible given the erosion of dominant logics which underpinned the nature of strategic relations within these regions. This can be the result of, and result in, disintegration of a rival network (due to the fact that the bonds which united the hegemon and followers around a common rival have been weakened which open up other prospective strategic alignments among follower powers); drift/abandonment from existing networks; and creation of new institutions which may represent embryonic stages of new networks that open the possibility of new strategic relations among regional members and larger ordering dynamics which are contrary to and thus undermine American networked centrality. There are seven network concerns which can be grouped into three categories. These are 1) concerns arising within the network, 2) concerns arising outside the network in the larger regional environment, and 3) concerns at the intersection of network/environment boundary. Furthermore, these seven concerns can be defined by those relationships which the US: ones they want to preserve and maintain, ones they want to prevent and/or disrupt, and ones they are ambiguous about. Figure Two below depicts the entire set of network concerns.

Figure 2: Network Concerns



Regarding 'inside' network concerns, these include a desire by the hegemon to ensure hegemonic followers remain within the network with the hegemon as leader (relationship number 2) and in general oppose allies, especially major power ones and/or a sizable sub-group of them, from becoming more autonomous in terms of leadership apart from the US (relationship number 3). This latter network concern represents a pseudo inside/outside case, depending on if the drifting follower(s) is trying to establish a more autonomous leadership position not just within the network but in the larger regional environment itself.

Regarding 'outside' network concerns, the US is ambivalent regarding relations forming between outside major and outside minor powers (relationship number 6). It will try to disrupt them if these are seen as constituting a significant network alternative, or if unable to do so maneuver to contain the alternative network from growing further. Relations forming among outside major powers, however, are a more problematic network concern given these linkages have more probability of altering regional dynamics and thus are ones the US will try to prevent and/or disrupt. This potential is not present in the cases explored during this project, but growing Russia-China ties over the past two decades, and their possible impact on US networked centrality in and between the core regions of Europe and East Asia in the current era will be explored in the concluding chapter. The US approach to relations among outside minor powers is more ambiguous and usually determined by its interaction with other network concerns, specifically if these cumulatively rise to the level of impacting the dominant regional order dynamics.

Regarding concerns which are on the boundary of the network and environment, these include the US wanting sole control of the entry of outside major powers into the network in conditions when such expansion is possible. The US is largely ambiguous about network entry for outside minor powers, and linkages forming between them and hegemonic allies, which is largely conditioned by their interaction with other network concerns (relationship number 4). The US, though, is opposed to strategic linkages forming between outside major powers and hegemonic followers (relationship number 5), especially with drifting hegemonic followers (relationship number 7).

There are three interrelated points which speak to the role of rationality in US network concerns. First, neither the US, nor any hegemonic power, possesses the ability to think through all possible trajectories, benefits, and consequences of their actions before embarking upon them. Sometimes issues arise relatively quickly motivating a swift but not well thought out response; other times there are biases embedded in the US strategic community which limit the scope of thinking about different possible trajectories stemming from their actions. Second, and relatedly, actions to address one network concern can influence others unintentionally, the effects of which may be difficult to fully comprehend and appreciate even for a long time afterwards. Finally, it is common, especially during periods of large-scale change, that the US confronts more than one network concern at the same time, with a variety of different combinations of them increasing the difficulties highlighted in the previous two points.

Furthermore, there are two additional 'overlays' which influence the identification of and response to network concerns by the US which speak to the nature of the networks themselves. The first is the differences in the structure and purpose of security versus economic networks in core regions. The second, and more fundamental, is the different regional strategic culture the US holds towards Europe versus East Asia.

Security Versus Economic Network Ordering Dynamics in Core Regions

The core of security networks in both core regions take the form of defensive alliances with the US playing a dominant role given their military capabilities and commitments to defend allies. These networks stem from commitments in the region due to the territorial nature of military security and the legacy on which these networks were built after the Second World War and during the Cold War. As a non-resident power in these regions, the US is better positioned than resident powers to develop relations in the region as they are less threatening than regional ones.¹⁸² Such networks can be - as they were in the Cold War - oriented against a rival great power and security network (like the Warsaw Pact), but they also preclude alternative alignment between members.¹⁸³ Security networks operate primarily in the region they reside, precluding

¹⁸² Schuessler, Shiffrinson, and Blagden, "Revisiting Insularity and Expansion," 1-15.

¹⁸³ Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry."; Nexon, "The Balance of Power in the Balance."

alternative alignment dynamics between regional partners. They can, though, be mobilized in the service of larger, extra-regional American interests. Alignment within security realms, furthermore, is more a zero-sum phenomenon for actors cannot maintain alliance commitments between multiple, competing networks.

American anchored economic networks are also designed to ensure that core regions do not become closed and under the control of a dominant outside major power or rival bloc. The logic, however, is somewhat different. First, the orientation starts at the international level and feeds into the regional level. American hegemonic ordering economically is about tethering regional states and economies into the larger economic system influenced by structures, flows, and norms which favour US economic centrality to dictate the nature of the system and its ability to leverage it.¹⁸⁴ While not entirely non-territorial, economic networks are not as fixed in terms of territorial logics as security networks. Instead, they are trans-territorial in trying to connect regional systems to others to facilitate connections for finance, goods, and services which preclude the ability to build any sort of closed, self-contained system. A second feature is that it is not as zero-sum in actor relations compared to security issues. While the US works with its hegemonic partners to restrict certain technologies and economic transfers to other powers deemed threats, in general the US is not opposed to the economic power development of others. Development of economic relations between actors within these regions is not opposed by the US, but rather focused on ensuring continued US access to these states, and their connection to and embedding within the larger liberal economic system as a whole.¹⁸⁵

American alliances form the intersection, and thus connection, between these two networks. Alliance networks support US leadership regarding regional security dynamics, in-theatre presence of forces, and connecting regional economic systems to the larger international level. Many of the US' closest and longest standing allies, furthermore, are also important economic actors, through the World Bank, IMF and G7. As a result, these patterns reinforce alignment dynamics among these powers within

¹⁸⁴ Tooze, *The Deluge*; Norrlof, "Dollar Hegemony."

¹⁸⁵ This was a function of both the fact that the US, especially by the 1980s, was focused on integrating its own regional base in North America, resulting in NAFTA in the early 1990s, and as the world's largest market and financial power had well-established linkages with other core regions and principal economic powers.

these networks under US leadership, closing off the possibilities of rival networks forming in these spaces. While the US, furthermore, regularly calls upon its allies and partners to contribute more in terms of providing security and economic goods, there has been little advocacy by the US for these partners to assume more leadership roles. The US has retained these leadership roles even as their allies did not contribute to the degree and extent desired.

One of the key differences between economic and security networks is the need for the support of others, including outside major powers, in the post-Cold War era to maintain these where there is no peer military rival power. In terms of security, the US was (and remains to this day) a military superpower which can perform most of its functions without active contributions by others.¹⁸⁶ There was a need, however, for continued passive support, retention of followers in the security network, preclusion of alternative network and/or greater leadership efforts, and providing some forms of assistance.¹⁸⁷ Economically, however, the US was (and continue to be) in a less commanding, superpower position and therefore needs the support of other major powers, specifically its allies, for a number of system maintenance activities.¹⁸⁸ As well, the US was sometimes supportive of leadership activities and roles of its major allies in these areas, but remained averse to more autonomous roles straying from the main logics and linkages of the hegemonic system.

Regional Strategic Cultures Towards Core Regions

The differences in addressing network concerns in the core regions by the US in the post-Cold War transition are explained by the distinct *regional strategic cultures* held by the US towards each region. The regional strategic culture concept is a modification to the concept of strategic culture which originally emerged as an area of study in the 1970s. Strategic culture is a historically emergent phenomenon arising out of a state's development and growth as an international power which solidifies into a largely

¹⁸⁶ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 86–120.

¹⁸⁷ Such as basing rights to ensure a continued military presence in core regions. Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon, "'The Empire Will Compensate You': The Structural Dynamics of the U.S. Overseas Basing Network," *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 4 (2013): 1034–1050.

¹⁸⁸ Examples include support from several European countries and Japan regarding currency re-valuation schemes throughout the 1980s such as the Plaza and Louvre accords and support for the creation of the WTO.

coherent but not entirely fixed or unified set of values, beliefs, and habits which inform and reflects how it views the strategic environment, its interests, and ways to employ its power instruments to achieve them. While many employ the concept only with respect to military force, this project uses a more expansive definition which includes other power instruments used in foreign policy including diplomatic and economic elements.¹⁸⁹ Strategic culture provides the lens within which a state develops and pursues grand strategy, shaping threat and opportunity perceptions, strategic preferences, and courses of action.¹⁹⁰ Strategic culture can change because of historical developments and experiences which challenge, reinforce, and/or open new pathways for ideas, beliefs and behaviors.¹⁹¹

Strategic culture originated as a rebuttal to rationalist-structural realist accounts of the assumption of commonality held by the US and the Soviet Union regarding nuclear weapons strategy, with the original scholars of strategic culture arguing environmental position and material conditions alone could not account for how states act strategically.¹⁹² Rather, the ways in which states perceive their environment and the use of force was based on their internal development and emergence as an international power which created a number of values, principles, and habits that conditioned and reflected how they acted strategically. Strategic culture studies have passed through a number of 'generations' defined by theoretical, methodological, and empirical debates among scholars, with the most famous being the third generation debates over whether strategic culture should be treated as an explanatory variable, specifically divorcing ideas from behavior in order to study causal patterns between them, or as a 'context' which

¹⁸⁹ The narrow application of most definitions and uses of strategic culture to military power is understandable given it is a power resource over which the state has a monopoly over in terms of generating, sustaining, and employing it (in an 'ideal' scenario of a fully functional state). In contrast, economic power is developed by a number of actors, many residing beyond state control (except in communist states), with the state using its prerogative of taxation to capture some of this wealth for programs and services. Given, however, the importance of economic policy in the global environment, we must examine how a state, especially a hegemonic one, views the use of that power instrument for both economic and non-economic purposes.

¹⁹⁰ Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context," 49- 69.

¹⁹¹ Arthur Hoffman and Kerry Longhurst. "German Strategic Culture in Action," *Contemporary Security Policy* 70, no. 7 (1999): 31–49.

¹⁹² Foundational in this regard was Snyder's work on Soviet deterrence policy and how the US repeatedly failed to predict Russian reactions to nuclear developments based on the assumptions Moscow would react the same way Washington would. Jack L. Snyder, "The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations," *Rand Corporation*, September 1977. See, also, Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979).

keep both together.¹⁹³ Some, furthermore, argued that strategic culture should be seen as a research program rather than a theory, housing many different but related theoretical questions and pursuits.¹⁹⁴ Inspired by such sentiments, the current fourth generation of scholarship has moved away from the ideas versus behavior debates and instead focused on exploring strategic culture not as a monolithic, unified totality but consisting of several sub-cultures and determining how they emerge, interact, and become more or less hegemonic.¹⁹⁵

The concept of regional strategic culture used in this project is nested within the fourth generation of scholarship studying sub-cultures in strategic culture. Specifically, the argument is that there are distinct strategic cultures held by the US towards Europe and East Asia which influence how they have gone about hegemonic ordering and maintenance pursuits in each. This project may be one of the first to explore such a phenomenon, and therefore being of use not only to scholarship on the US but other states past and present, especially hegemonic powers, with interests, activities, and presences in multiple regions.¹⁹⁶

This regional variation was largely overlooked and underappreciated during the Cold War given the focus on the system level with the global rivalry with the Soviet Union dominating strategic culture studies. However, this importance of regional differentiation has become very apparent in the post-Cold War era with shift towards the regional level in US grand strategy and academia.¹⁹⁷ This project does not see the differences in the nature and function of American hegemonic networks in core regions as simply a 'translational error' where the US tried to do/establish the same things in each but rather confronted different regional realities which created variation in the successful

¹⁹³ Alistair I. Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 32–64; Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context."

¹⁹⁴ David G. Haglund, "What Good Is Strategic Culture? A Modest Defence of an Immodest Concept," *International Journal* 59, no. 3 (2004): 479–502.

¹⁹⁵ Alan Bloomfield, "Time to Move On: Reconceptualizing the Strategic Culture Debate," *Contemporary Security Policy* 33, no. 3 (2012): 437–461.

¹⁹⁶ There is scholarship exploring the existence of strategic cultures in regions but that involves commonalities and conflicts in values, interests, and practices across multiple states and entities within a specific region (for an example see: Sten Rynning, "The European Union: Towards a Strategic Culture?" *Security Dialogue* 34, no. 4 (2003): 479–496). This project, on the other hand, investigates regional strategic culture held by one power, the US, towards specific regions.

¹⁹⁷ This is most evident in the regional framing of the US 1993 defence policy (entitled the 'Regions Strategy') and national security strategy. See, also, Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

implementation of these in each. Rather, these differences reflect and reinforce the different regional strategic cultures the US held towards these regions which were the product of the interplay between American ideas of, practices towards, and historical experiences with each, which over time have consolidated towards a well-defined set of principles, dispositions, and habits specific to each.

These distinct regional strategic cultures explain the approaches taken for dealing with network concerns which emerged in each region the early 1990s. As a result, an American regional strategic culture is defined as:

The collection of mental frameworks and habits which constitute regularized patterns of strategic preferences and behaviors that reflect how the US interprets a core region in terms of 1) dominant logics and features, including opportunities and threats; 2) vision for regional ordering; 3) the role of the US, and the deployment of US power, within them; and 4) their connection to US global hegemony.

Furthermore, a regional strategic culture informs the development of an overall American disposition towards the region regarding the relative emphasis on *achieving* the emergence of wanted developments versus *avoiding* the emergence of unwanted developments.

American regional strategic cultures are not disjointed, unconnected entities but stem from and inform a larger, prevailing American strategic culture regarding its role as a hegemon. The US strategic culture stems from internal characteristics associated with its emergence as a continental-sized, liberal democratic and capitalist state¹⁹⁸ and external characteristics via interactions with other major powers and core regions throughout the past three centuries.¹⁹⁹ The primary components are:

¹⁹⁸ This includes the expansion out west towards the Pacific coastline and the destruction of indigenous societies which reinforced 1) the value of technology (such as railroads and weapons of war) which facilitated this expansion; 2) the belief in the cultural, political, and economic American modes of organizing as superior to others; 3) the belief of 'manifest destiny' in which the US has a national dream beyond simply gaining independence, but expansion and growth as depicted by the moving frontier. See: Brice F. Harris, "United States Strategic Culture and Asia-Pacific Security," *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 2 (2014): 290-309.

¹⁹⁹ This includes the growing assumption of a 'regional power' role and identity via the Monroe Doctrine in which the US claimed authority for regulating the nature of relations between European empires and states in the Americas. These efforts constituted creation of a sphere of

- 1) Exceptionalism of the US, both in terms of its unparalleled practical ability and normative prerogative to exercise international leadership and universal applicability and benefit of its political and economic forms of organization;²⁰⁰
- 2) Opposition to 'balance of power' political ordering dynamics, 'closed regions', and illegitimacy of other government-society forms;²⁰¹
- 3) Obsession with the risk of a return of peer rivals and threats from Eurasia;²⁰²
- 4) Formalized institutional forms of ordering, many including binding commitments and duties;²⁰³ and
- 5) Primacy as a goal in itself, specifically via technological-military dominance.²⁰⁴

The durability of these components over time is a function of the power the US has derived from actions and policies which are based on them, the engrained practices and habits they have become expressed by, and their sociologically vital role as key pillars of belief in government and the bureaucracy which conditions criteria for professional success.²⁰⁵ The relative importance of these components, however, can shift over time

influence, a common practice among major powers, in which the US maneuvered to secure acquiescence of this arrangement from external powers and those within the sphere, including its unique prerogative to intervene in the internal affairs of the latter category and 'speak' on the region's behalf. Furthermore, US desires, abilities, and behavior of ordering international spaces grew throughout the 20th century, especially in the post-Second World War era with the US becoming permanently involved in leading such efforts. Jackson, "Understanding Spheres of Influence in International Politics."; Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World*.

²⁰⁰ Michael J. Boyle and Anthony F Lang. "Remaking the World in America's Image: Surprise, Strategic Culture, and the American Ways of Intervention," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 17, no. 2 (2021): 1–20; David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Theo Farrell, "Strategic Culture and American Empire," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 25, no. 2 (2005): 3-18.

²⁰¹ Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 21-23. As the US increasingly became interested and active abroad, especially in East Asia and throughout Latin and South America, they developed imperialist dispositions and habits including acquiring colonies, pressuring states to open their markets and societies to trade, and increasing dealings and engagements with other major powers, socializing them increasingly into the 'club'.

²⁰² This formally stemmed from the writing of American geopolitical scholar Nicholas Spykman whose work in 1930s and 1940s popularized the term 'rimlands' and how these areas threatened American hemispheric security should they become under the control of one or a united collection of hostile powers. Colin S. Gray, "Nicholas John Spykman, the Balance of Power, and International Order," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 6 (2015): 873–897.

²⁰³ Ikenberry, *After Victory*.

²⁰⁴ Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed."; Harris, "United States Strategic Culture and Asia-Pacific Security."

²⁰⁵ Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed."

depending on the interplay between international events and the balance among different American strategic subcultures. Dueck argues there are four dominant subcultures – internationalist, nationalist, progressive and realist – which compete with one another for dominance over American foreign policy behavior. Depending on the exact configuration of these, the US can be more a ‘crusader’ by imposing its interests and ordering preferences on others or an ‘exemplar’ by demonstrating through its actions and example in exercising its hegemonic powers.²⁰⁶ Dueck’s approach, however, like other analyses, does not explore the different regional cultures towards different parts of the world thereby limiting the explanation of US actions and prerogatives across and within the core regions despite its shift towards a more liberal-internationalist expansionist disposition in the post-Cold War era. The ways they are pursued in the core regions, it is argued here, are conditioned by the regional strategic culture held by the US towards Europe and East Asia, which accounts for the different understandings of threats, challenges, opportunities, and strategic preferences for dealing with each.

The American Regional Strategic Culture Towards Europe

The American regional strategic culture towards Europe sees the continent after the Second World War as requiring a macro-level, whole-of-region ordering project. This is in the service of precluding the return of multi-polarity among its powerful members given their history of ferocious, extra-regional spanning wars which increasingly impacted and affected the US throughout the 20th century. However, the continent was divided during the Cold War with the emergence of the Soviet bloc, another new hegemonic challenger the US had to contend with, which stifled this project.²⁰⁷ A major emerging frame, therefore, was need for Europe to become “free and undivided”, politically democratic and economically liberal but subordinate to and supportive of US security and economic ordering. This included bringing allies and former adversaries together in Western Europe, with growing urgency introduced by the Soviet Union and its hegemonic order in Eastern Europe. Europe was too weak to order itself effectively against this threat, but it was also too dangerous to risk allowing balance of power ordering dynamics to return.²⁰⁸ In particular, eliminating great power claims of hegemony

²⁰⁶ Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*.

²⁰⁷ Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*.

²⁰⁸ This applied both to continental and extra-regional political relations. Strategic relations among European major powers would flow through the US, which was willing to intervene and break up arrangements between and pursuits by these powers it was opposed it. Major periods of tension

over Eastern Europe, a site and cause of repeated wars between major European powers, was seen by the US as an essential task.²⁰⁹ Defeat of the Soviet Union and liberating the states of Eastern Europe from its rule, therefore, was not just about eliminating a hegemonic rival²¹⁰ but also about completing the regional order project through growing security and economic binding via multilateral organizing which would preclude the future emergence of another rival. Europe, furthermore, was no longer conceived as a separate region but rather part of the 'transatlantic' community, demonstrative of the permanent link the US wanted to establish between the two even if/when the Cold War ended. Doing so solidified American defence both physically in terms of military cooperation across this body of water protecting the approaches to North America and ensuring a presence in Europe, and geo-strategically in tethering its wartime allies and defeated adversaries together in a permanent security arrangement under their hegemonic leadership.²¹¹

As examined in Chapter Two, several explanations have been given as to why the US pursued collective, multilateral form of hegemonic ordering in Europe, especially in contrast to the bilateral form taken in East Asia. These include structural-materialist arguments that the US needed a more unified collection of allies to oppose the rising Soviet threat after World War II and was less worried about adventurism by its allies which would drag the US into parochial conflicts which were not in its interests.²¹² Furthermore, bringing these powers together within an economic union would

in this new adjustment for European major power allies included the American intervention in resolving the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956 against the interests of France and the UK, and France leaving NATO's Unified Command Structure in 1966. In these incidents the US acted to ensure these powers remained allies (in the case of France establishing alternative security and defence arrangements) and did not become more autonomous in terms of strategic relations and actions. With respect off-continental strategic dynamics, the US, while not an aggressive supporter of decolonization during the Cold War, did not actively support European powers in their wars to retain control over their colonial empires and refused to include these places as falling under their mutual defence obligations as defined in the NATO charter.

²⁰⁹ Martin D. Mitchell, "Using the Principles of Halford J. Mackinder and Nicholas John Spykman to Reevaluate a Twenty-First-Century Geopolitical Framework for the United States," *Comparative Strategy* 39, no. 5 (2020): 407–424.

²¹⁰ Blouet, Brian, *Global Geostrategy*.

²¹¹ The solidification of the Transatlantic relationship, furthermore, established a new maritime 'heartland', as opposed to Mackinder's thesis of a terrestrial heartland based in the lands of Russia and Central Asia, which the US did not see, or accept accusations of it, as threatening to other major powers in Eurasia. Phil Kelly, "Recognizing the North American Heartland: A More Suitable Fit For Mackinder's Thesis," *Geopolitics, History, and international Relations* 9, no.1 (2017): 215–240.

²¹² Cha, "Powerplay"; He and Feng, "'Why Is There No NATO in Asia?' Revisited."

help rebuild their economies and create new security logics underpinning their relationships beyond territorial based conceptions of power and influence which had caused centuries of warfare between them. As well, there are a number of social-historical arguments such as culturally and racially the US sees itself as part of the same community of European (especially Western European) states and societies which are predominantly white, democratic, and capitalist.²¹³ Furthermore, the US increasingly became socialized by interacting with European imperial powers including France (its first ever alliance treaty partner) and especially Great Britain/the United Kingdom throughout the 19th and 20th century which conditioned both for the power transition occurring between them.²¹⁴ These interactions were not entirely cooperative, such as contestation with European powers over their presence and activities in the Americas which went against the Monroe Doctrine; American worries that European powers would take advantage of their weakened state during their civil war; and competition over colonies, resources and (forced) access to markets in East Asia. Overtime, however, an understanding and appreciation grew that engagement with these powers was necessary for the US who had joined the club of major powers by the latter part of the 19th century with tightening cultural, strategic, and economic relations forming among them.

With the ending of the Cold War the US saw an opportunity to complete this regional ordering project, with particular emphasis on building a “democratic zone of peace” via a coalition of democracies. Increasingly, as well, European allies and hegemonic networks were seen as vital international partners for extra-regional missions and duties, both economic and security wise. The US was particularly sensitive to growing autonomy and drift of allies, fearing the return of balance of power political dynamics emerging on the continent. Economically, the European Community was growing in institutional strength and autonomy, bringing together the economies on the continent. The US supported these actions so long as its leading members, supported American international efforts. Even though throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s the US became increasingly enamored with the idea of shifting trade towards the emerging economies in East Asia, Europe remained their most important trading partner and there

²¹³ Hemmer and Katzenstein, “Why Is There No NATO in Asia?”

²¹⁴ Schake, *Safe Passage*.

remained a prerogative to ensure the continent supported US global economic approaches and ordering pursuits given their importance in hegemonic management.

To summarize using the four features of a regional strategic culture outlined above, the US regional strategic culture towards Europe is characterized by:

- 1) Geopolitical logics of the region: Historical preference of balance of power political dynamics and imperial rivalries are dangerous for stability in the region and the world. Major power allies remain loyal but autonomous desires are not entirely extinguished and cannot be allowed to re-emerge.
- 2) Vision for the region: Europe united via multilateral organization under US leadership within a transatlantic communal identity of democratic-capitalist states.
- 3) US role in the region: The US is the only power able to facilitate and order security and economic affairs on the continent to prevent a return to negative geopolitical logics forming among its members.
- 4) Role of region in US global hegemony: Home to major partners and organizations vital to US global security and economic system management. The transatlantic community is the most important power bloc in the global system.

As a result, the overall disposition of the US towards Europe has been one of exercising control over the molding and formation of continental strategic dynamics, especially when major changes and disruptions happen(ed) on the continent. In achieving this, the US seeks greater homogeneity across the continent in terms of strategic alignments (towards them) and domestic political-economic systems among regional states to facilitate an overarching multilateral hegemonic framework encompassing the entire region.

The US Regional Strategic Approach Towards East Asia

Throughout the 19th century, the US became increasingly interested in East Asia both as a region to exploit economically and to defend against the possibility of an emerging power there threatening the continental US.²¹⁵ These interests legitimated and

²¹⁵ Green, *By More Than Providence*. Alfred Mahan, furthermore, argued that the US needed strategically positioned 'coaling stations' throughout the Western Pacific to position and sustain maritime forces across this ocean as a defence against the possible emergence of a maritime great power emerging from East Asia, namely Japan or China. Mahan, Alfred T. *The Problem of*

reinforced a number of activities including coercive measures, sometimes in conjunction with European powers, to 'open up' markets in the region and acquire colonial possessions including the Philippines, Hawaii, and a number of other small islands dotting the Western Pacific Ocean. The US regional position became further entrenched throughout the 20th century, most importantly through the defeat and occupation of Japan following the Second World War. While the US did have allied support, both from regional states like China and Australia and Western powers such as Great Britain, they largely defeated Japan on their own.

Throughout the Cold War, East Asia was seen as a secondary theatre of priority in US grand strategy even it experienced significant fighting (with the US heavily involved in many of these wars such as Korea and Vietnam) whereas Europe did not experience such "hot wars." But the Soviet threat was seen as more pressing in Europe given its hegemonic order in Eastern Europe and large land forces which the US felt concerned could possibly overrun its Western allies in a conventional conflict. Fears of the Soviet Union overrunning East Asia were not as pronounced given its less dominant in-region military presence, the lack of tight control over other communist regimes compared to its Eastern European allies, and the maritime nature of the region which favoured US air and naval power and its maritime alliances.²¹⁶ These conflicts in East Asia, however, demonstrated the limitations of US military power there, a condition which was not 'tested' in Europe. Furthermore, despite some attempts at multilateral security organizing, most (in)famously SEATO in Southeast Asia in the 1950s²¹⁷, the US pursued its hegemonic relations within a hub-and-spoke structure via largely separate bilateral relations with the maritime states encircling mainland East Asia which was by the 1950s dominated by communist states but which were not all strategically aligned in a multi-lateral alliance akin to the Warsaw Pact. Given, furthermore, given that many of these regional states were small economically and unmodernized (except for Japan which was rebuilding following the Second World War), the US did not see them as important partners in the management of a global economic system. Throughout the second half of

Asia and Its Effect Upon International Policies (Massachusetts: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1900). See, also, Greg Russell, Greg. "Alfred Thayer Mahan and American Geopolitics: The Conservatism and Realism of an Imperialist." *Geopolitics* 11, no. 1 (2006): 119–140.

²¹⁶ Ikenberry. "American Hegemony and East Asian Order."

²¹⁷ The lack of seriousness in creating a regional security organization is evidenced by the fact most members of SEATO were not located within Southeast Asia.

the 20th century, though, the US increasingly came to see East Asia as a future site of economic importance in terms of trade but there remained few regional states of importance as management supporters.

The lack of pursuit of more multilateral forms of ordering stem from a number of causes including: 1) the unpopularity of Japan, its primary partner, in the region;²¹⁸ 2) the unpredictability of its mostly authoritarian allies;²¹⁹ and 3) the less pressing Soviet threat taking over all of Asia versus Europe in the early period of the Cold War and the absence of alliance bloc politics. As well, there is a general sense that there were no natural partners in Asia for the US as there were in Europe due to lack of common identification based on race (with the exception of Australia and New Zealand), domestic political-economic systems and interacting as 'great powers'; the lack of in-region allies during the world wars; and American experiences of exploiting and interpreting East Asia as largely a region of weak states under constant predation from European imperial powers or their outright ownership via imperial possession. As a result, the US favoured bilateral forms of ordering and relationship building with regional powers of importance. Trying to create overarching regional institutions was difficult given historical, cultural, and strategic tensions between regional states but was also not needed given the ability to ensure American interests and goals via separate, bilateral hegemonic ordering. This is reflected in the lack of regional ordering conceptions put forth by the US. A prime example is the advocacy of the 'Asia-Pacific' regional nomenclature by the US which is more about blunting any possible emergence of an 'Asian' form of regionalism which would be closed off and hostile to the US than an actual vision or plan for regional organization under its leadership.²²⁰ In sum, the US regional strategic culture towards East Asia is characterized by:

1) Geopolitical logics of the region: Pluralistic regional makeup, both in terms of internal dynamics of states and relations between them, produces lack of alliance and tight, bloc-like alignment dynamics which is favourable to US interests. A few major powers who historically have harbored regional hegemonic aspirations, and a history of animosity between them, remain a US concern.

²¹⁸ Victor Cha, "Informal Hierarchy in Asia: The Origins of the US-Japan Alliance," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 17 (2017): 1-34.

²¹⁹ Cha, "Powerplay."

²²⁰ Arturo Santa-Cruz, "Out of the Blue: The Pacific Rim as a Region," *Portal* 2, no. 2 (2005): 1-19.

2) Vision for the region: No overarching vision or preference of how to order region as a whole. East Asia is not seen as divided (as is Europe), with its diverse political-economic makeup the norm. Focus on preventing a closed sense of regionalism.

3) US role in the region: The US is the only power able to ensure stability through an in-region presence, including restraining would-be regional powers. The US is not focused on ordering region but preventing other major powers from ordering region.

4) Role of region in US global hegemony: Region not important in the maintenance of American global hegemonic networks in terms of the need for supporters, though there are specific states of importance which are engaged with bilaterally and separately.

The overall disposition of the US towards East Asia has been to ensure access to the region via bilateral forms of engagement rather than an aggressive promotion of particular regional ordering project. The US does not see the need to overcome significant cultural, historical and strategic tensions in creating a pan-regional order and therefore is not opposed to the pluralistic nature of the region so long as unwanted dynamics such as intra-regional alignment formation and a closed form of regionalism do not emerge. Indeed, many regional dynamics such as hedging and non-alignment reinforce the American posture that regional pluralism is not dangerous given it prevents the emergence of a consolidated within-in region hegemonic alternative from forming among its members.

The Influence of American Regional Strategic Cultures on Ordering Forms and Foci

The idiosyncrasies specific to each of these regional strategic cultures contextualize and condition how the US both interprets and responds to network concerns. These strategic cultures, therefore, assist in understanding how and why the US dealt with these issues differently in Europe versus East Asia during the formative years of the post-Cold War era. Their approaches, however, were not entirely distinct, but rather a combination of commonalities and differences both in terms of sensitivity to specific network concerns and their response to them.

In both regions, the US was opposed to strategic relations forming between outside major powers and hegemonic allies, specifically drifting supporters. The US wanted to insert itself between these two, utilizing existing hegemonic practices to keep them apart. In Europe, this was heavily influenced by the desire to bind others 'in the same tent' whereas in Asia this was expressed by a desire for separation and division. The US, furthermore, wanted to singularly control entry for outside major power into their hegemonic networks. In this regard, there was greater ease of acceptance into economic as opposed to security networks and in general greater acceptance by the US of economic relations forming between outside major powers and hegemonic supporters versus security ones. In Europe, however, there were long established economic and security networks as opposed to in East Asia in which there were few, allowing for more ad-hoc formations. In both regions, as well, the US opposed any attempts by major powers to become autonomous leaders in regional organizing without US concurrence and support. Another commonality was ensuring access to the region, which necessitated American hegemonic networks being in a dominant regional position. In Europe, the environment was seen as one which must be tamed via network expansion to prevent the return of negative, historical regional political ordering dynamics whereas in East Asia the environment was not seen as dangerous or important in terms of these dynamics and therefore network expansion was not as strong a priority.

Perhaps the greatest area of variability was US views of and responses to relations forming between and among outside major and outside minor powers and between outside minor powers and hegemonic supporters. In Europe, US consternation against balance of power and alliance formation dynamics led to heightened concerns stemming from the emergence of independent outside minor powers emerging out of Soviet hegemony, risking the balkanization of sub-regions creating a destabilized middle zone between Western Europe and the FSU. There were also desires to ensure the development of these smaller states along neo-liberal economic lines to blunt the emergence of a more insular and protectionist form of capitalism on the continent. In East Asia, the US was not opposed to smaller states' organizing efforts provided they did not displace the US and its regional networks, were commensurable to its larger global ones, and in general did not create unwanted regional dynamics, such as being excluded from regional institutions. Furthermore, the US was supportive of hegemonic supporters' relations with these smaller states and institutional processes to break up any possible

Asian-only formation and to retain environmental pluralism based on hedging and non-alignment.

The Opening of the Post-Cold War Era - A Critical Juncture

In order to map the emergence of, changes to, and actions to address network concerns throughout the period of transition from the Cold War to post-Cold War era, the NC framework is embedded within a Critical Juncture (CJ) approach. Doing so places historical contingency and context as critical causal forces, which can be expressed and studied within the CJ approach by investigating the interaction of, and their mutual influence on, structural and regional forces, network concerns, and American regional strategic cultures. This period – spanning 1989\90-1994/95 - is treated as a critical juncture for US grand strategy in general and towards the core regions examined in this study in particular, given the simultaneity of structural (most importantly the decisive ending of the Cold War), regional (localized effects of the ending of the Cold War; new economic and security developments), and domestic (the election of the Clinton administration; peace dividend desires) changes opening up a number of alternative possibilities for the US regarding the future of its hegemonic networks and positions within them.

The NC framework provides a useful explanatory account of the overall macro pattern of choices made by the US within this time period in addressing security and economic network concerns within Europe and East Asia. This period of potential, however, ended by the mid-1990s when a combination of structural factors, regional developments, and government solidification ultimately reinforced the maintenance of American regional strategic cultures for Europe and East Asia respectively. While there were some major changes to the US approaches to both regions, these were instrumentalist in addressing long held network concerns rather being transformational in establishing and being guided by a new hegemonic order/ing logic. As a result, strategic adjustment, not change, was the most appropriate characterization of American grand strategy during this period.²²¹

Before applying it to this study, the CJ approach will be briefly outlined. To begin, the concept of a critical juncture stems from Historical Institutionalism (HI) which studies

²²¹ Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*.

the continuities and discontinuities in the central characteristics of institutions broadly defined.²²² Specifically, a critical juncture is seen as a period where large-scale change to institutions - in terms of power distribution, interests, operations, strategies and overall trajectory - are more probable than at other periods of time.²²³ The greater malleability of such a period is a function of the loosening of dominant structural conditions which opens up the menu of possibilities leading actors can consider in moving forward. Critical junctures are not defined by the duration of time over which they unfold but rather by the opening and closing of the processes which bring them into and out of existence. The termination of a critical juncture is when a dominant mode of operation emerges within the institution creating path dependencies which produce feedback loops reinforcing the continuation of a specific direction and thus pushing other options further to the margins of consideration and possibility.²²⁴ Figure Three details the various component of the CJ approach.

The opening of the critical juncture is defined by the 'permissive conditions' which create this period of higher malleability in the possible pathways open for an institution moving forward, reflecting the loosening of structural conditions.²²⁵ Structural conditions in this circumstance can refer to forces and factors endogenous to the institution itself and/or change to the larger environment within which an institution is nested. Crucial in determining the opening of a critical juncture is the growing agency of actors in considering and pursuing alternative trajectories in light of the weakening of structural

²²² Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 936–957; Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 369–404. Paul Pierson, "Not Just What, but When: Timing and Sequence in Political Processes," *Studies in American Political Development* 14, no. 1 (2000): 72–92. Historical Institutionalism has been applied to a large collection of entities and phenomenon, from individual companies to the global system. Another importance aspect of Historical Institutionalism is the enabling of counterfactual analysis in thinking through alternatives which were not taken/pursued and the resultant implications for theory (testing) and the real-world. Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism." *World Politics* 59, no. 3 (2007): 341–369.

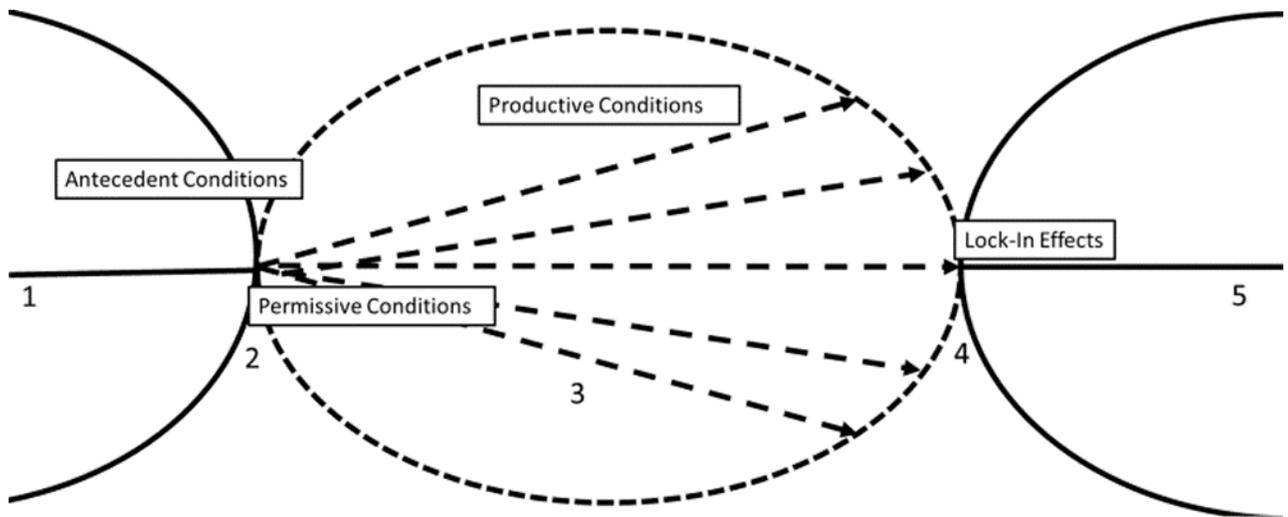
²²³ There is no universally accepted definition of what an 'institution' is within Historical Institutionalism, with some projects focusing narrowly on a particular organization whereas others focus on larger more environmental settings. There is usually though a study of the interplay of social and material elements of the institution under examination. Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," 938.

²²⁴ Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251–267; Jenna Bednar, Scott E. Page, and Jameson L. Toole, "Revised-Path Dependence," *Political Analysis* 20, no. 2 (2012): 146–156.

²²⁵ Hillel David Soifer, "The Causal Logic of Critical Junctures." *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 12 (2012): 1572–1597.

conditions which had previously informed and reified the identities, interests, and practices of the institution without serious scrutiny or challenging.

Figure 3: The Components and Pathway of a Critical Juncture



1. Clear trajectory of institution heavily influenced by dominant structural factors/conditions/reinforcing feedback loops.
2. Opening of critical juncture based on permissive conditions, specifically loosening of dominant structural factors/conditions.
3. Critical juncture defined by pathway indeterminacy and greater agency. Intersection of antecedent, permissive, and productive conditions in determining new trajectory.
4. Closing of critical juncture with new logics/structural conditions 'locking-in' specific trajectory.
5. Positive feedback loops solidifying path-dependencies (including of interests/logics which may be different from originals).

Ironically, until recently the literature regarding critical junctures was most underdeveloped regarding the critical juncture itself, specifically what happens within them in terms of the process(es) in which a dominant trajectory emerges.²²⁶ Critical junctures, furthermore, should not be interpreted as periods in which everything changes and from which an entirely new trajectory emerges from its predecessor. Instead, there are usually 'antecedent conditions', factors and forces which existed before the critical juncture and remain important in determining the future trajectory of the institutional pathway, which helps explain continuities throughout.²²⁷

²²⁶ The lack of studying the critical juncture itself is largely a function of the general favouring in Historical Institutionalist research of studying institutional continuity versus change, with critical juncture employed as a heuristic device to explain change as occurring in a big and abrupt way. This overlooks the fact that 1) institutional continuity is possible throughout a critical juncture; and 2) institutional change is possible in non-critical juncture periods, specifically in a gradual and incremental way which over time begins to carve out a new path. Jeroen van der Heijden, "Institutional Layering: A Review of the Use of the Concept," *Politics* 31, no. 1 (2011): 9–18.

²²⁷ Dan Slater and Erica Simmons, "Informative Regress: Critical Antecedents in Comparative Politics," *Comparative Political Studies* 43, no. 7 (2010): 886–917.

Within the critical juncture itself, antecedent conditions interact with what are known as 'productive conditions', the specific factors and forces emerging within the critical juncture.²²⁸ It is the interaction between these two sets of conditions which produces lock-in effects favouring one trajectory emerging and thus closing the critical juncture. It is unlikely an institutional trajectory remains exactly the same pre and post critical juncture, but there can be partial change cases where there are significant changes at some levels but retention of the status-quo at others. Such an example is what occurred to American economic and security hegemonic networks in the early 1990s.²²⁹ The US retained these networks given the maintenance of durable regional strategic cultures informing how to address network concerns in this new strategic environment which in turn influenced, directly and indirectly, relations with and approaches towards China and Russia.

The closing of the critical juncture is defined when one trajectory becomes 'locked-in' as the path forward for the institution. As with the permissive conditions at the opening of the critical juncture, the exact relationship between the influences within the institution and its larger environment which produce this lock-in effect can vary. An important component, however, is the establishment of positive feedback loops which solidify the path trajectory and diminish the prospects of alternative trajectories.²³⁰ Over time these positive feedback loops further path dependencies and the concretization of this trajectory, due to the reproduction of benefits for central actors which reinforce the maintenance of the status-quo. Crucially, however, this process does not need to be fueled by only, or even predominantly, the dominant logic and rationales which established the new pathway initially. Instead, the new trajectory can take a life of its own in terms of producing other logics and interests which facilitate the recruitment of new status-quo maintainers, furthering the entrenchment of path dependency.²³¹ There can,

²²⁸ Soifer, "The Causal Logic of Critical Junctures," 1573-1575.

²²⁹ This project, furthermore, is part of a growing use of Historical Institutionalism, which originally derived within the sub-field of Comparative Politics, within IR theory over the past two decades. Examples include: Orfeo Fioretos, "Historical Institutionalism in International Relations," *International Organization* 65, no. 2 (2011): 367–399; Daniel H. Nexon, "Historical Institutionalism and International Relations," *E-IR*, 16 April 2012, <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/04/16/historical-institutionalism-and-international-relations/>; Van Jackson, "A Region Primed for Peace or War? Historical Institutionalism and Debates in East Asian Security," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 2, no. 3 (2017): 253–267.

²³⁰ Paul Pierson, "The Limits of Design: Explaining Institutional Origins and Change," *Governance* 13, no. 4 (2000): 492-493.

²³¹ Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," 387-392.

therefore, be different configurations of newer and older interests and logics that interact with one another in furthering this process. This can include newer logics being additive to older ones, newer logics being largely separate from older ones but complementary to them, and new logics being hostile to and eventually displacing the older ones.

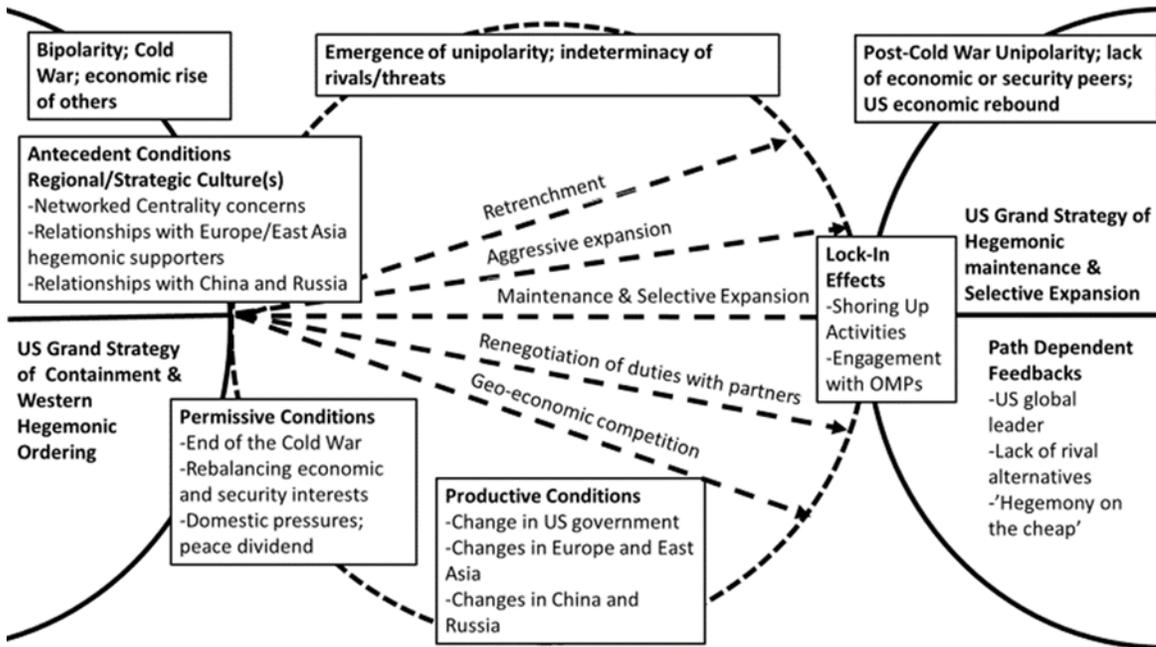
There is wide agreement in IR scholarship that the transition to, and early period of, the Post-Cold War world constituted a critical juncture for American grand strategy.²³² This period is treated as the loosening of structural forces - the end of the Cold War, superpower rivalry, and system bipolarity - allowed the US, as the world's pre-eminent power, greater room for maneuver in determining the future pathways of its international engagements, relationships, posture and commitments to the international system at large, individual regions, and specific states. The policy of containment became irrelevant with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the non-emergence of another military rival peer. The rationales for alliance commitments, global force posture, economic stabilizer, and other roles based on building up the power of and leading the Western hegemonic bloc against the rival Soviet one evaporated.

Stemming from these permissive conditions, the importance of other factors became elevated during this transition period which questioned how the US would interpret and use its hegemonic networks moving forward. These included the growing economic power of some of its allies, most importantly Japan and Germany, generating increasing friction with Washington; American economic stagnation; demands for a 'peace dividend' domestically to refocus efforts at home rather than abroad; and a sense that non-security issues had to be prioritized in US foreign policy. These 'inward' facing factors regarding the nature of hegemonic networks and the US role within them are usually glossed over in accounts of US hegemonic order and ordering in the post-Cold War world in favour of 'outward' facing factors regarding external expansion of these hegemonic networks – such as the spreading of liberal democracy, bringing in non-allies into the economic order, enlargement of alliance and military partnerships, and developing a large international coalition to pressure and isolate 'rogue' powers - of as the central focus of US grand strategy. It is not a question of exclusively focusing on one of these over the other but investigating how the two sets of factors interact and influence one another during this period of malleability. While agreeing that not

²³² Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*; Ikenberry, *After Victory*; Mastanduno, "Partner Politics."

everything was up for debate within the US regarding its hegemony, within this milieu there were a number of possible pathways open for US grand strategy including: some degree of retrenchment; renegotiating greater burden sharing and leadership transfer of regional duties with allies and other powers; aggressive expansion of hegemonic networks; and adopting a geo-economic rivalry posture. Figure Four below represents the forces and factors which will be investigated in this study.

Figure 4: The Transition to the Post-Cold War Era as a Critical Juncture in US Grand Strategy



Moving into the critical juncture phase, the primary antecedent condition of this study is the relevant regional strategic culture for each case. Of particular focus will be the interplay between the permissive conditions listed above and how these affect the regional strategic culture's approach in mapping the change of network concerns from the beginning of the critical juncture phase until its termination, including US relationships with and approaches to its hegemonic partners, outside major powers, and the region in general. US policy and action, however, was not operating in a vacuum during this period but rather was also influenced by changes during the critical juncture itself. These productive conditions included the assumption of the Clinton presidency, changes within the region, and those within China and Russia. The resultant changes

and/or continuities to both regional strategic culture and the system-structural and regional levels influenced each other in producing a new pathway in American regional strategies. In particular, the mutual influence of these conditions created a new equilibrium which reflected and enabled a new strategic approach to dominance, eliminating other possibilities (and their supporters) from having influence moving forward.

By the mid-1990s the broad contours and rationales of US hegemonic ordering and actions in both Europe and East Asia had been firmly established. The closing of this juncture is due to a number of factors occurring at several interrelated levels. Structurally, the US rebounded economically while its competitors, namely Japan and Germany, entered a period of stagnation. This eliminated the prominence of relative gains economic pressures in foreign policy and the softening of zero sum framing of the pursuit of hegemonic prerogatives versus addressing domestic issues. The domestic issues were not resolved but given hegemony can be done 'on the cheap'²³³ (given the US rebound economically), the lack of rivals emerging, and decreased public pressure to rethink its hegemonic posture, the US retained by and large its hegemonic disposition, duties, and commitments. The economic rebound, as well, diminished those voices in the US government wanting to adopt a more geo-economic focused foreign policy, specifically pressuring allies and others to reform their economies and do more of the burden sharing in the maintenance of hegemonic networks. Instead, network concerns, which are principally geopolitical in nature, retained their importance in US grand strategy in general and regional strategic cultures. As listed above, these network concerns included those within the hegemonic network, relations with outside major powers, and the wider regional-domain environment. The balance between shoring up activities towards allies and engagement activities towards outside major powers during this time precluded other negative network concerns forming among and between them, locking in a new American grand strategy of *hegemonic maintenance and selective expansion*. How these were pursued within each region reflects the US reacting to the various network concerns, and the sensitivities to them as defined by the regional strategic culture, which exist in each throughout the critical juncture.

²³³ Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, 114.

The balance between these projects - shoring up activities with allies and engagement with OMPs - was conditioned by the different regional strategic cultural approaches to addressing network concerns in Europe versus East Asia which produced different levels of 'fit' between them beyond simply an assessment material importance/potential of either China or Russia. Rather, the maintenance of the dominant American regional strategic cultures towards each region determined the type and degree to which both projects could be integrated, and conversely the type and degree of tensions which existed between them, leading to a coherent American approach to address network concerns within each region. The ending of the Cold War produced seismic changes in the global system, but not seismic enough to displace the prevailing modes of thought and practice embedded within each unique regional strategic culture which endured during this period and largely conditioned the possibility spaces the US considered in (re)ordering its hegemonic networks in Europe and East Asia and the placement and function of these in the larger, global security and economic networks underpinning American hegemony.

As a result, the CJ framework will be employed in each of the case studies, focusing on the particularities of each separately before combining them into a macro-level analysis in Chapter Nine. The rationales for why the US maintained its policies and practices associated with the engagement strategy towards both China and Russia in the post-Cold War era – its institutional 'stickiness'²³⁴ - despite growing evidence neither power was becoming a more liberal hegemonic subordinate will also be examined for each case. Part of the reason for this rigidity in American strategy is explained by the path dependent effects which took hold in the mid-1990s making abrupt changes difficult in both cases, given the ideational, social, and material feedback loops reinforcing the status-quo and discouraging alternatives as unrealistic. However, another important reason is the way in which revisionism is perceived and countered within the US strategic culture which is focused not simply on changes in material power but more importantly on alternative network building by other powers. Combined, these reasons obstructed the US strategic community from appreciating the nature of Chinese and Russian revisionism as strategic and comprehensive in nature rather than simply tactical and issue specific until it became very apparent in the 2010s.

²³⁴ Pierson, "The Limits of Design," 490-491.

Networked Centrality Versus Lynchpin Theory: The Crux of the Debate

At its core, the fundamental difference between LP theory and NC is the role China and Russia play in the continuities and changes in American hegemonic networks in core regions in the post-Cold War period. LP theory argues the *functional* importance/non-importance of these outside major powers in the maintenance of core regional hegemonic networks is the key in understanding the overall American strategic approach towards the core regions during this period. China was important and therefore hegemonic networks were reformed by the US to incorporate them whereas Russia was not important and therefore the hegemonic networks were not reformed to incorporate them. China, as a result, was the centre of gravity in American regional ordering pursuits, with all other decisions and actions being influenced by it. On the other hand, Russia sat on the margins, being influenced by (and forced to accept) American ordering pursuits in Europe which were driven by other considerations which increasingly displaced incorporation of Russia as a central goal. As a result, when there were tensions between engagement with China and other hegemonic pursuits in East Asia, the US would tend to favour solutions which sidestepped having to confront trade-offs arising by removing, limiting, or avoiding the issue or action of concern. Examples include: the US not confronting China on its maritime aggression in the South China Sea; displacement of human rights as a central issue guiding the future of bilateral relations; and in general, the lack of democracy promotion, alliance expansion, and military interventions in East Asia. In contrast, when there were tensions between engagement with Russia and other hegemonic pursuits in Europe, the US would usually confront the tradeoff head on by sacrificing the former for achievement of the latter. Examples include: NATO expansion into CEE and part of the FSU, and the lack of a sustained economic, financial, and other technical aid to assist Russia's transition to democracy and capitalism.

Alternatively, NC argues American strategic approaches towards China and Russia were conditioned by their *fit* within their larger regional activities in the early 1990s to address a number network concerns in each region. These concerns were primarily with respect to shoring up activities within existing hegemonic followers' relationships and roles. The difference in sharpness in the trade-offs between these shoring up activities and engagement activities with OMPs, however, is not just a product of the different configurations of the network concerns present and/or absent in each. Rather, addressing these is conditioned by the different regional strategic cultures held

by the US towards each region in terms of ordering methods, network end states, and placement of the region in the larger, global hegemonic structure.

In Europe, the US strategic cultural disposition was and is towards Europe “free and undivided” but securely in a followership role under US leadership which can mobilize its hegemonic networks, specifically security wise, for regional and extra-regional missions. This created an integrationist orientation that the best way to deal with emerging network concerns following the end of the Cold War was through absorption into the EU-NATO joint hegemonic project. These pursuits limited the willingness of the US to allow more ‘European’ control and direction over security and to some degree economic ordering which would dilute the ‘transatlantic’ framing of relations between the US and the major powers on the continent. Russia, despite its economic and democratic reforms and initial desires to be part of the West, did not want to be part of these pacts as a hegemonic follower. It wanted a major rethink in the economic and security organizing on the continent as a more inclusive process and community structure with itself as a major, independent pillar. This was unacceptable to Washington, which was unwilling to entertain such ideas and sentiments, either expressed by Moscow, American allies, or others. Doing so would have fundamentally altered the nature and functioning of US hegemonic networks in Europe. As a result, this reduced the options for pursuing engagement with Russia within the European strategic landscape. Efforts to ensure Moscow’s inclusion in these hegemonic networks, furthermore, would have dramatically changed their character, caused frictions with other hegemonic supporters, and most likely diluted Washington’s grip on security and economic ordering norms, preferences, and practices on the continent.

In East Asia, the US strategic cultural disposition was towards ensuring access to rather than expansion of its networks within the region. Given the region’s cultural, political, historical, and strategic diversities, the US favoured bilateral and mini-lateral forms of hegemonic networking rather than a more definitive leadership role in designing a more integrated region via these networks. Therefore, the maintenance of non-alignment norms and practices among East Asian powers and the leadership of smaller states in creating inclusive but non-binding regional organizations was supported by the US. This created a parallelist orientation for the US, working with specific states separately and/or in ad-hoc, issue specific mini-lateral groupings. The US, therefore, did

not have a desired regional 'end state' of its structure and functioning, but rather was focused on preventing an Asian regionalism that was closed and hostile to non-resident powers from emerging. Furthering relations with China, including extra-regionally economically, fit within this strategic cultural orientation, with Beijing benefitting from the lack of over-arching regional designs held by the US. China was too big ignore but not important enough to alter the American regional strategic cultural orientation in terms of causing a fundamental rethink in how and why the US goes about its regional hegemonic pursuits, specifically a more integrationist approach like in Europe.

As a result, the tradeoffs the US confronted in the early-mid 1990s between its shoring up activities and OMP engagements in Europe were far starker and more immediate than the tradeoffs it confronted in East Asia. This was primarily a function of the different American regional structure cultures towards both regions which influenced the 'fit' between these two sets of activities amidst the uncertainty of the early period of the post-Cold War period as the US responded to various network concerns in each. Therefore, many of the key trajectories characterizing American hegemonic ordering were established early in this period before it would become apparent how important or not China and Russia would become to these regions in the decades ahead. The differences in American regional strategic cultures, therefore, created the space enabling China's rise in power and importance in East Asia while restricting this space for Russia, resulting in its further marginalization from the European ordering project.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter outlines the components of and rationales underpinning the research design, methodology and research sources employed for this project. In brief, this project is a two-stage, multiple case study analysis. The first stage employs the Networked Centrality (NC) theoretical framework described in the preceding chapter to investigate each of the four cases selected separately. The second stage conducts a cross-case analysis to identify and explain similarities and differences between the cases. This chapter consists of three sections. The first section provides an overview of the research design. The second section outlines the case selection criteria and details of the cases under examination. The final section provides an overview of the research sources used, including some of the limitations encountered in accessing them.

Research Design

The purpose of the first stage of the research design – case by case analysis - is to apply the theoretical framework of NC, embedded within a Historical Institutionalist (HI) approach, to demonstrate the utility of the framework in explaining US strategic approaches towards China and Russia within each case by itself. There are four cases included in this study, each exploring different American hegemonic networks. These are differentiated by network domain (economic or security) and region (East Asia or Europe). Two cases – one economic and one security - pertain to East Asia/China and the other two cases – one economic and one security - pertain to Europe/Russia. Such a division allows for the surgical exploration of forces and factors of relevance in economic and security domains within both East Asia and Europe to study the influences on American strategic approaches towards both China and Russia with/in these regional hegemonic systems. The case study method allows for a deep dive into each case as a stand-alone study in determining the internal validity of the NC framework.²³⁵

The purpose of the second stage – cross-case analysis - is to demonstrate how the framework accounts for and explains the differences and similarities between the cases. The cases are divided into three groups. The first group explores the security and

²³⁵ Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath. *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2017), 214.

economic cases specific to each country. The second group examines the two security cases and the two economic cases of the entire project. The final group compares the China and Russia cases directly. This methodological approach strengthens the applicability of the theoretical framework to explain the entire case collection and helps further our understanding of American hegemonic ordering in general, with implications for future research endeavors being detailed in the concluding chapter. This cross-case analysis enables the determination of the external validity of NC in terms of determining how well it ‘travels’ as a useful explanatory device across the cases based on their sub-categorization and accounts for the large-scale patterns defining the entire collection of cases.²³⁶ Table Two below summarizes the research design.

Table 2: Research Design by Stages

Stage	Process	Purpose
Case by Case Analysis (Chapter Five to Eight)	Chapter Five: East Asia/China Security Case Chapter Six: Europe/Russia Security Case Chapter Seven: East Asia/China Economic Case Chapter Eight: Europe/Russia Economic Case	-Individual case analysis using NC framework -Demonstrate utility of explanation in each case
Cross-Case Analysis (Chapter Nine)	1)Country Specific Cases - East Asia/China Security and Economic cases - Europe/Russia Security and Economic cases 2) Domain Cases -East Asia/China and Europe/Russia Security cases -East Asia/China and Europe/Russia Economic cases 3)Country Case Comparisons - East Asia/China and Europe/Russia cases	-Compare and evaluate relevant cases according to groupings -Demonstrate general applicability of NC framework towards explaining the large-scale pattern of American hegemonic ordering in core regions

²³⁶ Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 215.

This study is not a fully developed theoretical comparative one. This is due to two factors - project purpose and practicality. The purpose of the project is to demonstrate how NC offers a more nuanced, contextual, and complete understanding of the overall pattern of behavior defining US strategic approaches towards China and Russia than LP theory without entirely dismissing the usefulness of the latter approach. This is in part because there exists complementarity among certain aspects of both theories which will be further examined in the concluding chapter. Another complication is the different ontological perspectives grounding both theories regarding history. LP theory sees the summation of American actions and approaches towards China and Russia in the post-Cold War as a function of their attributional importance, actual and potential, and thus history 'reflects' this reality. In contrast, NC asserts that specific (non)actions and behaviors taken in the early part of the post-Cold War era created path dependent effects which heavily influenced the trajectory of relations with China and Russia respectively. As a result, history is treated as a causal force, specifically through the framework of critical junctures. These different treatments of history make it difficult to construct a study where both theories are on the same evaluative playing field. Instead, a short summary of the arguments put forth by Lynchpin theory and their limitations of these will be outlined at the beginning of each chapter before spending the majority of the chapter employing and evaluating NC.

Cases: Selection and Analysis

As mentioned above, four cases - two pertaining to East Asia/China and two pertaining to Europe/Russia - have been chosen for this project. The selection criteria are primarily endogenous in nature, stemming from Mastanduno's initial question of the different American approaches towards including China and Russia into their regional hegemonic systems. Unlike Mastanduno, however, the regional cases have been divided into two by domain type, economic and security, given the different logics which underpin these systems in American hegemonic ordering as outlined in Chapter Three. These cases, furthermore, are not exclusively focused on the bilateral relationships of the US towards China and Russia respectively, but rather are rooted in the larger American hegemonic (re)ordering efforts and relationships within the regions of East Asia and Europe.

The basis for the decision to only include these two regions is threefold. First, these are the important cases to determine the validity of NC as a theoretical and analytical framework, particularly in comparison to LP theory.²³⁷ Second, as explained in Chapter Two, East Asia and Europe are ‘core regions’ in US grand strategy which sets them apart from other regions. Core regions are defined by the presence of several major powers which the US is concerned could bring about the emergence of a major global challenger either in the form of a single power becoming dominant there and/or a rival, antagonistic bloc of powers. Furthermore, in the post-Cold War era China and Russia were the most important outside major powers the US was focused on establishing a new relationship with to bring them into their regional (and global) hegemonic systems.²³⁸ Third, even if there are other regions which meet the criteria of this study – namely being core regions with outside major powers located within them – inclusion of these would require a far larger project and different research design which is not feasible for the author at this time.²³⁹

Before detailing the specifics of the processes which will be used in the case studies and cross-case analysis, the definition of East Asia and Europe as the regions of focus is required. There are many ways regions can and have been defined. These include geographically, in which natural barriers, such as oceans and/or difficult land terrains, create boundaries between regions which preclude/limit connections between them. In classical geopolitical and neo-realist terms, the region principally defined by the extent to which states, specifically large powers, can project military power beyond their

²³⁷ According to Yin, the critical nature of cases in testing/comparing theories is one of three possible primary criteria usually employed in case studies. The other two are 1) the cases are revelatory in that relationships cannot be studied by other means; and 2) the cases are unusual, highlighting extreme cases with respect to what is being studied. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014).

²³⁸ Given the US focus and investment there since the 1980s, specifically militarily, the Middle East could also be seen as an (emerging) core region in US grand strategy during the post-Cold War era. The Middle East, however, occupied a different positionality in US grand strategy, being seen not as a place where a hegemonic challenger could emerge but one where ‘rogue powers’ could try to develop a monopoly on the development and export of oil and other natural resources. Therefore, the Middle East, like other regions such as Southeast Asia, was seen by the US more as sites of flows and linkages of military and economic power which must remain open rather than regions with major powers whose geopolitical alignments were a major concern for the US to preclude.

²³⁹ There are, however, legitimate rationales for expanding this project to include other regions, specifically in determining how other region-specific US strategic cultures inform and affect their priorities and actions in these regions. This will be further discussed in the conclusion.

borders.²⁴⁰ Others, such as Buzan and Waever and Katzenstein, define regions in more inter-subjective ways as being produced by the interplay of economic, military, and ideational linkages tethering states and other communities together not just materially but socially and normatively through a lens of belonging to a region.²⁴¹ While technology can to some degree help overcome distances and other physical barriers, thereby altering the extent of and barriers between regions, usually the densest linkages are between states which are closer together, reinforcing ideological notions of regional-ness with some, specifically larger states, feeling responsible for ordering these spaces via regional projects.²⁴² Another possible definition can derive from the specific conceptualization of regions held by a particular state. This is particularly relevant for larger powers with a presence and interests in multiple regions like the US which employs regions as categories to order, make sense of, and portray its international goals, priorities, and activities. In the US case, this practice has become far more pronounced in official strategic policies and regional strategies in the post-Cold War era with the turn towards the regional level as opposed to the global level as the dominant way of framing and interpreting national security challenges and American grand strategy.

In defining East Asia and Europe, this project uses aspects from all of these regional definitions but with particular emphasis on the inter-subjectiveness in the construction of regions and how the US defines these regions within its strategic culture. Europe is defined as all those states in the European peninsula from the Atlantic to Russia. This includes the sub-regions of Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Former Soviet Republic states of Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the three Baltic states. Therefore, the Central Asian states and Caucasus states are not included. While

²⁴⁰ For example, Mearsheimer conceptions of regions is inextricably tied to and defined by power projection, the extent to which a great power can use and threaten to use its military power to ascertain the subordination of neighbouring states towards its own prerogatives. This usually includes establishing a 'sphere of influence' to create rules of extra-regional great power respecting their regional leadership and regional states accepting limits on their foreign and military, and sometimes domestic, policies (specifically with extra-regional great powers).

²⁴¹ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*; Katzenstein, *A World of Regions*.

²⁴² Regionalism is defined as a purposeful political projection by a state or collection of them to order relations, politically, economically and with respect to security, among themselves and for the region in general. This contrasts with, but usually brought about by, regionalization which is the growing linkages between states, usually economic in nature with greater flows of people, trade and investments. Michael Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change* (Cheltenham, UK: E. Elgar, 1998).

there are differences in linkages within and between these sub-regions, it is clear the US views them as part of Europe. Therefore, while some Western European states were more hesitant about including Eastern European and Former Soviet Republics, the US by and large saw them as constituting one region which required an overarching regionalist program to bring together and manage. The exact borders of this regional space are always in some degree of contestation, not just between the US and its allies but within the US government itself, with the relationship and role of Russia within Europe being the most problematic. As will be seen throughout the project, whether Russia was seen by US policy makers as 'in' Europe, a European power in its own right, or having power and influence 'into' Europe, but not as a European power has been a particularly pertinent question.

As for East Asia, this region includes the sub-regions of Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the Pacific region (such as Australia and the US territories dotting the Western Pacific Ocean). While in many US government documents, Northeast and Southeast Asia are treated differently, throughout the transition to and in the post-Cold War era the growing economic and political linkages between these two regions increasingly brought them closer together, creating a phenomenon the US increasingly had to confront and engage with. Therefore, these regional definitions each combine one sub-region populated by major powers (Western Europe and Northeast Asia) with one sub-region which does not (Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia). These combinations reflect the changes occurring within the non-great power subregions during the period of study, including the growing agency of states within them, which began to change their relationships to the major powers, sub-regions, and the growing US adjustment to dealing with these phenomena. In this process, Russia occupies a unique position on the opposite side of Western Europe, where the other major regional powers reside, with Eastern Europe in between, whereas China sits within and between the Northeast and Southeast Asian subregions.

Case Study and Cross-Case Analysis Processes

Each case study consists of seven sections. The beginning section outlines the arguments for, and evidence used by, LP theory for the case in question followed by a critique of its theoretical and empirical limitations. The second section, the nature of the regional environment, the hegemonic network of focus, and the interplay between them

at the ending of the Cold War, in the pre-Critical Juncture period, will be detailed. This creates the 'starting point' to begin the investigation using the Critical Juncture approach. The third section is an examination of US relations and approaches to its hegemonic allies, the outside major power of concern, and larger environmental changes and forces during the period of study. The fourth section details the closure of the Critical Juncture when the broad contours of American hegemonic ordering specific to the case stabilized into a durable strategic approach in the post-Cold War era, specifically the relationship between its shoring up activities and outside major power engagements. The fifth section examines changes and continuities to the nature of the American hegemonic network from the beginning to the ending of the critical juncture via a detailed breakdown of the presence and absence of network concerns and how these are interpreted and acted upon through the lens of the relevant American regional strategic culture. Particular attention is paid to how the regional strategic culture is situated between and therefore moderated structural changes occurring in the environment and debates within the US government and bureaucracy. The sixth section provides an overview of the path dependent effects and durability of these strategies in the post-Cold War era, including the re-entrenchment of the regional strategic culture. As well, there will be an examination in their alteration, and in some cases termination, with the return of strategic rivalry and enmity defining US relations with both Russia and China. The concluding section conducts a short comparative assessment of the explanatory relevance of NC versus LP theory for the case.

Each cross-cross analysis – of which there are five which are divided into three groups as outlined in Table Two above – is structured in the same way. There are three main parts. The first part examines the primary similarities of the cases under comparison with the second part examining the primary differences among them. Having mapped out these major features, the third section showcases how NC has more explanatory power in accounting for these similarities and differences than LP theory. Once all the case comparisons are complete, the major patterns emerging from the entire set of the cases will be detailed. The concluding section of this chapter will undertake a final assessment of NC's ability to provide a superior account of the major patterns of the entire case collection of this dissertation compared to LP theory.

Sources

This project employs a strategy of research *triangulation*, using multiple sources of data collection and methods.²⁴³ This approach is pursued for three reasons - reliability, corroboration, and location. Regarding reliability, using data from multiple research streams assists in ensuring the strength and consistency of the findings of the studies and avoid over-reliance on one data stream. Pertaining to corroboration, multiple research streams help in identifying areas of congruence and incongruence, the latter of which can assist in focusing efforts towards resolving these and/or set limits on the strengths of the arguments being made. Finally with respect to location, leveraging other streams enables a more surgical and targeted approach (temporal and issue-specific) towards where to look for other types of information and data. Several research sources feed into this project. They include secondary literature, official US policies and strategies from the period of study, interviews with various Bush and Clinton administration officials, (auto)biographies of main decision-makers and some archival work. Only English language sources were used given language restrictions of the author. Research triangulation, in summation, helps limit biases from affecting the study and is an appropriate approach to structure social science research given its complicated subject matters.²⁴⁴ Unfortunately, the travel and other restrictions associated with COVID measures in Canada and the US made the conduct of in-person research for this project, including archival research and interviews, impossible.

Secondary academic literature forms the backbone of the research conducted for this project. There are two reasons for this: the purpose and nature of the research design and the difficulties of accessing some primary data, specifically archival sources. The purpose of the study is not to uncover new information per se about the specifics of each case explored, with many of these being well documented, researched and studied, but rather to connect them in a new analytical framework which proposes to be a useful way of understanding the pressures and logics which account for the larger scale structure of American grand strategic action during the time period of focus. Second, beyond their importance in the literature review and analysis regarding the specific case studies, academic sources can be good repositories of primary research. There is a large and growing number of IR academic articles produced over the past half-decade

²⁴³ Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 161.

²⁴⁴ Helen Noble and Roberta Heale. "Triangulation in Research, with Examples," *Evidence-Based Nursing* 22, no. 3 (2019): 67–68.

investigating some of the cases explored in this project, which have accessed and conducted extensive archival work on newly declassified US government documents.²⁴⁵ Access to such work has helped remedy in part the limitations in archival research for this project (see below).

A number of foreign policy and national security-related policies of interest were analyzed for this project, including National Security Strategies, Defence Planning Guidance documents, National Security Directives, and region-specific strategies. As well, several speeches, specifically given by the President, were analyzed. A full list of these documents is provided in Table Three below. These documents were researched for three primary purposes: first, to focus other research efforts to explore the contexts and debates occurring in the administrations during the time of their development and publication; second, to conduct an analysis of how China and Russia are portrayed in these documents to evaluate alongside other research streams for consistencies and irregularities of China/Russia framing and US goals and strategies towards each; and third, to determine continuities and changes over time in the framing of national security challenges and priorities globally and in Europe and East Asia, in order to situate assessments of China and Russia within these.

Over 40 people were approached for interviews for this project. This list was crafted after an extensive personnel search within the main departments and organizations of the US federal government with portfolios which dealt with the issues under examination in this project throughout the Bush and (primarily the first term of) the Clinton administrations. These included the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the National Security Council (NSC) and the National Economic Council (NEC). In the end, ten former officials consented to be interviewed. This participant population included personnel from both administrations, served in various portfolios pertaining to

²⁴⁵ Growing use of archival research is an increasingly prominent methodological development in IR theory, which is fostering greater relations and connections between historians, foreign policy and IR scholars. While these developments remain limited, they can be expected to grow especially as many structural theories/ists increasingly incorporate 'unit' levels factors into their work as evidenced in the work of neo-classical realism. See Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Chapter 31: Digging Through Documents: The Promise, Problems, and Prospects of Archival Research for International Relations," in *Handbook of Research Methods in International Relations*, ed. in R. Huddleston, Thomas Jamieson and Patrick James (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), <https://www.elgaronline.com/view/book/9781839101014/book-part-9781839101014-43.xml>

Europe/Russia and East Asia/China matters, and varied in rank from Staffer to Director to Assistant-Secretary. It included personnel who had worked in the Departments of Defense and State as well as the NSC with some having worked in more than one of these. Unfortunately, despite repeated overtures no one from the NEC during this period of study participated.²⁴⁶ Table Four provides more details on the personnel interviewed. Given public health restrictions at the time, interviews were conducted by phone, Skype or Zoom. The interview was semi-structured, with a set of questions which the participants received in advance, guiding the session. There were different interview question guides depending on the expertise of the participant being interviewed. Many of the participants were generous in suggesting other people of interest to reach out to.

Several biographies and auto-biographies of senior personnel in both the Bush and Clinton administrations were researched. These assisted in developing an understanding of their framing of a number of American actions and decisions as well as identifying prospective interview candidates and additional topics and issues to research. The information derived from these, furthermore, assisted in corroborating with other material to develop a more fulsome picture of the forces and factors at play in the cases studied, many of which were controversial and in part defined their respective administrations' legacies. The importance of status and legacy for the individuals writing these materials was always kept in mind when researching and employing material from them.

In-person archival work was not possible for this project given pandemic restrictions. Both the Bush and Clinton Presidential Libraries were closed to all in-person research as part of larger COVID restrictions in place at all presidential libraries and the National Archives in Washington. The libraries continued to process research request pulls with the accompanying documents being scanned and sent via PDF. Unfortunately, researchers could not look into the specific documents in the pulls beforehand, risking incurring large, prohibitive costs in using such a method.²⁴⁷ One possible alternative to

²⁴⁶ Everyone who did reply to the invitation to participate did consent to being interviewed. The lack of NEC (and other) representation, therefore, can reasonably be inferred to be a function of coincidental non-replying/responsiveness from this groups of individuals rather a collective unwillingness to participate.

²⁴⁷ The cost was listed as 0.80 cents per page which could quickly add up if there were hundreds or thousands of pages within each search pull.

doing big generic searches is to look at previous Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests' pulls which are far narrower in their subject matter focus. Some of these were used in this project. Submitting original FOIAs was not done given the likelihood these would not get processed within the timelines of the project. Another way to access documents is to search these presidential libraries' respective websites for digitized records which are free to download. There are few such documents on the Bush website but quite a few on the Clinton website.²⁴⁸ However, these digital records are usually large bundles of documents ranging in the thousands of pages and usually not well organized. As a result, many of these were not examined deeply, though some were employed for the project. A very useful site of archival records was the National Security Archives (<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>) which has a large deposit of declassified US documents on various foreign policy issues as well as expert analyses of these by leading historians and political scientists. Given the challenges listed above, however, in general there is limited archival research conducted for this project. Instead, it heavily relied on archival research and analysis by other scholars of the various issues under investigation prior to the pandemic. Furthermore, there appears to be far more de-classified/accessible archival documents regarding European/Soviet-Russian matters than East Asian/China ones from both the Bush and Clinton Presidential libraries. It is unclear what the reason(s) are for this disparity, with many possible (combinations of) explanations including differences in the sensitivity of material, its abundance and availability, and more focus on European affairs from researchers creating a forcing function for that material over Asian ones in FOIA/declassification processes.

Table 3: US Official Policies, Strategies, and Speeches²⁴⁹

Document Name	Administration	Date Released
Bottom Up Review (Department of Defense)	Clinton	October 1993
Building a New Pacific Community (Presidential Speech)	Clinton	07 July 1993

²⁴⁸ The library staff at both the Bush and Clinton Presidential Libraries were very helpful and generous with their time in assisting me in determining how best to access and use their archival records.

²⁴⁹ The documents listed here are those of relevance for the time period studied (early to mid 1990s). Other strategic documents from different periods are referenced throughout the project.

Defense Planning Guidance (National Security Council)	H Bush	1992
Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy (Department of Defense)	H Bush	January 1993
Fundamentals of Security for a New Pacific Community (Presidential Speech)	Clinton	10 July 1993
National Security Strategy of the United States (White House)	H Bush	March 1990
National Security Strategy of the United States (White House)	H Bush	August 1991
National Security Strategy of the United States (White House)	H Bush	January 1993
National Security Strategy of the United States (White House)	Clinton	February 1995
A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (White House)	Clinton	July 1994
Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review (Department of Defense)	Clinton	May 1997
Strategic Framework for the Asia-Pacific Rim: Report to Congress (Department of Defense)	H Bush	April 1990
Strategic Framework for the Asia-Pacific Rim: Report to Congress (Department of Defense)	H Bush	1992
United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region (Department of Defense)	Clinton	February 1995

Table 4: Interview Participants' Details

Name	Previous Position	Date Interviewed
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David Gompert	Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director, European and Soviet Affairs (NSC), H Bush administration	July 2021
Joseph S. Nye	Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Clinton administration (first term)	July 2021
Frank Wisner	Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, H Bush administration	August 2021
Douglas Paal	Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director, Asian Affairs (NSC), H Bush administration	August 2021
James Keith	Staffer, NSC Asian Affairs, H Bush and Clinton administrations (first term)	August 2021
David Shear	US State Department, diplomatic corps, H Bush and Clinton administrations	September 2021
Jim (James) Goldgeier	Staffer, NSC Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia Affairs, Clinton administration (first term)	October 2021
Michael Green	Consultant, Department of Defense, Clinton administration (first term)	October 2021
Robert Hutchings	Director, European and Soviet/Eurasian Affairs (NSC), H Bush administration	November 2021
Raymond Seitz	US Ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1991-1994, H Bush and Clinton administrations	November 2021

**Chapter Five: The East Asia Security Environment and US Regional Security
Network:
Assessing the Placement and Role of China**

This chapter explores the first case study under investigation: the East Asia security environment and the US regional security network positioned within it. China is the Outside Major Power (OMP) of focus, specifically determining its role and influence in American security ordering efforts in this domain case. Lynchpin Theory (LP) argues China is a, if not the, central influence in these regards, with American actions primarily motivated by and designed to create favourable conditions to embed China within its regional security network as a lynchpin supporter in the post-Cold War era.²⁵⁰

There are, however, several empirical and theoretical limitations which seriously undermine LP's explanation for understanding American regional security activities and posture. In particular, the patchwork of arguments and evidence presented is too China centric, implying the entirety of American hegemonic pursuits are guided by accommodation considerations, and thus sidelining other rationales and pressures the US was facing in this case. Networked Centrality (NC) offers a better explanation for the changes and continuities to the structure and nature of the US security network in post-Cold War East Asia as being a function of actions to address larger network concerns in general. China is an important consideration, but not the main one within this larger constellation of network concerns. The perception of and actions taken to address these concerns in the early 1990s stemmed from the American regional strategic culture towards East Asia which prioritized disrupting the emergence of a closed form of Asian regionalism over implementing a specific vision of ordering for the region. Given the low-level nature of such concerns during this time, the US favoured the status-quo by and large. This kept China largely out of the network but enabled it greater latitude in furthering its military modernization plans and avoiding US aggression. These actions, furthermore, created a number of path dependencies in US regional behavior which China was able to benefit from and exploit through most of the post-Cold War period. However, by the mid-2010s the US became increasingly active in regional ordering pursuits amidst the growing overtness of Chinese revisionism and the resultant

²⁵⁰ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 497.

motivation of regional powers to work together to counteracts this more directly and collectively.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The beginning will present an overview of the arguments for, and evidence presented, by LP theory followed by a critique of its conceptual and empirical limitations for this case. The second section employs the critical juncture framework in mapping the changes and continuities of the US security network, environment, and interplay between them. The third section explains these changes and continuities as a function of network concerns rooted in the US regional strategic culture. The fourth section explores the path dependencies which emerged from this critical juncture and how these affected the US security approach to the region throughout the post-Cold War period, and why this eventually began to unravel in the 2010s. The final section compares the explanations provided by LP and NC for the case.

Creating a Favourable Environment for China

Of the four cases under examination in this project, this one - the security network in East Asia - is the most underdeveloped by Mastanduno both in terms of empirical evidence and in clearly explaining China's influence on US regional strategy, specifically changes and continuities to the regional security network and the US security approach to the region. The evidence that is employed can be grouped into three main arguments.

First, the US not pursuing a containment strategy against China post-Tiananmen was largely a function of trying to create favourable regional security conditions to facilitate China becoming a lynchpin supporter.²⁵¹ Numerous National Security Strategies (NSS), other strategic documents and major policy speeches in both the Bush and Clinton administration reflected this sentiment, specifically emphasizing that isolating China must be avoided to prevent any destabilization of the region.²⁵² Furthermore, it can

²⁵¹ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 499.

²⁵² Specific examples of the importance of China influencing US regional strategy include emphasis in the 1991 NSS (p.9) of the Bush administration that China will remain a central feature in American regional policy despite Tiananmen; China being listed as a 'major factor' in any security equation in the Asia-Pacific region emerging in the post-Cold War world in the 1992 Department of Defense (DOD) *East Asia Strategy Review* (p. 6); and the need to avoid isolating China to prevent it from becoming a security threat and jeopardizing regional stability in the Clinton administration's 1994 NSS (p. 23).

be inferred that the non-expansion and/or retooling of the US alliance structure in Asia was motivated by similar considerations.

Second, the major security network change the US pursued was to create a 'dual lynchpin' model in Asia, retaining its alliance with Japan while also striving to build a security relationship with China as a new 'spoke' in its existing hub-and-spoke structure.²⁵³ China was an essential regional security partner for a number of issues such as non-proliferation and stability on the Korean peninsula.²⁵⁴ Given their importance, the US worked throughout the post-Cold War era to bring China into the regional security architecture while being mindful that any sort of alliance-type relationship was unrealistic. As a result, the US constructed a number of different institutional vehicles, including furthering bilateral defence and military relations and minilateral forums, to involve China. This served as a major catalyst in the changing nature of the US regional security network.²⁵⁵ Furthermore, the reaffirmation of the alliance with Japan greatly benefited China by restraining a possible regional rival which could hurt their rise and ensured the US retained its favourable position in this triangulated relationship.²⁵⁶

Third, US military aggression was focused on other regions, specifically the Middle East, and not East Asia in the post-Cold War period.²⁵⁷ While not specifically stated, the underlying assumption in this assertion is that the US was deterred from using kinetic military force in East Asia due to concerns of upsetting and antagonizing relations with China, even if it was used in an area or issue which did not directly involve China. Apprehension about destabilizing important major power partnerships due to the use of violence was not present in other regions, which included not only the Middle East but Europe given US involvement in the Bosnian and Kosovo wars of the 1990s.

²⁵³ Former Carter administration National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski shares a similar sentiment, arguing the US did not have to choose between Japan and China in the post-Cold War but rather pursued deepening relations with both powers simultaneously which reaffirmed its favourable position in the regional balance of power within a dual lynchpin approach. Zbigniew Brzezinski, David Ignatius, and Brent Scowcroft, *America and the World: Conversations on the Future of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Basic, 2008), 132.

²⁵⁴ Such a sentiment was echoed in President Clinton's 1993 speech in Seoul emphasizing the need to ensure China was brought into the regional economic and security architecture. Bill Clinton, "Fundamentals of Security for a New Pacific Community," Speech at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, Seoul, South Korea, July 10, 1993.

²⁵⁵ Hugo Meijer, "Shaping China's Rise: The Reordering of US Alliances and Defence Partnerships in East Asia," *International Politics* 57, no. 2 (2019): 166–184.

²⁵⁶ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 498.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

In summation, US security policy in East Asia was heavily influenced by avoiding upsetting China to ensure tensions were kept limited and isolated from the larger relationship. Furthermore, it is implied that deep consideration by the US for Chinese sensitivities occurred before pursuing security operations and activities, especially regarding areas and issues of importance to Beijing. Retaliation, also, was tempered against Chinese coercive behavior, such as a lack of action against Beijing following evidence of widespread Chinese espionage of US nuclear weapons technology as uncovered by the Cox Commission in 1999.²⁵⁸ Such moderation was not limitless, but there was a high degree of acceptance of such Chinese behavior by the US due to the 'far-sighted' strategy that overtime a more cooperative, engagement approach would extinguish these transgressions as China became further assimilated into the hegemonic order.²⁵⁹

Critiques

Despite its apparent coherence, there are a number of empirical and conceptual omissions and limitations which limit LP theory's ability to explain this case. It is important, furthermore, to remember the question is not whether China was important in the regional security environment but whether it was so important as to heavily influence American actions and decisions pertaining to its future configuration of the regional security network and its military posture and activities there as part of offering a favourable security bargain to China. China had always been an important consideration in US regional policy throughout the transition to and duration of the post-Cold War era, as evidenced by the Clinton administration's efforts as early as 1993 to construct a strategy towards the country.²⁶⁰ However, as Suettinger argues US-China relations have been more events-driven than following some well thought out strategy, being regularly hit by crises which demonstrated the number of tensions and limitations in the relationship throughout the post-Cold War period,²⁶¹ though both states have worked

²⁵⁸ Robert G. Sutter, *Historical Dictionary of United States-China Relations* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2006), LXXII.

²⁵⁹ Brzezinski et al, 114.

²⁶⁰ David M. Lampton, *Same Bed Different, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 33-34.

²⁶¹ Robert L. Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations 1989-2000* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2004), 343.

hard to prevent these tensions from affecting the entirety of their relationship.²⁶²

Furthermore, there were many actions the US took which challenge the characterization that it adopted a benign posture towards Chinese security sensitivities and exercised self-restraint on security matters in East Asia.

US sensitivities to and accommodation of Chinese security concerns: The argument that the renewal of the US-Japan alliance was largely supported by China overlooks China's growing criticisms in the mid-late 1990s that this arrangement was leading to the rearming of Japan which was primarily aimed against them.²⁶³ While the US was aware of these concerns, it seems little was done to try to reassure Beijing of the 'defensiveness' of this arrangement and its benefits to China and the region.²⁶⁴

Relatedly, the US was not willing to rethink work with both South Korea and Japan on advancing Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) and the continued development of its own continental missile defence systems in response to North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile developments despite Chinese concerns that these countermeasures undermined their own nuclear deterrence capabilities.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, while growing military incidents between their armed forces can in part be attributed to Chinese naval and air units operating further offshore in contested areas claimed by Beijing, they were also a function of augmented surveillance and intelligence operations conducted by the US in China's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) throughout the post-Cold War era.²⁶⁶ Such behavior demonstrated both a lack of regard for China's security sensitivities and

²⁶² David M. Lampton, "China and Clinton's America: Have They Learned Anything?" *Asian Survey* 37, no. 12 (1997): 1117.

²⁶³ P. Midford, "China Views the Revised US—Japan Defense Guidelines: Popping the Cork?" *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 4, no. 1 (2004): 113–145; Wu Xinbo, "The End of the Silver Lining: A Chinese View of the U.S.-Japanese Alliance," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2005): 117–130.

²⁶⁴ Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia." *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999): 60-61.

²⁶⁵ Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," 75; Neil E. Silver, "The United States, Japan and China: Setting the Course," *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 12, 2012.

²⁶⁶ The US, a non-signatory to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea but treats the document as customary international law, argues that military activities such as exercises and surveying are in other states' EEZs are legal whereas China's position on this matter is unclear. Campbell and Weitz, "The Limits of U.S.-China Military Cooperation," 177. Such activities, along with the US exercising military power in its periphery during the 1995/1996 Taiwan Straits crisis, motivated China in the 1990s to purchase a number of Russian air and naval platforms to counteract US power projection along its coastlines. Chas W. Freeman, Jr, "US-China Military Relations: From Enmity to Entente and Maybe Back Again" in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, ed. Anne F. Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021): 295-334.

the collection of information which could be used in war planning. The continuation of American sanctions on arms and some technology, and pressuring allies in Europe to follow suit, also demonstrated the limitedness of supporting China as a hegemonic security partner.²⁶⁷

The biggest omission in Mastanduno's account, however, is the lack of analysis of Taiwan. While the US did not significantly modify the declaratory components of its One China Policy, throughout the 1990s China became increasingly concerned that Washington was walking back its commitment in the 1982 Communique to gradually phase out weapons transfers to Taiwan. Specifically, throughout the 1990s, US arms exports increased substantially, the military relationship with Taipei was expanded significantly (including island defence planning and war gaming), and there were high level cabinet and Congressional team visits to the island.²⁶⁸ While the US did not support Taiwanese de jure independence (maintaining its dual deterrence approach of deterring the use of violence by China and deterring Taiwan from officially declaring independence and maintaining unofficial relations), it appeared its position was to freeze the status quo into the indefinite future - China and Taiwan as de facto independent countries with no effort to reach some sort of formal, negotiated solution. This situation reflected US concerns about the changing balance of power across the Taiwan Straits and even more importantly the growing democratization of Taiwan and the resultant increase in American domestic and political support towards Taipei which eroded the shield of conducting US-China relations from a purely strategic/foreign policy lens.²⁶⁹

Lack of US military aggression in Asia: Regarding the lack of US violence in East Asia in the post-Cold War period, this was more a function of the nature of the rogue states the US confronted, the challenges they posed to the region, and larger regional considerations of conflict management beyond purely considering China sensitivities. Unlike Iraq and Serbia, North Korea possessed massive conventional military power which discouraged any sort of military force by the US given the expectations of

²⁶⁷ Thomas J. Christensen, "Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy Toward East Asia," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 117.

²⁶⁸ Shirley A. Kan, Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms Sales Since 1990. Library of Congress. *Congressional Research Service*, 2014; Sutter, *Historical Dictionary of United States-China Relations*, LXVII.

²⁶⁹ Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, 261.

concomitant destructions of South Korea (and collateral damage in Japan and possibly even China), even as it developed an operational nuclear weapons arsenal. Furthermore, whereas Iraq threatened to acquire a commanding position in the development and export of oil and Serbian violence expanded into newly independent states of the former Yugoslavia (and raised concerns of other such state breakdowns along ethnic lines in Central and Eastern Europe), there was no equivalent regional threat in East Asia to vital economic supply systems or spreading destabilization. Continued military action and commitment in the Middle East, also, reflected path dependent effects taking hold in the US strategic community that the region was vital for US national security, especially due to the 9/11 attacks and the resultant War on Terror (WOT). Finally, American military action in Eastern Europe and the Middle East was supported by a number of regional actors, and in both settings the US felt its leadership was essential in counteracting the threats posed there. In East Asia, however, there was an aversion to intervention in ongoing intra-state wars given the general regional peace post the Vietnam war which facilitated the region's growing economic development. Emphasis, rather, was placed on negotiations facilitated by regional states with US support such as in the cases of Cambodia and Indonesia-Timor East.

Notable omissions: Finally, there are three major omissions within LP theory's account which limit its ability in explaining how China impacted US security designs and actions in East Asia. First, what accounts for the partial inclusion of China in the US security network? While Mastanduno argues the approach to China falls in line with the US preference in the region for pursuing security relations and issues bilaterally, what accounts for the inability to develop a stronger military relationship with the PRC? Did the US try but was rebuffed by China? Why were there no effective crisis communication and confidence building measures developed between them? Second, why did the US not become involved in managing and settling regional disputes, especially maritime ones, involving China and others, including US allies? Was this avoidance based on considerations of not directly confronting China or a generally low level of concern that these issues would threaten regional stability? Finally, what accounts for the US acceptance of low involvement and support in the growing pluralization of security institutions in East Asia? Why did the US not feel the need to become more involved in shaping these regional dynamics, especially considering they increasingly involved China? While the preference of partners over institutions is clear, given the altering

regional landscape, why did the US not reconsider other forms of hegemonic ordering in East Asia in this changing environment? While some have argued that the US had made such an adjustment in moving towards a diversified networked approach of various security institutional structures at bilateral, minilateral and multilateral levels²⁷⁰, others such as Goh have correctly highlighted that this institutional milieu is better understood as a patchwork versus a network given the difficulties in understanding how the different parts work and fit together. This analysis challenges how much the US approach was based on strategic planning versus reaction to unfolding dynamics.²⁷¹

Ad-Hoc Developmental Approach Over Comprehensive Region Building

Determining the role and importance of China in US strategy in this case first requires a broader overview of the changes and continuities from the Cold War to post-Cold War era of the security environment of East Asia, the US regional security network, and the interplay between these two. A Networked Centrality (NC) approach allows for a more accurate depiction of the role of China in US strategic calculations and actions by embedding them within and treating them as being part of these systems rather than LP theory's China-centric approach which positions them as the central and dominant factor, with these systems conforming around them in US strategy. In combating the distorting effects of any such selection bias inherent in LP theory, the NC approach maps out the large scale structural and functional environmental and network changes and continuities first and then proceeds to explore the rationales behind American priorities within them. In particular, the major environmental-network changes and continuities in this case are:

- 1) *Environment* - Pluralization of multilateral institutions dealing with regional security issues but no major security blocs emerged; US supported but did not seek a major leadership role in these developments; growing arms sales in region but not dramatically so during the 1990s.
- 2) *Network* - Maintenance and non-expansion of the hub-and-spoke alliance structure; some atrophy, specifically in Southeast Asia, but majority of them

²⁷⁰ Matteo Dian and Hugo Meijer. "Networking Hegemony: Alliance Dynamics in East Asia," *International Politics* 57, no. 2 (2019): 131–149.

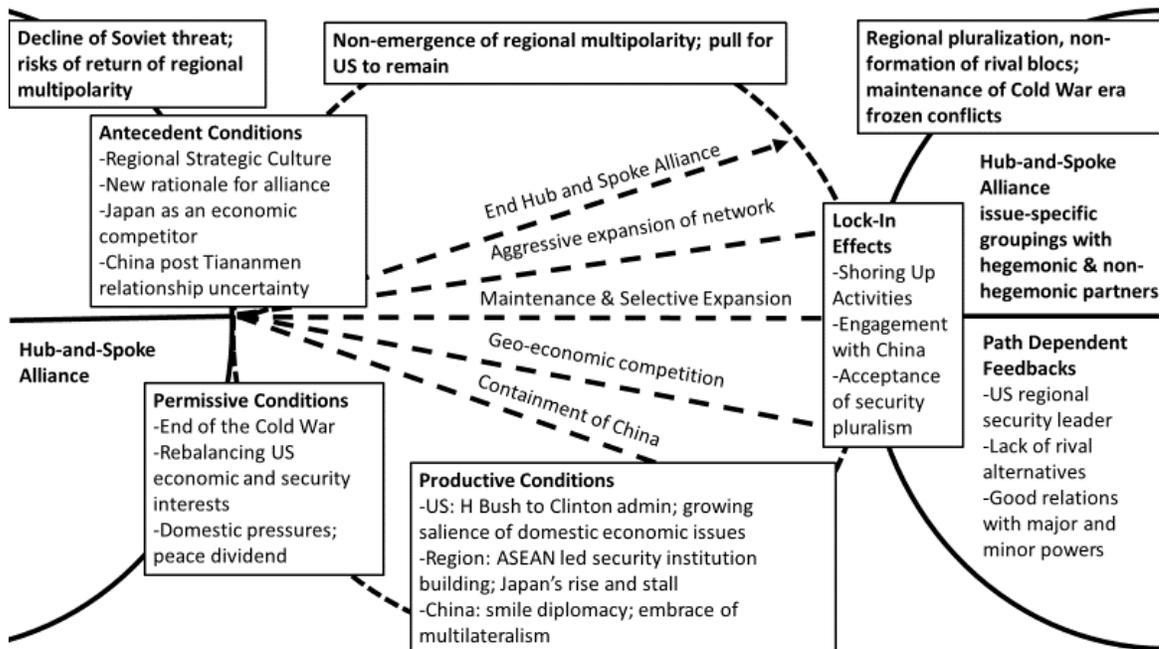
²⁷¹ Evelyn Goh, "In Response: Alliance Dynamics, Variables, and the English School for East Asia," *International Politics* 57, no. 2 (2020): 279.

reaffirmed by mid-1990s. Most important of these being Japan reaffirmed, halting further drift in relations.

- 3) *Interplay of the two* - Retention of function of alliances in region (defensive against territorial aggression against members) with some changes in specific relationships for regional partners to do more in terms of regional/global security; construction of regional groupings with allies and other powers to deal with specific issues; maintenance of US regional military posture and activities.

These changes and continuities are mapped within the Historical Institutional framework as depicted in Figure Five below. This framework is employed to capture the interplay between networked considerations and historically specific conditions and factors during this period. Specifically, this framework is divided into three temporal segments - pre-critical juncture, critical juncture and the closing of the critical juncture.

Figure 5: Critical Juncture of the US Security Approach Towards East Asia



Pre-Critical Juncture (late 1980s-1991)

During the Cold War, the major structural condition affecting US grand strategy was its rivalry with the Soviet Union. Unlike in Europe, the local manifestation of the Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union was not of competing multi-state

alliances but rather a series of bilateral alliances with varying but overall loose degree of connections with one another. This was particularly evident in the nature and functioning of the US hub-and-spoke regional alliance network which consisted of five separate alliance agreements with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. As explored briefly in Chapter Two, several explanations have been offered regarding the differences in the structure of American alliances in and process of security ordering in Europe and East Asia. In the East Asia case, arguments have centered on the nature of US-ally relations, including the desire for the US to have greater control over unpredictable allies which also have strained relations among themselves²⁷²; needing less out of them versus European allies in countering the Soviet threat regionally²⁷³; and looser identity affiliation with Asian states precluding sustained US efforts towards multilateral security organizations and regional institutional building.²⁷⁴ While unclear which account has more causal importance, cumulatively these factors entrenched the bilateralism of the US security network in East Asia, especially after the dissolution of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in the 1970s which coincided with its withdrawal from the Vietnam War. At the same time, relations with China were dramatically improving in large part due to a growing convergence of concern over the Soviet Union as their main rival. Even amidst these radical changes in relations with both China and Taiwan, the US maintained its preference for dealing with such shifts in a bilateral context. The hub-and-spoke alliance structure was seen as sufficient for dealing with the major regional network concern during this time - containing Soviet power and influence in the region - without having to aggressively push for new regional security arrangements.

While not as consequential as the monumental geo-strategic changes which took place in Europe during this time, Soviet retrenchment led to the drastic reduction of funding to its partners in East Asia, specifically North Korea, ending its war in Afghanistan, and the near total drawdown of its forces from regional overseas bases, especially in Vietnam. The larger implication of the declining importance of the Cold War rivalry and the challenge presented by the Soviet Union for the US was the removal of its

²⁷² Cha, "Powerplay."

²⁷³ He and Feng. "Why Is There No NATO in Asia?' Revisited"; G. John Ikenberry, "American Hegemony and East Asian Order," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 58, no. 3 (2004): 353–367.

²⁷⁴ Hemmer and Katzenstein, "Why Is There No NATO in Asia?"

declared rationale for its security presence in East Asia in general and its alliances in particular.

There were concerns, especially from the Department of Defense (DOD), that the winding down of the Cold War would increase domestic pressures for the US to militarily retrench from key regions of the world as part of a peace dividend where more focus and energy would be diverted to domestic economic matters. These concerns were the initial rationale for the periodic East Asia Strategy Reports (EASR), the first being released in 1990, to legitimate the retention of US forces in the region, though at a lower level than in the 1980s, and the maintenance of its bilateral alliances and engagements with other regional powers.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, throughout the entire tenure of the Bush administration during this tumultuous time there was no real consideration on the part of the US of reducing or fundamentally changing its security role and relations in East Asia, based on the argument that the US was the only power capable of organizing regional and international efforts to preserve and advance global security and prosperity during this period of uncertainty.²⁷⁶ Preservation, therefore, was the main motivation of the US in East Asia during this period, but questions remained about exactly how to go about this and if changes were needed to adapt to the altering regional environment - influenced not only by the retrenchment of the Soviet Union but also by concerns about Japan, the rise of multilateralism in regional ordering, and China.²⁷⁷

Japan: Throughout the 1980s, the US under the Reagan administration pushed its Asian (and European) allies to contribute more to their alliances, specifically in building more capabilities to defend themselves.²⁷⁸ Such sentiments continued throughout the Bush

²⁷⁵ The effect of domestic expectations of a peace dividend are explicitly mentioned in the 1990 report. Department of Defense, *Strategic Framework for the Asia-Pacific Rim: Report to Congress*, April 1990, 2.

²⁷⁶ The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, March 1990, 6.

²⁷⁷ This did not totally eliminate concerns about the Soviet Union as a regional military power. Soviet naval power, specifically in the form of the Pacific Fleet which had been extensively beefed up since the 1970s, in East Asia continued to be a major American regional security issue throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s. Even though this fleet, like the rest of the military, shrank dramatically following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian naval 'residual power' in East Asia remained an American military concern. Department of Defense, *Strategic Framework for the Asia-Pacific Rim: Report to Congress*, 1992, 6.

²⁷⁸ Such pressures reflected a return, though in a milder manner, to the Nixon Doctrine of the 1960s where-in regional allies were expected to do the lion's share of defence capability spending and development with the US playing a supportive role, specifically centred on its extended nuclear umbrella. Sue Thompson, "The Nixon Doctrine and U.S. Policy on Regional Cooperation

administration, with greater allied burden sharing seen as a critical component of ensuring the continuity of the alliance structure through the ending of the Cold War and into the post-Cold War era. Most of this focus, however, was on Japan, the most important US alliance in Asia. In response, Japan gradually increased its defence spending, despite some domestic trepidations doing so ran against the letter and spirit of its constitution, and began assuming new security responsibilities, such as patrolling in surrounding waters up to 1000 nautical miles from the coast.²⁷⁹ Alongside, and connected to, this issue, there were growing US concerns that Japan was becoming an economic power at the expense of the US which, in the absence of a common security threat, could enable it to pursue a more autonomous regional and global path.²⁸⁰

In the US, Japan's state-capitalist development strategy focusing on exports and market share was increasingly criticized as undermining US companies domestically in advanced sectors such as telecommunications and the auto industry. Furthermore, decades of American military protection had allowed Japan to focus economically, investing large sums into research and development, leading to technological superiority and other competitive advantages. Such concerns of free-riding were evident in the harsh US reaction to Japan not sending military units during the Gulf War, with its commitment remaining strictly financial.²⁸¹ By 1990, the US public was more concerned about Japan's economic prowess as a national security challenge than the Soviet Union militarily²⁸², with a growing number of academic works and pop culture portrayals of Japan as an enemy.²⁸³ These economic concerns were compounded by geopolitical ones that Japan, as a growing economic power, would shed itself of the Yoshida doctrine - allowing the US to provide for Japan's security while it focused on economic development - and become a more active regional player in constructing economic and

in Southeast Asia after the Second World War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 23, no. 1 (2021): 126–162.

²⁷⁹ Taeyoung Yoon, "The Role of U.S. Naval Power in the Asia-Pacific Region: From Regional Protector to Regional Balancer," *Global Economic Review* 32, no. 2 (2003): 114; Schaller, *Altered States*, 254.

²⁸⁰ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 408.

²⁸¹ Schaller, *Altered States*, 258.

²⁸² Harrison M. Holland, *Japan Challenges America: Managing an Alliance in Crisis* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc. 1992), 193.

²⁸³ Two examples of the latter include Michael Crichton's 1992 *Rising Sun* and Pat Choate's 1990 *Agents of Influence*.

security regional realities towards its interests without US guidance or approval.²⁸⁴ Such developments would increase Japanese drift from the US alliance and possibly even transform it into a hegemonic challenger one day as the region organized around a newly militarized Japan possessing the world's largest economy.²⁸⁵ This perspective was summed up in a quote by Chalmers Johnson that for the US "the good news is that the Cold War is over. The bad news is that Germany and Japan won."²⁸⁶ While there was a wide diversity of views on what the US should do to adjust to this dynamic and the potential fallout from it, there was broad consensus that a new relationship with Japan was needed to transform the "unequal partnership".²⁸⁷

The Bush administration did not treat Japan like a future security concern needing to be constrained nor a flighty ally needing reassurance. However, it pursued a series of bilateral trade negotiations, beginning in the 1980s, to address US concerns about Japanese market shares in US industries, the level of government support its companies received, and the reluctance to open up its markets. Throughout these endeavors, the US began to view their economic relationship with Tokyo in increasingly zero-sum terms.²⁸⁸ Furthermore, the US acknowledged that the growing economic power of its allies affected their security relationship to some degree, and that trade talks with Japan (and Germany) shared a similar level of strategic importance to the US as arms talks with the Soviet Union.²⁸⁹ The US wanted Japan to take action to address US economic concerns and contribute more to not only its defence but regional and global security.²⁹⁰ How to redefine the relationship along more equitable lines was left unresolved when the Bush administration left office in 1993 while concerns continued to grow about Japan's rising economic power and priorities as a major power in Asia.

²⁸⁴ Yoichi Funabashi, "Japan and the New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 5 (1991): 58–74; Nobuhiko Tamaki, "Japan's Quest for a Rules-Based International Order: The Japan-US Alliance and the Decline of US Liberal Hegemony," *Contemporary Politics* 26, no. 4 (2020): 389.

²⁸⁵ George Friedman and Meredith Lebard, *The Coming War with Japan* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1991); Michael J. Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (Palgrave: New York, 2001), 17.

²⁸⁶ Quote taken from Schaller, *Altered States*, 258.

²⁸⁷ Richard Holbrooke, "Japan and the United States: Ending the Unequal Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 5 (1991): 41–57.

²⁸⁸ Michael Mastanduno, "Do Relative Gains Matter? America's Response to Japanese Industrial Policy," *International Security* 16, no. 1 (1991): 73–113.

²⁸⁹ The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, August 1991, 2-6.

²⁹⁰ Department of Defense, *Strategic Framework for the Asia-Pacific Rim: Report to Congress*, April 1990, 5.

Regional Multilateralism: The US has long been concerned about Asian groupings which did not include them.²⁹¹ Such concerns were heightened in the late 1980s when a number of regional actors, including some US allies, began advocating for different multilateral institutional organizations to address regional security and economic concerns. Examples include the Australian and Japanese promotion of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the growing transformation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) away from an anti-communist pact towards a regional body increasingly interested in facilitating dialogues with regional major powers. The US during this time made it clear it would primarily engage with the region through its bilateral alliance structure, and while it did not oppose these multilateral efforts it was skeptical of their effectiveness and would be quick to oppose them if exclusionary criteria were applied to the US.²⁹² One aspect of this emerging phenomenon to which the US was completely opposed were Soviet proposals of a regional security community agreement, possibly to include limits on military deployments by non-resident powers.²⁹³ In contrast to Europe, the US did not feel the need to engage with the Soviet Union bilaterally or within a multilateral setting to determine the future security situation in East Asia, because the region was not going through seismic changes as was the case in Eastern Europe and due to the Soviet Union's weaker influence on the overall security environment in East Asia.

China: The security relationship between China and the US grew stronger throughout the 1980s due to their common strategic concern in relation to the Soviet Union. Beijing was increasingly wary about the Soviet military stationed and operating around a large area of their periphery, including in Mongolia, Afghanistan and Vietnam.²⁹⁴ As a result, military contacts steadily developed between China and the US, including the start of arms sales

²⁹¹ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 411.

²⁹² Baker III, James. "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 5 (1991): 1-18.

²⁹³ Some of these ideas were not simply Soviet in origin but supported by US allies like Australia in Canada, including some musings about setting up an equivalent to the Council on Security Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in East Asia. Paul H. Kreisberg, "The U.S. and Asia in 1990," *Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (1991): 12; Sheldon W. Simon, "U.S. Interests in Southeast Asia: The Future Military Presence," *Asian Survey* 31, no. 7 (1991): 671.

²⁹⁴ Douglas Paal, "President George H.W. Bush's China Policy," in *Transforming Our World: President George H.W. Bush and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Andrew S. Natsios and Andrew H. Card Jr. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), 89-100.

from the US to China.²⁹⁵ While strategic alignment was the primary driver drawing the two together, China's changing economic model under Deng Xiaoping - from autarky to tentative, limited opening-up based on market principles - also furthered a deeper and more multifaceted relationship.²⁹⁶ This development encouraged many US officials to believe that China was not only a useful partner in maintaining a favourable balance of power against the Soviets, but was on a trajectory of change domestically and internationally which would further bring it into the fold of the world the West was trying to build and promote.

Such a sentiment, most importantly held by President Bush who had developed a deep connection to the country and its people when he was the Director of the US Liaison Office in Beijing 1974-75, was critical in saving the relationship after the Tiananmen Square massacre committed by the Chinese government in 1989. From the outset the Bush administration maneuvered to ensure a restrained reaction to the crackdown.²⁹⁷ While military relations were suspended, an arms ban imposed, and targeted sanctions invoked against elements of the Chinese military which conducted the massacre, President Bush used up much domestic political capital and employed his veto power in pushing back against far more strict retaliatory measures advocated by Congress with China becoming deeply unpopular among the US public.²⁹⁸ At the same time, the administration attempted to ease Chinese concerns that they were a new target of the US containment strategy, though the leadership in Beijing was quite alarmed by the US response. Bush tried to limit the fallout from damaging the overall relationship but appreciated it would take years to try to rebuild it to where it had been before June 4th, 1989. Bush's actions were motivated in part by the strategic implications to the regional balance of power caused by any serious, permanent rift between the two, including opening an avenue for a renewed Sino-Soviet entente and China's role in checking any future Japanese proclivities to regional leadership.²⁹⁹ Another important element,

²⁹⁵ Eden Y Woon, "Chinese Arms Sales and U.S.-China Military Relations," *Asian Survey* 29, no. 6 (1989): 601-618.

²⁹⁶ Thomas Fingar, "The Logic and Efficacy of Engagement: Objectives, Assumptions, and Impacts," in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, ed. Anne F. Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021): 32-55; interview with James Keith, 10 August 2021.

²⁹⁷ Paal, "President George H.W. Bush's China Policy," 89.

²⁹⁸ Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, 67.

²⁹⁹ David Skidmore and William Gates, "After Tiananmen: The Struggle over U.S. Policy Toward China in the Bush Administration," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1997): 518; Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*. 91.

however, was Bush's firm belief that China was on the 'right' path in terms of economic and political reforms which would be threatened if the US and the international community acted too harshly to punish Beijing for its crackdown. Such a sentiment was conveyed in the 1991 National Security Strategy warning "China's angry isolation would harm all these prospects [regional stability and its economic and political reforms]" and that "Change is inevitable in China".³⁰⁰ This approach, as well, was largely supported by American allies in the region, including Japan which were particularly interested in resuming normal diplomatic, trading and aid relations with China.

Critical Juncture (1991-1995)

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991 definitively concluded the Cold War period. The challenge for US grand strategy now was not simply how best to navigate in a world of reduced Soviet power and influence but determine and justify a new international security posture and priorities in the complete absence of its long-term adversary and primary declaratory rationale of its global containment strategy. The removal of its system-level peer challenger, furthermore, focused American attention more on the internal dynamics of regions themselves, specifically Europe and East Asia, and whether and how to maintain its alliance relations and military posture and commitments there. Unlike in Europe, East Asia did not experience massive changes in the strategic alignment and internal political-economic constitution of many states. Frozen conflicts, such as on the Korean Peninsula and between China and Taiwan, and unresolved matters from the Cold War era, such as Japanese reconciliation with the region regarding its past horrific imperialist pursuits before and during the Second World War, remained unchanged. As a result, intensive discussions with the Soviet Union, and its successor Russia, about regional matters in East Asia were absent. In this way, the US had a freer hand to determine the future of its security approach to and in the region. However, the US was not completely free to determine and implement this, for within this critical juncture period changes within US administrations, the region and China all interacted to influence its development.

Change in US Administrations: In developing a new conceptual anchor for US grand strategy, including the maintenance of its overseas forces and alliance commitments, the

³⁰⁰ The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, August 1991, 9-11.

DOD under the Bush administration published the Regions Strategy in early 1993, with much of the work conducted throughout 1992 via the Defence Planning Guidance (DPG). While acknowledging the growing domestic pressures that foreign policy should not be expensive as part of the peace dividend following the ending of the Cold War, the Bush administration was focused in East Asia (and elsewhere) on “saving the furniture” in terms of US alliances and forward deployed military presence as necessary mechanisms required to peacefully navigate this more uncertain world in terms of threats and challenges.³⁰¹ Countering proliferation and deterring aggression from regional rogue powers were concerns listed in many regions, but East Asia was the only region where precluding a hostile power, or bloc of powers, from taking over was explicitly listed as a regional goal in the Regions Strategy.³⁰²

In preventing such a possibility, the regional strategy remained largely what it had been in the latter part of the Cold War. Japan was seen as a ‘formidable economic competitor’, but emphasis continued to be placed on them being the key partnership for the US regional strategy³⁰³; preservation of the hub-and-spoke system as the main security mechanism for engaging the region; and continued engagement with China. Despite the evaporation of the strategic rationale underpinning relations with Beijing with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, President Bush’s continued strong belief in the eventual liberalization of China drove his determination to pursue engagement despite domestic public and political opposition.³⁰⁴ China’s importance to the region also continued to be emphasized as justification³⁰⁵, but there was a growing admission that the relationship with China was becoming more complex and complicated, with more emphasis placed on the need to protect US interests which meant deterring Chinese pursuits in some areas.³⁰⁶

³⁰¹ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 426-432; Robert G. Sutter, *The United States in Asia*. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009),25.

³⁰² *Defense Strategy for the 1990s*, 23.

³⁰³ The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, January 1993, 1.

³⁰⁴ Jeffrey A. Engel, “A Better World ... but Don’t Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H. W. Bush Twenty Years On,” *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (2010): 37.

³⁰⁵ This includes the statement that China will be a major factor “in any security equation” for the region within the 1992 *Strategic Framework for the Asia-Pacific Rim* (p. 6).

³⁰⁶ Such a sentiment was captured in the 1993 *Regions Strategy* which stated relations with China would be pursued on a “realistic basis” and would not interfere with continuing to arm Taiwan (p. 22) and in the wording of the 1993 *National Security Strategy* that the US will watch the emergence of China “...and support, contain or balance this emergence as necessary to protect US interests.” (pp. 7-8).

In 1993 the Clinton administration assumed office, becoming the first post-Cold War US administration. Unlike President Bush, President Clinton was not overly interested in foreign policy, focusing far more on economic than security issues, and was highly critical of both Japan and China. The establishment of the National Economic Council (NEC), an executive body with equal standing to the National Security Council (NSC), most clearly signaled this new elevation of economic matters to the centre of foreign policy. Not only were economic issues promoted in importance, but they would also be used as a tool to further other foreign policy aims. Furthermore, the new national security strategy of 'engagement and enlargement' was not as much about democracy promotion as it was about the US focusing on economic revival and lower international costs.³⁰⁷ The 1993 Bottom-Up Review (BUR), as well, was predicated on lower foreign, specifically military, costs by downsizing US forward presence in East Asia and Europe, though still retaining the capability to fight two wars simultaneously against small-to-medium sized rogue powers.

Regionally, the Clinton administration promoted the idea of a 'New Pacific Community' anchored on three pillars: economics, security and democracy. The overall framing of the approach under the 'Pacific' geographic nomenclature was in part to blunt and oppose any intra-Asian groupings and concepts which could emerge in the post-Cold War environment.³⁰⁸ While the messaging indicated the US would remain an interested and committed player in East Asia, it remained unclear to regional states how the US under the Clinton administration would pursue this economics-first approach. Relations with Japan continued to degrade over trade, with the NEC largely populated by hawks wanting tougher economic arrangements aggressively negotiated with Tokyo.³⁰⁹ Much of the motivation of these efforts was predicated on the assertion that Japan was

³⁰⁷ This is clear in the promotion not of democratic states, but "market democracies" in then Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Anthony Lake's 'From Containment to Enlargement Speech' in the fall of 1993. Green, *By More Than Providence*, 460.

³⁰⁸ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 464.

³⁰⁹ Koji Murata, "The 1990s: From a Drifting Relationship to a Redefinition of the Alliance," in *The History of US-Japan Relations: From Perry to the Present*, ed. Makoto Iokibe (Kobe, Japan: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 215-233.

becoming economically dominant at US expense, and could overtake the US in total economic size by 2005 and eventually become the regional leader of Asia.³¹⁰

The relationship with China during this period was also beset by tension and a lack of clarity in strategy. In contrast to the tough language during the 1992 presidential election, President Clinton early in his tenure asserted China should not be isolated from the region or the world, with its inclusion in regional economic and security architectures being an important priority.³¹¹ Severe frictions, however, defined the relationship, largely centred on China's human rights record. While not seen as an economic challenger or possible military competitor in the foreseeable future as Japan was, the Clinton administration heavily relied on coercive economic instruments to push its agenda with Beijing.³¹² By 1994, the relationship with China was deeply confused with different administration entities and figures sending mixed and contradictory messages to Beijing.³¹³ As with the relationship with Japan, there was little appreciation in the administration of the incoherence of the US strategy towards China and the negative ramifications emanating from its the economics-first approach.

Throughout the latter part of 1994 it was becoming increasingly evident in the Clinton administration that several of its relations with major powers, both within Asia and beyond, were riddled with tensions and that the absence of strategic guardrails to guide their trajectory was creating aimlessness and possibly alienation. In an environment marked by frictions with China over human rights, concerns about Russia given the rise

³¹⁰ Courtney Purrington and Charles A. Goldman, "Forces Shaping the New Pacific Community in the 1990s," in *The New Pacific Community in the 1990s*, ed. Young Jeh Kim (Armonk, New York: ME Sharpe, 1996): 26.

³¹¹ Clinton, "Fundamentals of Security for a New Pacific Community."

³¹² Much of the framing of US concerns regarding China in the early to mid-1990s was ideological versus economic and security in nature in terms of government assessments, media reporting and public attitudes. Yi Yang and Xinsheng Liu, "The 'China Threat' through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992-2006," *The Journal of Contemporary China* 21, no. 76 (2012): 695–711. Militarily, besides its nuclear arsenal China is not listed as a country possessing advanced conventional capabilities across a number of categories in the Bottom-Up Review (which did include allied capabilities like France). As well, the framing in both the 1994 and 1995 National Security Strategies of China possessing a "repressive regime" point towards assessing the main challenge of China to the US being in human rights.

³¹³ This was most evident during then Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to China with a heavy emphasis on human rights while the White House had decided to end its linkage policy regarding China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status. Donald D. A. Schaefer, "U.S. Foreign Policies of Presidents Bush and Clinton: The Influence of China's Most Favored Nation Status Upon Human Rights Issues," *The Social Science Journal* 3, no. 3 (1998): 407–421.

of ultra-nationalists and disputes over how to handle the outbreak of war in the dissolving former Yugoslavia, and mounting tensions with Japan over economic issues, the Clinton administration realized it was unwise to have uncertain and unstable relations with all these powers simultaneously.³¹⁴ Furthermore, there was a growing realization that the administration needed to speak with 'one voice' towards major powers, specifically by re-emphasizing and balancing geopolitical and security considerations along with economic ones in determining the future of these relationships.³¹⁵

Specifically with regard to East Asia, the 'Malaise Memo' in May 1994 by Winston Lord, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, argued the heavy handed approach of using economic mechanisms to force changes in other states' economic policy and other portfolios was not just having a damaging impact on relations with Japan and China, but with the entire region.³¹⁶ Lord recommended an urgent adjustment to the default strategy of trying to achieve narrow US interests through aggressive trade leveraging to lower risks of further alienating the entire region. This call to action, furthermore, illuminated the need to think of the US approach towards the region more holistically than simply a collection of bilateral arrangements which the US was trying to reconfigure instrumentally to achieve a discrete set of interests closely tied to domestic matters. The US needed to take a long-term approach to the evolving East Asia regional environment and how it could best position itself to maintain its dominant position there. While President Clinton had early on signaled its support of the growing regionalism efforts through multilateral institutions, such as personally hosting the 1993 APEC Summit in Seattle and advancement of the New Pacific Community concept, there remained much uncertainty in many regional states, including allies³¹⁷, about whether the US would simply use these as vehicles to impose and gain acceptance for unilateral changes in its regional policy.

Uncertainty also remained about the US security role in the region, specifically towards its alliance partnerships which had remained in existence after the Cold War but

³¹⁴ David M. Lampton, "America's China Policy in the Age of the Finance Minister: Clinton Ends Linkage," *The China Quarterly* 139 (1994): 611.

³¹⁵ Lampton, "China and Clinton's America," 1100.

³¹⁶ Richard Fisher. "Mr. President, Heed Winston Lord's Warning on Asia," *The Heritage Foundation*, June 02, 1994.

³¹⁷ Tomohiko Satake, "The Origin of Trilateralism? The US–Japan–Australia Security Relations in the 1990s," *International relations of the Asia-Pacific* 11, no. 1 (2011): 87–114.

were in various states of disrepair. This included the continued expulsion of US forces from bases in the Philippines (since 1992), the uncertain consequences of trade frictions on security relations with Japan, and uncertainty in Canberra on the reliability of the US as a security partner moving forward. Finally, the Clinton administration's focus on Northeast Asia over Southeast Asia reflected and reinforced its prioritization of large regional powers over smaller ones which were becoming some of the lead organizers in regional ordering efforts.

Changes in the Region: As mentioned above, East Asia did not experience the large geopolitical and geoeconomic disruptions with the end of the Cold War that Europe did at the regional and state levels. Nevertheless, a large number of observers believed the region was heading towards a tense and conflict-prone future with the expected growing multi-polarity of the region, unresolved historical tensions, numerous land and maritime claims disputes, and the erosion of strategic alignments of major powers towards the US given the removal of the Soviet Union as their common adversary.³¹⁸ The fact that many of the world's top ten arms importers in the 1990s were Asian states, including China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan (none of which had been in the top ten in the late 1980s), lent credence to these assessments.³¹⁹ As well, there was a growing belief that Japan's emergence as a peer rival to the US was all but certain to occur over the 1990s and 2000s.³²⁰ Despite these premonitions, the region remained largely stable and peaceful, although there were a number of important changes regarding security matters.

The early 1990s were a period of reflection in Japan regarding its future regional and international position and strategy. Indeed, Japan was more worried in the post-Cold War world than in the Cold War one given uncertainty about the future relationship with the US, growing concerns about the future of China as a regional power, and the

³¹⁸ William J. Nault, "The Strategic Impact Upon the United States of Future Naval Rivalries in South and Southeast Asia," *Naval Post Graduate School*, 1992; Richard K. Betts, "Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War," *International Security* 18, no. 3 (1994): 34–77; Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18, no. 3 (1994): 5–33.

³¹⁹ Michael T. Klare, "The Arms Trade in the 1990s: Changing Patterns, Rising Dangers," *Third World Quarterly* 17, no. 5 (1996): 857–874.

³²⁰ Friedman and Lebard, *The Coming War with Japan*; Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 5–51.

increasing belligerence of North Korea.³²¹ Japan, furthermore, had weak relations with members of the Clinton administration when they came into power; and uncertainty about the future international security environment dominated debates about possible the security postures it could adopt in the future.³²² In particular, the Higuchi Commission of 1994 explicitly explored different security strategies for the post-Cold War era. While none explicitly excluded or advocated the abandonment of the alliance with the US, some options reduced the importance of the alliance in favour of playing a more active role in the emerging multilateralism of regional security.³²³ In particular, Japan was a supporter of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a mechanism for addressing regional security matters and was increasingly active in providing support, including peacekeepers, to resolving regional conflicts such as in Cambodia.³²⁴ It did not, however, promote its own security ordering vision nor moves towards separate security deals with other regional states.

Relatedly, the 1990s saw the emergence of regionalism - the purposeful act of ordering relations among states in a region - within East Asia, specifically spearheaded by smaller countries comprising ASEAN. Moving away from its origins as an anti-communist pact, ASEAN increasingly became the anchor for multilateral institutions pertaining to both economic and security issues, with the ARF being the most prominent in dealing with the latter category. Multilateral regionalism efforts, furthermore, were more pronounced in Southeast Asia, an area the US had increasingly retrenched from, than in Northeast Asia where bilateral relations with the US remained the dominant form of sub-regional organization.³²⁵ ASEAN states were motivated to create such forums in order to bring together the region's major powers to ensure their continued relevance in regional organizing and to address the growing number of security issues affecting the

³²¹ Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, 6.

³²² Sook-Jong Lee, "Japan's Changing Security Norms and Perceptions Since the 1990s," *Asian Perspective* 31, no. 3 (2007): 125–146.

³²³ Patrick M. Cronin and Michael J. Green. "Redefining the U.S.-Japan Alliance," *Institute for National Strategic Studies: National Defense University*. McNair Paper 31, November 1994; Akaha Tsuneo, "An Illiberal Hegemon or an Understanding Partner? Japanese Views of the United States in the Post-Cold War Era," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 5, no. 2 (1998): 137–148.

³²⁴ Takeshi Yuzawa, *Japan's Security Policy and the ASEAN Regional Forum: The Search for Multilateral Security in the Asia Pacific* (PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2005).

³²⁵ Mark Beeson, "American Hegemony and Regionalism: The Rise of East Asia and the End of the Asia-Pacific," *Geopolitics* 11, no. 4 (2006): 541–560, p. 553.

region, including the maritime and islet disputes in the South China Sea involving a number of ASEAN states, China and Taiwan. Goh characterizes ASEAN's pursuits as an 'omni-enmeshment strategy' to bring together the region's major powers in inclusive bodies as a large-scale hedge to maintain good relations with them all and demonstrate the usefulness of such processes.³²⁶

In particular, these states moved to engage with China early given it was a claimant in the South China Sea disputes and tried to embed the Chinese in multilateral institutional processes for order building and conflict resolution even as they were expected to become a major power in the future.³²⁷ At the same time, ASEAN, specifically Singapore, worked to ensure the US remained present and active in the region, especially after the exit of American forces from the Philippines with the collapse of the base deal in 1992.³²⁸ The US was seen as the primary security provider of the region which had facilitated its overall peace and stability since the late 1970s, allowing many states to focus on trade and economics. The US, as well, was indispensable in ensuring Japan did not become a more autonomous actor, which many Southeast Asian states were apprehensive about given Tokyo's growing power in the late 1980s and early 1990s.³²⁹

There were no moves towards developing alliance type arrangements however, either within ASEAN itself or between other states in the region. Conflict in the region remained low and was largely internal to states with long histories of domestic unrest, such as Myanmar. The remaining communist states in the region - China, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam - did not form an alliance bloc, with many developing deeper relations with their non-communist neighbours.³³⁰ Indeed, tensions between China and Vietnam remained, given the growing stand offs and skirmishes between the two in the South China Sea, specifically around the Paracel Islands. The multiple claimants in that dispute and the fact that many East, specifically Southeast, Asian states retained a

³²⁶ Evelyn Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (2007): 121.

³²⁷ Evelyn Goh, "The ASEAN Regional Forum in United States East Asian Strategy," *Pacific Review* 17, no. 1 (2004): 53.

³²⁸ Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia," 134.

³²⁹ Interview with Dr. Joseph Nye, 29 July 2021.

³³⁰ This is particular evident in the cases of Vietnam and Laos which in the latter part of the 1990s would become members of ASEAN, the once former anti-communist pact.

strong sense of independence and the need to protect their sovereignty due to their experience with colonialism also explains the lack of security pacts developed.³³¹ Finally, while many US regional allies retained low, and sometimes hostile, levels of security relations among themselves (such as between Japan and South Korea), there were efforts by some, specifically Japan and Australia, to increasingly work together in regional organizing efforts, though these largely kept the US in the loop and tried to ascertain their support for or at least non-opposition to them.³³²

Changes in Chinese Regional Behavior: Coming into the 1990s, China remained wary of being isolated by the US, and others, given the fallout from the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. This concern was heightened when President Clinton came to office, defeating the Bush administration which had worked hard to preserve the relationship during this time. The resumption of military relations and President Clinton's side meeting with President Jiang Zemin at the APEC Summit in 1993 were positive signs that the US was not drastically moving towards a containment approach against them.³³³ What new approach, though, the US would develop in the post-Cold War era remained uncertain, especially given the Clinton administration's focus on human rights and its influence on the future of the trading relationship. Furthermore, continued American arms transfers and meetings between members of congress with Taiwan was a major concern, as well as the fact that despite assessments that the world, and region, would move towards a multipolar arrangement, by the mid-1990s it was evident to leaders in Beijing that US unipolarity would remain for a far longer time.³³⁴ This was made clear with the deployment of American naval power along China's coastline during the 1995/96 Taiwan Straits crisis, demonstrating the unmatched power projection the US possessed and its willingness to deploy it against Beijing if its actions were deemed as threatening the status quo.

Regional relations in the early 1990s remained stable, but there were growing concerns about the future intentions and aspirations of China in the future, especially

³³¹ Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds., *Network Power: Japan and Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997): 29.

³³² Ellis S. Krauss, "Japan, the US, and the Emergence of Multilateralism in Asia," *Pacific Review* 13, no. 3 (2000): 483.

³³³ Lampton, "America's China Policy in the Age of the Finance Minister," 610.

³³⁴ George Shtraks, "Sino-Russian Relations and the Lessons of 1996," *The Diplomat*, 13 April 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/04/sino-russian-relations-and-the-lessons-of-1996/>

from US allies and Southeast Asian states.³³⁵ Many of these countries, furthermore, had outstanding territorial and maritime disputes with China, specifically in the South China Sea with Beijing passing a law in 1992 declaring jurisdiction over the entire area based on claims these constituted 'historic' waters under previous Chinese rule dating back to the Xia Dynasty. Realizing that the 'China threat' narratives/image held within the US and some regional states threatened its grand strategy of continuing its power development without causing a counterbalancing great power coalition against it,³³⁶ Beijing began to make significant adjustments in its regional (and global) behavior during this time, specifically in embracing and participating in multilateralist forums.³³⁷ Over the course of a decade, China's membership in these institutions would grow from just a handful to being a member of virtually every single one it was eligible to join.³³⁸

Involvement in multilateral institutions was also a way to ensure the US was not overbearing towards China via unilateralist approaches by embedding themselves within regionalization efforts which others supported.³³⁹ Moreover, such efforts reassured partners that China was able to work with others towards developing solutions rather than imposing its own which in turn supported American goals of deterring the unilateral use of force in conflict resolution in the region.³⁴⁰ Chinese participation in regional multilateral institutions and processes, also, worked against any moves towards exclusionary blocs which could be directed against them, blurring friend-enemy distinctions which are common in alliance pacts. Such moves would form the basis of future Chinese led regionalism efforts as an indirect way to contest and compete with American regional hegemony.³⁴¹ During this time, therefore, China moved from skepticism of multilateralism, limiting China's ability to use its size against smaller partners, towards seeing it as an effective tool to shield them against the excesses of US designs.³⁴² Examples of this turn include China working within ASEAN constructs to

³³⁵ David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia", *International Security* 29, no. 3 (2004) pp. 64–99.

³³⁶ Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

³³⁷ Evelyn Goh, "Contesting Hegemonic Order: China in East Asia," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019): 628.

³³⁸ Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?"

³³⁹ Beeson, "American Hegemony and Regionalism", 552.

³⁴⁰ Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," 73.

³⁴¹ Baogang He, "Regionalism as an Instrument for Global Power Contestation: The Case of China," *Asian Studies Review* 44, no. 1 (2020): 80.

³⁴² Christensen, "Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster?", 117.

address the South China Sea disputes, including participating in the 1995 Sea China Sea dialogues and eventual signing the ASEAN code of Conduct and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the 2000s.³⁴³ Beginning in 1995, China started regularly publishing defence white papers, trying to increase transparency concerning the rationales behind its military modernization plans and its views on the role of military power in its regional endeavors.³⁴⁴ Finally, violent incidents continued throughout the 1990s with other South China Sea claimants, but China was able to resolve several land border disputes with neighbours throughout the 1990s as well as its maritime boundary with Vietnam in the Gulf of Tonkin.

The Closing of the Critical Juncture (1995-1996)

1995 marked the ending of the critical juncture regarding American security strategy in East Asia with the development of a coherent approach which would by and large govern American relations and actions over the next two decades. This approach consisted of three primary aspects - shoring up activities in terms of revitalizing American regional alliances, especially with Japan; pursuing engagement with China; and acceptance of, and in some cases contribution to, the pluralization of the regional security environment via unilateral and multilateral institutions. This approach was laid out in the 1995 National Security Strategy and the 1995 United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region, both of which were released in February of that year.

In the end, geopolitical considerations won out over the more narrow, transactional, relative gains geo-economics approach pursued in the early phase of the Clinton administration.³⁴⁵ Unipolarity became entrenched not only as a structural condition but a social system with the non-opposition to US preponderance by other major powers and the US's economic rebound eroding sensitivities to the rise of other powers coming at their expense.³⁴⁶ By the mid-1990s, cracks in the structural underpinning of Japan's meteoric economic rise became very evident and China was still seen as in the beginning stages of its rise to major power status, not posing an economic

³⁴³ Lee Lai To, "The South China Sea: China and Multilateral Dialogues," *Security Dialogue* 30, no. 2 (1999): 166.

³⁴⁴ Denny Roy, "Southeast Asia and China: Balancing or Bandwagoning?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 2 (2005): 309.

³⁴⁵ Interview with Dr. Michael Green, 13 October 2021; Joseph S. Nye, "The 'Nye Report': Six Years Later," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 1, no. 1 (2001): 101.

³⁴⁶ Wright, "The Rise and Fall of the Unipolar Concert."

or military challenge to the US.³⁴⁷ At the same time, however, the cumulative negative effects of American actions in East Asia were seen as reaching a detrimental level, undermining the future of American interests and centrality in the region, and requiring a course correction to rectify. The incentives to move in this direction were reinforced by other trends in the region, most importantly allies and other smaller regional partners seeking greater US regional security involvement. Cumulatively, these forces reinforced the centrality of the US security network in the pluralizing East Asia security environment, requiring only minor changes to maintain.

Shoring Up Activities: The 1995 United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region re-affirmed the US commitment to being the regional security provider, as the only power capable of doing so and with the hub-and-spoke system serving as the foundation of regional stability.³⁴⁸ Re-affirming and re-vitalizing the US-Japan alliance was the most important component of this strategy. After years of neglect leading to the continued drift in the alliance partnership, in part arising from the economic tensions between the two, by late 1994 the US executive became convinced, principally by the State Department and DOD, of the seriousness of this issue. Japan was the lynchpin of the US alliance network and military posture in Asia which needed to be reaffirmed if the US was to continue its role as a regional security provider.³⁴⁹ Trade frictions were not allowed to undermine the alliance. Furthermore, Japan was seen as an important partner internationally, requiring close cooperation and alignment with the US.³⁵⁰ Securing the continued alignment of Japan also ensured the US maintained the most favourable position within the triangulated relationship with Japan and China.³⁵¹ While prohibiting an untethered Japan benefited Chinese interests, the primary focus for the US was to ensure Japan remained firmly entrenched in the regional security network.³⁵² It ensured that Japan remained a central pillar in the Western strategic grouping at international and regional levels³⁵³, laying the ground for negotiations on revising the alliance guidelines in 1996-1997 which included contingency operational planning in cases of conflict with

³⁴⁷ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 469.

³⁴⁸ Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, February 1995, 1-2.

³⁴⁹ *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, 12.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ Interview with Dr. Joseph Nye.

³⁵² Silver, "The United States, Japan and China," 9.

³⁵³ Christian Wirth, "Securing Japan in the 'West': The US-Japan Alliance and Identity Politics in the Asian Century," *Geopolitics* 20, no. 2 (2015): 287–307.

China.³⁵⁴ This included US confirmation that the Senkakus islands, claimed by both China and Japan but occupied by the latter, fall under their alliance agreement.³⁵⁵ At the same time, Japan became increasingly motivated to ensure and update the alliance given the growing belligerence of North Korea, concerns about China's rise, and the feeling that the US may move from "Japan Bashing" to "Japan Passing/Nothing" in characterizing its sentiment towards the relationship.³⁵⁶

Alliances were also strengthened during this time with both South Korea and Australia. With respect to the former, the US recommitted to maintaining its presence and declared its alliance with Seoul would continue even if the North Korean threat passed.³⁵⁷ The Sydney Statement of 1996 re-affirmed its bilateral alliance with Australia, alleviating the latter's uncertainty over the future American security presence and involvement in the region, especially as Canberra became increasingly concerned about China.³⁵⁸ Alliance relationships with its Southeast Asian counterparts continued to atrophy but were not terminated. Relations with Thailand remained stagnant throughout the 1990s, with the alliance decreasing in importance since the US termination of its military involvement in Indochina and became more tense following Washington's criticism of the 1991 coup by the Thai military.³⁵⁹ Relations also remained rocky with the Philippines, but after 1995 some progress was made on restarting joint exercises and naval visits. These developments were motivated by Manila's growing concern about its disputes with China in the South China Sea, particularly after the 1995 Mischief Reef incident in which Beijing physically captured the islets.³⁶⁰ These matters formed an overall pattern of greater US focus on Northeast than Southeast Asia in the 1990s given

³⁵⁴ Adam P. Liff, "Unambivalent Alignment: Japan's China Strategy, the US Alliance, and the 'Hedging' Fallacy," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (2019): 453–491; Christopher W. Hughes, "Not Quite the 'Great Britain of the Far East': Japan's Security, the US-Japan Alliance and the 'War on Terror' in East Asia," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2007): 329–330.

³⁵⁵ Congressional Research Service, "The Senkakus (Diaoyu/Diaoyutai) Dispute: U.S. Treaty Obligations," 01 March 2021.

³⁵⁶ Silver, "The United States, Japan and China," 16.

³⁵⁷ *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, 13, 31–33.

³⁵⁸ Aileen San Pablo-Baviera, "The China Factor in US Alliances in East Asia and the Asia Pacific," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 57, no. 2 (2003): 329–352; J.J. Park, "The Persistence of the US-Led Alliances in the Asia-Pacific: An Order Insurance Explanation," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 13, no. 3 (2013): 352.

³⁵⁹ Pongphisoot Bushbarat, "Thai-US Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Untying the Special Relationship," *Asian Security* 13, no. 3 (2017): 256–274.

³⁶⁰ Renato De Castro, "The US-Philippine Alliance: An Evolving Hedge Against an Emerging China Challenge," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31, no. 3 (2009): 405.

the placement of major powers and a very disruptive rogue power in the former but not the latter.³⁶¹ Furthermore, the US security priority in Southeast Asia was maintenance of freedom of navigation which was not threatened seriously in the 1990s, even amidst periodic skirmishes between claimants in the South China Sea. It, also, reflected the US change in sub-regional strategy to 'places not bases' to ensure the continued in-theatre presence and movement of American naval power there from a variety of partners, including Singapore which was worried about the US retrenching from Southeast Asia, rather than just exclusively rely on allies' for such support.³⁶²

The overall thrust, therefore, of US alliance efforts in East Asia was to strengthen most of these partnerships, putting them on a new strategic footing in the post-Cold War era. While threats and challenges, especially from North Korea in Northeast Asia, were an important rationale for these efforts, the over-arching emphasis was that the hub-and-spoke alliance structure as a whole was vital for the maintenance of regional stability. The US was not opposed to greater inter-spoke cooperation between its allies, as evidenced in growing Japan-Australia security efforts,³⁶³ but in general was not promoting it as a necessary measure in the new security environment. The US supported continued allied efforts in regional security matters, such as Japanese peacekeepers in Cambodia and Australian peacekeepers in East Timor. There was no drive by the US to fundamentally alter the alliance network however, either by forcing closer inter-spoke ties, expanding its membership, or transforming its purpose and missions beyond self-defense. The US was largely unconcerned about growing relations between its hegemonic supporters and other regional states and non-US led institutions, and in fact (as will be explained below) regarding this as a beneficial development to ensure US networked centrality even amidst a pluralizing security environment by preventing any moves towards exclusive Asian blocs.

Engagement with China: China had been a low priority for the Clinton administration when it first came to office, with much of its regional focus on trade disputes with and

³⁶¹ Diane K. Mauzy and Brian L. Job, "U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia: Limited Re-Engagement after Years of Benign Neglect," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 4 (2007): 622–641.

³⁶² Stanley E. Meyer, "Incident at Mischief Reef: Implications for the Philippines, China, and the United States," *US Army War College* (1996): 18.

³⁶³ Pernedra Jain and John Bruni, "Japan, Australia and the United States: Little NATO or Shadow Alliance?" *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 4, no. 2 (2004): 265–285.

some geopolitical worry about Japan.³⁶⁴ By the mid-1990s, however, it was becoming clear China was a major power in Asia which needed high level, strategic attention to chart a coherent approach guiding the relationship forward.³⁶⁵ Ultimately, an 'engage but hedge' approach was constructed whereby the US would work with China to further include them in the regional and international community but also act to ensure China did not undermine the US security network or its leading position in the region. This approach facilitated the development of a more stable, high level relationship with China as demonstrated by the reciprocal Heads of State visits in 1997 and 1998.³⁶⁶ China was an important partner in combating regional proliferation and a priority was placed on advocating for more transparency on Beijing's part regarding its defence and security activities and goals.³⁶⁷ This importance would become increasingly apparent in the latter part of the 1990s and 2000s with China becoming part of a number of regional and US-led security groupings, such as the Six-Party Talks.³⁶⁸ The US, also, was supportive of China's engagement with regional multilateral institutions and processes, such as the ARF, and the solving of many of its border disputes.³⁶⁹ However, no formal, regular security arrangement was developed with Beijing, nor were any major, durable conflict dispute resolution mechanisms developed. Furthermore, military relations remained limited with little to no appetite, on either side, to conduct joint training or operations.³⁷⁰

Containment against China was never seriously considered, in part due to assessments that it would not be supported by regional partners and would jeopardize American economic opportunities.³⁷¹ But equally important, China was not seen as a strategic challenger to the US position, role, and security network nor in altering the regional security environment in a negative direction.³⁷² A major test of this position happened shortly after the development of the Engage but Hedge approach when China conducted aggressive military drills and missile exercises in the Taiwan Strait during the

³⁶⁴ Interview with Douglas Paal, 05 August 2021; interview with Dr. Joseph Nye.

³⁶⁵ Interview with David Shear, 07 September 2021.

³⁶⁶ Sutter, *Historical Dictionary of United States-China Relations*, LXVIII.

³⁶⁷ *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, 5

³⁶⁸ Meijer, "Shaping China's Rise," 167.

³⁶⁹ The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, February 1995, 36.

³⁷⁰ Phillip C. Saunders, "China's Rising Power, the U.S. Rebalance to Asia, and Implications for U.S.-China Relations," *Institute of International Relations* 50, no. 3 (2014): 19-55; Campbell and Weitz, "The Limits of U.S.-China Military Cooperation."

³⁷¹ Nye, "The 'Nye Report'," 96-97.

³⁷² This was reflected in China's absence from much of the 1993 *Bottom-Up Review* surveying the most militarily powerful states and assets in Europe and Asia.

summer of 1995 and spring of 1996. The former incident was motivated by the US granting a visa to the Taiwanese President to give a speech at his alma mater at Cornell and the second in response to the first-ever Taiwanese elections and the fear that Taipei, regardless of the winner, might formally declare independence. In response, the US deployed additional naval units to the region, specifically dispatching two aircraft carrier battlegroups to sail through the Taiwan Strait in 1996.

Such a demonstration of power projection caused Beijing to back down and not engage in any further military provocations. The status quo was retained and demonstrated that when push came to shove China would back down. Furthermore, rather than embarking on a more hostile approach towards the US, China redoubled efforts to develop a more benign and cooperative approach with Washington even though tensions remained. Though the incident created trepidations in Chinese leaders of just how outmatched they were militarily, and sparked greater efforts to build up and modernize its military and specifically naval, air and missile forces³⁷³, Beijing continued to emphasize publicly that the defence pillar was not a top of its 'four modernizations'.³⁷⁴ Furthermore, while the US asserted China to be important to regional stability, it was seen as a mix between a major power and a developing country and thus not as a regional power at that time.³⁷⁵

Acceptance of the Altering Security Environment: The 1995 regions strategy also acknowledged and supported the growing regional efforts to construct security dialogue and processes.³⁷⁶ In particular, regional multilateral efforts were not seen as undermining US based bilateral alliances.³⁷⁷ Instead, over time they were seen as important avenues for the US to exercise soft power without compromising its hard power approach.³⁷⁸

³⁷³ Rush Doshi. *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

³⁷⁴ The Four Modernizations were agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defence. These formed the basis of Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening up agenda for China upon assuming the leadership in the post-Mao era.

³⁷⁵ *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, 17.

³⁷⁶ *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, 8.

³⁷⁷ *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, 15.

³⁷⁸ Goh, "The ASEAN Regional Forum in United States East Asian Strategy," 48; Ralph A. Cossa, "US Approaches to Multilateral Security and Economic Organizations in the Asia-Pacific," in *U.S. Hegemony and International Organizations the United States and Multilateral Institutions*, eds. Rosemary Foot, S. Neil. MacFarlane, and Michael Mastanduno (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Furthermore, US allies, such as Japan and Australia, played an important role in counter-balancing any attempts to construct or change regional institutional processes away from or against the US and its hegemonic security network.³⁷⁹

Caution was exercised by the US, moreover, in promoting democratization and regional integration efforts given that the region was very different from Europe in the heterogeneity of regime types and fierce feelings of independence held by many regional states given their colonial histories. Instead, the US would focus on encouraging democratization and liberalization where these were already occurring, particularly within allies such as South Korea and Taiwan who were moving away from decades of martial law and authoritarian rule, making it easier to legitimate defending these states to the US public. The US, as well, began embarking on developing a number of 'strategic partnerships' with non-US allies such as Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia, deepening relations with important regional states without making binding commitments.³⁸⁰ In general, therefore, the US supported regional efforts to build a web of regional institutions to deal with security issues, being selective in where and how it chose to engage with this process which in its form did not threaten the US hub-and-spoke alliance system.

Addressing Network Concerns

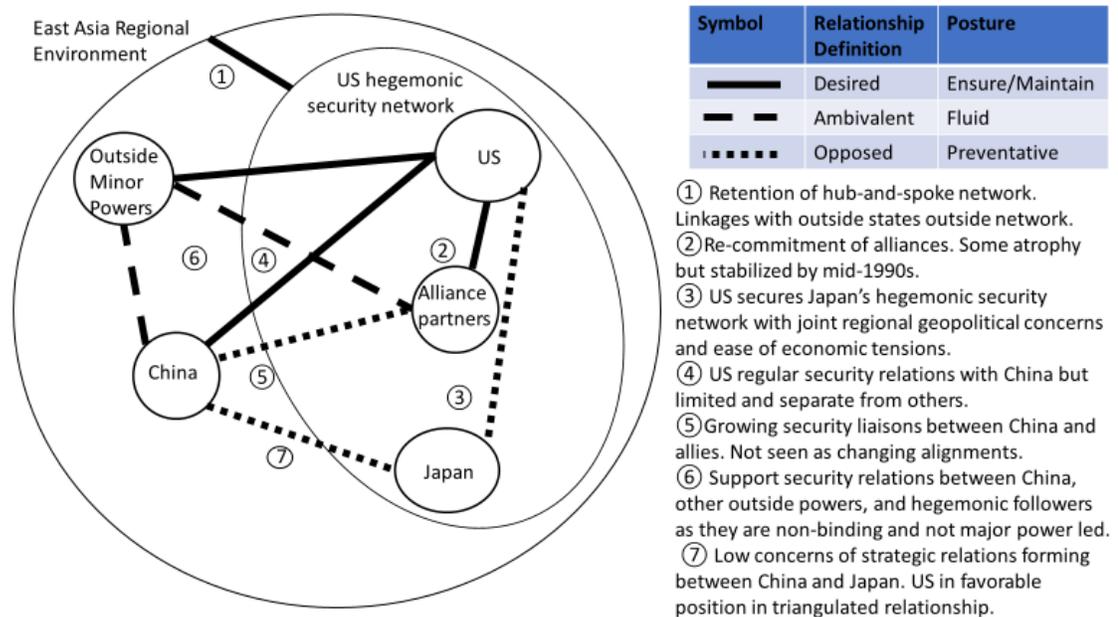
Understanding the logic connecting these decisions and actions, and gaining a more accurate understanding of the role and impact of China, on the US security approach towards East Asia ultimately adopted is best done through a step by step examination of network concerns at play and how US actions addressed these within the context of the mid-1990s in response to the changing nature of the regional security environment and the fallout from its economics-first approach. These network concerns and the US responses to them are represented in Figure Six. In particular, the three major outcomes from this case are: 1) minor changes to the nature and function of the hub-and-spoke alliance network; 2) shallow integration efforts towards bringing China into the security network; and 3) the non-development and -imposition of a new security

³⁷⁹ Jae Jeok Park, "The US-Led Alliances in the Asia-Pacific: Hedge Against Potential Threats or an Undesirable Multilateral Security Order?" *Pacific Review* 24, no. 2 (2011): 148.

³⁸⁰ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Explaining US Strategic Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific Region: Origins, Developments and Prospects," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 36, no. 2 (2014): 262–289.

network in the regional environment. These changes and continuities reinforced the predominant features of the American regional strategic culture towards East Asia which included: acceptance of heterogeneity among states in terms of domestic political organization; focusing on preventing and disrupting any movements towards Asian regionalism versus implementing its own vision of institution building; inhibiting major regional powers from leading ordering developments; and low expectations of hegemonic assistance from the region in general at the global level.

Figure 6: Network Concerns in the East Asia Security Environment



Maintenance of Security Network Dominance in Regional Environment: This was largely an 'internal' concern, in terms of the security network itself, rather than an 'external' one in terms of competing blocs and security ordering occurring which challenge it. US actions in revitalizing alliances, specifically with Japan, ensured the continuity of the American hub-and-spoke alliance structure, leveraging decades of relations with these regional states in order to continue to position military power in the region and cultivate these states' leaderships to remain committed to the security network and oppose developments in the regional environment which were seen by Washington as

detrimental, such as any Asian only multilateral security order.³⁸¹ Doing so enabled the security network to become a hedging instrument which could be mobilized if perceived negative developments did emerge. The US acceptance of the pluralizing security environment was in large part predicated on the fact that these regional ordering efforts were 1) not based on developing alliance type blocs; 2) led by smaller powers as opposed to larger ones, with China and Japan remaining largely agnostic about the future security order for the region; and 3) inclusive in their membership and functionally structured as dialogues as opposed to institutions based on hard commitments between members. This environment, therefore, did not undermine the US security network which remained highly relevant in the exercise and deployment of US power, with many of its allies occupying strategic positions along the maritime periphery of mainland East Asia adjacent to key sea-lanes.

The lack of environmental concerns - in terms of alternative ordering, strategic relations forming between major powers, and the absence of major wars – inhibited attempts to transform the function of the hub-and-spoke alliance and expand its membership. Network concerns, as well, were not sufficiently grave to legitimate investing the energy and effort to try to introduce a new security network which was more multilaterally based. The US concluded that given the nature of the threats in the region and the “...disparate cultures, histories, political systems, and levels of economic development” among its states, the best approach was the maintenance of the bilateral alliance system along with other, less commitment-based relations with other powers.³⁸² Trying to impose a new security order, therefore, was seen as not required given that US networked centrality was not being challenged to a sufficient degree to warrant such an attempt. In short, the US was amenable to the pluralizing security environment as it reduced the possibility of a more organized, major power led, closed Asian regionalist effort. Furthermore, the logics of hedging and non-alignment which reflected and reinforced these developments ensured the environment remained largely diffuse, giving the US an advantage in terms of being a desired partner for many and retaining an unrivaled series of alliances in the region.

³⁸¹ Park, “The US-Led Alliances in the Asia-Pacific,” 148.

³⁸² *United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region*, 5.

Ensuring Hegemonic Followers Remained Subordinated Within the Security Network: As detailed above, the US in the mid-1990s began to seriously work on updating and confirming its bilateral alliances in the region, such as those with Japan, Australia, and South Korea. Alliance relations in Southeast Asia had atrophied but by 1995 began to rebound. These concerns were not about all of these hegemonic followers drifting and forming new security orientations and groupings, but more about the need to preserve the architecture of the entire hub-and-spoke alliance system which generated many benefits to the US in terms of military basing, having regional supporters advocating for continued US involvement in the region, and as a system which could be mobilized if needed to oppose negative regional ordering developments. While there was a continued focus on burden-sharing, specifically asking allies to do more for their own security and assistance in regional and international missions, the urgency of this concern for the future of these relationships dulled throughout the post-Cold War era. Such a development reinforced broader network concerns displacing transactional economic ones in governing these relations. Furthermore, the US, unlike its allies in Europe, did not ask much of its East Asian allies beyond basing and territorial defence preparations. Even for an ally like Japan, and to a more limited degree Australia, was not expected to do more regionally or extra-regionally.

Oppose Hegemonic Followers Becoming More Autonomous: The US was highly concerned about the potential drift of Japan, its most important hegemonic follower in the region. This was demonstrated by the course correction in 1995 to update the alliance framework and lessen aggressive trade negotiations with Tokyo given their negative effects. The concern was not so much that Japan would be able to organize a different security order for the region but that losing its lynchpin would undermine US power in the future, both physically in the forward deployment of military assets and strategically in having to operate in a far more uncertain environment in terms of alignments. Retaining Japan within the security network was the most important element of the US post-Cold War security strategy for East Asia. While the US wanted Japan to do more in the security realm in terms of burden sharing of territorial defence and regional security duties, Washington did not push Tokyo too hard on these matters as it favoured the retention of the alliance in and of itself.

Have Direct Control of Hegemonic Entry of Outside Major and Minor Powers: Other powers or institutions in the region were not obstructing this development, and in many cases were encouraging closer US relations with these states, with China top of mind. However, as mentioned above there were no pressing environmental circumstances that pushed the US to pursue a more expanded security network. Instead, the US worked with these powers in an ad hoc and usually as-needed fashion. This included relations with China, with Beijing being brought into groupings to deal with specific challenges such as North Korea's nuclear weapons development but in general there was no need to prioritize the inclusion of China in the security network at this juncture. The US could achieve its networked centrality without their involvement, though maintaining stable relations with them was a priority. China was not a major power requiring overt balancing, or containment, nor was its inclusion in the security network vital for the US to continue in its role as security provider and ability to project power into and through the region. As former Secretary of State Christopher argued, the US had long developed a 'functionalist' view towards China with the intent of not building them into a hegemonic supporter but aiming to develop a stable relationship with them.³⁸³

Oppose Strategic Relations Forming Between Outside Major Powers and Hegemonic Followers: US concerns about any sort of strategic relations forming between outside major powers, specifically China, and its hegemonic supporters were low. While many were eager to continue to further trade relations China, security concerns remained about the future of its regional aspirations. As a result, many were supportive of the US taking the lead in managing strategic relations with China and offering security guarantees as an "insurance policy" against any Chinese revisionism directed towards them in the future.³⁸⁴ Demand by allies for the US maintenance of its security leadership role and posture remained strong with no other power or collection of them seen as a serious alternative.

Oppose Strategic Relations Between Outside Minor and Major Powers: There were low concerns of strategic relations forming between China and other regional states outside the security network. As with many American allies, regional states were wary of the future of China and thus unwilling to move into alignment with them. Furthermore, many

³⁸³ Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime*, 250.

³⁸⁴ Park, "The Persistence of the US-Led Alliances in the Asia-Pacific."

of these states remained fiercely independent and protective of their security sovereignty given their colonial histories making any sort of exclusionary, closed security pacts with China unlikely. Hedging was a common practice within East Asia which supported US networked centrality by precluding deep alignments forming between states and thus making any coherent, alternative security networks unlikely.³⁸⁵ Many of these states, furthermore, were increasingly calling for greater US security focus and attention in the region, specifically engaging with newly constructed regional security institutions. There was also little to no opposition among outside minor powers towards the continuation of the US hub-and-spoke alliance system, with broad agreement that it was an important element and stabilizing feature of the regional security environment. Such views supported the American regional strategic culture of having a diffuse, pluralizing security environment wherein the US could focus on targeting specific partners and mini-lateral groupings over imposing its own version of security ordering for the region.

Opposing Strategic Relations Forming Between Drifting Hegemonic Followers and

Outside Major Powers: Concerns over strategic relations forming between China and Japan were low. There had been long-standing mistrust between these powers, despite growing economic relations between them, which were rekindled in the 1990s first with Chinese concerns over a more autonomous and powerful Japan striving for regional leadership and later Japanese concern that China was increasingly becoming a long-term challenge given its economic growth. The US approach was to insert themselves between these powers. This was more about preventing instability than blunting some sort of deep alignment between Beijing and Tokyo. Putting both relations on stable, separate foundations was in response to an overall course correction from the US' economics-first approach which threatened to degrade relations with multiple states, resulting in less ability to exercise power and influence in a more unstable region with more multi-sided balancing dynamics emerging.

In general, the low level of network concerns accounted for the lack of major changes to the US security network in East Asia. The regional environment in the 1990s was largely stable, with the absence of major war and competing blocs emerging and with many in the region supportive of continued US security presence and leadership.

³⁸⁵ Sutter, *The United States in Asia*, 282.

This overall environmental stability greatly benefited China as the US was not pressed by severe network concerns towards more drastic changes to retain its networked centrality. This reflected and reinforced the US regional strategic culture which was more preventative than constructive in nature. The US did not have any grand designs for regional ordering as it was more focused on disrupting perceived negative developments than imposing some a priori vision for the region. China was an extremely important power in the region, which combined with the changes in their foreign policy such as the embrace of regional multilateralism influenced the US security approach; but in general, the lack of change in the US security network and posture was due to larger, environmental circumstances which reinforced the maintenance, by and large, of the status quo. Furthermore, the US faced few tradeoffs in its security pursuits in East Asia in terms of prioritizing some relationships over others or facing tough choices in altering the security network to respond to a crisis or blunt the emergence of other security groupings or ordering dynamics. This permissive environment greatly benefited China in continuing to grow its power without being forced into compromises or confrontations with the US.

The US Approach to East Asian Security Environment in the Rest of the Post-Cold War Period

Throughout the latter half of the 1990s the US regional security approach outlined above became entrenched, creating and furthering a number of path dependencies guiding US strategy which would further solidify this approach for the next two decades. In particular, the returns on the strategy reinforced its continuation, including the achievement of institutional coherence in US regional policy with all relevant bureaucracies - State, the Pentagon, the NSC and the NEC - largely in line regarding its priorities, purpose, and lines of effort. There were no major regional environment disruptions challenging it, and the US had good regional relationships with all regional major powers and many others. Regional alliances went through a period of renewal and modernization, China had committed to a stable, non-oppositional relationship with Washington, and the US was largely acknowledged as the unchallenged regional

security provider who could pick and choose among allies and others to form varied coalitions in response to specific challenges.³⁸⁶

The rapidity in with which China emerged as a major power in the 1990s and 2000s surprised many political elites, and academic observers, in the US.³⁸⁷ While the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review characterized China (along with Russia) as possibly emerging into a regional great power with the desire and means to challenge US interests over the course of a generation, China's sustained investments in military modernization did not become readily apparent until the mid-2000s.³⁸⁸ China's rise and the challenges it presented to the US, however, was a major foreign policy focus for the incoming George W. Bush administration in 2001. In particular, there were growing concerns that the gap between the US and China in a number of military and technology fields was shrinking at a dangerous pace. To arrest these trends, plans were drafted to deploy the most advanced American military assets to the Asia-Pacific region and make major investments in military and other technologies to ensure the US maintained an insurmountable lead in these areas which China would not contest, reinforcing their acceptance of US pre-eminence into the future.³⁸⁹

The events of September 11th 2001, however, and the resultant War on Terror (WOT) dramatically shifted US strategic attention towards Afghanistan and the Middle East.³⁹⁰ International terrorism displaced China as the primary foreign policy concern of the US, but with many elements associated with this new pacing strategy – to keep the US technological and military lead over China - such as additional deployments of aircraft carrier battlegroups and advanced submarines to East Asia, included in both the 2001 *National Security Strategy* and *Quadrennial Defense Review* even though China

³⁸⁶ Jiyun Kih, "Capability Building and Alliance Cohesion: Comparing the US-Japan and US-Philippines Alliances," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 74, no. 4 (2020): 355–376; Goh, "Contesting Hegemonic Order," 627; Jonathan D. Pollack, "The United States and Asia in 1996: Under Renovation, But Open for Business," *Asian Survey*. 37, no. 1 (1997): 95-109.

³⁸⁷ Mark Beeson, "Asian Regionalism: Not so New, Not so Effective," *Pacific Affairs* 92, no. 3 (2019): 515; Green, *By More Than Providence*, 425.

³⁸⁸ Eric Heginbotham et al, "The US-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography and the Evolving Balance of Power, 1996-2017," *RAND* (Santa Monica, California, 2015): xxx; Department of Defense, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, May 1997, 20-22.

³⁸⁹ Nina Silove, "The Pivot before the Pivot: U.S. Strategy to Preserve the Power Balance in Asia," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 45–88.

³⁹⁰ Sutter. *The United States in Asia*, xi; Goh, "The ASEAN Regional Forum in United States East Asian Strategy," 54.

was not explicitly listed as the rationale for these moves.³⁹¹ During the WOT, China remained out of the US crosshairs by remaining agnostic in its view of the future regional and global order³⁹²; becoming an important partner in combatting international terrorism (including convincing the US there was a connection between Uighur separatists in Western China and anti-US terror networks like Al-Qaeda which legitimated Beijing's increasingly brutal crackdowns in Xinjiang³⁹³) and non-proliferation, such as its involvement in the Six Party Talks³⁹⁴; and its mild and indirect opposition to elements of the 'Bush Doctrine'.³⁹⁵ During this time, China continued to be able to focus largely on economic growth and military modernization without direct confrontation with the W Bush administration. Furthermore, as China became an increasingly important regional and global power, the US called on Beijing to become a 'responsible power' in providing more resources and commitments to uphold and defend the international order which had enabled China's rise.

The US pursuit of its objectives during the WOT within East Asia, specifically Southeast Asia, was not as disruptive to the overall regional security environment as might have been expected given the different nature of terrorist organizations they confronted there (largely separatist based rather than anti-American) and the lack of multilateral frameworks to combat these which reinforced the use of bilateral relations with regional states. Furthermore, while initially expected to become a major second front in the WOT, the US focus in Southeast Asia waned after 2003 as it became ever more occupied in managing its dual wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.³⁹⁶ The US security network position, however, remained strong within the region even with most of its focus on the Middle East during this time. No competing blocs of powers had

³⁹¹ Silove, "The Pivot Before the Pivot," 58.

³⁹² Goh, "Contesting Hegemonic Order," 625-626.

³⁹³ Michael Clarke, "China's 'War on Terror' in Xinjiang: Human Security and the Causes of Violent Uighur Separatism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 2 (2008): 271-301.

³⁹⁴ Wyn Rees, "European and Asian Responses to the US-Led 'War on Terror,'" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2007): 224.

³⁹⁵ In particular, China's critiques were framed in terms of restoring important elements of the international order, such as multilateralism and the restraint on the use of force besides self-defence, in order to manage contemporary challenges. China, as well, did not stand out in these criticisms given the large constellation of actors, including allies like Germany and France and other major powers like Russia, which were increasingly opposed to US unilateralism during the WOT, specifically the invasion of Iraq. Peter Van Ness, "China's Response to the Bush Doctrine," *World Policy Journal* 21, no. 4 (2004): 38-47.

³⁹⁶ Renato Cruz De Castro, "U.S. War on Terror in East Asia: The Perils of Preemptive Defense in Waging a War of the Third Kind," *Asian Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2005): 212-231.

emerged, assisted by the growing hedging of many Asian powers amongst themselves. Regional tensions, while not breaking into conflict, continued which further reinforced the US as the most important security power and growing regional demand for its continued presence there, despite its unilateralist propensities evidenced during the WOT.³⁹⁷

By the 2010s, however, the Obama administration unveiled its 'Pivot' (later renamed Rebalance) strategy towards the Asia-Pacific region; the premise being the US had been too focused for over a decade on the WOT and the Middle East and had paid insufficient attention to changes in the Asia-Pacific as it further emerged as a significant region of the international system.³⁹⁸ The six parts comprising the new strategy were almost identical to those listed in the 1995 strategy, including more emphasis on working with US allies, furthering relations with emerging powers with China top of mind, and engaging with regional institutions. Relatedly, the new strategy created confusion about its impact on American grand strategy in general. David Shambaugh argues this is due to the fact that the Pivot was not a new era where the Asia-Pacific would all of sudden become a priority in US foreign policy, as it has always been for decades, but that the region was to become *the* priority moving forward.³⁹⁹

China was a major motivation for and focus in the new strategy. By the early 2010s, however, it was very different from the China of the early 1990s in two primary respects. First, China was a major regional power economically and militarily, well entrenched in the regional institutional landscape and beginning to develop its own multilateral institutions, particularly in the economic domains such as the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB). Second, beginning around 2008/09, Chinese conduct towards many of its regional neighbours, specifically those which it had border and maritime disputes with, and other states internationally became increasingly coercive, eroding the positive and benign image it had developed since the late 1990s via its 'Smile Diplomacy' offering reassurances that as its power grew it would not be

³⁹⁷ Sutter, *The United States in Asia*, 255, 274; Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia."

³⁹⁸ Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>

³⁹⁹ David Shambaugh, "Assessing the US 'Pivot' to Asia," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (2013): 10.

used in a threatening way to disrupt the regional status quo.⁴⁰⁰ While Beijing had acted like this before,⁴⁰¹ what was new was the simultaneous erosion of multiple relationships and a new 'assertiveness' indicating China was forging a less restrained approach, moving away from Deng Xiaoping's long abided by dictum of 'hide your strength, bide your time'.⁴⁰² The Pivot/Rebalance was an attempt to ensure China remained 'moderately revisionist'⁴⁰³ by firming up the security and economic foundations of the region to deter any attempt to challenge them directly and comprehensively but still leaving room for engagement and possible Chinese inclusion. The actions included greater forward deployment of military forces and interoperability with allies, enhanced diplomacy with regional states, specifically in Southeast Asia, and a more surgical and comprehensive trade and investment focus via the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

This approach reflected the Bush administration's early focus on greater, more sustained efforts to balance China as opposed to containing them, the primary difference being balancing pertains to increasing one's own power and influence while containing is focused on undermining the power and influence of one's opponent.⁴⁰⁴ Furthermore, the approach was largely in line with the Clinton administration's Engage but Hedge approach to China. China's importance to the economic and security environment in East Asia was a major consideration in Obama's Pivot/Rebalance where trying to bring China 'on side' in its hegemonic ordering was still pursued. However, the US knew the strategy would be met harshly by Beijing, and might close doors to current and future cooperation, but decided to pursue it anyway given the importance of shoring up its regional position, posture and partnerships to ensure its networked centrality.⁴⁰⁵ The Pivot/Rebalance, furthermore, signaled a growing shift in the US interpretation of China's

⁴⁰⁰ Saunders, "China's Rising Power, the U.S. Rebalance to Asia, and Implications for U.S.-China Relations," 26.

⁴⁰¹ Alastair I. Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security* 37, no. 4 (2013): 7-48.

⁴⁰² Doshi, *The Long Game*.

⁴⁰³ Saunders and Bowie, "US-China Military Relations."

⁴⁰⁴ These approaches can be used in tandem such as the US overall approach to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. See: Kei He, "Undermining Adversaries: Unipolarity, Threat Perception, and Negative Balancing Strategies after the Cold War," *Security Studies* 21, no. 2 (2012): 154-91. The Pivot/Rebalance, however, was more strictly a balancing approach for the US focused on re-affirming its alliances and standing in the region but there was the introduction of some containment like moves such as creating specific rules for entering the TPP trading regimes leaving Beijing with the option of conforming to its rules or being shut out.

⁴⁰⁵ Ely Ratner, "Rebalancing to Asia with an Insecure China," *The Washington Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2013): 21-38.

provocative actions of the 1990s and 2000s as atomized, unconnected at the tactical revisionist level (ie getting a better position in an existing dispute or tension) seeing these as part of a larger, connected and determined approach to undermine (and possible introduce an alternative to) American hegemony at the strategic revisionist level in the latter 2000s and 2010s.⁴⁰⁶ For example, China's military and reclamation activities in the South China Sea were seen as threatening American freedom of maneuver and as part of a larger Chinese challenge against the US' entire maritime posture based on the 'Three Island Chains' than simply about planting flags on and building rudimentary structures on disputed islets.⁴⁰⁷

Another aspect, however, which is underappreciated given the focus on China which dominates contemporary examination of the US security approach towards East Asia but which also contributed to the timing and details of the Pivot/Rebalance was the growing mobilization of a number of resident major powers, most notably Japan and to a more limited degree India, to work together in ordering the region given concerns about China's growing power and behavior.⁴⁰⁸ The US did not oppose these efforts, in part because they were brought in early into them early such as the QUAD; but these did most likely motivate the US to signal to its allies and others in the region that it was assuming a greater leadership role in constructing new and adjusting existing security and economic institutions. These efforts, also, indicated that ASEAN-centred ordering pursuits, while still relevant, had failed to control and moderate great power dynamics necessitating new relationships and institutions forming between the US, its allies and other emerging powers concerned about China.⁴⁰⁹

Despite concerns that the Pivot/Rebalance was counterproductive in its overestimate of the power and threat posed by China⁴¹⁰; that it would 'de-balance' the

⁴⁰⁶ Mira Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020):153-154.

⁴⁰⁷ Sebastian Strangio, "Gregory Poling on the Deep History of US Involvement in the South China Sea," *The Diplomat*, 07 June 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/06/gregory-poling-on-the-deep-history-of-us-involvement-in-the-south-china-sea/>; Tanguy Struye de Swielande, "The Reassertion of the United States in the Asia-Pacific Region." *Parameters* 42, no. 1 (2012): 87.

⁴⁰⁸ Harsh V. Pant, "The Emerging Balance of Power in the Asia-Pacific," *The RUSI Journal* 152, no. 3 (2007): 48–53.

⁴⁰⁹ Euan Graham, "Southeast Asia in the US Rebalance: Perceptions from a Divided Region," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 35, no. 3 (2013): 305–332.

⁴¹⁰ Robert S. Ross, "The Problem With the Pivot: Obama's New Asia Policy Is Unnecessary and Counterproductive," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2012): 70–82.

region by forcing Asian states to choose between the US and China⁴¹¹; and in general create confusion and incoherence by forcing two regions, East Asia and South Asia, into one comprehensive approach⁴¹², both regional allies and other regional states (specifically in Southeast Asia⁴¹³) were very supportive of it, including the additional deployment of military forces in the region.⁴¹⁴ The primary purpose of the Pivot/Rebalance was to shore up the coherence and positionality of the US regional security network within the changing regional security environment to ensure the US retained its privileged position in leading both strategic relations with China and attempts by regional states to increasingly balance against Beijing. As a result, the US did not want separate political-security groupings forming without them, even if they were directed against China.

These shoring up activities were critical in facilitating the decisive break in the US approach towards China, and in general the closing of the post-Cold War era, with the ending of the engagement strategy in 2016.⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, it was clear that during both the Trump and Biden administrations deterrence, and increasingly moves towards containment, rather than reassurance had become the primary focus regarding China, which has been listed as the greatest security challenge to the US.⁴¹⁶ China is now seen as a near-peer challenge which possesses the ability and desire to remake the regional and global system to suit its interests, to the detriment of the US and its allies. As a result, the security network in East Asia is increasingly being oriented directly and confrontationally against China, specifically with a focus on interoperability and integrated defence among the US and its regional allies. This is reflected in the web of new security arrangements such as the Quad, AUKUS, and renewed bilateral alliance deals with Japan and the Philippines. The ability of the US to make these moves

⁴¹¹ Wei Ling, "Rebalancing or De-Balancing: U.S. Pivot and East Asian Order," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 35, no. 3 (2013): 148–154.

⁴¹² Nick Bisley and Andrew Phillips. "Rebalance To Where?: US Strategic Geography in Asia," *Survival* 55, no. 5 (2013): 95–114.

⁴¹³ Sheldon W. Simon, "The US Rebalance and Southeast Asia: A Work in Progress," *Asian Survey* 55, no. 3 (2015): 572–595.

⁴¹⁴ Michael J. Green and Zack Cooper, "Revitalizing the Rebalance: How to Keep U.S. Focus on Asia," *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2014): 25–46.

⁴¹⁵ David M. Lampton, "Engagement with China: A Eulogy and Reflections on a Gathering Storm," in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, ed. Anne F. Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021): 391-422.

⁴¹⁶ President of the University States, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, December 2017, 25; The White House, *National Security Strategy*, October 2022, 23.

demonstrates the fungibility of the security network in terms of repositioning and adapting to deal with changing environmental circumstances regionally and globally in this greater power rivalry-oriented world. But its ability to recruit new members which value their strategic autonomy (such as India) and/or are not prepared to adopt such an approach and posture towards China given their commercial links (such as Indonesia) remains doubtful. These issues will be explored further in the concluding chapter.

Conclusion

LP theory's accounting for this case, in which China was a, if not the, central consideration in the evolution of the US security network in East Asia during the post-Cold War era, is supported by many lines of evidence. For example, the US did resume military relations with China in 1993, signaling any sort of containment strategy, if ever considered by the incoming Clinton administration, was quickly discarded; sanctions and other measures in response to periodic instance of aggressive Chinese behavior in the 1990s was not very harsh or prolonged; and that avenues and channels were created by the US to include China in regional security issues. Furthermore, President Clinton's adjustment towards China is in line with past administrations which began their tenures with fiery, confrontational language against Beijing and then adopted a more pragmatic, balanced approach.⁴¹⁷ The Bush administration followed this same trajectory also. The leniency in approach towards the pressing of human rights issues and scrutiny of China's military buildup and activities, as well, demonstrates the importance of China as a security and economic partner to the US, making it willing to diminish and overlook these matters in order to entice Beijing into becoming a hegemonic supporter. Finally, the implicit assumption underpinning this account is that the lack of changes, purpose and membership of the US regional security network (unlike in Europe with NATO repurposing and expansion) was an expression of American self-restraint to alleviate Chinese security concerns that this network was opposed to and oriented against them. The attempt to convey a non-threatening posture, furthermore, was also expressed in US efforts to build a strategic relationship with Beijing as a separate spoke not fully part of, but in complementarity with the existing security network.

⁴¹⁷ Mike M. Mochizuki, "Terms of Engagement: The U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Rise of China," in *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific*, eds. Ellis S. Krauss and T.J. Pempel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004): 87-114.

LP theory almost exclusively focuses on the US pursuing parallel but separate security relationship building with China and Japan, neglecting the changes and continuities in the regional security environment and their impact on the American security approach. LP theory does not address how the security pluralization of the region in the post-Cold War era influenced its overall regional security strategy, which was largely benign and, in some cases, supportive of this development. In contrast, NC offers a more useful and comprehensive explanatory framework for understanding US actions to ensure the security network remained dominant in this altering security environment by exploring the network concerns emerging, or not, from the summation of changes in and between its component parts and not just individual partnerships.

Exploring this larger environmental context is particularly relevant in understanding the factors and forces influencing the development of the US security approach to the region during the early to mid-1990s which would come to define the next generation in American foreign policy. While China did play a major role during this time, the overall maintenance of the US security network and posture was largely a function of low network concerns in the regional environment in term of the possible emergence of competing blocs, destabilizing wars or different security ordering logics within this pluralizing security environment. As a result, the US did not need to transform or expand the security network to try to assimilate others into it or more directly control a larger portion of the environment. Rather, a number of minor adjustments were needed to shore up the internal configuration of its network, specifically retention of Japan as an ally, and opening up the possibility of furthering relations with China without the risk of having to confront tradeoffs in its security pursuits. China was an important partner and power in the region but given the favourable positionality of the US in the regional security environment there was no need to drastically alter the security network to bring them in and/or force Beijing and other regional powers together under the same institutional framework given the lack of possible alternative, strategic dynamics forming between regional powers to the detriment of the US. This is a development that would be expected in LP theory given China's lynchpin status.

As a result, the US could continue security engagement with China alongside alliance renewal, with low risk, while continuing to receive many benefits from these

arrangements both in relation to specific issues and challenges and cementing its favourable security position overall. The positive feedback loops established by the moves – such as the US retaining its role as the regional security leader, no alternative security alignments and Asian-only ordering schemes emerging, and the freedom to pick and choose partners and allies to work with depending on the challenge being confronted – combined with the maintenance of the overall stability of the region and American growing strategic focus on the Middle East to solidify the pursuit of the US East Asia security strategy by successive Democratic and Republican administrations.

LP theory focuses on function, with the US making space to accommodate China due to its importance. This is contrasted with NC's focus on fit, with China better able to grow and operate within East Asia due to the regional strategic culture the US held towards it. This regional strategic culture calibrated the network sensitivities and informed US responses to them during the crucial period of the early-mid 1990s. Unlike in Europe, the American strategic culture was not anchored by a major ordering vision for East Asia. The predominant feature of the US regional strategic culture towards East Asia was a fixation on preventing any sort of closed Asian regionalism from emerging rather than leading specific region building efforts. Therefore, as long as these 'negative' developments and possibilities were forestalled the US was satisfied with the geo-strategic status quo. As a result, the US was accepting of political heterogeneity of states in the region, did not feel the need to expand its regional security network in an all-inclusive and totalizing way, and retained low expectations about the region as a security partner for international matters.

China, as a result, was able to continue to develop its economic and military power without arousing a high degree of concern from the US until the 2010s when Washington's approach began focusing more on deterring than reassuring Beijing and which may now be entering the initial stages of a containment approach against them. NC helps answer the question of why the US did not more aggressively counteract China's growing power in the 2000s. Specifically, augmenting power developments do not in and of themselves trigger a forceful reaction by the US only, but do so when this translates into behaviors which are seen as undermining the centrality of its network in a regional environment, such as building alternative security and economic hubs, security ordering dynamics, and/or attempting to undermine and alter the alignment of hegemonic

followers. When these concerns become elevated to constitute network wide challenges, they can overcome well entrenched path dependencies which have reinforced the status quo and cause a more seismic change in the US security approach to the region, as is happening currently.

Chapter 6: The European Security Environment and US Regional Security Network: Assessing the Placement and Role of Russia

This chapter explores the European security environment and the US regional security network positioned within it. Russia is the Outside Major Power (OMP) of focus, specifically addressing its role, influence, and impact on American security ordering efforts in this domain case in the post-Cold War environment. Lynchpin (LP) theory argues that while US wanted to include Russia in its post-Cold War re-ordering of their European security network, when these efforts clashed with other regional hegemonic endeavors the US consistently chose the latter. This reflected and reinforced Russia's non-lynchpin power status in relation to the maintenance of the American hegemonic order in Europe. As a result, throughout the entirety of the post-Cold War era, Russia was continuously pushed to the margins of the transforming European security order as nearly all of its positions regarding these matters were opposed by the US.

While agreeing that Russia was continuously sidelined in American security ordering designs in Europe, Networked Centrality (NC) offers a different explanatory rationale. While LP theory largely focuses on the diminishing influence, stature and material power of Russia marginalizing its functional importance, NC argues Russia, even when liberalizing and wanting closer relations with the West, was a bad fit within the US responses to the environmental pressures they confronted in the region in the early 1990s and how these were addressed in accordance with its regional strategic cultural preferences. The US was focused on pursuing its vision for the region as "free and undivided", trying to bring all regional states under a common institutional construct with the US as the lead actor, especially regarding the security environment. The dominant feature of this case – the internal changes to and outward expansion of NATO - as the main vehicle for American hegemonic security ordering in Europe was largely focused on ensuring the followership of its existing members and closing off the chance of any other ordering alternatives, speculated on by some allies as well as Russia, from becoming dominant on the continent.

As well, bringing in CEE states, which wanted to be part of the Western community of states, would marginalize possible conflict in this sub-region, entrench political and economic developments there, and was largely manageable given their

small size and lack of immediate geopolitical concerns. Russia, on the other hand, was a former hegemonic superpower and large military and nuclear power, with an unpredictable future domestically and lingering questions about whether their imperialistic predilections had been extinguished. The US, as well, was unwilling to construct a radically different network system on the continent to include Russia. While Russia wanted to be part of the West, especially during Yeltsin's tenure, they did not want to become a subordinate of the US, joining the ranks of other former great European powers, nor did they want alliance-based politics to continue to be the primary security organizing device on the continent. Bringing Russia in, even if they really wanted to be included, would have severely challenged the character, nature and functioning of the alliance, which the US wanted to increasingly employ in out of area operations and undermined the US position of control and leadership. In short CEE entry was relatively safe and easy whereas Russian entry was not. Distinct dual approaches were therefore pursued in security relations with Russia versus Europe. NC, therefore, offers an explanation as to why the CEE non-lynchpin states were accommodated but not non-lynchpin Russia.

This understanding is critical in appreciating the sharpness of the tradeoffs confronting the US in the parallel pursuits of preserving its hegemonic security network while trying to build a new relationship with Russia. It was too big of a step to try to bring both into a singular arrangement without risking the nature of the security network and US control and influence over it. The US wanted a Europe free and undivided, but also one which did not have strategic autonomy and was largely deferential to its positions on regional security ordering, and willing to support US extra-regional/global security interests. In contrast, the US did not confront such a situation regarding its parallel pursuits regarding regional allies and China in the security domain of East Asia, both given the nature of the region and the US strategic culture towards it. This led to far smaller tradeoffs, a critical difference which will be further explored in Chapter Nine.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section outlines the arguments and evidence presented by LP theory followed by a critique of its conceptual and empirical limitations for this case. The second section employs the critical juncture framework in mapping the changes and continuities of the US security network in Europe. Much of this overview will be from 1991 onwards, when the post-Cold War world definitively emerged

with the termination of the Soviet Union but events and trends immediately before this period will also be covered given their dramatic effect on the Europe security landscape. The third section categorizes and explains these changes and continuities as a function of network concerns. The fourth section explores the path dependencies which emerged from this critical juncture and how these affected the US security approach to the region throughout the remainder of the post-Cold War period, and the various unsuccessful attempts to 'reset' the security relationship with Russia which is currently in a deep state of enmity. The concluding section reviews the arguments made by LP theory and NC for the case.

Russia's Irrelevance

According to LP theory, ever since the crumbling of the Soviet Union's hold on Eastern Europe in 1989 and its own termination in 1991 as a much-diminished successor state trying to forge a new path internally and internationally in the post-Cold War environment, the US has consistently and continuously prioritized the pursuit of other hegemonic ordering interests over developing a new relationship with its former adversary. This is because Russia "was neither vital to the management of America's European hegemonic order nor capable of subverting it."⁴¹⁸ While the US wanted to integrate Russia into its hegemonic order, it was only willing to offer a "take it or leave it" bargain as it was reluctant to accommodate, at almost any level, Russian interests which did not perfectly conform to and/or align with American ordering interests.⁴¹⁹ The clashing of security ordering preferences and interests between the two, in particular, was consistent throughout the transition to and emergence of the Post-Cold War security order in Europe, with the US steadfast in its refusal to entertain any Russian suggestions or compromises regardless of the nature of these proposals. With its diminishing power and influence, the Soviet Union/Russia became a non-lynchpin power and therefore not one the US bargained and compromised with but one to which it dictated the terms of the new security order on the continent and the place Russia was to occupy in it.

Since 1989 with the uprisings against Communist rule throughout CEE, the Soviet Union, and then Russia, begrudgingly accepted new security arrangements and

⁴¹⁸ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 480.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

alignments promoted and enforced by the US. This began with American maneuvering to ensure that as part of the German unification process throughout 1990, the new united Germany would be a member of NATO and therefore the dismissal of Gorbachev's suggestions that it should be a member of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine (intervening in Communist allied states should there be significant domestic rebellion against their rule) which signaled the beginning of the end of the Soviets' Cold War alliances, Gorbachev promoted the idea of a new 'common European home' defined by the elimination of the Warsaw Pact and NATO and the emergence of a more inclusive security order akin to a security community rather than an alliance.⁴²⁰ President Bush, steadfast in his belief that NATO would remain the central security institution in Europe even if the Soviet Union became a complete non-threat, rejected these ideas and refused to meet Gorbachev 'half-way' regarding the security re-ordering of the continent.⁴²¹ Even as it became clear NATO would remain even if the Warsaw Pact collapsed, the Soviet leadership tried to secure guarantees from the US that newly democratic states emerging in CEE would not be granted NATO membership. While there were a number of 'oral understandings' given throughout 1990 by various Bush administration officials, specifically Secretary of State James Baker III, to their Soviet counterparts that NATO would not expand eastward⁴²², good archival evidence exists to indicate that expansion was being actively considered by the administration at this time regardless of Moscow's concerns.⁴²³

Even with the definitive ending of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union, a change in power in the US with the Clinton administration in 1993, and the emergence of a new, democratic Russia under Yeltsin wanting expanded relations with and eventual inclusion in the Western bloc, Russian security interests continued to be marginalized by the US. Despite repeated opposition to NATO expansion by Yeltsin, including his warning of a new 'Cold Peace' descending on the continent during a speech in Budapest in 1994, President Clinton committed to NATO expansion to not just former Warsaw Pact states in CEE, but to some states, specifically in the Baltics, which

⁴²⁰ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 494.

⁴²¹ Robert L. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.:The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997): 346.

⁴²² Interview with Raymond Seitz, 18 November 2021.

⁴²³ Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 7–44.

were part of the Former Soviet Union (FSU).⁴²⁴ The Clinton administration, furthermore, was adamant that neither Russia nor any other state outside the alliance would have a veto over future NATO membership consideration or the missions it undertook.⁴²⁵ Russian proposals, including being granted membership in NATO before any other former communist state and the promotion of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as the new, central security institution of the continent, were dismissed by Washington.⁴²⁶ Instead, Russia was offered a loose association with NATO via the Partnership for Peace (PfP), which Moscow had erroneously assumed initially (and Washington did not correct them) was to be an alternative to, not a path facilitating, NATO expansion by establishing linkages between NATO, former communist states and traditionally neutral/non-aligned states on the continent.⁴²⁷ This was followed up with the 1997 Russia-NATO Founding Act which cemented Russia's role as a junior partner of the US in the security management of the continent in the post-Cold War era with Moscow having affiliation to but no seat in the formal, dominant security structures of the American hegemonic security network in Europe.⁴²⁸

Mastanduno concludes that this continuous marginalization of Russian security interests and concerns showcases that, despite dealing with the most pro-Western leader in Russian history in Yeltsin, the persistent favouring of other hegemonic pursuits demonstrate the non-lynchpin status of Russia as an increasingly irrelevant power in the management and exercise of US security hegemony in Europe. Rather than maximize this unique opportunity in US-Russian history to transform this relationship towards strategic amity as a long-term project, the US, and its European partners, expanded NATO (and the EU) right up to the borders of Russia, pushing Moscow further to the margins of Europe's emerging security and economic order. Despite a number of actions to show solidarity with the West and attempts to constitute a new relationship with its neighbours throughout the 1990s, there appeared to be nothing Russia could do to stop the US from pursuing security ordering efforts which disadvantaged them. This included diplomatic and military support during the Bosnian war, pulling Russian forces out of the

⁴²⁴ William H. Hill, *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018):122.

⁴²⁵ *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 34.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁷ Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme Herd. "Russia and NATO: From Windows of Opportunities to Closed Doors," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23, no. 1 (2015): 41–57.

⁴²⁸ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 494.

Baltics, ceasing rocket sales to India and offering security pledges to CEE states.⁴²⁹ Furthermore, despite President Clinton declaring developing a stable relationship with Russia as his number one foreign policy priority when assuming office (in order to reduce defence and foreign policy spending and focus more on domestic matters)⁴³⁰, and working to ensure its integration in the new European security order⁴³¹, his determined pursuit of NATO expansion at the expense of relations with Russia signals just how low a priority this relationship truly was and ignited an ongoing debate about the role NATO expansion played, or not, in the deterioration of relations between Russia and the West.⁴³²

In attempting to ameliorate these blows, however, the US did offer some overtures to Moscow, including joining the G7 and a joint initiative for ensuring peace in the Middle East, though these were more “symbolic than substantive” efforts.⁴³³ These were not, therefore, a recognition of Russia’s importance but rather consolation prizes which the US could offer relatively easily and without risk. Russia was too irrelevant to be a main consideration in, and too weak to oppose, American hegemonic security interests and pursuits in Europe in the post-Cold War era. Even with the re-emergence of the Russian threat in the 2010s, Mastanduno argues, it did not pose a serious challenge to American security hegemony in Europe but rather “breathed new life into NATO...[and] pressed the United States to reaffirm its longstanding regional commitment”.⁴³⁴

Critiques

As explained in the introduction, NC does not dispute the overall empirical account presented by LP theory that Russian interests and preferences regarding European security ordering were consistently opposed by the US, showcasing a general unwillingness to accommodate them. Rather, the primary difference lies in the

⁴²⁹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 209.

⁴³⁰ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 90.

⁴³¹ This declaratory sentiment was also present during the Bush administration, specifically in the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance which emphasized the need to bring Russia into the democratic ‘zone of peace’. *Defense Planning Guidance*, 2.

⁴³² Mary Elise Sarotte, *Not Once Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021): 43-75; James Goldgeier and Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, “Evaluating NATO Enlargement: Scholarly Debates, Policy Implications, and Roads Not Taken,” *International Politics* 57, no. 3 (2020): 291–321.

⁴³³ Mastanduno, “Partner Politics,” 494.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

explanatory rationale as to the existence of this pattern of little to no accommodation and inclusion of Russia in the evolving American European security network. LP theory focuses almost exclusively on the non-importance of Russia whereas NC examines the larger regional dynamics, including the activities and motivations of allies and emerging non-communist states in CEE, as creating the conditions of inevitable tensions and tradeoffs in the US's European security ordering which were unique and not a situation they confronted in East Asia. While LP theory argues Russia's non-lynchpin status was due to its lack of importance positionally within the European security environment, much of the evidence and rationales presented are based on the fact Russia in the late 1980s and 1990s is a declining power materially. NC does not focus on Russia's material degradation but rather how network concerns of the US during this time period motivated a series of shoring up activities to preserve the dominance of its network in the European security environment which increasingly were at odds with Russia. These hegemonic network designs, furthermore, were rooted in the specific strategic cultural preferences of the US towards Europe, most importantly trying to transform the entire continent into a single hegemonic bloc partner within the NATO-EU project, extinguishing room for other power centres and the re-emergence of great power autonomy and within European security ordering.

There are a number of notable empirical limitations and omissions with Lynchpin Theory's account which will be detailed below. These issues are important to address in order to develop a more accurate and complete understanding of the US disposition towards Russia in the security domain and explore the motivations and factors underpinning the US's European security behavior in general beyond a near exclusive focus on the material weakness of Russia.

Russia Not Losing Out All the Time: The account provided by Lynchpin Theory could erroneously lead one to believe that on every security issue Russia 'lost' to the US, endlessly being marginalized and relegated to being a minor, not major/great, power. The reality was far more complicated than this simplistic portrayal. Regarding German reunification and its inclusion in NATO, the Soviet leadership eventually came around to agreeing with the US that this was the best move not just for Washington and its European allies but for Moscow also. Restraining Germany, the most economically powerful continental state, within a web of security and economic institutions would

preclude any revisionist predilections it could develop in the future if it was allowed, as Moscow recommended, to be 'neutral', alleviating Soviet security concerns and enabling them to focus on tackling their increasingly severe domestic problems.⁴³⁵ Furthermore, despite advocacy from some elements of the Pentagon to coercively pressure Russia to relinquish/dismantle a sizable portion of its nuclear arsenal as a pre-condition to receiving American/Western aid and financial assistance, the Bush administration was far more concerned about ensuring Russia was the only successor state of the Soviet Union which possessed nuclear weapons.⁴³⁶ The US used a series of incentives and coercive approaches in the early 1990s to ensure that Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine all returned the nuclear arsenals on their territories to Russia.⁴³⁷ There was no contemplation of allowing any of these countries to become nuclear-weapons states to balance against the possibility of Russian revanchism given proliferation risks in Europe and the damage to the non-proliferation system that would result from this. Furthermore, the US continued to work with Moscow on strategic arms control, resulting in the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) II in 1993 which did not try to impose hard, asymmetrical weapons reductions on Moscow. As well, the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program offered technical and financial assistance to

⁴³⁵ Interview with Raymond Seitz. Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016): 288; Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996): 368.

⁴³⁶ Interview with David Gompert.

⁴³⁷ The nuclear politics within all three of these states were different and unique, and it was not simply US incentives or pressures which exclusively determined these countries to not become nuclear weapons states. For example, Belarus had a history of non-proliferation efforts, including suggesting a nuclear-weapons free zone in Central and Eastern Europe, and there was a strong consensus in the public and population to give its inherited Soviet nuclear arsenal back. For Kazakhstan, there were some musings by political elites of retaining the weapons to balance against any future Russian or Chinese aggression. However, there was strong domestic opposition against nuclear weapons given the environmental and social impacts of Kazakhstan being a primary nuclear weapons testing site for the Soviet Union which combined with American agreements of aid and assistance (and some warnings of being a pariah if they retained the weapons) convinced Almaty to relinquish them. The most complex, and uncertain, case was Ukraine given the large arsenal and nuclear infrastructure residing in the country and concerns about Russian aggression towards Kiev in the future. If Ukraine kept the weapons, they would have been the third largest nuclear weapon state and immediately been a major power given their population and economic size. The US, though, never wavered from ensuring Kiev relinquished nuclear weapons, working with Russia and other European powers to produce the Budapest Agreement of 1994 which offered security assurances and financial assistance in return for Ukraine returning the nuclear weapons to Russia. Togzhan Kassenova, *Atomic Steppe: How Kazakhstan Gave Up the Bomb* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022); William C. Potter, "The Politics of Nuclear Renunciation: The Cases of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine," *The Stimson Centre*, Occasional Paper No. 22 (April 1995).

Russia and other former Soviet Republics in safely dismantling elements of their former nuclear weapons program and in general preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons material, missiles/platforms and technical knowledge.⁴³⁸

Furthermore, the US supported Russian security and diplomatic organizing and managing efforts in the FSU, including the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO); the retention of Russian forces in breakaway republics in Moldova and Georgia; and Moscow taking the lead in peace negotiations in Tajikistan and Armenia-Azerbaijan, including being the sole provider of peacekeepers to the latter conflict.⁴³⁹ Finally, Russia won a significant security diplomacy victory in the renegotiation of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) in 1995 regarding having former Warsaw Pact states no longer count as part of its force totals and amendments to force levels in the 'flank' areas of the Baltics and Caucuses, which allowed Moscow to move more forces into the latter as part of its efforts to put down the armed uprising in Chechnya despite raising concerns among neighbouring states.⁴⁴⁰

Unity of Purpose Between the US and European Allies: Another mischaracterization inherent in Lynchpin Theory's account of this case is the apparent unity of purpose and effort shared among the US and its European allies towards NATO expansion and other security ordering moves. Rather, there were major disagreements between allies regarding the future and purpose of NATO with the removal of the Soviet threat,⁴⁴¹ the inclusion of Germany in NATO,⁴⁴² whether a more exclusive European force/construct should become more dominant in security affairs on the continent,⁴⁴³ and NATO expansion itself.⁴⁴⁴ Appreciating the nature of the disagreements among European allies and the US is critical in understanding the security ordering moves Washington took

⁴³⁸ William C. Potter and John M. Shields, "Lessons from the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program," *Asia-Pacific Review* 4, no.1 (1997): 35–56.

⁴³⁹ Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 106-108; Alekseï Georgievich Arbatov, ed., *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1997).

⁴⁴⁰ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 198.

⁴⁴¹ Interview with James Gompert; Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, 11.

⁴⁴² Hill. *No Place for Russia*, 119.

⁴⁴³ Kori Schake, "NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995: Institutional Competition and the Collapse of the French Alternative," *Contemporary European History* 7, no. 3 (1998): 379–407.

⁴⁴⁴ James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO*. (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1999): 3.

during this period, complicating the notion that it was only the Russians who were not accommodated and/or marginalized in this process. Doing so balances examination of NATO expansion as not purely driven by external-outward drivers and opportunities, but also as a shoring up activity focused internally and inwardly to ensure coherence and compliance among existing followers.

Choosing Between Non-Lynchpin Powers: This case brings forth a core conceptual limitation inherent with LP theory: how does the US choose among competing priorities when furthering relations among non-lynchpin powers in its hegemonic ordering pursuits? In this case, why did the US decide to include many non-lynchpin powers in CEE in its hegemonic expansion plans but not Russia? Are these powers more important to American hegemonic maintenance and security dominance on the continent? Examining these outside minor powers by themselves, it is hard to make this determination. Tying this back to the above point, American security network concerns in this case were a complex mixture of linkages between 'inside' (within the security network) and 'outside' (within the security environment) elements which requires a more comprehensive analysis than that afforded by a focus on individual relationships. The expansion of the security (and economic) hegemonic structures into CEE cannot be understood simply by looking at these states in isolation but as part of a larger effort to ensure American dominance of its security network on the continent.

Russian Actions: LP theory assigns little to no causal importance to Russian agency in influencing security (re)ordering in Europe. Indeed, the entire argument rests on the fact that despite being a nascent democracy, the Yeltsin government's pro-Western orientation, and its numerous efforts to support and demonstrate its commitment to American security efforts on the continent, Washington continuously sidelined Russia in its hegemonic efforts given their relative unimportance compared to other priorities. There was nothing Russia could or could not do to augment their station in the eyes of Washington decisionmakers, but were there things it did which lowered expectations and created doubt about their ability to be a real partner of the West? Specifically, the lack of democratic reforms enacted by Yeltsin, including his literal war against Parliament in 1993, and ongoing brutality committed by the Russian Army in Chechnya raised serious concerns in the Bush and Clinton administrations about the future of Russian democracy

and whether Yeltsin could be a trusted partner throughout the early to mid-1990s.⁴⁴⁵ The lack of alternatives to Yeltsin, however, tied the US to his political fortunes and revealed the limited influence the US had politically in Russia, even in its weakened state.⁴⁴⁶ Also, Russia remained a significant military power whose actions caused serious concerns among its neighbours and the US. These included its slow withdrawal of thousands of Russian soldiers from the Baltics and former East Germany, disputes with Ukraine over the Crimean Peninsula and the future of the Black Sea Fleet based there, and support for separatist elements in breakaway regions of Moldova and Georgia.⁴⁴⁷ These issues complicate any depiction of Russia as being an entirely benign actor during the early period of the post-Cold War era whose actions did not contribute to security concerns from states in CEE, which increasingly wanted more formal security and economic commitments and linkages with the West, and doubt in Washington about the future of Russia, including a possible future turn towards authoritarian-nationalism, revanchism and empire building.⁴⁴⁸

Re-Ordering European Security Towards a Continent “Free and Undivided”

For this case, the major environmental-network changes and continuities in this case are:

1) *Environment* - Ending of the rival, dual-alliance bloc security system with the termination of the Warsaw Pact and removal of communist regimes from the continent. Growing aspirations for and efforts towards European leadership regarding security issues on the continent, as part of larger economic-political integration around the EC/EU. US posture shifts from outright opposition to tepid support for these non-NATO based security organizing efforts.

⁴⁴⁵ The lack of reforms included non-ratification of a constitution, non-formation of a political party for Yeltsin to institutionalize his power within the democratic system, and not dismantling many Soviet-era governmental institutions like the Congress of People’s Deputies and the KGB. Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 37.

⁴⁴⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 119.

⁴⁴⁷ Sergey Radchenko, “Nothing but Humiliation for Russia’: Moscow and NATO’s Eastern Enlargement, 1993-1995,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 6-7 (2020): 783.

⁴⁴⁸ Such uncertainty was explicitly stated in both the 1994 (p.5) and 1995 (p.8) National Security Strategies. This sentiment was repeated in the 1997 QDR, where Russia is listed alongside China as the most likely great power peer competitors against the US in the next 15 years (p.22).

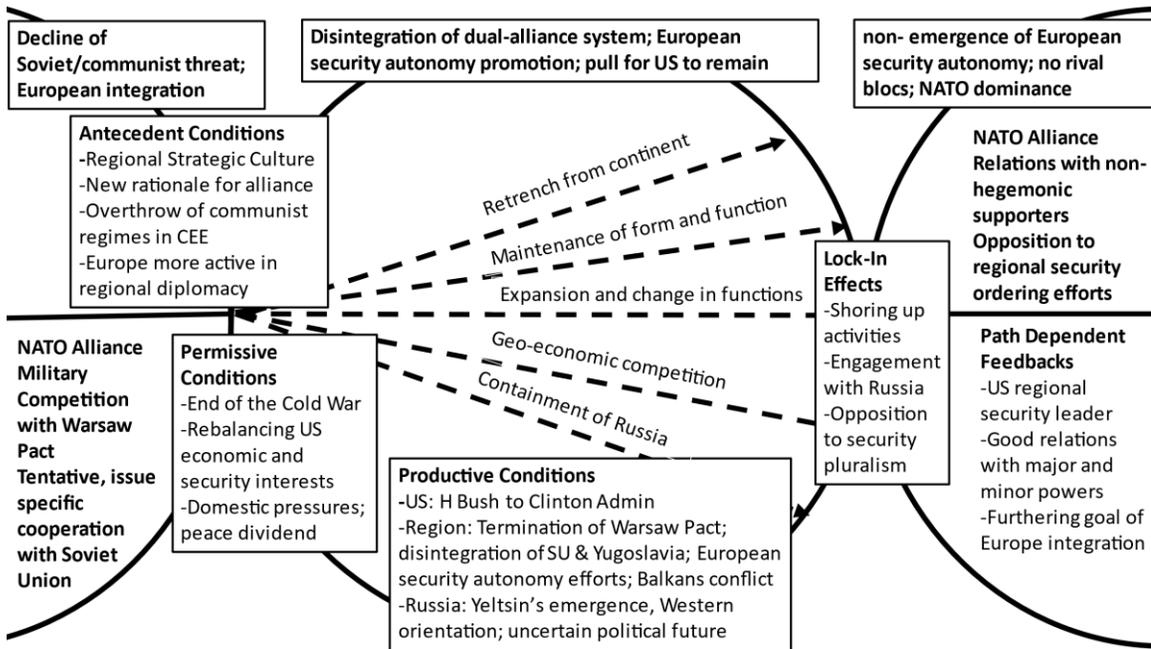
2) *Network* - Maintenance and expansion of NATO in terms of membership and function. Transformation of institutional emphasis from security alliance towards vehicle of political organization. Functional transformation from territorial defence towards expeditionary capabilities to conduct out of area operations.

3) *Interplay of the two* - Centrality of NATO in European security affairs; use as security force for conflict management and resolution both in and out of Europe. Mechanisms connecting NATO to non-NATO states (PfP). OSCE and EU security elements exist but no competitor to NATO. Maintenance of US regional military posture and activities.

The mapping of these changes and continuities raises important questions about the motivations behind entrenching the centrality of NATO in European security affairs, not only at the expense of developing a new relationship with Russia but curtailing greater European leadership of and contributions to security affairs on the continent. Why were other ordering initiatives and efforts not supported or pursued by the US given they could have re-distributed burden sharing among allies and helped stabilize relations with Russia? Despite these two matters being top of mind for US officials determining how best to deliver on the 'peace dividend' anticipated by their public with decreasing foreign and military spending at the end of the Cold War, there was little appetite to allow other security organizations and groupings to emerge, or have much agency, amidst the changing regional security environment in the transition to and early post-Cold War era.

The specific conditions and factors during this period are depicted in Figure Seven below using the Historical Institutional framework. As with the other cases, the framework is employed as a guide to structure and examine the case in a sequential manner by dividing it into three temporal segments - pre-critical juncture (late 1980s), critical juncture (1989-1995) and the closing of the critical juncture (1995) - to best identify and map the existence of, changes in, and interactions between network concerns. To reiterate, much of the focus will be from 1991 onwards, with the definitive end of systemic bipolarity and the Cold War as marked by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact and the emergence of a new, pro-Western in Russia.

Figure 7: Critical Juncture of the US Security Approach Towards Europe



Pre-Critical Juncture (late 1980s)

In the years immediately following the ending of the Second World War in Europe, the US, increasingly concerned about the hegemonic power of the Soviet Union as evidenced in the military occupation of and installation of communist regimes in CEE states and East Germany, enacted large scale economic and security programs to rebuild Western European states, including wartime allies and defeated former axis powers, into hegemonic followers to counteract Soviet power and influence.⁴⁴⁹ In the security domain, this was pursued primarily via multilateral organizing which culminated in the creation of NATO in 1949. The Soviet Union reciprocated by establishing the Warsaw Pact in 1955 as a military alliance constituting its hegemonic followers in Eastern Europe. The two rival blocs dominated the security environment on the continent throughout the Cold War. Trade and economic relations between the two remained limited. The US institutionalized the Marshall Plan into the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC, forerunner to the OECD) in 1948 and mobilized support

⁴⁴⁹ Timothy Sayle argues that the main fear of the US was not the military occupation of these states by the Soviet Union, but by being coerced by Moscow to make large compromises or else risk war which many of these domestic publics were opposed to after years of conflict. Timothy Andrew Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019):11-49.

for imposing export controls towards the Soviet Union and its allies with the establishment of the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (CoCom) in 1949. On the other side, pursuit of autarkic economic policies by the Soviet Union and the creation of their own inter-economic arrangement - the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) - among their communist allies limited trade and engagement with the West.⁴⁵⁰

The tensions between the two alliances never erupted in conflict during the Cold War. Rather, throughout the 1950s and 1960s both superpowers had to deal with dissenting hegemonic followers within their alliances. For the US, France, increasingly frustrated that NATO would not expand its territorial mandate to include colonial possessions, disdainful of the dominance of American leadership within the alliance, and feeling that they could pursue a more independent path now that they were a nuclear weapons power, left the unified command structure in 1966.⁴⁵¹ For the Soviet Union, they were never able to repair relations with Yugoslavia following their falling out in the late 1940s and Albania left the Warsaw Pact in 1968, in part due to Soviet-led military interventions in member states Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) to quell popular uprisings. During this time, the Warsaw Pact governments became increasingly focused on providing military support to one another in the face of domestic unrest which challenged communist rule, resulting in the establishment of the Brezhnev Doctrine by which the Soviet Union would come to the aid of/intervene in any communist ally facing severe domestic threat.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ James Libbey, "CoCom, Comecon, and the Economic Cold War," *Russian History* 37, no. 2 (2010): 133–152; Mastanduno. *Economic Containment*.

⁴⁵¹ France, however, did not technically leave the alliance but rather forced all allied forces to leave its territory, withdrew from various bureaucratic organizations within it and ceased its participation in NATO standing task forces. The US was forced to work with France to establish protocols to ensure Paris would support them in the event of a war with the Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact and to preclude any deep, separate security ties forming between them and Moscow. The result of France's withdrawal, however, was to decentralize the Alliance away from complete US domination with other members, specifically the United Kingdom and West Germany, taking on more leadership roles in running and organizing various elements and aspects of NATO. Christian Nuenlist, "Dealing with the Devil: NATO and Gaullist France, 1958-66," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 9, no. 3 (2011): 220–231.

⁴⁵² This doctrine was not limited to European communist allies, as evidenced in its invocation as the reason Soviet forces entered Afghanistan in 1979 at the behest of the communist regime in Kabul. Matthew J. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine in Soviet Foreign Policy*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Beginning in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, American-Soviet relations entered a period known as *détente* defined by the relaxation of hostility towards one another, acknowledging the need for socialist and capitalist spheres to coexist, and advancing arms control measures. During this time, European states, specifically within the Western bloc, became increasingly involved in security affairs on the continent as participants, and in some cases leaders, rather than strictly subordinates of the US. Events over the previous decade - such as the American withdrawal from Vietnam and increased Soviet fixation on the stability of its allied communist regimes - had demonstrated the declining influence of these powers from their apex of dominance in the two decades after the Second World War, opening up, to varying degrees, spaces for others to become more involved in economic and security matters, especially during the thawing of superpower relations during *détente*.⁴⁵³ Perhaps the most obvious example was the Helsinki Accords, where states from both blocs agreed to the establishment of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as a mechanism for managing tensions between the two blocs and a number of agreed principles including respecting the sovereignty of states (including the choice of alliance partners). Many Western European states also wanted to explore furthering diplomatic and economic relations with their Eastern counterparts during this time.⁴⁵⁴

The US posture towards the Soviet Union, however, shifted back towards enmity in the late 1970s, which deepened during the Reagan administration. President Reagan believed a far more comprehensive, confrontational approach was required to contain Soviet revisionism and to ultimately degrade and defeat the socialist alternative. *Détente* had enabled the Soviets to augment their power and become more aggressive, as reflected in their invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. In combating the 'evil empire', the Reagan administration introduced the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in 1983 which Moscow saw as a direct threat to their nuclear deterrence capability. As well, the administration tried to strengthen CoCom, expanding it beyond a broad-based strategic embargo towards a coercive mechanism to influence the behavior of the Soviet Union

⁴⁵³ Andreas Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity: NATO's Transformation and the Multilateralization of *Détente*, 1966–1968," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 1 (2004): 22–74.

⁴⁵⁴ Wilfried Loth and George Soutou, eds., *The Making of Détente: Eastern Europe and Western Europe in the Cold War, 1965-75* (London: Routledge, 2008).

and Warsaw Pact.⁴⁵⁵ These efforts not only eroded relations with Moscow, but also with allies as well who wanted to continue détente inspired engagement with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.⁴⁵⁶

Relations with Moscow began to improve, however, in the latter part of the 1980s with the emergence of Mikail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev wanted to ensure a benign international environment, specifically with the West, to encourage further relations among them as part of his efforts to reform the Soviet Union economically and politically.⁴⁵⁷ While the Reagan administration continued with a number of combative pursuits, and pushed their allies to support these, room began opening up for cooperation efforts to resume, specifically over arms control as demonstrated with the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. This thaw in relations was seen as important in ensuring stability in Europe but was not in and of itself something entirely new. Rather, it was an attempt to return to the detente of the early 1970s. Gorbachev, however, unlike Brezhnev, seemed far more willing to work towards developing more stable relations with the West as a longer-term change in Soviet foreign policy, though few believed the foundational element of the European security system - the dual alliance bloc rivalry led by opposing superpowers- would change anytime soon. The uprisings against communist rule throughout the Warsaw Pact in 1989, therefore, represented the emergence of a critical juncture in terms of rethinking security and economic orders throughout the continent. These seismic shocks began just as the Bush administration assumed power in the US, and quickly realized their major strategic challenge was not how to maintain the US advantage in the Cold War but how to manage its ending in a peaceful and stable manner.⁴⁵⁸ As with East Asia, the Bush administration, regardless of the future of the Soviet bloc, wanted to ensure the predominance of the US in the security environment in Europe throughout this period and its aftermath. Doing so required an approach which not only focused on the Soviets but on Western European allies and Eastern European states as well during this delicate time.

⁴⁵⁵ Mastanduno. *Economic Containment*, Chapter Eight "U.S. Leadership and the Struggle to Strengthen CoCom, 1981-1989."

⁴⁵⁶ Andrea Chiampan, "'Those European Chicken Littles': Reagan, NATO, and the Polish Crisis, 1981-2," *International History Review* 37, no. 4 (2015): 682–699.

⁴⁵⁷ Brands. *Making the Unipolar Moment*, 282.

⁴⁵⁸ Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment*, 279.

Allies: Maintaining alliance solidarity with European partners and preventing any sort of European only efforts during this period of change, was a paramount goal of the Bush Administration.⁴⁵⁹ As mentioned above, many European partners had been opposed to the more aggressive American approach under Reagan which they saw as undermining arms control measures and efforts to advance trade and diplomatic relations with Eastern Europe. Over the previous two decades, these allies had not only become more active diplomatically concerning security issues on the continent, but were important economic partners to the US whose cooperation was needed in stabilizing financial markets and expanding liberal trade regimes.⁴⁶⁰ At the same time, it was clear the Western European powers were not united in their approach to dealing with the growing destabilization in Eastern Europe, most importantly on the question of German unification which became a central and urgent matter with the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989. The Bush administration, therefore, believed American leadership was vital in organizing its European allies into a common approach which would also prevent any consolidation among them in advocating for new arrangements which did not conform to the interests of the US.

Soviet Union: The Bush administration believed they could negotiate with Gorbachev regarding managing the turmoil in Eastern Europe in a way which furthered American interests. Early on, the administration determined that while they would be unwilling to accommodate Moscow's proposals or interests during this period⁴⁶¹, they lessened the public messaging calling on the Soviets to immediately leave their satellite allies or promoting similar uprisings in the republics constituting the Soviet Union proper. The administration believed Gorbachev could be convinced to relinquish Moscow's hold over these states and allow them to choose their own domestic and foreign policy futures. This was based on Gorbachev's reform efforts and a number of conciliatory measures he had taken throughout 1989. These included his pledge to reduce the Soviet military's footprint in Europe by 20 percent, the effective renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine by

⁴⁵⁹ Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, "The End of the Cold War and German Reunification" in *Transforming Our World: President George H.W. Bush and American Foreign Policy*, eds. Andrew S. Natsios and Andrew H. Card Jr. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020): 57-80.

⁴⁶⁰ Liviu Horovitz and Elias Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration Wanted NATO Enlargement," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 6-7(2020): 847-868.

⁴⁶¹ Shifrinson. *Rising Titans, Falling Giants*.

not militarily intervening to prop up communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and completing the withdrawal of its military forces from Afghanistan.⁴⁶² The administration's approach to Moscow was informed by a sense that the Cold War might be coming to an end but that the Soviet Union would remain a great power even though its hegemonic order in Eastern Europe would cease.

Environment: The Bush administration decided they would support the uprisings in Eastern Europe but wanted to manage this at the diplomatic level with the Soviet Union to ensure a stable transition within these states which did not spark violence or Soviet attempts to regain control. Indeed, many of these states realized that the transition period away from communist rule and inclusion in the Soviet sphere of influence would not be completed immediately, requiring continuing relations with Moscow. For example, upon coming to power in Poland in 1989, the President of the Solidarity-led government, Lech Wałęsa, assured the Soviet Union it would not immediately leave the Warsaw Pact. Even amidst these revolutions, there remained thousands of Soviet troops in these states, most importantly in East Germany. Nevertheless, there was a sense that this moment provided an opportunity to the US to help ensure democratic forces won in Eastern Europe, pushing back Soviet influence and control. What would happen to, and effects of, these free states in this altered European security environment remained unclear, however.

Critical Juncture (1989-1995)

The Bush administration's approach to the dramatically changing situation in Eastern Europe, which was reverberating throughout the entire continental security environment, was to ensure, and if possible enhance, US centrality by: 1) securing the support of its allies both with respect to specific US efforts during this transition period and more broadly in the retention of American security leadership, via NATO, on the continent; 2) continuing to push for and facilitate the Soviet withdrawal of power and influence in Eastern Europe; and 3) countering the emergence of any other security group or network which could directly or indirectly undermine US networked centrality in Europe. From the beginning, the Bush administration was determined to prevent a new Yalta-type agreement. Rather, it would have its own agenda regarding Europe's future

⁴⁶² Philip Zelickow and Condoleezza Rice, *To Build a Better World: Choices to End the Cold War and Create a Global Commonwealth* (New York: Twelve Hachette Book Group, 2019): 90-91.

and would maneuver to ensure its acceptance by Western allies, the Soviets and CEE states.⁴⁶³ The first major challenge in this process was the question of German unification, which dominated European and American diplomacy throughout 1990.

During these deliberations, the US was able to convince allies, specifically France, that a unified Germany within NATO and the EU would not pose a future threat to the continent.⁴⁶⁴ The same logic was advanced to the Soviets who reluctantly agreed that this was the best path to proceed along regarding German unification. As well, the Bush administration leaned on the agreed upon values stemming from the Helsinki Accords, which the Soviet Union had signed onto, and which promoted the freedom of European states in choosing security alignments and alliances and was in line with Gorbachev's reform efforts in the Soviet Union and in its relations with the continent.⁴⁶⁵ Furthermore, the enmeshment of Germany into Western security and economic institutions was seen as alleviating many security concerns from the newly democratic/democratizing states in CEE, located between Germany and the Soviet Union and with a violent history of being competed over and subjugated by both during in the 20th century.⁴⁶⁶ At a macro-level, the '4 + 2' format of the unification negotiations (the four occupying powers and West and East Germany) was the product of American maneuvering to limit the number of states involved in the process, cement allied solidarity among Paris, London and Bonn and then present a united front against Moscow to accept German unification and its NATO entry. These efforts prevented any possibility of a new security network and/or relations forming between the major Western European powers, a neutral/unaligned Germany and the Soviet Union, reinforcing American dominance in this changing security environment through its position as a hub through which strategic relations between these states ran.

At the same time, the Bush administration increasingly became concerned about alliance solidarity in general given the retreating threat posed by the Soviet Union and

⁴⁶³ Zelikow and Rice, "The End of the Cold War and German Reunification," 59.

⁴⁶⁴ Hill. *No Place for Russia*, 119.

⁴⁶⁵ The US and West Germany, also, coordinated to give the Soviets money and loans to help battle its internal problems in exchange for Gorbachev accepting a unified Germany in NATO. Maey Elise Sarotte, "Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to 'Bribe the Soviets Out' and Move NATO In," *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 121-124.

⁴⁶⁶ Shiffrinson, "Eastbound and Down," 822.

the Warsaw Pact.⁴⁶⁷ There were growing voices, especially in France, calling for greater leadership by European states over continental security affairs as part of the larger diplomatic and economic cooperation and integration process resulting in the establishment of the European Union (EU) in 1992.⁴⁶⁸ Paris floated the idea that NATO would become a secondary, and somewhat removed alliance structure, to be activated and used only if there was a return of Russian revanchism in the future, implying the US would remove most of its forces from the continent and play a non-leadership role in the new European security system.⁴⁶⁹ In its stead, France advocated for the idea of a Western European Union (WEU) 'Eurocorps' as an alternative to NATO in conducting security missions on the continent as well as creating a separate European caucus within NATO itself.⁴⁷⁰ These ideas gained some support on the continent, most important from the newly unified Germany.⁴⁷¹ As a result, there were a multitude of different security ordering projects being advocated simultaneously - the Atlanticist vision, based on NATO centrality, most forcefully promoted by the US and UK; the Europeanist view led by France based on a European led and populated security force; the 'Vancouver to Vladivostok' vision of pan-Europism pushed by the Soviet Union (and later Russia), giving more prominence to the CSCE as the main security institution on the continent; and a 'Europe of the States' notion based on the primacy of the sovereignty of states with a heavy implication of neutrality being adopted throughout the continent.⁴⁷²

Throughout 1990 and 1991, many of the newly democratic states in Eastern Europe were increasingly concerned about the regional security environment moving forward. The prospects of Soviet/Russian revanchism were re-introduced with the crackdown in the Baltics in 1991, Soviet/Russian involvement in the civil wars in Moldova and Georgia and the August 1991 coup in Moscow.⁴⁷³ There remained much uncertainty, furthermore, about the future relationship between Germany and the rest of the region,

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Dr. Robert Hutchings. The 1990 National Security Strategy stated "maintaining cohesion among allies and friends as the common enemy recedes..." in Europe was indispensable to ensuring their common security and prosperity moving forward (p. 11).

⁴⁶⁸ Schake, "NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995."

⁴⁶⁹ Interview with David Gompert.

⁴⁷⁰ Interview with David Gompert; Schake, "NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995," 379-380.

⁴⁷¹ The Germans argued to the US that these efforts, specifically creation of a European caucus, would bring France closer back to NATO's unified command but France argued to Berlin that this was the beginning of a European-only force. Schake, "NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995," 388.

⁴⁷² Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, 150-151.

⁴⁷³ Horowitz and Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics," 860.

specifically with respect to Poland.⁴⁷⁴ The onset, as well, of ethnic based conflict with the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 created concern in many regional capitals (and Washington) that similar types of violence could occur elsewhere in the region.⁴⁷⁵ While many regional states began developing closer relations with one another to manage these issues, such as among the Baltics and the Visegrad Group (comprised of the Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia), the vast majority of them increasingly wanted tighter linkages with and if possible formal entry into Western economic and security pacts, in particular NATO given the high standards established for membership in the EU following the Maastricht Treaty of 1992.⁴⁷⁶

Compounding the difficulties of managing these changes was the sudden realization that democracy and separatist sentiments had begun to severely threaten the future of the Soviet Union itself.⁴⁷⁷ The Bush administration took a restrained approach to these developments and urged restraint on the part of separatists leaders (with the notable exception of the Baltic Republics which were seen as occupied states rather than integral components of the Soviet Union⁴⁷⁸), most famously advocated for during Bush's 'Chicken Kiev' speech in Ukraine.⁴⁷⁹ The basis for this approach was premised on three factors: 1) the risks of instability and violence stemming from these developments; 2) concerns about Moscow's control over its nuclear arsenal, specifically of those located outside the Russian Socialist Republic; and 3) apprehension of working with new leaderships emerging in Moscow and other parts of the Soviet Union, especially given Gorbachev's cooperations relations with President Bush in managing the changes in Europe since 1989. President Bush, reluctantly, began establishing informal relations with Boris Yeltsin in the latter part of 1991 as a hedge against the increasingly likely possibility of the Soviet Union's termination.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁴ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 33.

⁴⁷⁵ Interview with Frank Wisner; Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 117.

⁴⁷⁶ Horovitz and Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics," 860. Vojtech Mastny, "Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership: Ending the Cold War in Europe," *Cold War History* 9, no. 2 (2009): 213.

⁴⁷⁷ Interview with David Gompert.

⁴⁷⁸ Andres Kasekamp, "An Uncertain Journey to the Promised Land: The Baltic States' Road to NATO Membership," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 6-7 (2020): 878.

⁴⁷⁹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 28.

⁴⁸⁰ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 26.

Within this milieu of both internal (new security arrangements proposed by and growing diplomatic and economic integration among its allies)⁴⁸¹ and external (democratization in Eastern Europe and later the collapse of both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union) pressures, the Bush administration was determined to ensure NATO was the dominant feature of the European security environment, and not relegated to being an 'alliance of last resort'.⁴⁸² During the 1990 and 1991 NATO Summits, the US began promoting the need for NATO to transform its mandate and operations if it were to be relevant in a post-Cold War era. NATO was to become more than a military alliance with the growing emphasis on being a political organization, specifically due to the inclusion of a unified Germany in the alliance, based on shared values like democracy. Furthermore, the functions and capabilities of the alliance were to be retooled towards cooperative security rather than exclusively collective defence, resulting in a shift away from territorial defence and towards expeditionary 'out of area' operations.⁴⁸³ While not being a direct participants, the deployment of NATO forces to Turkey and the Mediterranean during the 1990-1991 Gulf War (in anticipation of any possible expansion of the conflict towards these areas) had demonstrated the fungibility of the organization to support security operations occurring off the continent.⁴⁸⁴ Initially, many European allies were opposed to the change in force structure and missions of the alliance given that territorial defence (especially in the face of a rival great power threat which the Soviet Union had presented for decades) was easier to generate public support for than expeditionary missions in other countries which did not pose such an immediate threat.⁴⁸⁵ As will be explored below, however, successful US strategic maneuvering - linking their continued involvement on the continent to the continuation of NATO as the central regional security institution - and the failures of the Europeans themselves to deal with the escalating conflict in the former Yugoslavia eventually quelled opposition within the alliance to this new direction.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸¹ Steve Marsh and Hans Mackenstein. *The International Relations of the EU* (New York: Routledge, 2004): 95–129.

⁴⁸² Hutchings. *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, 29.

⁴⁸³ Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 77-78.

⁴⁸⁴ "Did You Know That NATO Played a Very Active Supporting Role During the First Gulf Crisis and War in 1990-1991?" *Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe*, accessed December 12, 2022,

<https://shape.nato.int/page2148111510#:~:text=Thus%20while%20NATO%20was%20not,states%20threatened%20by%20the%20conflict>

⁴⁸⁵ Paul van Hooff, "Land Rush: American Grand Strategy, NATO Enlargement, and European Fragmentation," *International Politics* 57, no. 3 (2020): 536.

⁴⁸⁶ Schake, "NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995," 379.

The 1991 Rome NATO Summit, furthermore, established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) as a mechanism for the alliance to establish and further relations with former Warsaw Pact members.⁴⁸⁷ Since February 1990, there had been elements in the Bush administration advocating the need to quickly advance security and economic linkages with these states. NATO was seen as the best vehicle of choice given the US power within this organization to set agendas and guide its future direction.⁴⁸⁸ However, in the early 1990s the Bush administration was still concerned about antagonizing the Soviets while they retained thousands of troops in the region.⁴⁸⁹ There were, also, some NATO members, specifically France, which were opposed to offering membership to these states. As a result, the NACC was a middle route which allowed the US, through NATO, to begin reaching out and establishing relations with states in Eastern Europe, building linkages which in the future could be transformed into something more permanent and stable. The NACC, also, assisted the Bush administration in curbing the rise in prominence of European security organizations which included both NATO and (former) Warsaw Pact members, such as the CSCE.⁴⁹⁰ These actions demonstrate that in this highly volatile environment, the Bush administration maneuvered assertively and along multiple lines to ensure the US entrenched its dominant position through changes to NATO and establishing NATO-affiliated networks. Moving into 1992, however, the Bush administration faced a new strategic challenge regarding European security: no longer was it focused on how to best position itself during a period of weakness for (though not defeat of) the Soviet Union but rather how to navigate a world where their longtime rival longer existed at all, marking the total collapse of communist systems in Europe. What would be the new foundations upon which American security interests, activities and relations with Europe would predicated upon? Such a challenge would be largely taken up and answered by Bush's successor, President Clinton beginning in 1993.

⁴⁸⁷ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 18.

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with Raymond Seitz; Shiffrinson, "Eastbound and Down," 822; Sarotte, "Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence," 118.

⁴⁸⁹ Shiffrinson, "Eastbound and Down," 825-826. The 1991 National Security Strategy stated that while the Soviet Union was in a weekend state it remained a 'military superpower' that still could threaten a sub-region or flank within Europe (p. 11).

⁴⁹⁰ Mastny, "Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership," 12.

Change in the US Administration: As with their strategic orientation towards East Asia, the Bush administration during the definitive beginning of the Post-Cold War era (with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a quasi-democratic and non-hostile Russia) in 1992 was more focused on saving American positionality and hegemonic relations within Europe than on thinking of new structures and processes to order its relations with the continent in the security domain. With the referent of opposing a clear and obvious continental strategic challenger gone, the determination and articulation of US interests proved challenging beyond references to achieving the goal of making Europe “free and undivided”.⁴⁹¹ The maintenance of primacy, therefore, became a goal unto itself, increasingly defining what the US did not want to see emerge in terms of security ordering more than what it wanted to (help) emerge. Dealing with the fallout from the collapse of both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union placed the Bush administration in a largely reactive posture focused on stabilizing these contexts.

For example, the Bush administration acquired NATO’s support in creating a multi-national alliance corps incorporating elements of the Bundeswehr to prevent any sort of German autonomy militarily.⁴⁹² Germany, along with Japan, also was increasingly framed as a “formidable” economic competitor, requiring strategic negotiations to ensure their competition did not become a counter-productive rivalry eroding their overall relationship.⁴⁹³ Furthermore, while displaying some declaratory support for other European security organizations, such as the CSCE and WEU, the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance explicitly warned that a European only security arrangement would undermine NATO’s integrated command structure.⁴⁹⁴ NATO would continue to provide the “indispensable foundation” upon which a stable security environment in Europe would be built.⁴⁹⁵ The deepening of NATO’s relations with states in Central and Eastern Europe, furthermore, would help blunt the possibility of these states becoming non-democratic and hostile.⁴⁹⁶ Disputes over the nature of, and their responsibilities within, the relationship between NATO and European security institutions met its first real

⁴⁹¹ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, 344.

⁴⁹² Schake, “NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995,” 391.

⁴⁹³ This sentiment is featured prominently in the beginning of both the 1990 and 1991 National Security Strategy.

⁴⁹⁴ *Defense Planning Guidance*, p. 42. The H Bush administration, as well, was opposed to making the CSCE into any sort of legal entity with binding obligations on its members. Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 79.

⁴⁹⁵ *Regions Strategy*, 22

⁴⁹⁶ *Regions Strategy*, 22-23.

challenge in 1992 with the worsening civil war in Bosnia. The CSCE mission had done well to document the nature of the conflict but had been unable to foster a negotiated ending to the violence. The WEU could not muster enough membership support for managing ceasefires and blockades.⁴⁹⁷ As a result, the Bush administration felt increasingly pressured to employ NATO as an intervention force to end the conflict.⁴⁹⁸

Regarding Russia, President Bush was focused on the immediate issues of securing a new arms control agreement, with START II signed in early 1993, as well as non-proliferation efforts in the FSU, specifically ensuring Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine surrendered the nuclear weapons on their territories back to Moscow, which they agreed to in the Lisbon Protocol signed in May 1992.⁴⁹⁹ There remained, however, a lack of specifics about the values and interests which would guide the future of Russia-US relations in this new era, though Bush and Yeltsin had an amicable relationship. Beyond their joint statement in early 1992 that "Russia and the United States do not regard each other as potential adversaries", however, it was unclear what they regarded each other as.⁵⁰⁰

When the Clinton administration assumed office in 1993, Russia was their number one foreign policy priority.⁵⁰¹ President Clinton, who had successfully run on the message that he would focus more on domestic issues (most importantly addressing the faltering American economy), believed that developing a stable relationship with Russia would allow the US to focus less money and energy on foreign policy matters. In particular, the 1993 *Bottom Up Review* stated that while Russia was much reduced, it still retained significant military capability, including nuclear forces, air forces, air defence forces, and submarines.⁵⁰² Thus establishing a more stable relationship was necessary if the US wanted to continue to draw down its forces from the continent. In support of this, Cocom was terminated in 1994 which removed a number of trade and export barriers to Russia and was replaced by the Wassenaar Agreement in 1996 which included Russia

⁴⁹⁷ Mastny, "Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership," 215.

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Frank Wisner/

⁴⁹⁹ Potter, "The Politics of Nuclear Renunciation," 14.

⁵⁰⁰ "U.S.-Russian Summits, 1992-2000," *U.S. Department of State*, accessed December 07, 2022, https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/nis/chron_summits_russia_us.html

⁵⁰¹ Maclean, *Clinton's Foreign Policy in Russia*, 1; Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 3.

⁵⁰² *Bottom Up Review*, 40, 48, 60.

as a member.⁵⁰³ Russia, also, was seen as a critical partner in managing the most immediate risks facing the continent - proliferation throughout the FSU and the ongoing wars associated with the breakup of Yugoslavia. The Clinton administration worked closely with Russia throughout to finalize an agreement for Kiev to finally surrender its Soviet nuclear arsenal to Moscow.⁵⁰⁴ Russia was brought into the 'Contact Group' in 1994 (composed of the US, UK, France, Germany and Italy) to steer negotiations regarding the Bosnian war and work out the specifics of the future contribution of Russian forces in conjunction with NATO forces to the peacekeeping mission there.⁵⁰⁵ Furthermore, President Clinton and President Yeltsin established a warm relationship, which would include regular summits between the two leaders throughout the 1990s. This was in part based on President Clinton's determination that while there was much uncertainty regarding the future of Russia politically, siding with and supporting President Yeltsin was the best approach to facilitating democratization within and stabilization of Russia.⁵⁰⁶ The latter was listed within the top tier of Washington's democracy efforts in the Clinton administration's first National Security Strategy, released in early 1994.

At the same time, the Clinton administration wanted to deepen relations with the democratizing states of CEE, as part of its larger Engagement and Enlargement strategy to expand the sphere of 'market-democracies'.⁵⁰⁷ NATO would continue to be the primary vehicle through which this was undertaken, especially as the Alliance increasingly came to be seen by Washington as not only the guarantor of stability but of democracy on the continent.⁵⁰⁸ Exactly how this was to be done – including the exact relationship between CEE states and NATO - remained unclear in President Clinton's first year in office. The inability of the Europeans to manage the Bosnian war led to the growing use of NATO in maritime blockading and no-fly zone enforcement throughout

⁵⁰³ Michael Lipson, "The Reincarnation of CoCom: Explaining Post-Cold War Export Controls," *The Nonproliferation Review* (Winter 1999): 33-51.

⁵⁰⁴ This included the US threatening to withhold Ukrainian membership to PfP during Strobe Talbott's visit in the middle of 1993 to Kiev. This ultimatum eventually brought Ukraine back to the negotiating table, though Kiev was angry that the US was singing almost entirely with Russia on the nuclear weapons matters. Stephan Kieninger, "The Strobe Talbott Papers at the State Department's Virtual Reading Room," *The Wilson Center*, accessed December 07, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/strobe-talbott-papers-state-departments-virtual-reading-room>; Potter, "The Politics of Nuclear Renunciation," 23-27.

⁵⁰⁵ Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 83.

⁵⁰⁶ Radchenko, "Nothing but Humiliation for Russia'," 779; Goldgeier and McFaul. *Power and Purpose*, 119.

⁵⁰⁷ *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 6.

⁵⁰⁸ 1995 *National Security Strategy*, 32.

1993 and 1994, replacing and integrating the WEU forces.⁵⁰⁹ As well, despite some musings by some officials such as Defense Secretary Aspin of CEE states organizing more closely for their own security⁵¹⁰, many in the administration believed that without deep linkages to, and most likely eventually inclusion, of these states into Western economic and security organizations the region would be at risk of future ethnic-separatist conflicts, democratic backsliding, balkanization into various security pacts, and overall instability.⁵¹¹

To formalize the relationship between NATO and CEE states (and others including traditional neutral European states and states in the FSU), the Clinton administration created the Partnership for Peace (PfP), launched at the Brussels NATO Summit in January 1994.⁵¹² While seen by some, most notably the Russians, as an alternative anchor in organizing European security, the Clinton administration envisioned the forum as the primary mechanism to formalize NATO expansion, a project which had never been seriously questioned by the White House in terms of if they should do it but when and how.⁵¹³ The determination to maintain the path of transforming NATO in terms of functions, duties and capabilities, expanding its membership and ensuring other European security organizations remain subordinate to and/complementary with the US security positionality on the continent was based on the “Three Ds”: no duplication of NATO assets, no discrimination against non-EU members and no decoupling from NATO.⁵¹⁴

⁵⁰⁹ Schake. “NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995,” 399.

⁵¹⁰ John Borawski, “Partnership for Peace and Beyond,” *International Affairs* 71, no. 2 (1995): 237.

⁵¹¹ For example, Madeleine Albright argued that if CEE states were not allowed into NATO, they would find other means of securing their interests resulting in “unpredictable alliances...or use of force to settle disputes” (Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 252.). Similarly, Warren Christopher argued exclusion of these states would make them more fearful of Russian resurgence, more cautious towards the West and maybe reluctant to embrace democratic change (Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime*, 274). Some possible conflicts identified within the CEE states included Romania/Moldova, Hungary/Romania, and Hungary/Slovakia. Hill, *No Place For Russia*, 110.

⁵¹² Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 14.

⁵¹³ There were some which opposed NATO expansion entirely, such as Secretary of State William Perry, given the expected deterioration it would cause in the relationship with Russia, but for many it was a matter of how expeditious expansion would be done and within what mechanism. Interview with Dr. James Goldgeier.

⁵¹⁴ Van Hooff, “Land Rush,” 533.

The cumulative effect of these decisions and actions was that the Clinton administration adopted a strategy of parallelism with the simultaneous, but separate, pursuit of 1) improved relations with Russia and 2) NATO expansion. As will be further explained in the closing of the critical juncture section, the administration was convinced that despite growing Russian opposition to NATO expansion throughout the 1990s they could pursue both aims without having to deal with serious frictions or confronting difficult tradeoffs. President Yeltsin's suggestion that Russia should be the first state to be admitted in NATO's enlargement was quickly dismissed by the US as not practical to them (giving Russia an effective veto over new memberships and possibly causing paralysis in the alliance), CEE states (which wanted to join NATO as an insurance policy against future Russian aggression) and to Russia itself (most likely igniting nationalists' ire which could threaten Yeltsin's hold on power).⁵¹⁵

Changes in the Region: The end of the Cold War had a massive strategic impact on the security environment across the continent, including the emergence of 20 new states from the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia between June 1991 and June 1992.⁵¹⁶ As outlined above, these new states emerged as the dual alliance system on the continent collapsed, with the Warsaw Pact formally being terminated in the summer of 1991. Several successor states in the FSU, particularly those regimes with autocratic tendencies worried about democratization pressures from the West, signed onto the Russian-led CSTO, a military type of alliance meant to be reminiscent of the Warsaw Pact but without the ideological unity underpinning it.⁵¹⁷ However, the former communist states in CEE, as well as the Baltics and Ukraine, did not want to join any security pact led by Moscow. Instead, many sought inclusion in Western economic and security organizations to insulate themselves against future Russian predation and access to financial and other forms of assistance as they established their new political and economic systems. While many were very vocal about EU and NATO membership goals, there were some CEE leaders who mused about establishing new security ordering principles and organizations beyond alliance-type pacts. Perhaps the most notable was Czech President Vaclav Havel's suggestion, during a state visit to the US in

⁵¹⁵ Albright, *Madame Secretary*, 253.

⁵¹⁶ Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 68.

⁵¹⁷ Simon Koschut, "Regional Security Governance in Post-Soviet Eurasia. The History and Effectiveness of the Collective Security Treaty Organization," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 35, no. 2 (2022): 273–274.

1993, of the need for a new European security system that did not rely on, or was not reminiscent of, Cold War structures such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁵¹⁸ The worsening ethnic-separatism based conflict in Yugoslavia also created uncertainties whether the nascent and reorganizing constellation of security institutions on the continent could effectively bring an end to the conflict and prevent (and if not respond to) other similar conflicts occurring in CEE, populated as it was by various multi-ethnic states.

At the same time, Western European states were finalizing the creation of the European Union, which alongside the economic and diplomatic aspects of this regional project included the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI): an attempt to build European led and sustained forces, via the WEU, to play a more central role in continental security affairs.⁵¹⁹ France was the leading proponent of this initiative, and actively worked to utilize WEU forces, separate from NATO, to enforce UN Security Council Resolutions regarding the ongoing conflict in Bosnia. Furthermore, there were growing calls, including by Russia and the Czech Republic, to strengthen the CSCE throughout the early 1990s into a formal international organization (especially given the numerous missions it was conducting at that time)⁵²⁰ and possibly becoming the leading security institution on the continent.⁵²¹

However, throughout 1993 and 1994 it became clear that NATO was to be the main security institution in Europe. NATO forces replaced, and incorporated, WEU ones in the Bosnian maritime and airspace monitoring (and later policing) missions.⁵²² France, and other European allies, increasingly came to realize that NATO was the only force capable of organizing, sustaining, and executing such missions. As well, American security involvement on the continent was predicated on and would be channeled through NATO as the central organization in the security environment. Furthermore, the demand for linkages to, and eventual membership in, NATO by many CEE states

⁵¹⁸ Goldgeier and Shiffrinson. "Evaluating NATO Enlargement," 295.

⁵¹⁹ Van Hooft, "Land Rush," 531.

⁵²⁰ In the early 1990s the CSCE/OSCE had missions throughout the former Yugoslavia, Azerbaijan-Armenia, Moldova, Chechnya, Ukraine (Crimea), Latvia and Estonia. Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 125-126.

⁵²¹ Mastny, "Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership," 210.

⁵²² This included NATO warplanes shooting down Serbian jets which violated Bosnian airspace in 1994, marking the first time the alliance had engaged in combat.

showcased the continued relevance and benefits of its multi-national command structure.⁵²³ Finally, while the CSCE transformed into the OSCE in 1994, acquiring the components and architecture of an international institution, it was clear the organization would occupy a smaller position in the continental security environment than some desired given the growing power, influence and activism of NATO.

Changes in Russian Regional Behavior: Yeltsin, like Gorbachev, wanted closer relations with the West as he assumed the presidency of the newly independent Russian Federation. Unlike Gorbachev, however, Yeltsin appeared to want deep integration with the West across economic and security domains, especially in the early 1990s to assist with his ongoing political and economic reform efforts at home. Such an approach not only was historically unique, indeed unprecedented in Russian history, in terms of Yeltsin's push for Russia to 'be in' the West, but seemed to signal its abdication of status and prerogatives of being a 'great power' with its own sphere of influence and expectation of different treatment from other, smaller states by the US.⁵²⁴ However, a number of actions and positions by Moscow during this period indicated that Yeltsin's Russia was not as liberal domestically nor adopting an entirely new orientation regionally as was being advertised. The democratic shortcomings of Yeltsin's government were detailed in the first section of this chapter, so the remainder of this section will be dedicated towards its regional behavior.

In the early 1990s, Yeltsin appeared willing to accept the autonomy of other states in CEE and FSU to determine their political and security futures. In his power struggle with Gorbachev over Russian independence, Yeltsin supported similar movements in other areas of the FSU, specifically the Baltics in 1991.⁵²⁵ Furthermore, on an official state visit Yeltsin showed support for Poland's desire to join NATO, tentatively signaling a shift in policy of opposing NATO expansion eastwards at all.⁵²⁶ However, tensions over these matters quickly arose. Russian troop withdrawals from the Baltics and the former East Germany proceeded more slowly than expected, based on demands

⁵²³ Schake, "NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995," 396, 405.

⁵²⁴ Cohen, *Failed Crusade*, 211.

⁵²⁵ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 20-21.

⁵²⁶ "NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard," *National Security Archive*, accessed December 13, 2022, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-03-16/nato-expansion-what-yeltsin-heard>

to ensure the rights of Russian military retirees and diaspora communities in these states. These troops were finally removed in 1994-1995 after many rounds of negotiations between Moscow, Washington and the affected states.⁵²⁷ Yeltsin, however, was also increasingly opposed to discussions of NATO expansion into CEE and especially states of the FSU, issuing warnings beginning in 1993 and 1994 of the negative effects these developments would have on European security.⁵²⁸ Moscow tried to offer security assurances to CEE and FSU states, but many did not believe these would protect them against Russian revanchism. These worries were not simply hypothetical, based on Russian behavior in the past but as well on real time, unfolding events. These included the use of the army by Yeltsin in his battle against the Duma, Russian military presence in and support to separatist regions in Moldova and Georgia, and the accelerating war in Chechnya.⁵²⁹

Russia, furthermore, did not entirely abandon its great power prerogatives pertaining to ordering beyond its borders during this time, as seen in the establishment of the CIS and CSTO in the FSU. Many of the member states of these groups wanted to retain good relations with Moscow, and the US largely supported these efforts, seeing these spaces as within Russia's orbit.⁵³⁰ Russia, however, became increasingly frustrated over its inability to influence, and be listened to by Washington, over security ordering in Europe, including in CEE throughout the early to mid-1990s when there were a number of different proposals being contemplated. Yeltsin was initially ecstatic upon hearing the Clinton's administration PFP concept, but erroneously assumed this was an institutional alternative to, rather than a vehicle for, NATO expansion. Russia was frustrated, as well, that within PFP it was treated as an equal to other, smaller members, showing that its great power disposition had not entirely dissipated.⁵³¹ Furthermore, Russia's promotion of the OSCE, revamped from the CSCE, as the central security institution within Europe increasingly came into conflict with Washington's focus on NATO centrality and expansion.⁵³² Given its weak position, especially the need for

⁵²⁷ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 209.

⁵²⁸ Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 295.

⁵²⁹ Radchenko, "Nothing but Humiliation for Russia", 783.

⁵³⁰ Yulia Nikitina, "The Collective Security Treaty Organization Through the Looking Glass," *Problems of Post-Communism* 59, no. 3 (2012): 41–52.

⁵³¹ Forsberg and Herd, "Russia and NATO," 44.

⁵³² Mary Elise Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate Inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–95," *International Security* 44, no. 1 (2019): 39.

Western financial assistance, Moscow did not vigorously oppose Washington's efforts. Russia signed onto PfP in 1995 and increasingly focused on limiting, not stopping, NATO expansion. Despite these tensions, as well, Russia continued to work with the US on a number of continental security issues, specifically efforts to end the Bosnian war. By 1993, however, Yeltsin had increasingly adopted a more nationalist, and less liberal, tone, in part due to pressure from political opponents threatening his grip on power (and in turn leading to further delays in democratic reform efforts) and the realization that Russia was not going to be treated like a 'great power' by Washington in terms of (near) equal status⁵³³; a condition which made Russia similar to many European states in terms of being order supporters and followers rather than order architects/originators in the security sphere.

Closing of the Critical Juncture (1995)

By 1995, the Clinton administration had solidified the approach it would take towards security ordering in Europe for the post-Cold War era, the blueprint which would be followed, largely unchanged, by successive administrations both Republican and Democrat. The US would pursue a dual, parallel, non-integrative approach of NATO expansion and furthering relations with Russia. While modestly supporting other European security institutions, the Clinton administration, like the Bush one which preceded it, did not advocate for a new security architecture and system for the continent as this would inevitably dilute American control over security dynamics in general and undermine its ability to mobilize and direct its alliance network in dealing with issues on and off the continent. Despite the paradoxes of trying to simultaneously further these two pursuits given the obvious tensions between them, the Clinton administration believed these challenges were manageable, transitory in nature and would over time become more reconcilable.⁵³⁴ However, by the end of 1994 the balance of the dual approach clearly favoured expansion of NATO over and at the expense of Russian interests and relations.⁵³⁵ The dual approach, however, also disadvantaged voices on the continent wanting European states to play a more leading role in security affairs. By 1995, the US had successfully extinguished such possibilities and even the most European-first advocates, France principal among them, had conceded that the dominance of American

⁵³³ Forsberg and Herd, "Russia and NATO," 43-44.

⁵³⁴ Interview with Dr. James Goldgeier.

⁵³⁵ Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO," 37.

leadership over European security ordering via NATO was not just an empirical reality but desirable in effectively combating and preventing regional conflict and preserving stability.

Shoring up Activities: By 1995, after completing their enlargement study, NATO had unveiled its Open Door Policy in which they would consider new membership entries as they emerged. There would be no specific membership expansion limit, but neither would there be inevitable or fast track acceptance for those that applied. The signaling, however, was clear that NATO expansion into CEE, and possibly parts of the FSU, would proceed despite Russian opposition. Supporters of expansion argued it would further a number of key US interests on the continent including: ensuring continued democratization and marketization of CEE states; preventing future ethnic-separatist conflicts, like Bosnia, from erupting throughout the region; facilitating conciliatory relations between a recently unified Germany and its eastern neighbours; and acting as a strong hedge against Russian revanchism.⁵³⁶ While there remained some voices inside, and many outside, the administration that warned against NATO expansion as likely to produce instability in Europe in the future given its expected negative effects on relations with Russia, by 1995 the debate was over.⁵³⁷

An examination of only external environmental rationales does not fully appreciate the internal, within security network, rationales driving NATO expansion. By 1995 dissident voices about a new security architecture in the Europe expansion project where NATO would be included but in a junior role to European institutions had largely been extinguished. Most importantly, France, due to the decisive role the alliance had played in bringing the warring parties to the negotiating table with the Dayton Accords in 1995, had accepted the importance of NATO and American leadership in European security affairs which could not be done by another organization or constellation of states. While they would not fully rejoin NATO until 2009, the drift between NATO/the US and France had ceased by 1995, though it would re-emerge in 2003 with Paris' objection

⁵³⁶ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 171.

⁵³⁷ Robert J. Art, "Creating a Disaster: NATO's Open Door Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no. 2 (2016): 341–363. Opposition remained but was ineffectual. For example, in 1997, on the verge of the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, an open letter signed by 50 former US senators, cabinet secretaries, ambassadors, and FP specialists was sent to President Clinton opposing NATO expansion. Michael MccGwire, "NATO expansion: 'A Policy Error of Historic Importance'," *Review of International Studies* 24 (1998): 23–42.

to the US invasion of Iraq.⁵³⁸ The EU, as well, never fully committed its efforts to building upon the EDSI, leaving security ordering largely to NATO while it focused on continued economic and political integration. Furthermore, the US was successful in getting allied solidarity and support behind its major NATO plans: transformation of its mission sets and expansion of membership. This, furthermore, cemented the growing willingness of members to use the alliance in out of area operations not directly linked to their territorial security, both on and off the continent. Internal cohesion around NATO expansion ensured only one main security conduit between the West and CEE states. Doing so precluded other linkages from being developed, including mini-alliance pact making among CEE states or a more European-led approach to integration between these two groups of states.

By 1995 the US had ensured NATO centrality in the post-Cold War European security environment, sidelining Russia but also limiting European autonomy. Doing so ensured its allies' continued followership and support of changes to the alliance's functions and duties as a more global, all-purpose hegemonic instrument for the US.⁵³⁹ NATO centrality, furthermore, effectively forestalled other environmental forces from emerging as defining features of any new European security order, such as inclusive membership in a non-alliance based institution or a patchwork collection of mini-alliances/pacts populating the continent and raising the risk of balancing becoming a dominant feature again.⁵⁴⁰ Rather, even in the absence of a rival with the Warsaw Pact gone and Russia, in a weakened state, as a largely cooperative partner of the West, NATO centrality ensured alliance-based politics, led by the US, would remain the dominant path to organizing the continent.

Engagement with Russia: Engagement with Russia, the second plank of the American approach to European security, would continue but as a separate and less prioritized line of effort compared to NATO transformation and expansion. The Clinton administration would continue high level diplomacy and summitry with Russia to explore ways of working together. However, compromises over NATO expansion or exploring alternative

⁵³⁸ Hill, *No Place for Russia* 76-77.

⁵³⁹ Schake, "NATO after the Cold War, 1991–1995," 383.

⁵⁴⁰ In the 1995 National Security Strategy, it states that expansion of NATO will prevent any spheres of influence from emerging on the continent in supporting the overall goal of a Europe undivided, at peace and democratic (p. 34).

security ordering institutions would not be entertained by Washington. By this time many of the most pressing concerns about the remnants of Russian power on the continent had been addressed. Russian troops had left Germany, the Baltics, and Ukraine and Russia had reached an agreement for the former to return to the latter Soviet era nuclear weapons in exchange for security assurances.⁵⁴¹ For many in Russia, 1995 was the year the US finally became unambiguous about its long-held European security ordering goals anchored around NATO expansion, marking (according to Moscow) the culmination of a series of lies and mistruths told to Soviet and Russian leaders over the previous six years.⁵⁴² Russian objections to these plans were not taken too seriously by the Clinton administration, which increasingly focused on working with Yeltsin in making these moves politically palatable for him in terms of his domestic fortunes.⁵⁴³ Despite Yeltsin arguing that NATO expansion, even if it not a security threat to Russia, would severely undermine his position domestically against his nationalist and communist rivals, the Clinton administration believed he could weather this storm.⁵⁴⁴ Furthermore, despite ongoing concerns about the future of democratization in Russia, the Clinton administration stuck with Yeltsin and did not forcefully pressure him on this reform front.⁵⁴⁵

The Clinton administration was committed to including Russia into other elements of its hegemonic order, but these were mostly at the global level. In terms of the regional security order, Russia would be increasingly left out and become a partner to, not a member of, the increasingly NATO dominated system.⁵⁴⁶ The US, furthermore, became the primary channel through which strategic and security relations between Europe and Russia flowed. Crucially at this time, the Clinton administration believed they could pursue both NATO expansion and developing good, stable strategic relations with Russia. Goldgeier argues this was primarily a function of the administration believing Russian opposition to NATO expansion was a political problem, which could be resolved

⁵⁴¹ Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO," 39.

⁵⁴² Sarotte, *Not One Inch*, 213-240.

⁵⁴³ For example, Clinton assured Yeltsin that NATO expansion would not begin until after his 1996 re-election campaign. Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 193.

⁵⁴⁴ Goldgeier and Shiffrinson, "Evaluating NATO Enlargement," 296.

⁵⁴⁵ Part of this rationale was that Yeltsin was seen as the only real and reliable partner, especially considering Yeltsin had largely supported or at least not directly opposed Washington's efforts. Cohen, *Failed Crusade*, 21.

⁵⁴⁶ Astrid Wendlandt, "Pacifying Russia: International Aid and NATO Expansion," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1998): 131-148.

by changes to timing and minor adjustments to implementation to support Yeltsin domestically and make it palatable to Russian elites, rather than a strategic one which would erode future relations with Russia regardless of who was in power.⁵⁴⁷ The administration, in effect, avoided acknowledging and confronting the tradeoffs involved. Most importantly, a common talking point and belief from successive US administrations in the post-Cold War era was that NATO is a defensive alliance and in no way undermined the security of Russia, and therefore should not be seen as a threat to them. However, Russian concerns in the 1990s were not solely, or predominantly, about NATO expansion increasing security risks for Russia in terms of invasion or take-over but that it in effect excluded Russia from the West permanently.⁵⁴⁸

Moving Towards Network Assimilation of the Environment

Understanding the role, impact, and position of Russia within American security ordering efforts in Europe must be properly embedded within the large milieu of network concerns which Washington confronted in the early-mid 1990s. These network concerns and the US responses to them are represented in Figure Eight. Furthermore, the US sensitivities to these network concerns, and the way they went about prioritizing and resolving them, were heavily influenced by its regional strategic culture in relation to Europe. To recap, the major components of this are:

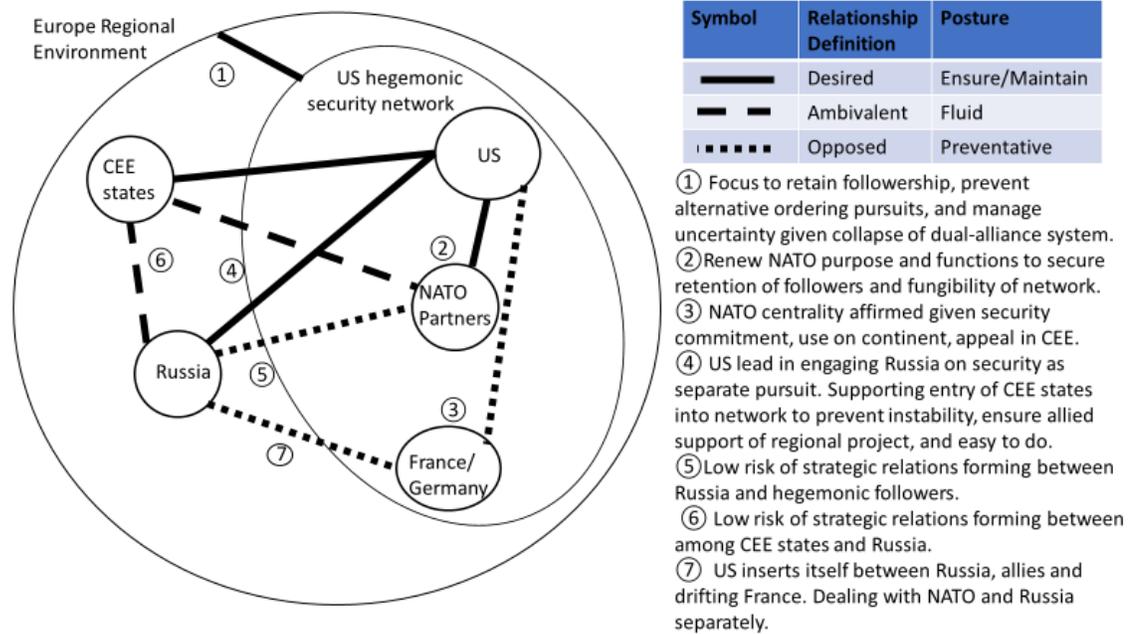
- 1) Inhibiting European powers from organizing security affairs on the continent by themselves;
- 2) Aspiring to build a Europe united, free, and undivided via multilateral organization under US leadership within a transatlantic communal identity of democratic-capitalist states;
- 3) The US as the only power able to facilitate and order security and economic affairs on the continent to prevent a return to negative geopolitical logics forming among its members; and
- 4) The transatlantic region being the most important power bloc in the global system and central to US global hegemony.

⁵⁴⁷ James Goldgeier, "NATO Enlargement and the Problem of Value Complexity," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 22, no. 4 (2020): 146–174.

⁵⁴⁸ Radchenko, "Nothing but Humiliation for Russia"; Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 184.

As a result, the US moved quickly to ensure that its security network, anchored by NATO, expanded throughout the continental environment quickly, undermining other ordering pursuits, either by its allies, outside states, and or a combination of both.

Figure 8: Network Concerns in the European Security Domain



Maintenance of Security Network Dominance in Regional Environment: Moving into the post-Cold War era in Europe the US faced many different types of pressures influencing the nature of the security environment and the positionality of the American security network within it. The collapse of the dual alliance system and its main hegemonic rival in the Soviet Union in 1991 brought relief that the Cold War was definitively over raised trepidations in both the Bush and Clinton administrations about the future of the region and the US position there. There was never any serious deliberation about retrenchment from the continent, but rather how to ensure American preponderance in security ordering on the continent. There were network concerns from all sides. Internally, there were issues of ensuring Germany remained an embedded hegemonic follower and preventing further drift by France in its efforts to generate continental followership for a more European led and organized security system. Furthermore, there were risks within the CEE and FSU states pertaining to the future of democratization and marketization, ethnic based conflict, renewed tensions between regional states and Russia, and the

possibility of a confusing web of security pacts and clubs emerging. In counteracting these pressures, the US pursued NATO transformation, expanding its missions (from strictly territorial defence towards expeditionary, out of area operations), purpose (military alliance towards furthering democracy and other political goals), membership (Open Door policy) and posture within the environment (containment towards assimilation).

These moves ensured the US, through NATO, retained its primacy, maneuvering to secure its centrality within the network and of the network's centrality in the environment. The US was not completely opposed to alternative security institution building, such as via the EU or OSCE, but rather wanted these to be done in ways which supported NATO's primacy by not challenging/competing with its core functions and/or generating new approaches to security alignment and ordering on the continent.⁵⁴⁹ Even though the dual-alliance system had collapsed, the US wanted to keep alliance ordering dynamics as the dominant form of security ordering on the continent under their control. The closing of other ordering possibilities simultaneously addressed a number of concerns - retention of followers within the alliance, managing relations between Germany and other European states, prevention of other forms of security ordering in CEE states, and an intervention mechanism in managing regional conflicts. Russia's position in this process increasingly became one looking from the outside in. The US was unwilling to entertain any ordering debates or compromises with Moscow, or NATO allies, and there was deep skepticism that any attempt to include Russia in NATO would fundamentally alter, maybe fatally, the primary purpose of the alliance: the exercising of American power and leadership on the continent via compliance and support by followers. Indeed, many Russian moves were seen by the US as attempting to acquire a de facto veto over major elements of NATO, specifically membership expansion.⁵⁵⁰ The US, in this milieu of competing pressures, was unwilling to postpone NATO transformation moves until it became clearer that Russia would become a compliant follower. This rush to action was based on key elements in the US regional strategic culture in favouring a Europe that is free and undivided via an all-encompassing

⁵⁴⁹ Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 101.

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Dr. Robert Hutchings. This was explicitly stated in the 1995 National Security Strategy that within the PfP program "no non-member of NATO will have a veto" (p. 34).

multilateral framework which ensures Europeans are not autonomous in managing their own security affairs.

Ensuring Hegemonic Followers Remained Subordinated Within Security Network: The Bush administration acted quickly in the context of the rapid collapse of the Cold War to propose new, additional purposes and missions for NATO to ensure its continuation in a world where it did not face a major military rival. The Clinton administration continued with these initiatives, including most importantly expansion. While there were some initial concerns from allies about these changes - including an orientation towards out of area expeditionary operations and admittance of new members from CEE - given the unfolding issues on the continent, specifically pertaining to the wars in the former Yugoslavia and fears of similar conflicts elsewhere, American allies quickly fell in behind Washington's lead, and fully accepted its key, undisputed performance of this role in European security affairs. While many European states continued to promote security institution building and practice through other mechanisms like the EU and OSCE, by the mid-1990s it had become clear the US had firmly secured its leadership position through NATO, stemming any possible expansion of, and resultant divergence from the US, European autonomy of security ordering on the continent which had begun in the 1970s with détente. NATO expansion, also, further solidified allied support for the development of a Europe "free and undivided" not as an entirely autonomous and separate strategic actor but a willing follower helping the US in its continental and global security prerogatives. These moves were based on the US regional strategic cultural assessments that Europe is the most important hegemonic partner/bloc to the US not only regionally but internationally as well.

Oppose Hegemonic Followers Becoming More Autonomous: There was some concern of drift from important hegemonic followers, most importantly Germany and France. German unification was predicated by the US on its inclusion in NATO, overcoming both Soviet and to a more limited degree allied opposition as both parties eventually came to see this option as in their interests. A neutral or unaligned Germany was unacceptable among Western European allies, CEE states and the Soviet Union/Russia, opening the door to alternative ordering pressures and possible behaviors of states to hedge against this development. Binding Germany in the security domain would also support continued EU integration and its continued support of American interests around expanding the

global economic order. France, which had left NATO's unified command structure in the 1960s, was another major US concern, particularly in terms of its promotion of a European led and populated security system to replace the role of NATO on the continent (with the alliance remaining in existence but only to be called upon if Europe faced another hegemonic level threat like the Soviet Union). As a result, the US worked to ensure NATO remained the primary vehicle throughout which it engaged in security affairs on the continent, showcasing to European allies and others that the two - American leadership and participation on the continent and the primacy of NATO as the only security alliance - were inseparable. By the mid-1990s, France, and others, had accepted this reality, especially after the WEU and OSCE failures to manage the numerous conflicts stemming from the collapse of Yugoslavia and NATO increasingly being employed as an effective intervention mechanism. Such an outcome reinforced the US strategic cultural sentiment of not allowing Europeans too much autonomy in determining continental security affairs.

Control of Hegemonic Entry of Outside Major and Minor Powers: There was low concern of hegemonic followers taking the lead in, or offering an alternative to, engagement efforts pursued by Washington towards Russia. The US, furthermore, through its consolidation of allied support within a transforming NATO ensured it was the main conduit between Russia and the continent on security issues. There was no real opposition to US leadership, furthermore, as Washington and Moscow were seen as the natural leaders in many of the security issues negotiated at this time, such as arms control and proliferation concerns in the FSU. Regarding NATO expansion, there was some initial hesitation voiced by some allies, but these concerns became largely muted as it became clear that continued US leadership on the continent was inextricably tied to acceptance of its NATO transformation efforts. Indeed, the lack of opposition from major power allies, like France and Germany, over the potential impact of NATO expansion in unnecessarily disrupting relations with Russia was quite surprising. This seemed to be a function of these powers having to accept all the NATO moves by Washington - mission and force structure changes, political purpose, expansion eastwards, becoming dominant intervention mechanism – due to the inability to separate them from each other and the eventual acknowledgement that NATO expansion and EU development/expansion were mutually supportive. The US, furthermore, was able to seize the initiative in establishing in developing strong ties with CEE states in the early

1990s given many Western European states' reluctance to invest the time and energy required to do so (due to the demands of EU development and the absorption of a unified Germany into it). This reinforced US and NATO centrality in structuring the European east-west relationship.

Oppose Strategic Relations Forming Between Outside Major Powers and Hegemonic Followers: There was a low concern about strategic relations forming between Russian and hegemonic followers. The US was effective in ensuring NATO allies remained in a followership position regarding relations with Russia in the post-Cold War era. With NATO expansion becoming official policy in 1994-1995, Russia tried to increase support for the OSCE as an alternative organizing body to connect west and east. Many NATO allies were supportive of making the OSCE a more robust institution, however they did not see these efforts as an alternative to NATO expansion but a parallel, mutually supportive development. Russia, therefore, was unable to garner much support for these moves as many NATO allies became increasingly removed from efforts to forge security relations with CEE states, deferring to the US on these matters. Therefore, the primary, most consequential security issue between Europe and Russia in the post-Cold War era was primarily controlled by the US.

Oppose Strategic Relations Between Outside Minor and Major Powers: There was low concern about strategic relations forming between CEE states and Russia. Rather, many CEE states were actively looking to further relations with the West to shield themselves from possible future Russian revanchism towards them. Russian attempts to offer security assurances to these states did not satisfy them. The US supported these efforts by Moscow as a parallel, not alternative, to its security ordering plans via PfP and NATO expansion. The US was also supportive of more direct ordering pursuits by Russia in the FSU, specifically managing regional conflict which usually involved ethnic based separatist movements. As a result, there was an apparent acknowledgement that these states were in a different regional space more oriented to Russia than Europe. The US assisted Russia in ensuring it emerged as the only nuclear successor state to the Soviet Union, helping ensure that Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine relinquished their inherited arsenals. While the US furthered relations with FSU states, this was done in a bilateral manner and not in opposition to Russian regional ordering efforts through the CIS and CSTO. For CEE and Baltic states, however, the US saw these as integral parts of

Europe which had recently been occupied by the Soviet Union. Furthermore, possible instability in CEE due to conflict combined with the possibility of region-wide democratic backsliding and the balkanization of the region into various alliance pacts motivated the US to become more involved in this region and bring it fully into its security network.

Opposing Strategic Relations Forming Between Drifting Hegemonic Followers and Outside Major Powers: There was a low concern about strategic relations forming between Russia and drifting hegemonic followers, specifically France and Germany. The Bush administration, however, did feel that the US would increasingly have to develop and occupy a leadership position within the quick changing region of CEE to prevent any new possible power struggles between a newly unified Germany, the Soviets/Russians, and regional states concerned about both these powers given the history of being subjugated by both. The administration, also, maneuvered to ensure alliance solidarity as it negotiated the unification of Germany and its incorporation into NATO to counter any Soviet Union perspectives or proposals. France, in its attempts to develop a more European led and autonomous approach to security ordering the continent, never really reached out in a comprehensive and sustained way to Russia about devising such a system. Instead, Paris focused its efforts on getting Western European support for the development and employment of Eurocorps under the control of the WEU. Indeed France, like Germany to a certain extent, was reluctant to further security and economic relations with CEE and FSU states, including Russia, which was promoting the OSCE as alternative to alliance-based politics on the continent.

In summation, Russia, despite its Western orientation under Yeltsin, was continuously placed in a position of opposition to the US regarding security ordering in Europe. The US security moves during this time were designed to address the simultaneity of network concerns, and their intersections, as listed above and according to the dominant components comprising its regional strategic culture towards the continent. The US maneuvered to prevent any movement towards the adoption of a more autonomous security orientation by its followers, stabilize the uncertainty in CEE, and subordinate, but not entirely suppress, other security institution-building into supportive mechanisms in line with its use of NATO as the vehicle through which to address matters concurrently. While the Clinton administration attempted to pursue NATO transformation and engagement with Russia in parallel, tradeoffs become

unavoidable because: 1) the US did not believe Russia could, at this time, be included in NATO given uncertainty about what its inclusion would do to the nature of the organization nor the domestic trajectory within Russia itself; 2) was unwilling to build and promote a regional security system where NATO was not in a predominant position; and 3) by 1994 Clinton was unwilling to wait and see what happened to/in Russia before pushing more forcefully for its other hegemonic plans pertaining to NATO transformation and expansion. As Borawski argued, President Clinton went from being focused on ensuring no new dividing lines in Europe to preventing a 'veil of indifference' from emerging in regards to furthering relations in CEE.⁵⁵¹

There was to be no new concert of Europe, akin to the Vienna Congress where the defeated power (France) was included in this new system alongside the victors.⁵⁵² NATO was to be the vehicle through which the US addressed network concerns in the European security environment, which meant relations with Russia were prioritized less. Furthermore, by 1994/1995 the US had come out of recession, with the economy starting a near ten-year period of continuous economic growth, easing Clinton's aversion to spending time and money on foreign policy. As a result, the focus on Russia decreased in favour of dealing with other European security matters as the pressure to reduce security spending (through establishing better relations with Moscow) gave way towards a more active and engaged US which increasingly believed its leadership on the continent was vital for the continuation of peace, stability and market-democratization there. Therefore, whereas the Bush administration appeared more concerned about NATO being pushed out and marginalized in a new security order in the years immediately following the end of the Cold War, the Clinton administration, especially due to the Bosnia experience, seemed more concerned about chaos taking over in the absence of NATO playing a predominant role on the continent. Despite the different relative emphasis of these two perspectives, the overall constellations of network concerns had the same end result: the need for NATO centrality in the European security environment firmly under US leadership. Another point of commonality across both administrations, furthermore, was concern that their materially unchallenged position as a unipole in and of itself did not make them feel secure in terms of their security

⁵⁵¹ Borawski, "Partnership for Peace and Beyond," 241.

⁵⁵² Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "The Unravelling of the Cold War Settlement," *Survival* 51, no. 6 (2009): 43.

hegemony in Europe. The needed to ensure allies remained allies and took a number of preventative measures to blunt counter-movements from emerging.⁵⁵³

European Security Environment/Network in the Post-Cold War Era

After 1995, relations between Russia and the US did not proceed uniformly along an ever-degrading path. Rather, there were a series of periods when both sides tried to stabilize the relationship and prevent further deterioration; but these efforts were within the context of Russia sitting largely outside the American-orchestrated European security network and in a marginalized position within the larger continental security environment.⁵⁵⁴ The 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, in particular, served as the blueprint within which Russia and the West, led by the US, would seek to develop positive, co-operative relations amidst NATO expansion.⁵⁵⁵ The deployment of Russian peacekeepers, in conjunction with NATO ones, to Bosnia beginning in 1996 showcased such cooperation. The US, also, promoted the strengthening of relations between Russia and expected future NATO states, such as through the US-Baltic Charter of 1999.⁵⁵⁶ While NATO expansion would continue to be a major declaratory rationale from Moscow for the deteriorating security relationship between them and the West, the use of the alliance also contributed to these trends in Russia's eyes.

Most importantly, NATO's intervention in the Kosovo War in 1999, without a UN Security Council Resolution, was seen by Yeltsin as a worrying precedent, with the US was using the alliance as a global police force on its own volition with almost no checks or balances. The intervention isolated Russia against the other European states, showcased Moscow's growing limitation in influencing security developments in CEE, and briefly risked conflict between its forces and NATO in Kosovo.⁵⁵⁷ The use of NATO in Kosovo, as well, effectively sidelined any chance of the OSCE becoming a major, standalone security institution on the continent which would be used in conflict prevention/management. NATO's growing role on the continent, therefore, marginalized not just Russian but European influence on security issues.

⁵⁵³ Shiffrinson, "Deal or No Deal," 842.

⁵⁵⁴ Forsberg and Herd, "Russia and NATO," 48.

⁵⁵⁵ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 210.

⁵⁵⁶ Kasekamp, "An Uncertain Journey to the Promised Land," 873.

⁵⁵⁷ Hill, *No Place for Russia*, 161.

Relations with Russia would stabilize again under President Putin during the initial period of the War on Terror, with Moscow trying to downplay their concerns about NATO expansion and focus more on ways they could help the US.⁵⁵⁸ However, by the early 2000s the US-Russia relationship was noticeably drifting apart due to actions by both sides. The US' aggressive use of its military power during the War on Terror and their pullout from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty furthered Russian concerns that the US was an unchecked unipolar power. The violent ending of the Chechnya war, growing anti-democratic developments, and the initiation of weapons sales to states like Iran raised concerns in Washington that Russia was becoming more of a challenger than cooperative partner.⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, the uncertainty of whether capitalist democracy would take root in Russia tentatively voiced in the early-mid 1990s had by the late 1990s-early 2000s turned into skepticism, and resignation, that Russia would not be joining the community of market democracies; but there was still belief that a stable strategic relationship could be developed and maintained.⁵⁶⁰

This belief motivated the Obama administration's attempted 'reset' of the relationship with Russia following Moscow's invasion of Georgia in 2008 in support of the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. There are a myriad of both immediate and historical reasons for the outbreak of the conflict, which shattered the 1992 peace deal, but one aggravating factor was it occurred only a couple months after the George W. Bush administration's offer of Membership Action Plans (MAPs) to both Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO.⁵⁶¹ Acceptance of the Baltics in NATO had been tough for the Russian leadership, but Georgia and Ukraine appeared to be red lines for the Putin-Medvedev regime which saw these states as well within the Russian sphere. Despite the war, a number of joint initiatives were undertaken by Moscow and Washington during the reset including agreeing to sanctions against Iran, Russia allowing US military aircraft overflight rights into and out of Afghanistan, and President

⁵⁵⁸ This included Russian support for US regional bases in Central Asian states in support of its war in Afghanistan. Forsberg and Herd, "Russia and NATO," 47.

⁵⁵⁹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 210.

⁵⁶⁰ This was expressed in numerous National Security Strategies in the early and mid 1990s which commented that Russia's future remained 'uncertain'. In the 1997 Quadrennial Defence Report.

⁵⁶¹ Roy Allison, "Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace,'" *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1145–1171.

Obama canceling a US missile defence shield system for Eastern Europe.⁵⁶² However, the US would not terminate NATO's Open Door Policy nor the MAPs offered to Georgia and Ukraine.

The Russian invasion of Crimea and the Donbass in 2014, following the overthrow of the Moscow-friendly Yanukovich during the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine, terminated the reset and left Russia-West relations on a trajectory of deepening enmity which has continued to the present. The invasion led to the deployment of NATO forces into Eastern Europe, sanctions against Moscow, strengthening of security relations with Ukraine, and did not deter continued rounds of NATO expansion. Even during the Trump administration, which was seen as pro-Putin and pessimistic of its alliance relationships and obligations within NATO, the US continued to develop deep military relations with Eastern European NATO members, most notably Poland, concerned about Russian revanchism. Furthermore, Montenegro and North Macedonia were admitted into the Alliance during Trump's tenure and Russia was labeled a 'revisionist power' in numerous US strategic documents.⁵⁶³ Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has further degraded relations to perhaps their worst levels since the early part of the Cold War, with extensive sanctions placed on Russia, robust European efforts to become energy independent from Russian energy, and massive military and economic assistance, especially from the US, to Ukraine. As a result, Russia, after years of being framed as a cooperative partner, is now designated as the greatest threat to the peace and security of NATO members in Europe.⁵⁶⁴

Looking inwards into the American security network, European allies have by and large followed US leadership on major security matters.⁵⁶⁵ Furthermore, they have been unable or unwilling to develop alternative structures and processes for ordering security relations on the continent. US concerns around burden sharing among its allies, which have always existed, continued in the post-Cold War era in which defence

⁵⁶² Arthur R. Rachwald, "A 'Reset' of NATO-Russia Relations: Real or Imaginary?" *European Security* 20, no. 1 (2011): 117–126.

⁵⁶³ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (December 2017), 25.

⁵⁶⁴ "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*, July 2022, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁵ This state has existed since the early 1990s, with some estimates that NATO allies had only 10% of the effective military of the US total. Furthermore, European states struggled to muster 40,000 soldiers for the Kosovo mission. Marsh and Mackenstein, *The International Relations of the EU*, 92.

spending among European allies fell dramatically.⁵⁶⁶ However, these allies followed US direction and radically transformed their militaries from primarily territorial defence to expeditionary operations, which were used in both the Balkans and Afghanistan. Furthermore, despite major allies such as Germany and France being opposed to the US invasion of Iraq, they remained resolutely within the US security network. Also, the US received support from many of the newer members of NATO, such as Poland, during this conflict.⁵⁶⁷ The EU's development of its security plank remains largely aspirational despite some hopes that it would become a more autonomous security actor given many Western European states' misgivings about the direction of the US prosecuted War on Terror.⁵⁶⁸ Even during the tumultuous tenure of the Trump administration, which regularly chastised them and mused about the future of American participation in NATO, European (and in general Western) allies were not able or willing to develop alternative mechanisms to order relations which did not so heavily rely on the US, despite there being considerable doubt regarding the nature and trajectory of the US as a hegemonic power moving forward.⁵⁶⁹

American efforts, therefore, to ensure its European allies remained followers within its security and economic networks, obstructing other ordering initiatives and even leadership roles in the name of alliance solidarity, may have had the unintended consequence of socializing these states to significantly underinvest in their own security capabilities and prerogatives. While such developments are supportive of the existing hegemonic order, with states not building up their military and other power bases to become more autonomous from or oppositional to the US, in this new age of 'strategic competition' against both China and Russia the US is pressuring its European (and Asian) allies and partners to build up these power bases.⁵⁷⁰ Some former officials, in particular, have stated the US worried too much about European security autonomy to the detriment of promoting stronger defence partners in both capacity and ability to lead missions.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁶ Jo Jakobsen, "Is European NATO Really Free-Riding? Patterns of Material and Non-Material Burden-Sharing after the Cold War," *European Security* 27, no. 4 (2018): 498.

⁵⁶⁷ van Hooft, "Land Rush," 543.

⁵⁶⁸ Neil Winn, "CFSP, ESDP, and the Future of European Security: Whither NATO?" *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9, no. 2 (2003): 149–160.

⁵⁶⁹ Robert E. Kelly and Paul Poast. "The Allies Are Alright: Why America Can Get Away With Bullying Its Friends," *Foreign Affairs* 101, no. 2 (2022): 131–143.

⁵⁷⁰ Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment*, 351.

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Dr. Robert Hutchings.

For example, during the current Russia-Ukrainian War, initiated by Russia's full-scale invasion in early 2022, the US has led efforts to organize European (and other) allied support to Kyiv. The war has shown the limited impact of major European powers, individually or collectively via the EU, to take the lead on dealing with the conflict. This is particularly striking given the fact that at various times both Germany and France have indicated a desire to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict, expressed concerns about the extent of arming Ukraine, and in general promoted the need to make security assurances to Russia to prevent future conflict.⁵⁷² Despite these contrasting positions to the US (and to many states in CEE), both Germany and France remain essentially followers of Washington's lead in determining the broad parameters of the West's approach to this conflict. Furthermore, the conflict has re-energized NATO, specifically acknowledgement of the centrality of the US in organizing security efforts for the alliance materially and in terms leadership, and further cementing European states, especially the major powers in Germany, France and the United Kingdom, into a state of hegemonic followership regarding continental security affairs in general and their relationship with Russian in particular.

In summation, the US has increasingly employed and transformed NATO as the default solution to solving any and all security issues with respect to Europe during the Post-Cold War era. It was seen as the answer to prevent destabilization on the continent (specifically the outbreak of major wars in CEE), retain followership of major European powers, and prevent any possible rival organization from emerging. As a result, the US demonstrated little to no compromise with not just Russia but European states on the re-ordering of the security environment on the continent. Russian entry into the Alliance was seen as impractical given it would likely force a transformation in the organization towards more of a security community which was not in the US interest and would leave unresolved long-standing tensions between Moscow and CEE states. As a result, Russia would be treated as a partner to, not a member of the expanded NATO-based security network. On the other side, with European states increasingly organizing as a bloc in terms of economic and political regionalism maintenance of NATO and US leadership over it would preclude any move towards full scale autonomy for the continent, allowing

⁵⁷² Judy Dempsey, "Are France and Germany Wavering on Russia?" *Carnegie Europe*, 08 December 2022, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/88588>

the US continued primacy in ordering regional security affairs as well as employing the Alliance to support missions on and off the continent. Indeed, eventual NATO and EU expansion became linked as a two-sided Western hegemonic project, with Western European states firmly supporting the sentiment of a “free and undivided” Europe which the US referenced throughout the 1990s as part of its justification for expanding the Alliance. As a result, NATO expansion and transformation eased concerns about alternative security ordering among Europeans themselves, and linked security and economic interests and pursuits together both on the continent, via the dual NATO-EU expansion projects, and globally in securing European support for American global economic order.⁵⁷³ Given the positive feedback from these efforts, specifically controlling security ordering affairs in general and retaining its major power allies in particular, and the apparently-manageable negative feedback, specifically Russian opposition, NATO expansion quickly developed into a path dependency for US grand strategy, to which any change, especially because of pressure from an outside power, would seriously undermine American prestige and hegemonic standing.

NATO expansion has led to a number of ongoing debates about whether it has been a net positive or negative for the continent in terms of peace and stability in general and the degree to which it has contributed to the worsening of relations between the West and Russia in particular. The return of Russian revisionism, specifically via the use of military force in its ‘near-abroad’, clearly signals the Putin regime’s attempt to secure a sphere of influence over this space and the states within it.⁵⁷⁴ Whether this is largely a function of Russia acting on the defensive due to aggressive Western efforts to expand NATO,⁵⁷⁵ ‘normal’ behavior for a great power to pursue,⁵⁷⁶ or the result of a long standing imperialist strategic culture within Russia (further entrenched and mobilized with the rise of authoritarianism under Putin),⁵⁷⁷ remains hotly debated and contested. Regardless of the exact reason, or combination of them, in explaining Russian revisionism, it is clear

⁵⁷³ Horowitz and Götz, “The Overlooked Importance of Economics,” 847.

⁵⁷⁴ Oxana Schmies et al, *NATO’s Enlargement and Russia: A Strategic Challenge in the Past and Future* (Berlin: Ibidem Verlag, 2021).

⁵⁷⁵ John J. Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin,” *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014): 77–89.

⁵⁷⁶ Nicholas Ross Smith and Grant Dawson, “Mearsheimer, Realism, and the Ukraine War,” *Analyse & Kritik* 44, no. 2 (2022): 175–200.

⁵⁷⁷ Alexander Lanoszka, “Thank Goodness for NATO Enlargement,” *International Politics* 57, no. 3 (2020): 451–470.

that throughout the early period of the 1990s the US maneuvered to ensure its central position between Western Europe, the CEE states, and Russia, reinforcing its networked centrality in the European security environment.

Conclusion

Both LP theory and NC agree that throughout the post-Cold War period Russia was continuously marginalized and largely left out of the emerging security ordering undertaken by the US on the continent. These accounts differ, however, in the explanatory rationales provided for this empirical phenomenon. LP theory argues Russia was not vital to the management of, and could seriously threaten, American security hegemony in Europe because it was a weak and declining power in the wake of collapse of the Soviet Union. In particular, Mastanduno argues the proof of Russia's non-lynchpin power status lies in the fact that it continuously lost out to other American hegemonic ordering activities on the continent. However, Mastanduno does not explore in any detail what these other efforts were, the motivations driving them, or why they were privileged over building stable relations with Russia via their inclusion in a new post-Cold War security order in Europe. The lack of attention to these aspects of the European security domain case closes off investigation into the sources and causes producing the particular American approach of the early-mid 1990s which would be the largely unchanged and unchallenged guide, Washington would follow for the next two decades. LP theory as well, through its lynchpin-non-lynchpin power typology framework focuses analyses on a dyadic level, making it difficult to answer questions pertaining to this case such as why some outside powers (for example Poland, the Baltic States, or Bulgaria) are accommodated over Russia. Are the former more important to US hegemony than Russia, and if so why? It is very difficult to discern such a distinction just by looking at states in a bilateral manner, largely isolated from the larger environmental situation.

In contrast, NC allows for such a large environmental level scan and analysis to properly situate Russia within the larger web of changes and pressures the US was contending with in the early period of the post-Cold War era. From this perspective, it becomes clear the US faced several different types of pressures and uncertainties within its regional security network, the larger environment, and the intersection between the two. In addressing these numerous and simultaneous network concerns, the US turned

towards the transformation of its security network, NATO, in terms of functions, missions, purposes, and positionality within the security environment. Furthermore, as time went on the US increasingly saw NATO, given its fungibility, as the mechanism for addressing all these challenges.

The impetus for the US expansion of the security network in Europe in the post-Cold War era via NATO had a number of mutually reinforcing logics whose salience differed over time depending on the government in power and the immediate issues at hand. Overall, however, the consistency, persistency, and deepening of this approach was due to its ability to achieve several elements underpinning the US regional strategic cultural approach towards Europe. In particular, US leadership via NATO ensured Europeans did not assume more autonomous dispositions towards organizing continental relations; the multilateral form would allow the binding of Western and Eastern European states under one construct heavily influenced by the US to ensure the continent became “free and undivided”; and NATO transformation both internally and externally ensured the US could employ the network not just for continental matters but increasingly extra-regionally as well. As a result, these moves increasingly came into friction, and contestation, with Washington’s efforts to cultivate and entrench stable strategic relations with Russia towards amity, support, and non-opposition by Moscow, which was denied membership but offered “partnership” with NATO. The immediacy and sharpness of trade-offs in these parallel pursuits is what leads to Russia’s increasing marginalization. Russian inclusion in NATO was a non-starter given this would derail efforts to address other concerns and most likely fundamentally alter the organization and undermine the US’s central leadership position within it. This was most evidently expressed by the repeated emphasis that no outside state, primarily Russia, would have a veto over alliance issues, resulting in a de facto closing of the door to ever considering Moscow’s inclusion.

Long standing debates remain about who and what is ultimately to blame for the breakdown in relations between Russia and the West. At a minimum, it could be confidently assessed that NATO expansion, specifically the pace of it throughout the 1990s and 2000s, was an aggravating factor, though changes in Russian domestic politics, including democratic backsliding and economic downturns, played a major role

as well.⁵⁷⁸ In particular, the expansion of NATO towards the MAP offered to Georgia and Ukraine in 2008 was a turning point after which Russia began to push back militarily to prevent these states from ever joining. This point, furthermore, represented the collision of the path dependencies driving NATO expansion with firm, violent Russian opposition, marking a definitive change and driving Western-Russian relations firmly back towards enmity and rivalry. The change to viewing Georgia and Ukraine as eligible and worthy of NATO membership by the US represented a shift from the 1990s in view of these states becoming more oriented towards Europe than Russia in general, and cemented the perspective that Russia is not considered part of, though it has a major impact on, Europe and US hegemonic ordering therein. Therefore, NATO expansion was not a military threat per se to Russia but a strategic one given its growing assimilation of the regional environment, leaving a small and decreasing space for Moscow in Europe.

⁵⁷⁸ Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO," 10.

Chapter 7: The East Asia Economic Environment and US Regional Economic Network: Assessing the Placement and Role of China

This chapter explores the Asian economic environment and the US regional economic network positioned within it to understand the role, influence, and impact of China on American regional economic ordering efforts in the post-Cold War environment. Lynchpin Theory argues that the US moved quickly to ensure the inclusion of China in the economic order, becoming a major priority and occupying a central position within the American international economic agenda given China's lynchpin status. This sense of necessity enabled China to quickly become embedded and eventually develop into a core within regional and international economic systems and flows, heavily influencing their structuring and functioning throughout the following two decades.

There seems to be a clear, consistent, and persistent effort by the US to further economic relations with China, both bilaterally and in terms of their inclusion in global economic systems and institutions throughout the post-Cold War era. This depiction reinforces the central premise of LP theory that this is an expression of the determination by the US of the importance of China as a necessary economic hegemonic partner. However, this economic approach was heavily influenced by events and US actions within the region during the early 1990s which did not directly or predominantly concern China. These were related to larger regional developments with the US, based on its regional strategic cultural lens, more focused on precluding undesirable trajectories such as a closed Asian regionalism and/or greater Japanese regional leadership from emerging than building, promoting, and gaining support for a regional economic ordering project. Furthermore, given the widespread backlash to the attempt to weaponize its economic power against many regional states (for economic and non-economic issues) in the early 1990s, the US gave up this strategy and reverted to a focus on ensuring a closed region does not emerge while focusing bilaterally on major powers of importance and tying them into the global system. Such moves benefited China by facilitating space for them to grow into an important, and desirable, partner for the US and increasingly influencing the nature of regional economic order with Washington more focused on the international level. A strictly bilateral assessment, as LP theory pursues, does not adequately capture these factors and forces which are critical in understanding this case. Networked Centrality (NC) provides such an account, mapping out the various network

concerns at play, explaining the linkages between them and how this created/denied spaces for others (intentionally and not) to maneuver within and between.

The structure of this chapter is the same as those of the previous cases. The first section outlines the arguments and evidence presented by LP theory followed by a critique of its conceptual and empirical limitations for this case. The second section employs the critical juncture framework in mapping the changes and continuities of the US economic network in East Asia. The third section categorizes and explains these changes and continuities as a function of 'network concerns', according to NC, present within this case. The fourth section explores the path dependencies which emerged from this critical juncture and how these affected the US economic approach to the region and China throughout the remainder of the post-Cold War period and how China's growing attempts to build its own economic networks in 2010s have led to increasing tension and friction with the US. The concluding section re-examines the arguments made by both NC and LP theory, including areas of complementarity between the two in understanding how China was able to emerge as a major economic power in the relatively short period of the first two decades of the post-Cold War era.

China as an Economic Lynchpin Power

The most compelling case for LP theory was the US effort to incorporate China into the global economic system throughout the 1990s and early 2000s despite concerns about the nature of their regime, its human rights record, and periodic military flare ups with neighbours over disputed territories and maritime areas. These issues were simply not enough to derail US efforts to bring China into the global economic system as a necessary partner. Furthermore, given the unlikelihood of security binding with China, the US determined economic binding was the best path forward in this regard. Such a process was justified by a liberal ideological belief that engagement with China would eventually transform them, with economic liberalization (facilitated by pre-conditions and entry requirements into the global economic system) eventually leading to social and political liberalization.⁵⁷⁹ The biggest example of this strategy was the determination by

⁵⁷⁹ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 499. There is an apparent difference in how Mastanduno interprets the role of liberal ideology in post-Cold War American foreign policy/grand strategy compared to others associated with the 'liberal hegemonism' school. Mastanduno's account privileges determination of lynchpin (non)importance of outside powers as the most important factor driving the types of engagement efforts, with liberal/izing beliefs playing an instrumentalist

the mid-1990s to work towards the admittance of China into the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Such a move greatly accelerated China's development into an economic power and assuming of a dominant position in the global economy in less than two decades. China's leaders post-Tiananmen realized that continued integration in the world economy was vital to their country's development and rise/return to major power status.⁵⁸⁰ This would require massive changes and adjustments in its domestic political economy to meet the American and WTO requirements, which American negotiators did impose to a degree never seen towards a developing country candidate.⁵⁸¹ But the benefits China received were substantial. As Mastanduno details "It received regularized access to its key export markets in North America and Europe, insulation from arbitrary policy shifts that might disrupt trade, and the ability to attract foreign direct investment as investor confidence in China's domestic market increased".⁵⁸² A decade and a half after joining the WTO, China surpassed Japan as the world's second largest economy as well as became the world's largest exporter and second largest importer.⁵⁸³ China, as well, grew a very large trade surplus with the US and became one of the largest holders of US securities, reflecting and reinforcing the "complementary addictions" - for China exporting and lending and for the US importing and borrowing – increasing the interconnections and interdependence between the world's two largest economies.⁵⁸⁴ Former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers described this condition as a "financial balance of terror" to emphasize how reliant and dependent both powers had become on one

legitimizing role especially when dealing with relations with non-democratic/authoritarian states like China. The liberal hegemonism arguments put forth by those like Friedberg and Mearsheimer, in contrast, assert US policymakers' belief in the power of these liberalizing efforts in and of themselves guided, and were not simply used to justify after the fact, policy and action.

⁵⁸⁰ Deng's 1992 Southern Tour was a critical signal to the outside world that China was determined to maintain its opening up path through experimentation with 'Special Economic Zones' populating many of its coastal urban areas despite the setback in relations resulting from the Tiananmen Square massacre. David H. Autor, David Dorn and Gordon H. Hanson, "The China Shock: Learning from Labor Market Adjustment to Large Changes in Trade," *Annual Review of Economics* 8 (2016): 209.

⁵⁸¹ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 496-497.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ China's international trade exploded during this time as well, going from \$500 billion in 2000 to \$3 trillion in 2016, and came to account for upwards of 60% of China's GDP. Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 496; Douglas H. Paal, "America's Future in a Dynamic Asia," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (January 2019): 3; Autor, Dorn, and Hanson, "The China Shock," 209-213.

⁵⁸⁴ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 498.

another economically as well to the stability of the entire global economic system.⁵⁸⁵ In this way, China became economically indispensable to the US and thus American policymakers, despite Beijing's growing belligerent behavior and lack of political liberalization, felt it necessary to maintain their "liberal bet" despite mounting evidence to the contrary.⁵⁸⁶

The maintenance of US-China relations in the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 can be attributed in large part to President Bush's personal views of China and his relationship with the Chinese leadership. While he knew sanctions and rollbacks would be necessary due to domestic political reasons, he worked hard to keep this as limited as possible for he believed China was an important power which could not be isolated without risking major negative impacts to the region and American interests. Bush, furthermore, believed that the best way to influence China's future towards a more liberal path was in maintaining relations and keeping them within the international community.⁵⁸⁷ President Clinton, however, did not share the same personal history with or views of China when he came to power in 1993. He and his team had little knowledge about China, and East Asia in general, and campaigned aggressively against President Bush's approach towards China's dictatorial leadership.⁵⁸⁸ However, over time he also came to the view of China as a major power which could not be ignored, isolated, or punished to force internal change.

This realization began at the 1993 APEC Summit in Seattle, where despite his side meeting with Chinese President Jiang being tense Clinton gained a greater appreciation that China was a power which had to be engaged with regularly despite their differences and tensions.⁵⁸⁹ This was reflected in Clinton's 1993 speech in Seoul stating that China had to be included in the region's economic and security structures and that "We need an involved and engaged China, not an isolated China."⁵⁹⁰ Furthermore, Clinton's ending of the linkage policy - tying yearly approval of China's

⁵⁸⁵ Aaron Friedberg, "A New U.S. Economic Strategy Toward China?" *The Washington Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2017): 98.

⁵⁸⁶ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 500-501.

⁵⁸⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 89, 101.

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with Douglas Paal.

⁵⁸⁹ Clinton, *My Life*, 561; John W. Dietrich, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy: Clinton and the China MFN Debates," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1999): 289.

⁵⁹⁰ Clinton, "Fundamentals of Security for a New Pacific Community," 511.

Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status to human rights criteria - in 1994, only after a year it was introduced, was also seen as a result of the new administration appreciating how important China was economically.⁵⁹¹ Furthermore, it is commonly argued that the American business community successfully lobbied for this reversal, beating out a host of other domestic interest groups wanting a harder stance adopted towards China.⁵⁹² Echoing similar sentiments as the Bush administration, Clinton officials expressed their frustrations with the inability to ensure the support of their allies in developing a common position on China regarding sanctions and human rights.⁵⁹³ Given the confluence of these factors, by the mid-1990s the Clinton administration had settled on an economic approach towards China consisting of: 1) regular and stable continuation of bilateral relations; and 2) facilitating China's entry into the WTO. In justifying this approach, President Clinton regularly emphasized that this was the best approach in bringing about a more liberal China and one that would further become a status-quo supporter of the international order; failure to continue on this path would alienate and isolate China, making it more anti-democratic and anti-Western and would disadvantage American business and consumers against competitors in Europe and Asia.⁵⁹⁴ As the overall relationship stabilized by the late 1990s under the Engage but Hedge strategy, many officials in the Clinton administration, including the President himself, voiced the assessment that China's leaders were committed to reform and liberalization and thus continued engagement would help to encourage and entrench these promoters/reformers and sentiments within the state.⁵⁹⁵

Critiques

LP theory presents a powerful and easy to understand argument regarding US economic policy towards China in the post-Cold War era. The near continuous path towards deeper integration of China into the world economic system by the US was

⁵⁹¹ Charles A. Goldman, "Managing Policy Toward China Under Clinton: The Changing Role of Economics," *RAND Corporation* (July 1995).

⁵⁹² Dietrich, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy."

⁵⁹³ Expressing such frustration, Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, remarked "We want European and Japanese and other help on nonproliferation, trade, or human rights. Good luck. We try very hard; they hold our coats while we take on the Chinese and they gobble up the contracts". Quote taken from: Lampton, "China and Clinton's America," 1111.

⁵⁹⁴ Bill Clinton, "Speech on China Trade Bill," delivered at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, 09 March 2000, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/030900clinton-china-text.html>

⁵⁹⁵ Clinton, *My Life*, 792-794.

predicated on the belief that China was vital to the continued successful management of American regional and global hegemony. China, regardless of other concerning behavior, had to be embedded into these systems to entrench their position as a hegemonic supporter. Despite such logical clarity and supporting evidence, there are some critical limitations and omissions which challenge its account of this case.

The Role of Foresight: A major inconsistency in LP theory's accounting for this case, and indeed for the theory in general, is the role of foresight in guiding American foreign policy and action. It is unclear if the 'China as a lynchpin power' determination was developed beforehand, and therefore guided policy and action, or whether there was a realization on the part of successive US governments of the importance of China over time. The former speaks to a more rationalist based approach while the other is a more contextual learning one. Mastanduno's account never clarifies this point of ambiguity. For example, much of the evidence presented by him are the results of US support for China's inclusion in the global economy, such as China becoming one of the largest holders of US securities, which seems to suggest the US knew what it was doing and what China would become. At other times, Mastanduno talks about China "emerging" as a lynchpin power economically in East Asia and globally.⁵⁹⁶ This leaves open a possible explanation that there was a gradual realization on the part of the US of China's growing importance, regardless of whether they intended for these outcomes to come about or not. Mastanduno, though, does not focus on such process issues but rather is focused on outcomes. There may be a relationship between the two, but this is not explored.

Mastanduno, furthermore, does not address why the US is comfortable with China having a large bilateral trade surplus, not opening their markets, keeping their currency undervalued, and acquiring a large amount of US debt when throughout the 1980s and early 1990s the US was opposed to such features in their economic relationships with Japan and Germany. Why was the US not focused on reversing these trends, both in terms of its overall international economic approach and towards China? As well, it appeared China's emergence as a major economic power by the 2000s caught many American officials and experts by surprise.⁵⁹⁷ This speaks not only to the lack of reform and increasingly assertive disposition developed by China, but also the mere

⁵⁹⁶ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 496.

⁵⁹⁷ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 425; Autor, Dorn, and Hanson, "The China Shock," 210.

empirical fact that it had become a major core in regional, and global, economic systems with significant influence and power over the systems' form and functioning. Even Mastanduno asserts that the US never really appreciated how interdependent economically and financially they had allowed this relationship to become, with China becoming indispensable to the continued functioning of the global economy and US hegemony.⁵⁹⁸

Such a situation questions whether the US fully thought through the consequences of their actions during the 1990s and what the projected outcome was envisioned to be. China was to be included in the global economic order, but if the US had known the dominant position China would grow into would they have pursued the same strategy? It is clear the US wanted to benefit from trade and economic relations with China, but reliance on them is a different goal which did not seem to be a major consideration or motivation. For example, one of the main pillars of President Clinton's 2000 speech encouraging Congress to pass legislation regarding PNTR with China was that if the US did not do so they would lose out to other competitors (including allies) in Europe and Asia.⁵⁹⁹ China was not framed as a vital partnership as much as an opportunity the US could not afford to miss out on due to the benefits others would reap at their expense if they did not proceed down this path.

The Absence of a Regional Analysis: A critical area of investigation entirely absent from LP theory is explaining what the US regional economic approach towards East Asia was. This is surprising given this is a theory about American hegemonic maintenance in core regions. Mastanduno sidesteps the entire issue by arguing the primary mode of operation for the US in East Asia was bilateral in nature and thus focuses entirely on China-US relations and the position of China in the global economy. However, what was the US view on the growth in economic regionalism via the emerging web of institutions and agreements (of which China was a participant in) throughout the 1990s and 2000s? Was there no connection between these developments and the US approach towards China? Can the American economic approach towards East Asia, and the impact of the region on the US international political economy approach, be largely understood via an analysis of separate bilateral relationships, specifically with China and Japan?

⁵⁹⁸ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 500-501.

⁵⁹⁹ Clinton, "Speech on China Trade Bill."

Lack of New Structures: Finally, what explains the absence of new institutional structures to include China economically and the lack of China's inclusion in existing ones such as the G7? While China's membership profile and power augmented over time in existing US hegemonic institutions like the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - but still to a degree not satisfactory to China given its voting share never eclipsed the EU (Germany and France combined) or Japan – why did the US not try to create new structures, particularly at the regional level, to include China, Japan, and others? The complete dearth of such bodies is contrasted with their regional security approach where some such forums were created such as the Six Party Talks. There was some innovation at the international level, such as the G20 which came into existence in 1999, but this was not a US initiative and China was included alongside a large number of other states.⁶⁰⁰ Furthermore, while much emphasis was on China's accelerated entry into the WTO in the early 2000s, it is important to remember that other non/pseudo democracies were also granted entry into this organization around this time including Vietnam (in 2007) and Russia (in 2012), usually after lengthy negotiation periods which Beijing also had to go through. While China can be seen as different given its economic size and power potential, it remains interesting that the US did not act more comprehensively in restructuring economic ordering, especially regionally, to include China with its other allies in unilateral and other types of organizations where it could employ its influence in a more surgical manner.

Prevention of Closed Regionalism Over Being a Leader of a New Regionalism

Significant changes occurred to the economic environment within East Asia during the transition into and early period of the post-Cold War era. The three most important were: the slowing down and then stalling of the economic rise of Japan; the rise of China as a major regional economic power; and a growing web of various organizations and agreements aimed to help institutionalize and mold the ongoing economic regionalization in a more politically determined manner. Regarding the latter

⁶⁰⁰ Canada was the major proponent of the new organization as a way to include emerging economies in helping with management of the global economy, especially in the aftermath of the 1997-1998 Asian Financial Crisis. Peter I. Hajnal, "The Origins of the G20." in *The G20*, ed. Peter I. Hajnal (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2019) 11-19.

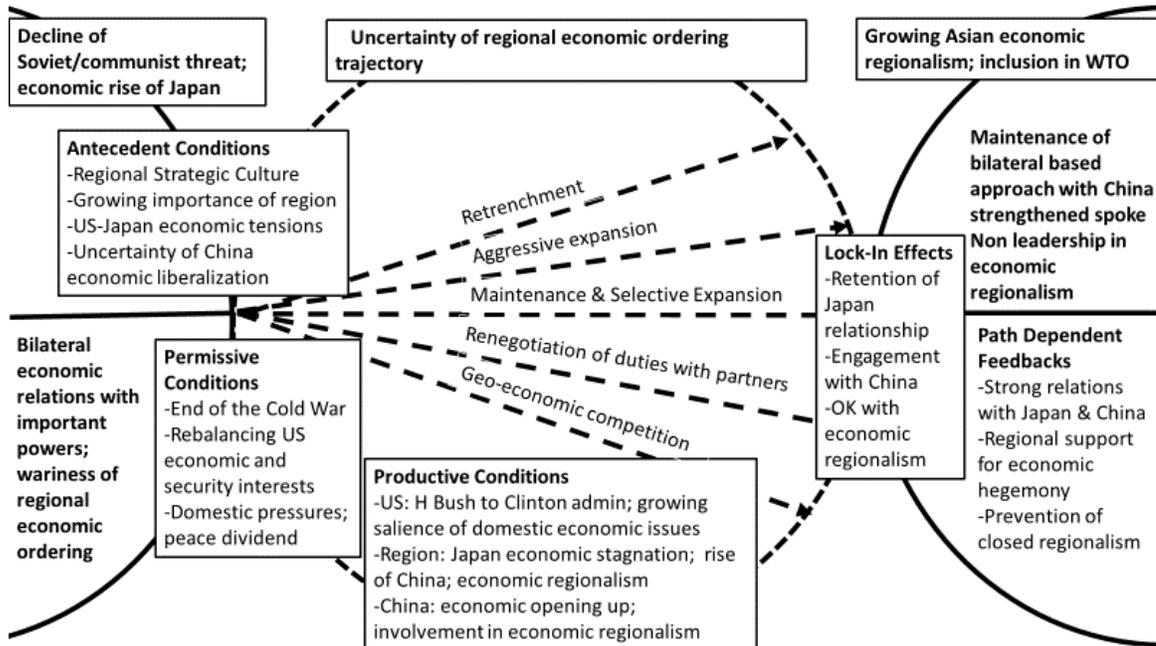
development, the US was not actively involved in terms of playing a leadership role in these processes but gradually became more receptive to them. Rather it was focused on ensuring regional support of and inclusion into the larger global economic structures and processes, specifically completion of the Uruguay Round leading to the creation of the WTO and enabling major international economic bodies to be the lead agencies during times of regional economic crises. The US furthered relations with both China and Japan as the main regional economic powers but did so in a separate manner. During this time, furthermore, the US was largely focused on bilateral trade tensions with Japan, including preventing any growing autonomy from Tokyo on regional economic ordering leadership. In this way, the US retained the primary economic network structure and their overall disposition towards the region, but with the inclusion of China. The changes and continuities within the East Asian economic domain case can be summarized as:

- 1) *Environment* - The plateauing and then eventual stagnation of Japan's economic rise. China emerged as a major regional economic hub alongside, and eventually eclipsing, Japan. Decades of economic regionalization without specific political direction and mechanisms gave way to more formal political regionalism throughout the 1990s and 2000s.
- 2) *Network* – The maintenance of security ties despite economic issues with allies. Tensions with Japan turned into a major strategic and domestic issue which were not resolved until the mid-1990s given changing economic circumstances to both states and a determination by the political leaderships in Tokyo and Washington to shore up and revive their alliance relationship.
- 3) *Interplay of the two* – American weariness of regional organizing gradually gives way to modest support to this process given its non-binding nature, inclusive practices, and was not led by a major power. The US remained uninterested in a regional leadership role regarding economic organizing, however. The focus, instead, remained on tying the region, especially its major powers, into the global system with leading international economic bodies having a privileged position in shaping rules for and interventions in the region. Finally, there are augmented efforts to formally include China in the global economy and as a major US economic partner.

This section will now trace the evolution of these features of the case sequentially. The overview will start with an examination of the pre-critical juncture period

(late 1980s) and then move into the critical juncture period (1989-1994/5) and finish with the closing of the critical juncture (1995/6). Figure Nine below depicts this evolution of the case through these three periods, including the major forces and factors which the US was dealing with throughout.

Figure 9: Critical Juncture of the US Economic Approach Towards East Asia



Pre-Critical Juncture (late 1980s)

In the decades following the end of the Second World War, the US did not devote much thought and energy regarding economic organizing throughout East Asia. In contrast, the US approach to Europe was not only focused on rebuilding multiple states but facilitating the development of a multilateral economic pact to link them together to preclude renewed conflict between them and to mobilize them as a bloc against the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. In East Asia, the predominant focus was on the economic rebuilding of Japan so it could become a functional ally. There were no other major economic powers of note in the US view. Even rapprochement with China throughout the 1970s was almost entirely based on strategic calculation - gaining a valuable partner on the Asian mainland to help counterbalance the Soviet Union by taking advantage of the split between the world's two largest communist states - rather than other considerations, like economic relations which would become more of a factor in the 1980s. Another

contributing factor to the low level of economic engagement with the region was that during the first few decades of the Cold War era international trade was not a dominant US foreign policy issue as it constituted a small percent of the overall American GDP.⁶⁰¹

Throughout the 1980s the US became increasingly concerned about international economic relations for several reasons. First, the US underwent an economic transformation via neoliberalism which saw the rise of multinational corporations (MNCs) and the importance of foreign direct investment (FDI) as major components of and influences over US international economic strategy.⁶⁰² The economic potential of East Asia increasingly became highlighted as a main area of priority for US trade, with this fact utilized to justify continued American security presence there in the post-Cold War era. Furthermore, the 1980s saw the economic emergence of American allies, specifically Japan and Germany, as important and necessary partners in global macroeconomic management. Finally, moving into the latter part of the 1980s the diminution of the Soviet military threat and the relative decline of American global economic power led to the US becoming more sensitive about the economic rise of its allies, most prominently Japan.⁶⁰³ Declining GDP growth rates closing out the decade, as well, contributed to renewed questions about whether the cost of US hegemonic management was worth it, including how to more equitably redistribute burden sharing among allies who had reaped significant security and economic rewards from this system while only paying mild costs to sustain it.⁶⁰⁴ These trends impacted the US economic approach to East Asia in the late 1980s in a number of ways.

⁶⁰¹ "Trade (% of GDP) - United States, 1970-2021," *The World Bank*, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS?end=2021&locations=US&start=1970>

⁶⁰² Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2001): 4-5. The 1980s, as well, witnessed the rapid change in the US standing from being the world's largest creditor state to the world's largest debtor which contributed to American growing fixation and concern about its international trade balance. James McBride Andrew Chatzky, "The US Trade Deficit: How Much Does it Matter?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 09 March 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-trade-deficit-how-much-does-it-matter>

⁶⁰³ Mastanduno, "Do Relative Gains Matter?"

⁶⁰⁴ The economic downturn began in 1988 with depreciating GDP growth over the next four years until 1991 when the US registered a negative GDP growth rate. "GDP growth (annual %) - United States, 1961-2021," *The World Bank*, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=US>. This period shares some parallels with the 1970s, another period of profound changes in US international political economic approach, specifically the cessation of pegging the US dollar and gold standard. In both cases there was a realization that the US could not manage the global economy on its own but rather increasingly needed to enlist the assistance of its followers.

First, relations with Japan started to become strained given the trade tensions between them. While the Reagan administration tried to keep from affecting the overall relationship, by the time the Bush administration took over in 1989 they had occupied a central and defining position in the relationship, including domestic pressures to address these more publicly.⁶⁰⁵ In particular, there were growing concerns that Japan's rise as a major economic power came at the expense of the US. This included Japan free riding off American security commitments which allowed Tokyo to dedicate more research and development (R&D) into commercial technologies;⁶⁰⁶ a government backed determination to gain sizable footprints in several US domestic markets, including emerging technological ones, for its leading companies;⁶⁰⁷ and an unwillingness to open up their markets leading to a sizable bilateral trade surplus for them.⁶⁰⁸

There were also American concerns that Japan was adopting a more autonomous regional leadership disposition, which could lead to Tokyo distancing itself from US guidance and tutelage in order to create a regional economic system more centred around itself including exporting its 'developmentalist state' economic model to others.⁶⁰⁹ This was most evident in disputes over the structure and function of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), co-created by the US and Japan in 1966, throughout the 1980s. Japan had tried to increase its voting share (which was equal to the US) via greater monetary contributions but these moves were blocked by the US and backed up by other bank members.⁶¹⁰ Furthermore, the Reagan administration successfully pressured Japan into allowing the ADB to work with private entities as part of the neo-

⁶⁰⁵ One of the earliest attempts to resolve the trade imbalance was the Structural Adjustments Agreement of 1988, which set off a series of near continuous negotiations for the next seven years between the two states. This period, furthermore, began a new US approach which moved away from dealing with specific sectoral (e.g. electronics, manufacturing, automobiles) issues towards larger plans for managing export and import flows. Rosemary Foot, "Power Transitions and Great Power Management: Three Decades of China-Japan-US Relations," *Pacific Review* 30, no. 6 (2017): 831.

⁶⁰⁶ Schaller, *Altered States*, 254; Walter Lafeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997): 374.

⁶⁰⁷ Chalmers A. Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982).

⁶⁰⁸ Foot, "Power Transitions and Great Power Management," 830.

⁶⁰⁹ Clyde V. Prestowitz, *Trading Places: How We Are Giving Our Future to Japan and How to Reclaim It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

⁶¹⁰ Ming Wan, "Japan and the Asian Development Bank," *Pacific Affairs* 68, no. 4 (1996): 511, 522-523.

liberal/'Reaganomics' transformation.⁶¹¹ Despite these tensions, the US realized that Japan had developed into a vital economic partner globally and regionally, alongside its important role as a security ally. While Washington continued to signal to Japan (and to its domestic audience) that the nature of their relationship would need to change to address these concerns, this was to be done in a non-disruptive way to the wider relationship.⁶¹² This was reflected in then-Secretary of State James Baker's 1989 *Foreign Affairs* article encouraging Japan to play a larger role in the international system but warning the bilateral trade balance had to be rectified.⁶¹³ Such a response reflected the growing worry in the US that Japan may be well on its way to becoming the world's largest and leading economic power with major advantages in emerging technologies with unknown consequences for the overall alliance relationship.⁶¹⁴

Second, the US remained wary of regional political organizing of security and economic affairs which began by the late 1980s with institutions such as APEC. Such sentiments had been a longstanding influence on the US approach to East Asia given its decades long concerns about 'Asian only' ordering which would exclude them and could result in a hostile hegemonic order forming.⁶¹⁵ However, given the inclusive nature of these processes and growing regional concerns that the US was trying to build its own closed regional pact via North American free trade talks, the US by the end of the 1980s was tentatively receptive to APEC, including being a member.⁶¹⁶ The US emphasized, however, the expectation that this institution (and others which may emerge in the future) was not a closed economic pact but rather part of the larger global trading system. Continued American support for these efforts, as well, would be conditional based on the fact these did not undermine or compete with its bilateral hub-and-spoke regional hegemonic network. There was no signaling that the US would play a predominant role in such regional economic ordering pursuits, however. The fact that smaller powers were some of main driving forces behind APEC alleviated American concerns about these

⁶¹¹ Wan, "Japan and the Asian Development Bank," 517,

⁶¹² Perhaps the most important economic capability Japan possessed by the late 1980s was (and remains to this day) being the world's largest creditor state and largest holder of US debt. "Major Foreign Holders of United States Treasury Securities as of November 2022," *Statista*, 30 January 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/246420/major-foreign-holders-of-us-treasury-debt/>

⁶¹³ Baker, "America in Asia."

⁶¹⁴ This sentiment was captured in Prestowitz' characterization of the US and Japan 'trading places' economically and psychologically in the 1980s and early 1990s.

⁶¹⁵ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 411.

⁶¹⁶ Baker, "America in Asia."

processes being possibly counter-hegemonic initiatives, especially if they were exclusively led major regional powers like Japan and/or China.⁶¹⁷

Finally, despite the Tiananmen Square Massacre the Bush administration was determined to maintain relations with China.⁶¹⁸ Economic relations had augmented between the two throughout the 1980s during China's ongoing economic liberalization away from Maoist autarky which created an additional explanatory rationale to retaining the relationship. Sanctions were imposed but were targeted in nature, with the Bush administration moving quickly to stabilize the relationship and trying to bring it back to normalcy as soon as politically feasible. The ability, though, of progressing large economic projects between the two, such as furthering China's 1986 application to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), was not seriously considered during this time given the tense domestic and geopolitical climate in Tiananmen's aftermath.

Japan: Throughout the 1980s Japan took several steps to assuage American concerns about burden sharing. In the security field, Tokyo increased defence spending beyond 1% GDP and agreed to develop the capability to conduct maritime patrols out to 1000 nm from its coastline.⁶¹⁹ As mentioned above, economic tensions continued to rise between the two, though their political leaderships tried to keep these low-key and isolated from the larger relationship. A major fissure, though, was opening between the two over the political economic models each pursued. For the US, this was the neo-liberal capitalism model which emphasized the primacy of the market, deregulation, and in general a limited state role in economic affairs. For Japan, this was the developmental state capitalism model which directed that the state worked closely with leading industries to secure their footholds in overseas markets, emphasized public savings, and restricted access to their own domestic market. Each state's views of the other's economic system heavily influenced what they saw as the major issue(s) in their economic relationship. Japan argued the trade imbalance was due to American

⁶¹⁷ Japan played a major role in the creation of APEC but knew such a body could hurt relations with the US and thus took measure to emphasize the open and inclusive nature of the organization. Another realization on the part of the US was that having US allies, like Australia (a main proponent behind the initial conception leading to APEC) in such an organization would help ensure they did not become exclusively Asian only pacts. Green, *By More Than Providence*, 474.

⁶¹⁸ Baker, "America in Asia."

⁶¹⁹ Schaller, *Altered States*, 254.

overconsumption and overspending while the US argued Japan distorted market forces by limiting access to internal markets, giving sizable state financial support to commercial enterprises, and not incentivizing internal consumption.⁶²⁰

The close working relationship between the state and industry, known as the Keiretsu, had benefited Japan immensely.⁶²¹ Japan had experienced high year-on-year GDP growth rates for the past three decades, and by the mid-1980s had an economy roughly half the size of the US and the second largest in the world.⁶²² Japan was a leading manufacturing power in many high technology areas, the world's leading creditor nation, and major source of FDI. Japan's trade surplus ballooned with the US, growing from \$1 billion in 1974 to over \$50 billion by 1985.⁶²³ American pressure to rectify this resulted in the Plaza Accord where Japan, along with the major European states, agreed to appreciate its national currency. However, these moves did not resolve the bilateral trade imbalance. They did, however, influence Japanese manufacturers towards focusing on establishing supply chain networks throughout Asia.⁶²⁴ By the end of the 1980s, Japan had eclipsed the US as the major investment partner for Southeast Asia and had become the largest trade partner to China.⁶²⁵

The regionalization of the Japanese economy became the major force in the region economically, though Tokyo remained quiet about its views on regional ordering. This was in part to avoid confrontation with the US and assuage any regional worries given the unresolved history of its brutal regional hegemonic conquests of the 1930s and 1940s. Japan preferred not to construct institutions and organizations to manage these developments but let economic forces, which were heavily in Japan's favour, lead the way in a politically unstructured way. Nevertheless, concerns remained that Japan was trying to orient the region around itself in a 'flying geese' model of regional economic

⁶²⁰ Akihiko Tanaka and Masayuki Tadokoro, "The 1980s: The Decade of Neoliberalism," in *The History of US-Japan Relations: From Perry to the Present*, ed. Makoto Iokibe (Kobe, Japan: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 201-202.

⁶²¹ Robert J. Crawford, "Reinterpreting the Japanese Economic Miracle," *Harvard Business Review* (January-February 1998).

⁶²² Foot, "Power Transitions and Great Power Management," 830-831.

⁶²³ Schaller, *Altered States*, 255

⁶²⁴ Peter J. Katzenstein and Martin Rouse, "Japan as a Regional Power in Asia," in *Regionalism and Rivalry: Japan and the United States in Pacific Asia*, eds. Jeffrey A. Frankel and Miles Kahler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993): 230.

⁶²⁵ Lafeber, *The Clash*, 377.

development, with some arguing Japan's developmental state capitalism could inspire others to develop similar systems which could eventually undermine the centrality of US neoliberalism globally.⁶²⁶ Despite the stresses in their relationship, Japan remained a loyal ally and hegemonic follower to the US as it tried to define a new relationship with East Asia after decades of near exclusive focus across the Pacific towards the US.

Region: Like Japan many East Asian states experienced high rates of GDP growth throughout the 1950s into the 1980s. The most well-known were the four 'Asian Tigers' - Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan - and followed similar economic practices of mobilizing underutilized resources (specifically labor), a focus on exports, domestic market protectionism, minimal welfare programs, and state assistance.⁶²⁷ Despite the growth of these states, Japan by the 1980s occupied a dominant and unrivaled position in the regional economic environment as the largest and most advanced economy.

Efforts towards regional economic ordering remained largely non-existent, instead relying on market regional economic integration.⁶²⁸ In the late 1980s there were some regional states, including those comprising ASEAN, which began advocating for the need to create institutions to discuss, and possibly coordinate on, economic issues. Part of the motivation behind these moves was fears that the global economy was becoming balkanized via regional trade pacts, uncertainty about the future staying power of the US in the region, and Japan's growing economic clout over the region.⁶²⁹ These smaller states also wanted to secure an important position in the region to ensure ordering of it did not become dominated by big powers like the US, Japan and to a more limited extent China and India. While initially skeptical, both Japan and the US came to

⁶²⁶ Walden Bello, "Trouble in Paradise: The Tension of Economic Integration in the Asia-Pacific," *World Policy Journal* 10, no. 2 (1993): 33–39. The Flying Geese model argued that the Asian regional economy should be viewed as a flock of geese flying in a triangular form, with Japan the leading state. As Japan developed, benefits would cascade down to lower levels with states in these could, emulating Japan's example, climb up the development ladder. Such a view, however, has questionable empirical support for explaining Asian economic development and was largely despised in the region. Yong Deng, "Japan in APEC: The Problematic Leadership Role," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 4 (1997): 362.

⁶²⁷ Ha-Joon Chang, *The East Asian Development Experience: The Miracle, the Crisis and the Future* (London: Zed, 2008).

⁶²⁸ Shujiro Urata, "Free Trade Agreements and Patterns of Trade in East Asia from the 1990s to 2010s," *East Asian Community Review* 1, no. 1-2 (2018): 62-63.

⁶²⁹ Katzenstein and Rouse, "Japan as a Regional Power in Asia," 220.

favour these developments. For Japan, the non-binding nature of them meant it would not interfere with the favourable economic trends developing and its inclusive nature would ensure Tokyo would not be isolated and ganged up on in the region. For the US, involvement in these for itself and its allies ensured the institution would not become a closed economic pact and possibly lead to an Asian-only regional organizing process and a set of practices.⁶³⁰

China: By the late 1980s China was well along its reform and opening up program, moving away from decades of Maoist autarky. It continued to expand the number of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along its eastern cities to both domestic experimental forms of capitalism and as sites for international trade.⁶³¹ In 1986 China expressed its intent to join the GATT, signaling just how far China had come in terms of economic transformation in a decade. International trade steadily grew, particularly with Japan during this period but also with the US and others.⁶³² China remained, however, muted on regional economic organizing, remaining largely focused on internal reform and taking advantage of dominant economic regionalization trends and flows, including FDI and aid coming into the country.⁶³³

The Tiananmen Square massacre, however, caused a chill in foreign relations, particularly with the West and it remained unclear in its immediate aftermath which way China would go in terms of international engagement and economic development. China did, however, seek to offset the risk of becoming a pariah by showing interest in the APEC negotiations, eventually wanting to be a member, and sought closer ties to the regional economic power Japan.⁶³⁴ While the Bush administration worked hard to reassure Deng that they were committed to preserving the relationship (while also conveying the point they had to impose tough measures in part due to domestic political demands), many in the regime were convinced the United States' long term goal was the

⁶³⁰ Lefeber, *The Clash*, 377.

⁶³¹ Yue-man Yeung, Joanna Lee, and Gordon Kee, "China's Special Economic Zones at 30," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50, no. 2 (2009): 222–240; Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007): 377-400.

⁶³² John Frankenstein, "Chinese Foreign Trade in the 1980s," *Current History* 87, no. 530(1988): 257-260, 272-275.

⁶³³ Urata, "Free Trade Agreements and Patterns of Trade in East Asia from the 1990s to 2010s," 63.

⁶³⁴ Ellis S. Krauss and T.J. Pempel. *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

eviction of the Chinese Communist Party from power. By 1989, China's GDP was the ninth largest in the world but by many measures remained a developing state, with a GDP per capita of just \$307.⁶³⁵ While economic opening and reform had delivered many benefits, the use of sanctions and cessation of aid by the wealthy powers in response to Tiananmen showed how vulnerable China could become if it continued down this path of pursuing foreign economic engagement and trade. Which way China's leaders would go remained unclear at the end of 1989.

Critical Juncture (1989-1995)

Entering the 1990s, the Bush administration's East Asia economic approach largely remained unchanged despite major upheavals occurring in the communist world in Europe and the Soviet Union. President Bush, based on his personal history and realist disposition, was determined to maintain the relationship with China, withstanding attacks from Congress and the public though he realized it would take years before it could be rehabilitated in the post-Tiananmen era.⁶³⁶ Already by 1990 the US, in conjunction with its G7 partners, was beginning to soften some of the sanctions placed the year before and re-establishing high-level contact.⁶³⁷ Given the limited nature of the sanctions imposed, trade continued to grow between the two during the early 1990s but in the near absence of political direction and coordination given the reduction of contacts. The administration, as well, continued its support for APEC but remained largely ambivalent about, and disinterested in, regional economic ordering projects. Nevertheless, East Asia was seen as an important emerging market that would lead to a growing focus on it in US foreign policy and influence its strategic orientation, especially in the post-Cold War era.⁶³⁸ Furthermore, the focus for the Bush administration economically was ensuring the continuation of the Uruguay Round talks towards the

⁶³⁵ Joseph O'Mahoney and Zheng Wang, "China's 1989 Choice: The Paradox of Seeking Wealth and Democracy," *The Wilson Quarterly*, Fall 2014, <https://www.wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/summer-2014-1989-and-the-making-of-our-modern-world/chinas-1989-choice-paradox-seeking-wealth-and-democracy>

⁶³⁶ Suettinger. *Beyond Tiananmen*, 93.

⁶³⁷ There were differences among the G7 states in terms of the timing and extent to which they wanted to re-establish relations. Japan was the most forward leaning in resuming ties quickly, ascertaining the support of the other G7 members in their 1990 meeting to re-establish aid flows and loans from the World Bank. These differences, however, were not major ones in terms of whether the relationship should be rehabilitated at all. Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 244.

⁶³⁸ Both the 1990 and 1992 East Asia Strategy Reports (EASR) cite the region's growing economic potential as justification for maintaining its military presence and alliance relationships in the region.

establishment of a truly global world trading system.⁶³⁹ As opposed to Europe where questions mounted about what type of economic assistance the US and its allies would provide the former communist states following the demise of Soviet hegemony and the Soviet Union itself, in East Asia there were no great pressures on Washington in terms of having to come up with a plan for rebuilding and integrating the economies of multiple states given the lack of dramatic changes there. Though in the background of continued sluggish US economic growth and the diminution (and eventual disintegration) of the Soviet strategic threat, trade tensions with Japan continued to deepen and affect the entire relationship.

The economic rise of allies became a central consideration in US foreign policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s. While stressing the need to maintain their close relationship to coordinate responses and manage disruptions regionally and globally resulting from the ending of the Cold War, the US characterized Japan and Germany as “bitter” competitors whose trade imbalances with them must be rectified. The negotiations were depicted to “now share some of the strategic importance we have traditionally attached to arms talks with the Soviet Union.”⁶⁴⁰ President Bush, and much of his cabinet, were concerned about the damage to relations with Tokyo which would occur if trade disputes began to occupy a central position in their relationship.⁶⁴¹ However, political and public pressure motivated the administration to begin tackling trade issues with Tokyo in a more overt manner and as a top priority.⁶⁴² Neither side was willing to compromise to the other’s satisfaction, leading to mutual frustration and fueling speculation about whether this was the beginning of a larger split in the relationship. This sentiment was captured in outgoing Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger’s turnover letter to his successor Warren Christopher in 1993 stating the relationship with Japan could be “our single most vexing relationship” in the 1990s.⁶⁴³ This sentiment was in part

⁶³⁹ This was expressed in Eagleburger’s 1993 turnover memo to his predecessor Warren Christopher which stated fears of Uruguay Round talks collapse as a major challenge to be addressed into the 1990s. Lawrence Eagleburger, “Memorandum for Secretary of State-Designate Warren Christopher,” *National Security Archive* (05 January 1993): 1.

⁶⁴⁰ *The National Security Strategy of the United States* (1991), 6.

⁶⁴¹ There were some outliers such as Robert Gates who saw Japan as a rival. Interview with Douglas Paal.

⁶⁴² This was expressed in a series of public opinion polls in 1989 that showed more Americans saw the Japanese economic rise as a greater challenge than the Soviet Union’s military power. Lafeber, *The Clash*, 381.

⁶⁴³ Eagleburger, “Memorandum for Secretary of State-Designate Warren Christopher,” 7.

predicated on the removal of their common adversary in the Soviet Union; American concerns Japan was not contributing significantly to regional and global order;⁶⁴⁴ and Tokyo's concerns of 'Japan bashing' on Washington's part as a way to blame some external entity for their economic woes rather than addressing the structural foundations at home which were the real cause.⁶⁴⁵ Despite these negotiations, the trade imbalance continued to grow in Japan's favour.

Change in US Administration - Flirting with a New Strategic Approach: Despite foreign policy successes in managing the end of communism in Europe, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and assembling a large coalition in militarily expelling Iraq from Kuwait, President Bush lost the 1992 election to Bill Clinton in large measure due to his lack of focus on domestic economic issues. In contrast, the incoming Clinton administration had a laser focus on these matters and a desire to alter US foreign policy as needed to service these. Within the first year in office, the administration had introduced several new initiatives to signal economic issues as the number one interest in American foreign policy. These included the creation of the National Economic Council (NEC), an executive body with equal organization standing as the National Security Council (NSC); the completion of the Bottom Up Review (BUR) defence report which would keep US military presences in both Europe and East Asia but at a reduced number; and the publication of an Export Strategy with an emphasis on growing the percent of GDP American exports accounted for, including employing the use of tied aid to promote trade and a focus on emerging markets in Latin America and East Asia.⁶⁴⁶ Furthermore, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake's 1993 Engagement and Enlargement speech, outlining the administration's foreign policy vision and focus for the post-Cold War era, emphasized a "domestic renaissance" which would be aided by reducing foreign policy costs through engagement, partnership, and prevention with other countries but especially existing allies and close partners.⁶⁴⁷ Their administration would expect more

⁶⁴⁴ Case in point was the very limited military support provided by Tokyo during the Gulf War, in part due to sensitivities about violating the constitution in deploying military forces abroad. Japan did, however, contribute sizable financial assistance to the coalition but this "cheque diplomacy" was still seen by the H Bush administration as an insufficient contribution. Harrison, *Japan Challenges America*, 206.

⁶⁴⁵ Funabashi, "Japan and the New World Order."

⁶⁴⁶ Juan P. Morillo, "The Clinton Administration's New National Export Strategy," *Georgetown Journal of International Law* 25, no. 3 (1994): 1113–1128.

⁶⁴⁷ Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," Speech delivered at Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, 21 September 1993, 1.

burden sharing from allies within this new era where domestic, specifically economic, issues would become a more central element in US foreign policy. As President Clinton stated in his 1994 budget address, “We have put our economic competitiveness at the heart of our foreign policy.”⁶⁴⁸ This more economics-first agenda would have major ramifications for the US economic approach towards East Asia over the next few years.

Throughout a series of speeches and events over the course of 1993, the Clinton administration set about detailing its visions for the region in the post-Cold War era. The region was to be a main focus given its economic potential. A major priority was to ensure continued regional access to US exports, preventing any moves towards closed regional pacts. Such motivations explain the timing of President Clinton hosting the 1993 APEC meeting in Seattle immediately after the finalization of NAFTA to assuage regional concerns about the balkanization of the world economy.⁶⁴⁹ Furthermore, President Clinton emphasized the creation of a “Pacific Community” which would further trade, creating a stable and secure environment, and promote democracy and human rights.⁶⁵⁰ Despite creating the impression of a greater role in the development of pan-Pacific regional order, the Clinton administration continued the long standing practice of pursuing its regional interests largely bilaterally. Not only was economics to be the main issue for Washington, with President Clinton subtly warning regional actors that trade with East Asia was conditional on it having to tangibly benefit American exporters and public⁶⁵¹, but so was the use of economic tools coercively in promoting its agenda, regarding trade and non-trade issues, towards Japan, China and others.

Relations with Japan were the most fraught given their long-standing economic tensions which made them the number one target of the Clinton administration’s economics first agenda. During his first public address in Asia in Waseda, Japan President Clinton called on Tokyo to help the US in furthering its “Pacific Community” but also criticized the stubbornly high trade imbalance between the two which had to be rectified to progress relations further. Trade imbalances with developing states like China

⁶⁴⁸ Frank Ching, “The Asian Legacy in Focus,” *The Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (2001): 176.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁰ Bill Clinton, “Building a New Pacific Community,” Speech at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan, 07 July 1993.

⁶⁵¹ Bill Clinton, “U.S.-Asia Economic Engagement in the 21st Century,” *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 5.9 (1994): 12.

were tolerated given their level of economic development, but such a condition among advanced economies was seen as abnormal, unusual, and potentially destabilizing.⁶⁵² On this last point, the 1994 National Security Strategy stated that Japan's large trade surplus was not just a problem within their bilateral relationship but a "major imbalance in the world economy."⁶⁵³ Japan, along with other wealthy allies, would have to move away from their parochial, narrow focus on economic growth at all costs and towards opening their internal markets, minimize state economic interventionism, and in general become more serious contributors to system stability in order to avoid "economic disaster".⁶⁵⁴ Such strong language was based on the fact that the US needed other wealthy states to help them in two crucial ways. First, to open their markets to help spur continued global economic growth as the US was incapable of being the only engine of consumption, and second to coordinate policies and positions on macro-economic matters, especially during crises. At the same time, the US did not allow Japan to become a more autonomous regional player, evidenced by its efforts to block Tokyo's desire to gain greater power within the ADB through increased contributions.⁶⁵⁵ The US wanted more burden sharing from allies, but within existing institutions and hierarchical relationships which would become even more apparent in the late 1990s with the Asian Financial Crisis.

Throughout 1993-1995 the US and Japan held a series of negotiations under the Agreed Framework designed to rectify a number of "structural impediments" to ensure a more balanced trade relationship emerged. This period has been characterized as "perhaps the nastiest and most confrontational of bilateral trade disputes ever."⁶⁵⁶ The NEC played a central role in these negotiations, being populated by a number of 'trade revisionists' who believed Japan's economic edge over the US was based on its developmental-state approach defined by close government-business coordination and subsidization to ensure Japanese firms developed strong footholds in emerging technology markets to the disadvantage of American companies.⁶⁵⁷ This led to the

⁶⁵² Clinton, "Building a New Pacific Community."

⁶⁵³ *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 16.

⁶⁵⁴ Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," 7.

⁶⁵⁵ Wan, "Japan and the Asian Development Bank," 524.

⁶⁵⁶ Robert M. Uriu, *Clinton and Japan: The Impact of Revisionism on US Trade Policy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009): 3.

⁶⁵⁷ Tanaka and Tadokoro, "The 1980s: The Decade of Neoliberalism," 209; Uriu, *Clinton and China*, 6, 20.

favouring of various tools associated with 'managed trade' to limit the volume of Japanese exports in certain US markets and augment US imports in certain Japanese exports. None of these efforts worked, with talks completely breaking down by 1995 which would never be resumed.

At this time there were major elements in the US government, specifically the Pentagon and State, that worried about the long-term damage to the US' most important bilateral relationship in East Asia resulting from this new confrontational economics-first approach. These developments seemed to confirm earlier warnings from the Department of Defense at the start of the decade that economic rivalry may become more pronounced with Tokyo in the absence of a clear and present security threat which could severely harm American strategic interests and regional stability.⁶⁵⁸ Furthermore, Under-Secretary of State for East Asia Winston Lord's May 1994 "malaise memo" was a catalyst for a complete overhaul of the administration's approach to East Asia. The US heavy fisted approach via the use of economic coercion had alienated many in the region, generating concern and resentment towards the US. As described by one commentator at the time, by the end of 1994 relations between Tokyo and Washington were "seriously adrift."⁶⁵⁹ Efforts towards adopting a course correction were growing.

The Clinton administration's relationship with China was always turbulent and confrontational during its first few years in power. China had been a low priority for the Clinton administration when they entered office, but they quickly realized China was a major power which needed to be engaged with.⁶⁶⁰ Whereas economics had been the major friction point with Japan, human rights was the conflict point with China. Conditional renewal of Most Favored Nation (MFN) status for China, an economic tool to pursue the administration's goals, was announced in the summer of 1993 as the new US policy. Renewal would not be given unless China showed concrete progress on human rights in the country.⁶⁶¹ As human rights progress was the only criterion, it appeared the US was not trying to address other possible concerns such as China's economic model

⁶⁵⁸ "The East Asia Strategy Report" (1990), 5.

⁶⁵⁹ Richard P. Cronin, "The United States and Asia in 1993: Year of Asia and the Pacific," *Asian Survey* 34, no. 1 (1994): 109.

⁶⁶⁰ Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, 160.

⁶⁶¹ "Executive Order 12850," *Federal Register*, May 28, 1993, <https://www.archives.gov/files/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12850.pdf>

or potential of influencing regional economic dynamics as in the case with Japan. President Clinton had made clear, for example, that the US trade imbalance with China was understandable and acceptable given it was still largely a developing state and economy.⁶⁶²

A year later, however, the linkage policy was disbanded and automatic renewal of China's MFN status resumed, with the administration arguing its usefulness had run out as a policy tool.⁶⁶³ While China made a number of goodwill gestures in 1993-1994 regarding human rights, such as allowing Red Cross visits to those still jailed from the Tiananmen Square massacre round up, many argued economic interests and business lobbying convinced the Clinton administration to discard the policy. It remains unclear what exactly were the factors which led to the policy being reversed so quickly. Some argue it was Clinton's realization of the negative impacts which would occur if trade with China was seriously constrained whereas others argue the business community was the critical factor in successfully lobbying Congress and the White House to reverse it.⁶⁶⁴ Recent evidence, also, suggests that Beijing was successful in recruiting specific businesses, via financial inducements, to lobby on its behalf even though many of these companies were not that invested in trade with China but critical to the political funding of key political figures.⁶⁶⁵ There also appeared real concern that US businesses would lose out to European and especially Japanese competitors with strong economic linkages forming between Beijing and Tokyo.⁶⁶⁶ Furthermore, by 1994-95 the NEC was exhausted with the endless and fruitless pursuit of a new *modus vivendi* economically with Japan and began to focus on other economic relations such as with China.⁶⁶⁷

Like its relationship with Japan, the US relationship with China during the first few years of the Clinton Administration was marked by tension and uncertainty. The Malaise Memo had warned that the new economics-first approach was not just hurting specific relationships but their standing throughout the region. Alongside the degradation of

⁶⁶² Clinton, "Building a New Pacific Community."

⁶⁶³ Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, 197.

⁶⁶⁴ Dietrich, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy," 293; Goldman, "Managing Policy Toward China Under Clinton," 1.

⁶⁶⁵ Indeed, many of the most powerful businesses and corporate sectors were largely focused on NAFTA and WTO matters during the early to mid-1990s. Hung, "The Periphery in the Making of Globalization."

⁶⁶⁶ Silver, "The United States, Japan and China," 2.

⁶⁶⁷ Destler, *The National Economic Council*, 37-39.

relations with both Japan and China, the US was also pressuring other regional states including Indonesia and Malaysia over labor and environmental standards and towards allies like the Philippines and South Korea in terms of access to their markets and in the latter's case renegotiating the cost distribution of housing US forces there.⁶⁶⁸ Regarding allies, the US regularly argued, behind closed doors, that its security contributions needed to be taken into consideration when determining trade access and burden sharing issues.⁶⁶⁹ As Jonathan Pollack observed, at this time the US policy towards East Asia seemed dominated by domestic political concerns specifically export promotion.⁶⁷⁰ There were little to no tangible benefits from this strategy, and instead it was opening severe risks and increased costs if the US lost standing in the region and was unable to mobilize others, allies and other regional states, during regional and international crises. Such an approach, therefore, would produce the exact opposite result desired by the Enlargement and Engagement doctrine of reducing foreign policy costs in order to focus on domestic issues. By the end of 1994/early 1995, the US was appreciating this realization and while a new approach had not been constructed, they had begun to stem the bleeding with the cessation of doubling down on trying to rectify the major sources of tensions with Japan (trade negotiations) and China (MFN status).

Japan - the Giant Stagnates: Throughout the early 1990s Japan continued to weather mounting trade tensions with Washington. Paralleling developments in the US, these frictions were causing a degradation in public opinion of the US in Japan and leading to the proliferation of commentaries advocating Tokyo pursue a more independent and autonomous foreign policy to escape endless US predation and badgering by adopting a growing superpower mindset.⁶⁷¹ Furthermore, political relations between the two states were thin given Tokyo had few connections with and knowledge of the incoming Clinton administration in 1993 and in 1993 the Liberal Democratic Party lost power for the first time in decades in Japan with the newly established New Party assuming power. Tokyo did not show overt opposition to American criticisms, but there were exploratory studies

⁶⁶⁸ Renato Cruz De Castro, "Whither Geoeconomics? Bureaucratic Inertia in U.S. Post-Cold War Foreign Policy Toward East Asia," *Asian Affairs, an American Review* 26, no. 4 (2000): 210.

⁶⁶⁹ A prominent example of this logic was the US insistence that it retain the same voting share percentage as Japan within the ABD even though Tokyo contributed monetarily far more than Washington. Wan, "Japan and the Asian Development Bank," 523.

⁶⁷⁰ Jonathan D. Pollack, "The United States and Asia in 1995: The Case of the Missing President," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 1 (1996):1-12.

⁶⁷¹ Funabashi, "Japan and the New World Order.," Shintaro Ishihara, *The Japan That Can Say No: Why Japan Will Be First Among Equals* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1992).

about different global trajectories, how these would affect the US-Japan relationship, and what options were available for carving a new foreign policy approach. Serious consideration of a complete divorce from the US alliance was not pursued, but diversification of relationships and partnerships, in East Asia and part of a supposed new multilateralism-based era centered on the UN, on top of (and thus diluting) the US relationship were taken seriously.⁶⁷²

Japan remained focused on pursuing its economic strategy in a low-key manner to avoid US and regional criticism as captured in the Flying Geese Model.⁶⁷³ The divisions produced by the trade talks with the US had furthered Japan's continued re-orientation towards East Asia. By 1992 the vast majority of Japanese overseas development assistance (ODA) money went to Asian states, overtaking the US as the region's larger donor in this regard.⁶⁷⁴ Furthermore, by the mid-1990s Japan was trading more with East Asia than the US.⁶⁷⁵ While Tokyo remained highly concerned about the development of other regional trade blocs in Europe and North America, its preference remained on the non-formalization of trade developments in East Asia. Tokyo believed that moves towards intra-regional free-trade agreements were premature and could disrupt the ongoing regionalization of the Japanese economy which Japan desired more so than the pluralization of the regional economy with multiple power centres.⁶⁷⁶ Despite its impressive decades-long GDP growth and rapid economic inroads into Asia, in the early 1990s Japan still did not possess the ability, specifically the internal market, to be the engine of a regional economic order. Therefore, it continued to further economic relations with the US in parallel with its Asian efforts to gain access to technology, capital

⁶⁷² Cronin and Green, "Redefining the U.S.-Japan Alliance," 18-19.

⁶⁷³ The dominant features of the Flying Geese model were 1) in the second bid for regional integration (the first being its militarily imposed Co-Prosperity Sphere of the 1930-1940s) Japan relied solely on its economic power; 2) Japan employed its aid as a means to boost its economic power and consolidate its production network in East Asia (commonly referred to as 'tied aid') and 3) the Japanese Government kept a low profile in international political affairs and was reluctant to come up with bold political initiatives. Fumitaka Furuoka, "Japan and the 'Flying Geese' Pattern of East Asian Integration," *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia* 4, no.1 (2005): 1-7.

⁶⁷⁴ Arvind Panagariya, "East Asia and the New Regionalism in World Trade," *World Economy* 17, no. 6 (1994): 834.

⁶⁷⁵ Deng, "Japan in APEC," 355; T.J. Pempel, "Challenges to Bilateralism: Changing Foes, Capital Flows and Complex Forums," In *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific*, eds. Ellis S. Krauss and T.J. Pempel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004): 23.

⁶⁷⁶ Bello, "Trouble in Paradise," 36; David P. Rapkin, "The United States, Japan, and the Power to Block: The APEC and AMF Cases," *Pacific Review* 14, no. 3 (2001): 382.

and overseas markets in its continued development of a becoming an economic superpower.⁶⁷⁷

This trajectory came to a grinding, and somewhat sudden, halt by the mid-1990s for a number of factors. Most importantly, Japan's economy entered a decade-long period of stagnation. While some had been arguing that since 1990 Japan's economy was heading towards such a state, it only became apparent by the middle of the decade with anemic yearly growth rates of 1% experienced over the next two decades, the shrinking of the economy in nominal terms, reduced wages, and stagnant price levels.⁶⁷⁸ Contributing to this state of affairs was an asset bubble burst due to over-loaning by Japanese banks; the increasing competitiveness of American exports due to the appreciation of the Yen following the Plaza Accords; and the failure of the Keiretsu political economy model. On the latter point, the Keiretsu model had proven effective at enabling Japanese business to catch up to leading foreign, mainly American, economic competitors in a number of sectors but once at the top was unable to reorient this system from copying/imitating towards innovation/learning.⁶⁷⁹ Another factor was the return of more traditional security concerns in Japan's neighbourhood, specifically from North Korea actively seeking to build a nuclear weapon and a more assertive China reinforcing arguments for maintaining the alliance with the US as the central pillar of Tokyo's foreign policy. Finally, by the mid-1990s the US had given up on trade negotiations with Japan, in part due to the failure of them but more importantly due to the economic resurgence of the US which dampened such relative gains mindsets, which enabled Washington decisionmakers to focus more on shoring up the alliance as the lynchpin of its Asia approach even as it sought closer relations with Beijing.

East Asia - Small States Take the Lead in Economic Regionalism: Moving into the 1990s, there was a growing desire among smaller states to become more active in regional management. Unlike in Europe and North America, these developments were based on norms of inclusiveness and non-binding agreements. While there were some efforts to carve out 'Asian only' institutions and groups, most evident in Malaysian Prime

⁶⁷⁷ Deng, "Japan in APEC," 358.

⁶⁷⁸ Hiroshi Yoshikawa, *Japan's Lost Decade* (Tokyo: I-House Press, 2008).

⁶⁷⁹ This led to a number of dead-end investments in emerging technologies which burdened companies and banks with additional debts. Crawford, "Reinterpreting the Japanese Economic Miracle."

Minister Mahathir's proposal of an East Asian Economic Group, the vast majority of regional states, large and small, preferred an open and inclusive membership style and practice for regional ordering.⁶⁸⁰ In particular, ASEAN states became heavily interested in creating institutions based around its organization, for it was envisioned such a process would ensure smaller states' representation and involvement in regional ordering, preventing them from being squeezed out by major powers.⁶⁸¹ The inclusive nature of such institutions would ideally involve all of the major powers to avoid the carving up of the region into separate spheres of influence and give equal weight to smaller states in regional discussions.

ASEAN states moved quickly to broaden their membership to include nearly all states in the sub-region and in 1993 created the ASEAN Free Trade Area. Given the small size of the economies comprising it, this regional bloc was not particularly strong but demonstrated their desire to act as a bloc and serve as an anchor for future free trade agreements in the 2000s.⁶⁸² Such actions reinforced hedging as a predominant mechanism of the region, pushing back against any sort of consolidation around one power (especially Japan) but also to facilitate working together when their interests aligned, such as growing concerns about US economic unilateralism in the imposition of sanctions and pressuring them to support the Uruguay Round.⁶⁸³ Moving into the decade, ASEAN based institutions began to populate the regional landscape.

China - Escaping Pariah Status and Maintaining a Low Profile: Moving into the 1990s

China was still facing a challenging international environment in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre. There were improvements, however, in their position with regional states, specifically Japan which was not as concerned about the importance of human rights as its Western partners, eager to lift sanctions. Furthermore, Deng's 1992 Southern Tour sent a strong signal that China would continue down the path of economic reform and opening up even though many in the regime believed the political-social unrest they had recently put down stemmed from these reforms. China was to move forward in this direction, nevertheless, managing the tensions inherent in pursuing a

⁶⁸⁰ Panagariya, "East Asia and the New Regionalism in World Trade," 817.

⁶⁸¹ Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia."

⁶⁸² Urata, "Free Trade Agreements and Patterns of Trade in East Asia from the 1990s to 2010s," 61.

⁶⁸³ Cronin, "The United States and Asia in 1993."

certain level of economic liberalization and foreign trade while preventing/limiting any spillover into the political realm.⁶⁸⁴

It was vitally important to ensure China was able to continue to gain access to and be part of the international trading system while also not drawing the ire of larger powers who may see China's system of governance and growing power as a threat.⁶⁸⁵ In facilitating this, Deng's *Taoguang Yanghui* doctrine advised China to keep a low profile, hide its strengths, and bide its time.⁶⁸⁶ China emphasized that it was still a developing state, requiring continued international assistance and needing to dedicate most of its energies towards internal reforms, and thus was unable to take on a larger leadership role until it was in a more stable and strengthened position to do so. China, as well, tentatively sought participation in the region's nebulous regionalism efforts, such as APEC and ASEAN based institutions, to embed them within this emerging regional architecture, sharing similar concerns as others about US unilateralism without directly criticizing the US.⁶⁸⁷

This approach allowed China to maintain its economic growth and quickly rejoin the international community in short order. China's GDP grew nearly 50% between 1989-1993, with foreign trade up 60%, World Bank lending doubling, and FDI growing 450% between 1991-1993.⁶⁸⁸ Furthermore, by 1993 there were estimates China had already become the world's third largest economy but this was not readily understood or appreciated by many at the time.⁶⁸⁹ While the incoming Clinton administration had realized early on that China was big and could not be bullied or isolated like smaller states, such as North Korea and Iraq, there was little appreciation of just how quickly China was growing economically and how fast they were embedding themselves within the regional economic architecture and nascent institution building processes.

⁶⁸⁴ O'Mahoney and Wang, "China's 1989 Choice."

⁶⁸⁵ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*.

⁶⁸⁶ Dingding Chen and Jianwei Wang, "Lying Low No More?: China's New Thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy," *China (National University of Singapore. East Asian Institute)* 9, no. 2 (2011): 195–216.

⁶⁸⁷ China, as well, shared similar concerns as other East Asian states about any growing regional leadership role for Japan.

⁶⁸⁸ Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, 145.

⁶⁸⁹ Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, 153.

Closing of the Critical Juncture (1995-1996)

By 1995, the Clinton administration realized the economics-first approach was not working and that a new strategic approach was needed to manage its relationship with the region.⁶⁹⁰ As well, there were growing voices in the administration, specifically in the Defense and State departments, arguing a more geopolitically informed approach was needed to preserve US standing in the region and prevent the possibility of a growing regional order which was rooted as a counter to them. This was reflected in Joseph Nye's, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (1994-1995), arguments that the US needed more 'realism' in its foreign policy approach to East Asia, thinking about alignment patterns amongst the US, allies, and outside powers and the need to address emerging traditional security issues.⁶⁹¹

At the same time, a more permissive environment was taking root for such a shift as the US economic rebound became apparent by this time. This marked the beginning of a decade-long period of relatively high GDP growth and low unemployment for the US, diminishing concerns about relative economic gain pursuits against other powers.⁶⁹² Relatedly, concerns about economic rivals diminished as Japan's rise stalled and China was not seen as an economic peer but a developing country with massive potential. While the US continued to emphasize export promotion, it slowly shifted focus on expansion of the economic system rather than zero-sum evaluations of specific economic relationships.⁶⁹³ This was in part based on the growing confidence that the US was the most advantageously constituted and positioned to benefit from the major economic trends of deregulation, globalization and innovation.⁶⁹⁴ Relatedly, pressure on fiscal restraint and seeing domestic and foreign policy spending as an either/or relationship eased given the better US fiscal situation plus the fact that, without having to contend with other major peers, Washington could maintain its hegemonic presence and

⁶⁹⁰ Cruz, "Whither Geoeconomics?" 210.

⁶⁹¹ Interview with Joseph Nye.

⁶⁹² The proximate reasons for the US economic surge in the 1990s was the lowering of prices for computers, health care, and oil as well as American companies' being leaders in the growing information economy. Jeffrey Frankel and Peter Orszag, "American Economic Policy in the 1990's," *IDEAS*, Working Paper Series from RePEc (2001): 8.

⁶⁹³ A prominent critic was Paul Krugman who described the competitiveness strategy of the Clinton administration during their first term as not useful and wasteful, being far too focused on cumbersome industrial and confrontational trade policies. The focus he argued should be on productivity and not balance of payments. Gilpin. *Global Political Economy*, 181.

⁶⁹⁴ Frankel and Orszag, "American Economic Policy in the 1990's," 12.

networks in East Asia (and Europe) at about 80% of the costs from the Cold War.⁶⁹⁵ This state of affairs re-invigorated the sense that the US had to be the global leader, even if (and especially because) its allies and others were not prioritizing burden sharing in managing the global and regional order.⁶⁹⁶

Given the uncertain strategic trajectory of East Asia, many regional major and minor powers, despite their frustrations with the US heavy handed economics approach, wanted closer relations with the US and for continued American involvement in the region. There was, therefore, an opportunity for the US to develop an approach which would solidify these orientations towards itself and prevent the region from becoming a closed system. As discussed in Chapter Five, the approach adopted was outlined in the 1995 East Asia Strategy Report (EASR), also known as the Nye Report, in which the US committed to: 1) revitalizing its alliance relationship with Japan as its regional lynchpin partner; 2) engaging with, and hedging against, China in establishing a more stable and coherent bilateral framework; and 3) support for institutional pluralism developments underway in the region. The approval of this framework represented a growing coherence within the administration itself regarding East Asian affairs (and foreign policy in general) with more linkages between and a common understanding held among the relevant government departments and organizations of the administration's approach to and priorities in the region.⁶⁹⁷

Shoring Up Activities: The most significant adjustment the US pursued during this time was the cessation of trade disputes with Japan and embarking on a plan to revitalize the alliance. Several converging factors facilitated this move. First, there was a growing realization that Japan was the lynchpin of the US economic and security presence in East Asia, and an important partner globally for hegemonic management in general, and

⁶⁹⁵ Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed," 30.

⁶⁹⁶ This sentiment is clearly expressed in the opening of the 1995 National Security Strategy where it stated that US leadership has never been more essential to "navigate the shoals of the world's new dangers" (p.1). Such sentiments, as well, were firmly held by a number of prominent officials in the foreign policy relevant departments, with the most obvious example being Joseph Nye who in 1990 wrote a book entitled *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Such exceptionalism infused American thinking about their role and purpose in East Asia, with the 1995 East Asia Strategy Report stating the US had provided the 'oxygen' for regional development over the past forty years via its security presence which has created such stable conditions. "United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region," 1.

⁶⁹⁷ Lampton, "China and Clinton's America," 1117; Cruz, "Whither Geoeconomics?" 207-208.

that trade frictions were having a serious negative effect on relations.⁶⁹⁸ Second, the rise of mutual regional security concerns regarding North Korean proliferation and China's long-term trajectory. Third, Japan's economic stagnation and the easing of US unilateralist and coercive economic moves.⁶⁹⁹ While Japan continued to develop relations with the region and engaged within the growing institutional ecosystem, the US had successfully stunted more autonomous predilections by Tokyo for regional leadership. Furthermore, while the US would work closely with Tokyo on a host of common regional (like North Korea) and global (like creation of the WTO) issues, this was not an overarching, all-encompassing relationship to tackling regional issues and order management. Rather, the US would continue to largely pursue its regional engagements on its own without consulting or informing Tokyo, especially with respect to China.⁷⁰⁰

The 1995 EASR, as well, re-emphasized not only the importance of other bilateral alliances, such as with South Korea, by reframing forward basing as an economically efficient, not burdensome, way to sustain US forces in the region.⁷⁰¹ As with Japan, the leveraging of security provision to gain economic concessions, specifically market access, with South Korea largely evaporated. Furthermore, the US made it clear that it did not see regional institution building as a threat or challenge to itself or its bilateral based regional system.⁷⁰² The US supported ASEAN's efforts to ensure the region did not become destabilized by major power rivalry through such inclusive institution building.⁷⁰³ While the US continued to raise human rights, labor, and environmental issues, these became a lesser priority in its engagement with East Asia states, except for rogue and pariah regimes such as North Korea and Myanmar.⁷⁰⁴

Engagement with China: The ending of the short-lived linkage policy in 1994 re-established the separation of economics from other, thornier aspects of the US-China

⁶⁹⁸ "United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region" (1995), 12.

⁶⁹⁹ Around this time, as well, the trade deficit began to fall. It peaked in 1994 at \$65.7 billion and was \$47.6 billion by 1996. Uriu. *Clinton and Japan*, 242

⁷⁰⁰ Cruz, "Whither Geoeconomics," 107.

⁷⁰¹ "United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region" (1995), 31-33.

⁷⁰² "United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region" (1995), 15. This sentiment built off views expressed in the 1994 National Security Strategy that inclusive regional bodies, such as APEC, helped ensure "open regionalism" prevailed in East Asia (p.16).

⁷⁰³ "United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region" (1995), 14.

⁷⁰⁴ Cruz, "Whither Geoeconomics?" 208.

relationship. Some sanctions, specifically regarding military weaponry and technologies, remained, but by 1995 the US had determined they would continue to engage with Beijing rather than seek a more confrontational or containment like approach. The widespread use of unilateral sanctions was becoming reserved for rogue regimes (like North Korea, Iraq, Iran, and Serbia) who were seen as immediate and manifest threats to regional security.⁷⁰⁵ Beijing had, as well, shown that it was willing to compromise and negotiate to some degree on such issues, which would further be demonstrated later in the 1990s as it made major internal economic adjustments as part of its WTO entry and gaining PNTR status. Furthermore, the 1995 EASR acknowledged that China was vital for regional stability, characterizing it as a mix of a great power but also a developing one.⁷⁰⁶ China's economic importance to the US was increasingly appreciated by the Clinton administration, particularly for the NEC who saw more potential in this relationship after years of non-stop dispute talks with Japan.⁷⁰⁷ China was not seen as a competitor like Japan was given the different stage of economic development it was currently in compared to the US. While the US would continue to hedge against China as needed, there was a determination that trade relations would continue unencumbered. This included furthering WTO entry negotiations which had been ongoing since 1986.

The US, as well, supported and encouraged China's participation in regional institution building and resolving outstanding maritime and territorial disputes with its neighbours.⁷⁰⁸ China had, also, avoided taking positions on trying to limit or exclude the US involvement in the region such as Malaysia's East Asia Caucus Group. The US approach to China, like its other regional relationships, would be pursued largely separate from others. As the Clinton administration moved into its second term China became a far larger priority with warming relations between the two countries' leaderships and ever deepening economic interdependencies forming. Furthermore, the most important change in the approach to China economically between the administration's first and second terms was the active growing governmental support of furthering American investment in China.

⁷⁰⁵ J. Dumbrell, "Was There a Clinton Doctrine? President Clinton's Foreign Policy Reconsidered," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 13, no. 2 (2002): 55.

⁷⁰⁶ "United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region" (1995), 17.

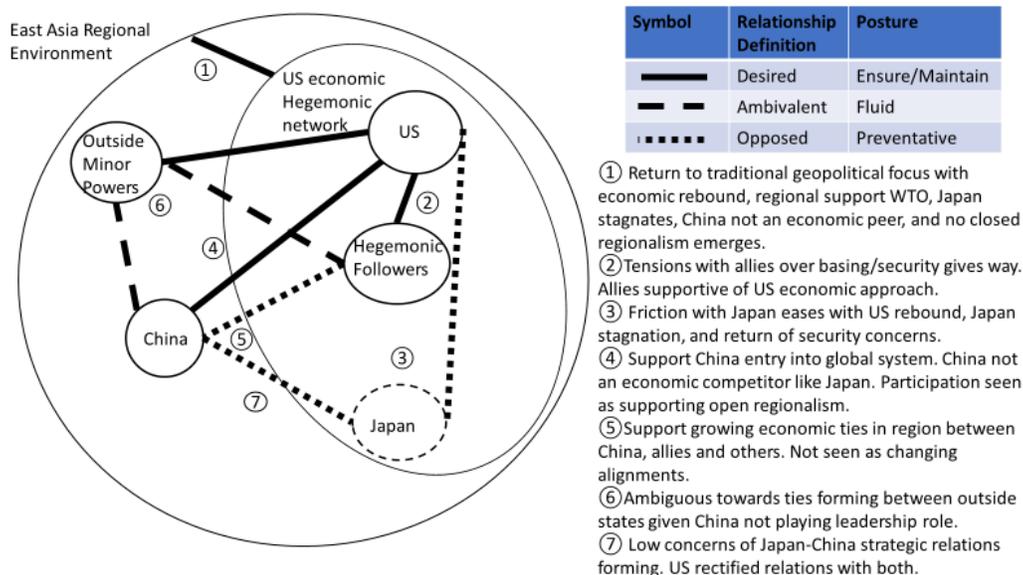
⁷⁰⁷ This switch in focus has been referred to as "Japan fatigue". Uriu, *Clinton and Japan*, 240.

⁷⁰⁸ "National Security Strategy of the United States" (1995), 36.

Addressing Network Concerns

Figure Ten below captures where network concerns existed for the US and how they responded to them in this case. There are three things of particular importance. First, decisions and actions to address specific network concerns can have unintended consequences both for the US in dealing with different concerns as well as dis/advantaging other states, both in the short and long term. In this case, China benefited immensely from American efforts to address other network concerns which created space for China's continued development into a major power without intense American scrutiny. Second, the Clinton administration's aggressive economics-first regional approach created and exacerbated tensions in addressing hegemonic network concerns. By the mid-1990s, the administration had abandoned this approach and returned to a more traditional approach focusing on the geopolitical foundations of hegemonic network maintenance as the central priority. Third, the return to this traditional disposition reinforced, and reflected, the durability of the main pillars of the US regional strategic culture towards East Asia given the diminishing importance of structural economic factors which had motivated the US to focus more on relative gains in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As outlined in the Chapter Three, the US East Asian regional strategic culture emphasized acceptance of heterogeneity among regional states; a focus more on preventing Asian regionalism than on creating a regional institutional order; preventing major powers from playing a prominent role in ordering the region; and the relative non-importance of the region as a global partner.

Figure 10: Network Concerns in the East Asia Economic Domain



Ensure Maintenance of Economic Network Dominance in Regional Environment: By the mid-1990s, through a series of specific actions and larger structural changes, the US had successfully addressed concerns regarding the continued dominance of its economic network in East Asia. Many of these issues were self-inflicted by the US given its growing sensitivities to relative gains issues and using its economic power to pursue non-economic goals. With the abandonment of the economics-first approach, the US was able further relations with Japan, China, and others which helped prevent the emergence of any pan-Asian regionalism which could minimize or exclude them. There was to be no NAFTA or EU of East Asia as there were few proponents for such an Asian only forum. Japan's economic rise had stagnated, its economic model losing much of its luster, with Tokyo falling back into a firmly allied position. China was proceeding with major internal economic changes and restructuring towards a more liberal path. Regional states supported the Uruguay Round talks. Despite the early emphasis on a "New Pacific Community", the Clinton administration showed little interest in leading or being a major player in economic institution building in East Asia. Such an approach was not needed as the US had achieved its major goals for the region by the mid-1990s: secured regional access, prevented a major power from leading regional ordering, and the lack of an alternative economic network or competing system.

While much emphasis was placed on East Asia developing into a centre of gravity in the world economy, the region was seen more as a place of economic opportunity, especially emerging markets and supply chain developments, to the US rather than an important economic partner given it was not unified or well-coordinated as was the EU. The US, therefore, could ensure support via partnerships with important regional states separately rather than try to build a regional specific economic group. Whether such an outcome would have occurred if the US had maintained its economics-first approach is doubtful given the simultaneous degradation in relations with many Asian states.

Ensure Hegemonic Followers Remain Subordinated Within the Economic Network:

Other than Japan, there were no serious concerns about the continuation of hegemonic followership among the US closest partners in the region. Even in relationships with strained military ties during this time, such as the Philippines and Thailand, there were

no major calls by these states to reorient economic relations away from the US based global system and towards a closed or privileged regional grouping. The growing linkage of security provision to economics, however, in alliances such as with South Korea were part of a larger degradation of relations with numerous regional states as part of the economics-first approach. This emphasis was largely removed by the mid-1990s with the Clinton administration emphasizing that such alliances were economically practical for the US in maintaining a forward presence which in turn was vital in ensuring that peaceful and stable regional conditions were maintained which fostered continued economic growth and development. These relationships, therefore, were primarily valued by the US for the geopolitical utility they served in ensuring the US regional rather than lucrative ones economically.

Oppose Hegemonic Followers Becoming More Autonomous: During the early to mid-1990s the US was most concerned about its relationship with Japan. Trade tensions continued to mount as Tokyo became the primary target of the Clinton administration's economics-first approach. Japan was seen as a direct economic competitor of the US, especially in high end and emerging technology sectors, which had been able to dedicate most of its focus on economic development for decades while the US provided for its security. While Japan was still portrayed as an important ally of the US, it appeared for the first couple of years in office that the Clinton administration was not overly concerned about the degradation to the overall relationship stemming from this more aggressive posture towards them. By the mid-1990s, however, the US relented from this approach, dropping endless trade negotiations and re-investing in the relationship via new defence guidelines.

Part of this was facilitated by the US economic rebound, Japan's economic stagnation, and growing mutual security concerns from North Korea and China that ensured geopolitical considerations were a primary motivation in moving forward in the relationship. During this time, the US was not concerned with Japan's growing economic ties in East Asia given many of these proceeded without formal institutionalization and overt Japanese leadership. The US, though, did move in to restrain any growing autonomous predilections from Tokyo, such as changes to the voting share structure and work of the ADB and later in the 1990s their proposal for an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) during the Asian Financial Crisis. Rather than enabling its primary regional ally from

assuming a greater leadership role in the economic management of East Asia, the US worked to disrupt any such developments in order to keep the region open and subjected to the larger international economic system and predominant institutions under US influence.

Ensure Direct Control of Hegemonic Entry of Outside Major and Minor Powers: The US faced no major opposition to its leadership in bringing outside major and minor powers in East Asia into the global economic order. This was largely done in a bilateral nature and side stepped any parallel promotion of a regional economic body. China played a predominant role in these efforts, particularly in the latter part of the 1990s as Washington moved aggressively to ascertain PNTR with China and secure its acceptance into the WTO. Ensuring East Asia's eventual largest economy was tied directly into the global economic system supported precluding an Asian only economic pact. It is important to keep in mind though that in the mid-1990s the US did not see China as a major ordering force or player like Japan. It was an emerging power whose economic potential was very enticing. China's entry into the WTO, however, was not an accelerated process, taking 15 years and requiring substantial changes by Beijing above and beyond the usual requirements for a developing state. Furthermore, China was not unique given other concurrent WTO entry processes for non/pseudo capitalist states like Vietnam and Russia. China benefited from the US abandonment of the economics-first approach, with Washington understanding its limited power to alter internal and regional dynamics via economic coercion. China's recommitment to internal reform and opening post-Tiananmen plus its non-advocacy for a regional economic structure alleviated possible American concerns about its growing power and importance. Furthermore, China was not a direct economic competitor of the US the way Japan was, which also enabled a more cooperative relationship to form between Beijing and Washington in the latter 1990s. Engagement with China economically was seen as having many upsides and manageable downsides from a hegemonic maintenance perspective.

Oppose Strategic Relations Forming Between Outside Major Powers and Hegemonic Followers: There were few concerns about strategic relations forming between China and regional hegemonic followers even with trade growing between the two. Economic links between them had developed since the 1970s, but these states still wanted US presence and protection to blunt against geopolitical uncertainty. China appeared to be

integrating itself into the economic regionalization patterns and participating in regional economic regionalism efforts led by ASEAN and others. These were positive developments but concerns still existed given outstanding maritime and territorial disputes and the history of Chinese imperialism. Given, however, that China was not a military threat at this time and was amenable to participation in such processes, many regional states and the US embraced the chance to further relations with Beijing and hopefully lock in such constructive behavior into the future. The US, furthermore, came to see its followers' inclusion in these processes as an important way to blunt the emergence of any sort of exclusionary Pan-Asianism/closed regionalism in regional ordering

Oppose Strategic Relations Between Outside Minor and Major Powers: There were few concerns about strategic relations forming among China and other regional states in East Asia from their growing economic connections. Much of this was because China adopted a low-profile posture in regional ordering discussions and debates, being a participant in these but not a leader. Indeed, joining organizations like APEC were seen by China as an important avenue to escape its pariah status post-Tiananmen, creating assurances for regional states and the US of its intention to be part of, rather oppose or try to enforce its own version, the ongoing regionalism being led by these smaller states. The US participated in these developments as they had inclusive membership, were non-binding and not led by a major power. By the mid-1990s, the US had moved towards a more overt form of support for these efforts given they did not interfere or replace US bilateral relations with major powers and regional allies. Such processes also supported the norms of hedging and non-alignment among outside states in the region. Norms which benefited the US by reinforcing its role as the external power of choice for many regional states regarding maintaining regional stability and precluded other regional major powers from developing their own institutional orders. Had the US continued with its economics-first approach, there may have been growing consolidation among regional states towards the need to band together in a tight and unified way to lessen exposure to US coercion.

Oppose Strategic Relations Forming Between Drifting Hegemonic Followers and Outside Major Powers: The simultaneous deterioration of relations with China, as the region's largest state, and Japan, the US most important regional ally and largest economy, by

the US was seen by the mid-1990s as a very serious and negative situation which had to be rectified. Despite some concerns that Japan and China would move closer into alignment against the US if this continued, but by the mid-1990s relations between Tokyo and Beijing began to sour. As a result, the US had an opportunity to secure a favourable position among these powers. First, the US had to restore its relationship with Japan, ensuring it remained its most important regional hegemonic ally. Doing so alleviated regional concerns about any autonomous Japanese regional leadership ambitions and allowed the US to focus on crafting a China approach which would not undermine its regional hegemonic networks. Pursuing these relationships on separate tracks reinforced the US regional preference for bilateralism and avoided difficulties in trying to assuage tensions between Tokyo and Beijing in bringing them under the same hegemonic construct. By the mid-1990s, US maneuvering between these powers was not so much about keeping them apart to blunt possible alignment dynamics between them forming but to mediate the tensions among them and ensure these did not disturb the regional environment.

In summation, by the mid-1990s US efforts to address network concerns regarding economic ordering in East Asia reinforced and reflected its historic preference to blunt these efforts more so than promote a specific and durable institutional design. Throughout the 1990s, the US became more supportive of economic regionalism in East Asia as it was led by smaller powers, inclusive, non-binding and did not interfere with their bilateral form of engagement with major powers. Japan was the major focus for the US during this time, looking to rebalance its trading relationship with Tokyo and stem any growing desires by Tokyo towards a more overt form of regional leadership. China benefited immensely from this focus as it marginalized any serious thinking of the US and Japan being joint leaders in regional economic ordering at this time. As well, the bitter trade fights with Japan left the US exhausted by the mid-1990s and looking to China as a new, more lucrative economic partner to focus on moving forward. Furthermore, China was able to embed itself within the nascent economic regionalism underway, portraying itself as a member of such processes and willing to be seen as the same as its smaller neighbours.

With Japanese leadership curtailed and support for regionalism efforts given by the US, China was able to grow economically throughout the rest of the 1990s and

2000s without too much US scrutiny. This was partially based on the fact the US saw China as a developing and transitioning state and thus not particularly concerned about the growing trade deficit between them. The US had shed its early concerns about relative economic gains given its relatively high GDP growth at this time and being a leader in new high-end technologies associated with the information age, reinforcing the framing of China and the US as in different economic leagues which would remain so for a long time. Over time, however, the realization of just how interconnected their economies were became a more compelling rationale for continuing the relationship even though concerns were growing of Beijing becoming a near-peer competitor.

China, as well, served a useful, non-direct purpose for the US by keeping Japan in line in terms of Tokyo wanting to maintain good relations with Washington given the realization that China was emerging as a major power and that US unipolarity had become a durable feature of the international landscape. Finally, this case demonstrates that the US was generally not that concerned about actual economic flows and trends among states within core regions. At the height of US-Japanese economic tensions, the growing displacement of the US in terms of regional trade and ODA to Japan was not a major issue. Instead, the US became concerned when there was direct competition over valued economic sectors in their bilateral trade relationship and/or when a major power, or group of them, attempted to branch out on their own and construct regional institutions with themselves in beneficial positions. This was the case with Japan in the 1990s and became the case with China in the 2010s.

The US Approach to East Asian Economic Environment in the Rest of the Post-Cold War Period

Moving into the late 1990s, the US economic approach to East Asia had largely crystallized and would remain unchanged until the 2010s. The US remained agnostic about the ongoing intra-regional economic development in trade flows and formal agreements. In particular, the US showed little interest in the proliferation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) which emerged throughout the 2000s. The US only signed two bilateral FTAs in the region, with Australia and Singapore.⁷⁰⁹ This was largely because

⁷⁰⁹ Heribert Dieter and Richard Higgott, "Linking Trade and Security in Asia: Has Washington's Policy Worked?" *Aussenwirtschaft* 62, no. 2 (2007): 151.

the US was focused on bringing states into the global trading system via the WTO and not on becoming more involved and active in the region's economic organizing. As well, the fact that many of these negotiations were driven by ASEAN assuaged American concerns of bigger regional states trying to take the lead in these regards.⁷¹⁰

Furthermore, the return to linkage approaches of tying security deals and commitments to FTA negotiations by the US in the region during the War on Terror (WOT) deterred many states from pursuing this option.⁷¹¹

Despite these setbacks, the US remained undisturbed by intra-regional economic integration so long as it was not led by a major power, or group of them, and that it did not move towards a closed economic bloc removed from the larger global trading system. A critical period where the US did intervene, however, was during the 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis. The US quickly maneuvered to sideline Japan's attempt to create a regional body - the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) - to deal with the crisis.⁷¹² Officially, the US argued the proposed body would not be as effective as the IMF in responding to the crisis. However, it appeared the US was also concerned that the AMF could become an Asian only institution, led by Japan, which would exclude the US and/or place it in a marginal position and thus diminish the power it could wield via the IMF in responding to this crisis.⁷¹³ In the end, despite the anger at the lack of a swift and coordinated international response, major regional states were reluctant to back Japan's proposal in the face of US opposition and thus the IMF became the main vehicle for addressing the crisis. The Clinton administration, furthermore, felt it necessary to manage this crisis via the IMF to prevent it metastasizing towards other regions and blunt any criticisms that the cause of the crisis was based on deregulation of financial flows, a core element of the neoliberal economic philosophy.⁷¹⁴ This would be the last major open Japanese

⁷¹⁰ Furthermore, regional FTAs, most importantly the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), were also proposed by ASEAN, in part as a blunt against Japanese and Chinese economic organizing. Urata, "Free Trade Agreements and Patterns of Trade in East Asia from the 1990s to 2010s," 68.

⁷¹¹ Dieter and Higgott, "Linking Trade and Security in Asia," 151.

⁷¹² Tokyo argued this was needed given that international bodies, specifically the IMF, were too slow to react to the crisis, which originated in Thailand, enabling it to spread to the entire region.

⁷¹³ Jennifer Amyx, "Moving Beyond Bilateralism? Japan and the Asian Monetary Fund," *IDEAS*, Working Paper Series (2002): 2-3; Rapkin, "The United States, Japan, and the Power to Block."

⁷¹⁴ There were two competing theories of the reasons for the crisis. The American view that this was the death throes of Asian state developmental capitalism with the accumulation of bad public debt versus the view of many East Asian states that the causes stemmed from the global financial system, specifically financial deregulation leading to the accumulation of large amounts of private

disagreement with the US in terms of regional economic organizing. The US intervention ensured the continued openness of the region which greatly benefited western MNCs and banks making major further inroads there.⁷¹⁵

Regarding China, once it was determined that trade and economic links were not going to be conditioned on human rights or any other considerations the US moved forward towards creating a more stable relationship anchored on their inclusion in the world trading system. In particular, the reciprocal heads of state visits in 1997-1998 cemented the movement towards a more cordial and intimate relationship.⁷¹⁶ The US took the lead in ensuring China's entry into the WTO, which occurred in 2001. The bilateral trade relationship grew rapidly, greatly benefiting US exporters and consumers with the enlarging US trade deficit not a major concern given the US economic rebound and the sense that China was not in the same economic league as them.⁷¹⁷ China's rapid economic growth, as well, did not come at the expense of the overall share of global GDP held by the US during this time, but rather to that of the EU and Japan.⁷¹⁸ China had retained a low key posture in terms of economic organizing, showing greater interest and involvement in regional free trade negotiations throughout the 2000s after its experience with such processes during its WTO entry experience. This did not cause

debt. Robert Wade, "The Asian Debt-and-Development Crisis of 1997-?: Causes and Consequences," *World Development* 26, no. 8 (1998): 1535.

⁷¹⁵ Richard Higgott, "The International Relations of the Asian Economic Crisis," *Politics and Markets in the Wake of the Asian Crisis*, eds. Mark Besson, Kanishka Jayasuriya, Hyuk-Rae Kim, and Richard Robison (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1999): 270-277.

⁷¹⁶ By this time, Clinton was talking about a stable, open, prosperous, and strong China confident in its place in the world and willing to assume its responsibilities as a great nation. Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, 283.

⁷¹⁷ This sentiment was helped by the sense that the Asian economic miracle, specifically developmental state forms of capitalism, had 'hit a wall' during the 1997-1998 financial crisis, demonstrating the limitations of this approach and convincing the US that China would have to continue to liberalize economically or face the same stalling out future as others in the region such as Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. Richard Higgott, "After Neoliberal Globalization: The 'Securitization' of U.S. Foreign Economic Policy in East Asia," *Critical Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2004): 428.

⁷¹⁸ In particular the US percentage of the global economy since the end of the Cold War has remained stable at around 25%. Japan's percentage has shrunk from 18% in 1995 to 6% in 2020. Germany's percentage has also gone down from 8% to 4.5% during this period. China's share went up dramatically, from 3% in 1995 to 18% in 2020. Ruben Berge Mathisen, "Mapped: The World's Largest Economies, Sized by GDP (1970-2020)," *Visual Capitalist*, 26 April 2022, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/cp/the-worlds-largest-economies-1970-2020/>. During this time, the US GDP per capita has also grown, demonstrating that the US materially was not losing out to China in overall economic terms. Instead, trade with China (especially imports of cheap manufactured goods) helped accelerate economic inequality within the US society which had grown in a dramatic way since the 1980s. Fingar, "The Logic and Efficacy of Engagement," 51.

concern for Washington given Beijing was involved as a participant and not a leader. The US unwillingness to participate in regional FTA negotiations greatly benefitted China who agreed with other Asian states that there should not be the inclusion of security matters in these economic dealings.⁷¹⁹

As China grew into a major economic power in the 2000s it increasingly worked within existing global institutions which reinforced US sentiments Beijing was, if what slowly, becoming a more status-quo power. Coordination with China during the WOT and the 2008 global financial crisis also supported this perspective. However, American concerns about China's lack of economic reforms internally (including granting market access), security and industrial espionage, and its modernizing military became increasingly tense issues in the relationship. By the beginning of the 2010s, the regional economic system had been rewired around China, and away from Japan, raising concerns about Beijing's growing ambitions and how it would use its central position to further these.⁷²⁰

These factors contributed to the Obama's administration's Pivot/Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region in 2011/2012. The major project underpinning the economic pillar of this approach was the US desire to create the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a major regional trading pact which would construct the rules of trade and engagement for the region.⁷²¹ This initiative, alongside those within the diplomatic and security pillars, was seen as a more forceful American attempt to shape regional realities to deter any Chinese revisionist predilections and get them to conform to US preferences.⁷²² These moves became more important with China's growing network building ambitions economically at this time, encapsulated in its twin macro-institutional projects of the Belt

⁷¹⁹ Heribert, and Higgott, "Linking Trade and Security in Asia," 151.

⁷²⁰ Nobuharu Yokokawa, "Re-Emergence of Asia and the Rise and Fall of the Japanese Economy in Super Long Waves of Capitalist World Systems," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 50, no. 2 (2020): 196.

⁷²¹ Michael J. Green and Matthew P. Goodman, "After TPP: The Geopolitics of Asia and the Pacific," *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2015): 19–34.

⁷²² Such a sentiment was forcefully expressed by President Obama in a 2015 interview with the Wall Street Journal arguing that TPP had to be passed by the Congress for "if we don't write the (trade) rules, China will write the rules for that region (East Asia)". Gerald F. Seib, "Obama Presses Case for Asia Trade Deal, Warns Failure Would Benefit China," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 27, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/obama-presses-case-for-asia-trade-deal-warns-failure-would-benefit-china-1430160415>

and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) placing China in a central position of power in them.

Particularly alarming for the US was not just the sizable membership of these institutions, but the fact many allies had signed on to them despite Washington's objections.⁷²³ There were also concerns that China's growing centrality in managing economic flows, rules, and regulations through these institutions would position and enable them to derive strategic advantage, including possibly creating a separate and oppositional hegemonic order to the US one. The US was unconvinced of Chinese arguments that these moves were motivated by the limited power Beijing had in existing international economic institutions, which were still dominated by the Americans, Europeans, and Japanese, and that these institutions were not addressing regional needs, specifically the regional infrastructure deficit estimated at \$8 trillion.⁷²⁴ The push for the TPP by the Obama Administration marked a significant departure from the American historical economic approach to East Asia in assuming a leadership role, demonstrating the degree of concern they had about China's growing networking abilities challenging the US hegemonic economic system.

This new US approach, however, was quickly jettisoned by the Trump administration when they withdrew from TPP negotiations in 2017. Such a move reflected the rise of protectionist sentiments in the US, with relative gains coming back to the fore in a way reminiscent of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Trump administration's focus on rebalancing trade flows was not just about China but allies as well such as Canada, Japan and European states.⁷²⁵ These moves demonstrated not only concern about China as a strategic rival but a growing political sentiment in a sizable part of the US public of disdain for the entire hegemonic project which did not

⁷²³ Mathias Sobolewski and Jason Lange, "U.S. Urges Allies to Think Twice Before Joining China-Led Bank," *Reuters*, March 17, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-asia-bank-idUSKBN0MD0B320150318>

⁷²⁴ Phillipa Brant, "Why Australia Should Join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank," *The Lowy Institute*, September 25, 2014, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-australia-should-join-asian-infrastructure-investment-bank>

⁷²⁵ Chad P. Brown and Eva Zhang, "Measuring Trump's 2018 Trade Protection: Five Takeaways," *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, February 15, 2019, <https://www.piie.com/blogs/trade-and-investment-policy-watch/measuring-trumps-2018-trade-protection-five-takeaways>

benefit the US.⁷²⁶ This sentiment reflected the ‘America First’ disposition of the Trump administration regarding foreign policy which de-emphasized many long standing foundational elements such as the need for US global leadership and liberal promotion.⁷²⁷ Unlike other relationships which were more about burden sharing (such as demanding allies pay more of the costs to station US forces overseas) and ensuring more equitable trade deals, in the Chinese case the fixation of the Trump administration in lowering trade deficits slowly gave way to a broader focus which included removing Chinese investment and companies from high-end and emerging technology sectors. Despite growing polarization around most other political issues, also, China as a strategic rival has become an entrenched bi-partisan issue occupying the centre of US national security and grand strategy.

The Biden administration reversed much of the heavy handed approach of the Trump administration towards allies and close partners and returned to the notion of the US as a global leader, but they have maintained, and in many cases furthered, the US’ confrontation strategy towards China which is perceived as a systemic rival.⁷²⁸ However, protectionist ‘Made in America’ sentiments and priorities remain prevalent which affect how the US is pursuing its strategic rivalry against China both in East Asia and beyond. For example, the Biden administration is more focused on working with allies and others to build rules and practices which effectively exclude China from and deny them access to critical supply chains and emerging technologies than building new economic networks with access to the US market. This is demonstrated by its Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) for East Asia, which is not an FTA like project as was the TPP but narrower and more exclusionary focused which may not sit well with many regional states if there is no replacement for agreeing to curb certain elements of its economic relationship with China.

Furthermore, China and the US appear to be in a process of selective decoupling, particularly in Washington’s exclusion of China from certain economic and

⁷²⁶ Arlo Poletti and Lorenzo Zambenardi. “Declining Hegemony and the Sources of Trump’s Disengagement from Multilateral Trade Governance: The Interaction Between Domestic Politics and the International Political Economy,” *International Politics* 59, no. 6 (2022): 1101–1118.

⁷²⁷ Paul K. Macdonald, “America First? Explaining Continuity and Change in Trump’s Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* 133, no. 3 (2018): 401–434.

⁷²⁸ “National Security Strategy,” October 2022, 17.

technology sectors and working to gain the acquiescence of its allies and partners to do the same. Given the enormity of the bilateral trade relationship and the financial interconnectedness of the two, a full decoupling is unlikely though moves in both states are making future investments in certain areas less likely. For the US, the move back towards protectionist sentiments has caused a rethink in granting market access, promoting of an open and free trade policy, and raised concerns about technological diffusion to competitors and rivals like China diminishing its advantage. For China, after years of reliance on foreign markets and technology there is a shift towards more self-sufficiency in terms of internal economic consumption, the return of state control over the economy, and an emphasis on becoming a leader and innovator in emerging technologies via their “dual circulation strategy”.⁷²⁹

Conclusion

The US economic approach towards China in the post-Cold War era was more a case more of symmetry, complementarity, and fit within the larger American economic approach to East Asia than one of radical change to include China based on their functional importance, especially in the crucial period of the 1990s. China benefited from residing in a region where American economic concern was principally focused on its major ally Japan, including inhibiting any attempts by Tokyo to exercise a more autonomous regional leadership position. Furthermore, while Beijing was a target of economic coercion, specifically the linkage policy, during this time, it was one of many Asian states facing such pressures as part of Clinton’s economics-first approach - an approach the administration quickly discarded in part due to the negative ramifications to its regional standing stemming from it. As well, the US’ economic rebound made it more confident of its hegemonic standing and economic model which resulted in less scrutiny of the region and pressures to conform to its preferences. This reinforced the long-standing American regional strategic culture of disinterest in playing a leading role in regional ordering. As long as the region remained open and major powers were not trying to craft a regional economic order, the US was accepting of regional economic development proceeding in a heterogeneous fashion rather than trying to impose an all-encompassing institutional order. During this period, Beijing was able to embed itself

⁷²⁹ Alicia García Herrero, “What is Behind China's Dual Circulation Strategy,” *China Leadership Monitor*, September 01, 2021, <https://www.prcleader.org/herrero>

within the economic regionalization and regionalism of East Asia without eliciting the concern of the US given its low-key posture. According to Networked Centrality, therefore, China benefitted by not being a major network concern and by maneuvering within, and taking advantage of, other networks concerns.

This is not to suggest that China entirely ‘snuck by’ while the US was focused elsewhere. Indeed, China became a major economic focus of the US beginning in the mid-1990s including spearheading their inclusion in the WTO and one of the world’s largest bilateral trade relationships. Indeed, FDI flows into China nearly doubled every year from 1991-1993 leading to the emergence of strong business advocacy for Washington’s support in facilitating greater access to China and in best positioning the American private sector to compete with its Japanese and European counterparts.⁷³⁰ As well, the US regularly stated that China was an important emerging power and economy that needed to be included in the regional and global economic order, minimizing others concerns regarding its human rights record, political system, and growing power. Such a development lends support to LP theory, with the functional importance of China motivating the US to increasingly work to embed them into these systems. However, even as Mastanduno acknowledges the US appeared caught off-guard by how economically powerful China had become by the 2010s which seems to imply they did not anticipate how quickly China emerged as a major economic force.⁷³¹ This implies the US did not think through or have a good understanding of the trajectory of and ramifications emerging from these decisions. In contrast, NC argues China greatly benefitted from US actions in the early 1990s to address network concerns in East Asia, many of which did not directly concern China as it was not seen as a major economic power at that time.

In reality, there was no grand plan regarding China until the late 1990s when the US adopted the engage but hedge strategy. Before then, throughout the early to mid-1990s US behavior towards China demonstrated an increasing logic that assessed, and valued, opportunity over risks, especially as the US became more confident in its regional and global standing with no real peers, no rivals, and a rebounding economy

⁷³⁰ “Foreign Direct Investment, Net Inflows (BoP, current US\$) – China, 1979-2021,” *World Bank*, accessed May 10, 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD?locations=CN>

⁷³¹ Mastanduno, “Partner Politics,” 500-501.

making hegemonic management fiscally less of a concern domestically. China was not an ally, peer, or rival during this time. It was not seen as a rogue state, like North Korea, Iraq or Serbia, which threatened regional stability. Therefore, there were few barriers to furthering relations, even if human rights and its authoritarian system still caused concern. But this was true of many Asian states, with the US historically adopting a posture of helping those regimes already in transition rather than trying to impose democracy on them or facilitate regional norms and practices which promoted these. East Asia, furthermore, was seen as slowly liberalizing economically and to a more limited extent politically and therefore trends were in the US' favour over time that these desirable developments would continue.

In summation, engagement with China economically did not lead to major changes in the US economic approach to the region or globally regarding network building. With the demise of concerns regarding economic rivals and its confidence restored as the global leader and hegemon, the US did not feel the need to become overtly involved in regional economic affairs. This greatly benefitted China, able to become increasingly embedded within the regional (and global) economy without substantial US scrutiny and intrusion. As China, however, began to translate its power towards institution building, specifically the BRI and AIIB, outside US control this increasingly loosened the path dependency of the US post-Cold War approach to China and East Asia, which heavily emphasized inclusion, liberalization and interdependence, throughout the 2010s and into the 2020s. Such actions by China were increasingly seen by the US as the nebulous beginnings of an alternative regional network centred on Beijing which constituted a direct challenge to American centrality in East Asia. From its demise, a new approach by Washington is emerging focused on severing many elements of the economic relationship and trying to reorient its economic networks against Beijing in an increasingly exclusionary and possibly containment like fashion.⁷³²

⁷³² Brands, Hal. "Biden's Chip Limits on China Mark a War of High-Tech Attrition," *Bloomberg*, October 09, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-10-09/biden-s-chip-limits-on-china-mark-a-war-of-high-tech-attrition>

Chapter 8: The European Economic Environment and US Regional Economic Network: Assessing the Placement and Role of Russia

This chapter explores the final case study of this project: the European economic environment, the US regional economic network positioned within it, and the placement and role of Russia on American regional economic ordering efforts in the post-Cold War environment. Lynchpin (LP) theory argues that Russia played a marginal role in US hegemonic ordering pursuits. Given its crumbling economy and weak economic links to the West due to the insulated regional command economy it inherited from the Soviet Union, Russia was a non-lynchpin power which did not warrant sizable American assistance and intervention to assist in its economic transformation. Furthermore, unlike the strategic situation in the late 1940s which motivated the rebuilding of Western states via the Marshall plan to stem the spread of Soviet hegemony and communism, geopolitical pressures of a contending rival power were absent in the 1990s making it less compelling to dedicate, and risk, financial resources towards the rebuilding and transformation of the Russian economy. Russia would not be denied entry into and assistance from international financial institutions (IFIs), most importantly the IMF, but such moves reflected Russia's placement as a client of mid-level importance and not a vital component of and member within the American-led hegemonic economic order.

The lack of attention and aid to Russia within US economic affairs throughout the post-Cold War era is glaringly apparent, as argued by LP theory. Such a strict bilateral focus, however, obscures the larger changes occurring within Europe, specifically the emergence of the European Union (EU) in the early 1990s which impacted the US approach to the continent, especially evident tradeoffs it faced in its dealings with Europe versus Russia; tradeoffs which were more acute than those regarding China and East Asia discussed in previous chapter. The source of these tradeoffs ultimately resided in the specific regional strategic culture the US possessed towards Europe. In particular, the US pushed and promoted the continued integration of Europe within a common multilateral framework in its efforts to ensure the continent was "free and undivided" but remained dependent on them in terms of security. With the disintegration of communist systems on the continent, the US maneuvered and coaxed its European allies to increasingly reach out and embed these states within these economic and security

processes. The issue, however, was that such overtures towards CEE states were manageable given their small size and desire to join the larger European community, but Russia was a different story. Despite its liberalizing economic agenda, push for closer relations with the West, and desire to be included in the European order, Russia did not want to become a junior partner, treated like other smaller states, within these processes. Furthermore, there was too much unpredictability in thinking about how Russian entry would ultimately alter the nature and functioning of these networks; networks which were important for the US not only for continental management but for employment globally as well. Russia, therefore, was left in the awkward position of being a participant with, but not a full member of these processes, and denied a separate role as a pillar for European economic management. The US ensured Russian, and CEE, inclusion within the dominant neo-liberal economic institutions, which assisted in preventing any sort of independent European process from emerging but did not work to embed them within the predominant continental hegemonic networks - the EU and NATO - given the unpredictability this would have introduced.

This chapter proceeds as previous chapters have done. The first section outlines the arguments and evidence presented by LP theory followed by a critique of its conceptual and empirical limitations for this case. The second section employs the critical juncture framework in mapping the changes and continuities of the US economic network in Europe. The third section categorizes and explains these changes and continuities as a function of 'network concerns' present within this case. The fourth section explores the path dependencies which emerged from this critical juncture and how these affected the US economic approach to the region and Russia throughout the remainder of the post-Cold War period until the current era defined by large scale economic sanctions against Russia for its aggression in Ukraine and energy decoupling with Europe. The concluding section re-examines the arguments made by both Networked Centrality (NC) and LP theory regarding this case.

Russia Down and Out with No One Willing to Help

According to LP theory, in the transition to and early period of the post-Cold War era Russia was in economic free fall, with its GDP decreasing by 60% between 1989-1993, with no one, specifically the US as the world's sole remaining superpower, willing to help stabilize the situation and assist Moscow's liberal reformers on transforming their

economy from a command and control one to a market based capitalism one.⁷³³ This economic crisis began with the reforms introduced by Gorbachev in the late 1980s which exposed the rotting foundations of the Soviet command economy. The situation became worse with the collapse of the Soviet Union with Russia facing near runaway inflation and a mounting food crisis as it attempted to swiftly introduce a capitalist economy.

Despite these monumental challenges, the US and its allies were unwilling to contribute sizable financial assistance to the Western-friendly Yeltsin government. There was no Marshall plan coming as there had been to many European (and some Asian) states in rebuilding their economies following the Second World War. Rather, the IMF and private investors became the main partners for Russia.⁷³⁴ For Washington and many Western capitals it was simply not worth the risk of committing large aid and assistance packages to Russia given the uncertainty of where the country was headed.⁷³⁵ Instead of being treated like a major power whose integration into the regional and world economy was a top priority for the US, Russia was treated more akin to a third world country with 'adjustment problems' and thus requiring 'shock therapy' advice and conditionalities imposed by the IMF.⁷³⁶ This left Russia exposed to several financial crises throughout the 1990s which resulted in severe resentment among Russian elites and the public towards the neo-liberal economic model.⁷³⁷

This historical record, according to Mastanduno, showcases how economically insignificant Russia was and thus why there was no rush by the US to include them in the economic hegemonic order.⁷³⁸ There was little economic incentive to invest given Russia's collapsing economy, lack of internal market, weak linkages to the West, and the lack of a compelling geopolitical pressure to onboard them quickly as there had been for Europe after the Second World War. Instead of real assistance, the US and its allies offered consolation prizes to Russia such as their inclusion in the G8 in 1998 which were not substantive moves but more status ones. For the most part, therefore, Russia was

⁷³³ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 493.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Emblematic of this sentiment, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft stated "We didn't give them economic aid because we just couldn't see how to do it without putting money down a Rathole." Quote from Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 61.

⁷³⁶ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 494.

⁷³⁷ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 495.

⁷³⁸ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 492.

left sitting outside many formal economic institutions, and in those which it was admitted into it was treated more as a client than a meaningful participant.⁷³⁹ The US wanted to include and embed Russia into the hegemonic economic order, but it was unwilling to invest the financial and political resources to do so. Russia, as a non-lynchpin power, was not worth the risk. Russia's inclusion was not vital for the continued hegemonic economic management of the US. Even as Russia transformed throughout the 2000s under President Putin into a more revisionist, authoritarian state-led capitalist model, the US was unwilling to alter its approach given Russia's non-lynchpin status in terms of posing a serious challenge to the security and economic order in Europe.⁷⁴⁰

Critiques

The lack of sizable, sustained, and direct economic assistance to Russia by the US and the West during its transition away from communism and its command-and-control economy is the central evidence for LP theory's accounting for this case. It demonstrates that Russia was a non-lynchpin power which the US was unwilling, based on the risks involved, to lead in integrating Russia into the world economy as a necessary move for hegemonic maintenance. This perspective, however, like the East Asia-China economic case from Chapter Five, is largely divorced from the larger regional landscape which minimizes and, in some cases, completely omits other factors and forces which are important in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the US approach to Russia economically.

Shock Therapy Pursued From the Inside: Mastanduno's account argues Russia was subjected, after the US refused to lead economic rebuilding efforts, to 'shock therapy' imposed by the IMF in the form of austere based conditionalities including the need to drive down inflation, liberalize price controls, and reduce government spending before future loans and other financial instruments would be made available to them. It is true the IMF, in line with the predominant neo-liberal economic philosophy underpinning the American hegemonic economic system, did impose such conditions at the expense of other important economic and social priorities (like a social safety net) which many have argued hurt Russia's reform trajectory and contributed to its back-sliding towards

⁷³⁹ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 495.

⁷⁴⁰ Mastanduno, "Partner Politics," 494.

authoritarianism and state-led capitalism.⁷⁴¹ However, what is missing from this account is that the new government under President Yeltsin and his Prime Minister Gaidar were the prime drivers of Russia's rapid move towards neo-liberal capitalism in the early 1990s. They moved ahead with these plans largely on their own based on the assumption they would not receive significant assistance from the outside world, or at least not until they demonstrated their commitment to such a radical neo-liberal approach to transforming the economy first.⁷⁴² The trajectory of the reform program was not only influenced by the conditionalities imposed by the IMF, but also by the changing political situation in Russia throughout the 1990s with Yeltsin and his reformers having to increasingly contend with nationalists and communists politically who were opposed to such radical changes.⁷⁴³ While the failure of establishing a liberal, market-based capitalist economy in Russia is rightly seen as one of the major factors leading to Russia's return to a more imperial and anti-Western orientation, it should not be solely framed as caused by the external imposition of austerity from IFIs but also the product of an internal drive by liberal reformers which ultimately failed.

Other Forms of Aid and Assistance: During the early-mid 1990s a number of assistance programs were established alongside economic aid to help Russia deal with its immediate problems and transition to a liberal-democratic system. These include democratic reforms, food aid, and nuclear safety programs. While some of these were not well funded or successful, others such as food aid and nuclear safety were. These represent a complex web of issues which were fighting for priority in the US approach towards Russia at the time. While comparisons to the Marshall plan are apt in this case, it is important to remember not only the different geopolitical contexts but the different dominant modes of economic ordering underpinning US hegemony in the late 20th century. First, there was a different capitalist economic model at the end of the Second World War compared to the neo-liberal economic model, centred on IFIs, which heavily influenced development/transition programs from the 1980s onwards. Second, the US was in a far more economically dominant position at the end of the Second World War than the end of the Cold War which, along with the lack of a geopolitical rival, impacted its willingness to invest in such projects directly. Finally, while the Marshall plan was an

⁷⁴¹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 107.

⁷⁴² Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 65-66.

⁷⁴³ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 87.

enormous undertaking in scope and scale, the Russian transition could be seen as a far more complex challenge given the goal was not just economic rehabilitation but complete restructuring and transformation from a planned economy to a market based one.⁷⁴⁴

(Eventual) Inclusion into IFIs: LP theory's portrayal of Russian inclusion into international economic bodies is depicted as either in the form of being a desperate client, as with its relationship with the IMF, or a status satisfying good will gesture, such as its inclusion into the G7. Both forms of inclusion did not come with any real power for Russia, but rather showcased its dependence on the West. This characterization, however, does diminish the fact that Russia was indeed included in these institutions as a member in short order. It was, as well, eventually accepted into the WTO in 2011 after submitting a bid to join in 1993. While its bid took 18 years to come to fruition (the longest on record), this is in line with other larger, complicated economies such as China and Vietnam with each taking well over a decade to get admitted also.⁷⁴⁵ The final few years of this process, furthermore, were complicated by ongoing tensions with Georgia, a WTO member, which Russia had invaded in 2008 in support of the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁷⁴⁶ Russia was included into IFIs and other economic bodies, and not simply existed outside of them as a partner. As with the regional security network, though, Russia was not included in the predominant institution anchoring the regional economic environment, the EU, which is a situation Mastanduno does not explore.

Lack of Region Level Analysis: As with the East Asia-China economic case, LP theory does not examine the regional level of analysis, specifically the relationship between the US, the EU, and the ex-communist states in CEE and the FSU. This leaves unexplained why Russia was not included in the European ordering project around the EU as well as the US economic approach to Europe in general, including the formation of the EU in

⁷⁴⁴ Alan H. Smith, *Russia and the World Economy: Problems of Integration* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 1993): 231-232.

⁷⁴⁵ Anders Åslund and Gary Clyde Hufbauer, "The United States Should Establish Permanent Normal Trade Relations with Russia," *Peterson Institute for International Economics* (2011): 55.

⁷⁴⁶ Daniel Warner, "Moving Borders: Russia's Creative Entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO)," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 39, no. 2 (2014): 90-107.

1992 and Washington's overtures to and promotion of CEE states' eventual inclusion in this organization.

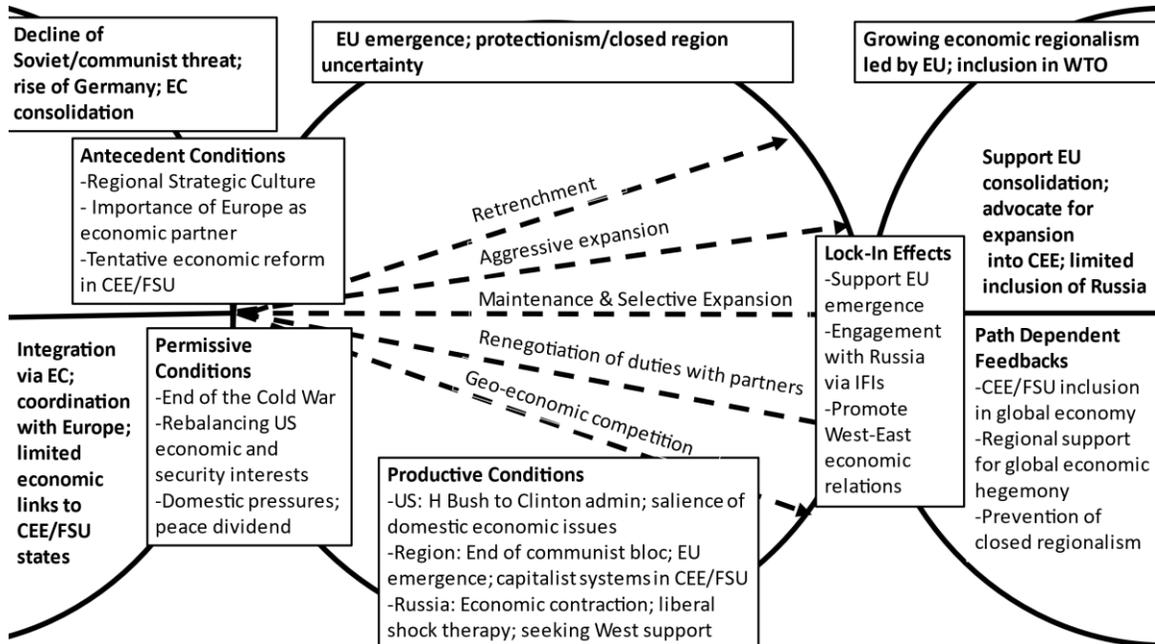
Implementing a Long-Held Regional Vision

The transition from the Cold War to post-Cold War era witnessed two parallel economic developments occurring within the European simultaneously. First, many long time American allies in Western Europe were continuing with their next stage of economic, and more limitedly political, integration with the establishment of the EU in 1992, creating a common market and firmly nestling the newly unified Germany into this institution. Second, the disintegration of the communist governments, and the closed economic order between them, heralded the emergence of nebulous democratic and capitalist systems in CEE and the Soviet Union in their stead. Such a combination of factors offered a window of opportunity for the US, in conjunction with its allies, to enact its long-held vision of a "free and undivided" Europe. The approach to be taken, however, was uncertain when the Cold War geopolitical system gave way and only become clear by the middle of the 1990s. For this case, the major continuities and changes are:

- 1) *Environment* – The end of the communist economic and political systems in CEE and Soviet Union. These states began their transition to capitalist ones. Growing consolidation in Western Europe resulting in the emergence of the EU. Growing importance of European powers in world economic management, including economic development along neo-liberal lines.
- 2) *Network* – The American remained supportive of the EU's emergence and growing linkages between the two throughout the 1990s. Concerns about European allies as economic competitors give way with US economic rebound, increasing coordination among them globally along neo-liberal logics, and the prevention of a more protectionist, social democratic economic bloc emerging in Europe.
- 3) *Interplay of the two* – American promotion of inclusion of CEE into EU. Russia as a partner with but not a member in this process. Embedding of Russia, FSU, and CEE states in global economic bodies but little appetite by US and allies to directly take on financing Russian or other CEE/FSU states' economic transitions.

These changes and continuities are mapped within the Historical Institutionalalist framework, as depicted in Figure Eleven below, which will guide the analysis of this case in the temporally sequential categories of the pre-critical juncture, critical juncture, and post-critical juncture periods.

Figure 11: Critical Juncture of the US Economic Approach Towards Europe



Pre-Critical Juncture (late 1980s-1991)

Throughout the latter stages of and in the immediate aftermath of the ending of the Second World War, the US undertook a number of efforts to create a liberal trade economic order with its wartime allies via the Bretton Woods Agreement establishing the IMF, World Bank, and pegging the US Dollar to the Gold Standard. Furthermore, given the devastation on the continent and the fear of communism spreading from its Soviet stronghold in CEE, the US in 1948 implemented the Marshall plan, a large, multi-year funding effort to rebuild the economies and societies of its Western European (and some Asian) allies. Over \$170 billion (in today's value) of assistance was distributed to over a dozen states over the next four years.⁷⁴⁷ As well, the US throughout the 1950s promoted and supported Western European economic linkages and integration, beginning with the

⁷⁴⁷ Benn Steil, *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018).

European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952. This economic organization based on supranationalist principles would serve as the foundation and template for further economic and diplomatic integration over the next several decades. Strategically, these organizing efforts supported several American interests. These included reducing frictions between historic rivals (specifically France and Germany); helped rebuild their economies along capitalist lines (with a specific emphasis on exports); and furthered the development of a cohesive and coherent bloc guided by US leadership as a bulwark against the growing consolidation of Soviet hegemony in CEE.

This latter concern motivated the US to establish CoCom, an export control regime among its allies against the Warsaw Pact countries. CoCom was to be a tool of economic warfare, to stifle trade in a large number of areas between Western and Eastern Europe and thus not strictly pertaining to military goods.⁷⁴⁸ Many allies were wary of the de facto imposition of an embargo during peacetime, but given the totality of US economic and security support offered they eventually relented and agreed to it.⁷⁴⁹ Concurrently, the Soviets moved to create their own form of closed economic organizing and export control regime via the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) among its allies. As a result, the economic environment in Europe became bifurcated along two competing, and largely mutually exclusive, economic blocs led by a dominant superpower. The US had essentially no trading relationship with the Soviet Union.

The exclusionary nature defining these economic pacts eventually began to erode somewhat beginning in the latter part of the 1960s and 1970s during détente. The Soviet Union began exporting oil to Western Europe, marking the beginning of a decades-long economic relationship exchanging raw materials, specifically fossil fuels, from Russia and manufactured goods from the West.⁷⁵⁰ During this time Western European states were increasingly successful in removing several products from CoCom export bans. Even the US began some limited trading with the Soviet Union, mostly agricultural products. While trade would continue to slowly grow between the blocs, the

⁷⁴⁸ Mastanduno, *Economic Containment*.

⁷⁴⁹ Yoko Yasuhara, "The Myth of Free Trade: The Origins of COCOM 1945–1950," *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 4 (1991): 127–148.

⁷⁵⁰ Marco Siddi, "The Role of Power in EU-Russia Energy Relations: The Interplay Between Markets and Geopolitics," *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no.10 (2018): 1554.

return of a more hardline approach to the Soviet Union during the Reagan administration in the 1980s largely curtailed these nascent economic ties.⁷⁵¹

Western European states, besides being important regional hegemonic followers, were foundational members of the US effort to establish a global capitalist trading regime under the GATT. With their economies rebounding, specifically West Germany, Western European states became increasingly important partners of the US regarding global macroeconomic management, beginning in the 1970s with the establishment of the Library Group which would eventually become the G7. Evidence of their importance was further demonstrated by European involvement in the Plaza and Louvre Accords of the 1980s. Furthermore, the US increasingly relied on European support during the Uruguay Round to establish a truly global trading regime, which had been a long-held priority since the end of the Second World War.

Trade between those European states in the European Community (EC) and the US grew sizably throughout the 1980s. This led to a rise in tensions over the unevenness of the bilateral trade balance, specifically regarding West Germany, and American concerns about the reluctance of some major European allies from adopting more neo-liberal capitalist models.⁷⁵² As states in CEE began to shed their communist systems and loyalties to Moscow, the US increasingly encouraged the EC to make overtures to these countries and include them in the ongoing integration of the continent. As Secretary of State James Baker III stated in a 1989 speech “The new architecture must continue the construction of institutions like the EC that can help draw together the West while also serving as an open door to the East”.⁷⁵³ Western European states seemed reluctant to embrace this recommendation, being focused on its continued integration into a fully-fledged common market by the early 1990s and the incorporation

⁷⁵¹ Kirill Shakhnov, “During the Cold War, US and Europe Were Just As Divided Over Russia Sanctions – Here’s How it Played Out,” *Global Government Forum*, March 22, 2022, <https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/during-the-cold-war-us-and-europe-were-just-as-divided-over-russia-sanctions-heres-how-it-played-out/#:~:text=The%20trading%20relationship%20between%20Russia,throughout%20the%20fossil%20fuel%20era>

⁷⁵² Thoms C. Fischer, *The United States, the European Union and the Globalization of World Trade: Allies or Adversaries?* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books, 2000): 30-40.

⁷⁵³ James Baker III, “A New Europe, A New Atlanticism: Architecture for a New Era,” Berlin Press Club (December 12, 1989): 2.

of a unified Germany into this project.⁷⁵⁴ While the US did not push its allies too hard on this matter at the time, it was clear even then that if/when the Cold War ended the US would remain heavily involved in European affairs, being guided by a desire to bring about a continent “free and undivided”.⁷⁵⁵

As the threat of the Soviet Union and Cold War rivalry receded by the end of the decade, the Bush administration struggled with the desire to rebalance trade and security relations with its European allies (motivated by growing domestic scrutiny of allied free/easy riding) with ensuring alliance ties remained strong even with their common adversary defeated. This was encapsulated in calls for the need to rebalance trade relations, especially with Germany which was characterized as a “bitter” economic competitor (along with Japan), alongside calls for unity between the US and European allies in furthering the multilateral trade system by pushing back against any moves towards “unilateralism, regionalism and protectionism”.⁷⁵⁶ The US continued to formalize its relationship with the EC in the lead up to establishment of a fully functional common market, encapsulated in the 1990 Transatlantic Declaration in which both sides committed to supporting further liberalization, trade transparency, and implementation of GATT and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) principles.⁷⁵⁷

The US supported Western Europe’s continued economic and political integration project, provided they in turn supported US global economic pursuits and remained firmly nestled within the transatlantic security network. These efforts stood in contrast with the administration’s cautious wait and see approach towards the Soviet Union during this time. Despite ongoing internal political and economic reforms enacted by Gorbachev, the US was largely agnostic about economic and aid relations and remained largely focused on strategic and security issues regarding managing the retrenchment of Soviet hegemony and the embedding of a newly unified Germany in American led hegemonic networks, NATO foremost among them.

⁷⁵⁴ Interview with David Gompert.

⁷⁵⁵ Interview with Frank Wisner. “National Security Strategy of the United States” (1990), 10-11.

⁷⁵⁶ “National Security Strategy of the United States” (1990), 7.

⁷⁵⁷ *Transatlantic Declaration on EC-US Relations* (1990), 2. The OECD was originally created as a mechanism for distributing the Marshall plan aid in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and then transitioned to help with the continued integration of Western Europe into a common market in support of the ECSC.

Europe: By the late 1980s, Western Europe was well on its economic integration trajectory via the creation of a new institution to entrench a common market and currency, develop a transnational diplomatic channel, and, more limitedly, pursue a European security and foreign policy agenda. While the US remained the leading actor in regional politics -evidenced by its ability to convince its allies, the Soviets, and Germans that Germany would be unified and placed within the institutional web of economic and security pacts of the West - coming into the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a growing sense that with the removal of the Soviet threat combined with concerns about economic competition with its that the transatlantic bond between would begin to severely erode.⁷⁵⁸ The H Bush administration was seen as firmly committed to retaining US involvement and leadership in Western Europe, but growing domestic pressures about the US economic standing in general and its increasingly hostile approach to Japan in particular caused concern in many allied European capitals about future American behavior towards them.⁷⁵⁹

With their focus largely internal in terms of preparations to create the EU, many Western European states did not prioritize or have a strategy for furthering relations with CEE states freed of communism, Soviet hegemony, and wanting deeper ties with and eventual integration with the Western half of the continent. Like the Bush administration, there was no foresight about what relations, instruments, and resources would be and could be made available to assist these states in the aftermath of the Cold War. One thing, however, which was certain was that none of these CEE states would qualify for entry into the EC/EU in the near-medium term given their inability to meet the political and economic standards. By 1991, however, programs and organizations were being prepared to establish communication channels and assist with economic transition and transformation of these states.

Soviet Union: President Gorbachev's internal political and economic reforms were meant to modernize and stabilize the Soviet system, but by 1990 it was clear that its hegemony in Eastern Europe quickly evaporating as well as its entire system of government

⁷⁵⁸ Catherine McArdle Kelleher, "U.S. Foreign Policy and Europe, 1990-2000," *The Brookings Review* 8, no. 4 (1990): 4.

⁷⁵⁹ Richard P. Cronin, "The United States and Asia in 1994," *Asian Survey* 35, no.1(1995): 111-125.

internally. These reforms did not produce a sudden externalization of the Soviet economy, which remained largely closed off from the world except for its CEE partners in Comecon, with foreign trade only accounting for 3% of its GDP.⁷⁶⁰ Despite growing trade between West and East over the past two decades, the Soviet Union remained the most important trade partner to many CEE states.⁷⁶¹ Soviet foreign aid programs, however, were drastically reduced throughout the 1980s given the internal struggles of the Soviet economy and political system, with many client states increasingly turning towards Western states and IFIs to fill the void.⁷⁶² The Soviet Union's foreign debt rose rapidly during this time with Moscow increasingly reliant on Western creditors to finance its ailing economy.⁷⁶³ Facing such challenges, the Gorbachev regime attempted to further political relations with these entities, seeking observer status to the GATT and a normalization treaty with the EC in 1988. They, however, continued to refuse to join the WB and IMF given its continued opposition to capitalist forms of international organizing.⁷⁶⁴ By 1991, however, none of these efforts had stabilized the Soviet economy or political system which was in its death throes and soon to be broken up and replaced in Russia by the Yeltsin liberal reformers regime.

Critical Juncture (1992-1994/95)

There had been little planning done by the Bush administration about what to do if the Soviet bloc and the Soviet Union itself collapsed. This was especially so regarding the economic ramifications of such an event. The administration was supportive of these political transitions (specifically in CEE but somewhat less so in the Soviet Union given their preference for a more gradual management of decline with a regime in Gorbachev they worked well with) but had no financial and economic assistance strategy to help these transforming economies, especially Russia which was facing a major economic contraction. Instead, the administration seemed far more focused on ensuring Russia, and other FSU states, repaid their debts to the US and Western creditors.⁷⁶⁵ There was a general sense that there was no way to ensure any aid or other financial assistance

⁷⁶⁰ Kirill, "During the Cold War, US and Europe Were Just As Divided Over Russia Sanctions."

⁷⁶¹ Kalman Dezseri, "Abandoned Brotherhood: Declining Economic Relations Between the CEECs and Russia in the 1990s," *Eastern European Economics* 39, no. 3 (2001): 6.

⁷⁶² Raymond E. Zickel, *Soviet Union: A Country Study* (Library of Congress, 1991): lx

⁷⁶³ Zickel, *Soviet Union*, 592.

⁷⁶⁴ Zickel, *Soviet Union*, 618-619.

⁷⁶⁵ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 61.

would actually be used properly rather than becoming a “sunk cost” of wasted money.⁷⁶⁶ This sentiment was compounded by the growing domestic economic concerns in the US which deterred the administration from considering any sort of large, dedicated financial assistance package. Why would the US send large sums of money to its former superpower rival with no guarantee it would be spent on what it was intended for and/or lead to the outcomes desired, especially as it faced its own economic headwinds?

This position began to soften in 1992 due to criticism from his political opponent Bill Clinton and former President Richard Nixon who leaked a confidential memo to the media, entitled “How to Lose the Cold War”, that he had sent to President Bush insisting that not assisting the Russians, and other CEE and FSU states, in their economic and political transformations would turn Russia into a “an infinitely more devastating issue in the 1990s”.⁷⁶⁷ Motivated to counter these criticisms, President Bush announced a \$24 billion aid package with contributions coming from a number of G7 allies and IFIs. Much of the money however was not new, having been pledged before, and with some partners such as Japan arguing the US had never consulted them prior to the announcement. This led many to believe the announcement was largely campaign rhetoric.⁷⁶⁸ Japan was unwilling to send such money given their ongoing dispute with Russia over the Northern/Kuril islands; Germany had already provided large amounts of money to the Soviets/Russians regarding the removal of their military forces from the country; and the US was increasingly looking inward given its economic troubles and growing domestic demands for a decrease in international spending following the end of Cold War.⁷⁶⁹

Even if this one-time package was implemented, it would not have come close to the estimated support needed for Russia. Using the Marshall plan as a model to scale what an appropriate economic package to Russia and the FSU would need to be, the estimated yearly sums are between \$25 and \$133 billion depending on the forecasted size of the FSU economies.⁷⁷⁰ These estimates were sizably larger than the yearly sums

⁷⁶⁶ Interview with Dr. Robert Hutchings.

⁷⁶⁷ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 79.

⁷⁶⁸ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 81.

⁷⁶⁹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 65.

⁷⁷⁰ The Marshall plan provided \$12.4 billion of grant aid and concessionary loans to Western Europe between April 1948 and December 1951, which would be equivalent to \$65 billion or \$17.3 billion per year at today's prices. Smith, *Russia and the World Economy*, 231.

from the Marshall Plan, though they only represented around 15% of total defence spending of the West in the early 1990s.⁷⁷¹ As the Bush administration left office in 1993, there was no plan for sustained aid and economic assistance to the FSU, with US policy a jumbled bag of reactive measures to address emergencies (such as the Russian food crisis in 1992) and/or pressures from political opponents.

This approach stands in stark contrast to the statements which populated the 1992 DPG and 1993 NSS, which both stressed the need to work to include Russia, alongside CEE and other FSU states, in a new democratic “zone of peace”.⁷⁷² Furthermore, the 1993 Regions Strategy listed assisting Russia’s transformation as a major goal for US foreign policy.⁷⁷³ Even more forcefully, the 1993 NSS lists supporting stability and economic reform in CEE and the FSU as the number foreign policy priority which would require “macro-economic support” from the US and its allies to see to come to fruition.⁷⁷⁴

At the same time, the Bush administration continued to offer its support towards EC consolidation into the EU via the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. Concerns remained about trade balances, but more importance was attached to ensuring the EC/EU remained a committed partner to the “free and undivided” European project as well as to the ongoing Uruguay Round of negotiations in creating a global trading regime. Connecting these two concerns was Washington’s critique of the lack of outreach and plans by Western European states to include and integrate CEE states in this process. The Bush administration felt moving into CEE quickly would help ensure these states moved in a neo-liberal direction, became tied into the global system via IFIs, and blunt any possibility of European ordering along closed, protectionist and social democratic forms of capitalism in the post-Cold War era.

In the early 1990s, Western Europe was populated by two forms of capitalist models: Rhineland/Social Democratic Capitalism (such as in Germany and France) which favoured more government involvement in the economy, relatively high taxes. and a strong social services support system, and Anglo/Neoliberal Capitalism (such as the

⁷⁷¹ Smith, *Russia and the World Economy*, 231.

⁷⁷² *Defense Planning Guidance*, 2.

⁷⁷³ *Defense Strategy for the 1990s*, 15.

⁷⁷⁴ *National Security Strategy of the United States* (1993), 6.

UK, the Netherlands, and Switzerland) emphasizing free markets, low taxes, and deregulation of financial flows.⁷⁷⁵ While not on the same level of existential concern of the economic-geopolitical-ideological dispute of capitalism vs communism in the Cold War, the US was concerned about the balance between these two capitalisms within Western Europe, its most important hegemonic partner, during this period of change in the regional and global environment. In particular, the US needed Western Europe's support to move forward with creating an interdependent global economy based on neo-liberal logics of free trade, financial flows, and low/de-regulation. A Europe which was focused inwardly on instability (emerging from the disintegration of communism in CEE and the FSU already evident in the former Yugoslavia), protectionism, and self-absorption would severely undermine the US project of economic globalization.⁷⁷⁶

If Rhineland/Social Democratic capitalist forms became dominant in Western and Eastern Europe, this would have hurt the neo-liberal underpinnings of this US-led global hegemonic project and made its markets harder to penetrate which would place the US at a disadvantage in terms of export potential which was increasingly focused on as an avenue of economic growth for the US.⁷⁷⁷ Moving aggressively to establish relations with and build pathways of inclusion for CEE states by the US would help address concerns of volatility; guarantee they were embedded in the neo-liberal economic project (breaking any consolidation of a more 'European' unique form of capitalism from becoming dominant in the EC/EU); and ensured Western European allies not only remained committed to an accelerated plan to fulfill a Europe "free and undivided" but one done so in accordance with American preferences regarding regional economic and security ordering.⁷⁷⁸ Given the high political-economic entrance requirements for EU membership making entry for CEE states most likely a decade or so away, the US decided, and got

⁷⁷⁵ Kees Van Der Pijl, "From Gorbachev to Kosovo: Atlantic Rivalries and the Re-Incorporation of Eastern Europe," *Review of International Political Economy* 8, no. 2 (2001): 275-276.

⁷⁷⁶ Horowitz and Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics," 847.

⁷⁷⁷ Such a sentiment was captured in outgoing Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger's 1993 turnover memo to Warren Christopher. Specifically, he emphasized that the most important global challenge in this new post-Cold War era was managing and ensuring the emergence of an "increasingly interdependent and competitive international economy", specifically given US domestic growth and employment depended increasingly on exports, which in turn hinged both on the expansion of the global economy. Eagleburger, "Memorandum for Secretary of State-Designate Warren Christopher," 2-3.

⁷⁷⁸ Horowitz and Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics," 855-857.

Western European support for, to proceed with security binding first via PfP/NATO and inclusion in the global economic system of IFIs.⁷⁷⁹

Change in US: Whereas the Bush administration was largely focused on strategic and security issues with Russia, the Clinton administration was quick to state that assisting in Russia's economic recovery and transformation would be major US priorities. This fed into the larger philosophy that the best way to reduce US foreign, specifically defence, spending was to support Russia becoming a liberal, democratic state which would ease security tensions.⁷⁸⁰ Exemplifying this framing regarding assisting Russia, President Clinton in April 1993 stated: "I would argue that we must do what we can and we must act now. Not out of charity but because it is a wise investment. . . .While our efforts will entail new costs, we can reap even larger dividends for our safety and our prosperity if we act now."⁷⁸¹ Reflecting this sentiment, the Clinton administration increased bilateral assistance to Russia and the FSU states to \$704 million, up from the \$417 million committed the year before by the Bush administration, with the goal to raise this to \$2.5 billion in 1994. As well, at the July 1993 G7 meeting the group members committed \$34 billion to assist Russia and the FSU, a significant increase from the \$24 billion figure announced by the Bush Administration in 1992.⁷⁸² This trajectory, however, was not to last long.

US funding only reached \$1.3 billion in 1994, its high-water mark, before dropping to \$341 million in 1995 and \$168 million in 1996.⁷⁸³ Congress was unwilling to dedicate such large sums given concerns about where exactly it was going, and with many Americans skeptical of this program given ongoing economic issues at home. Furthermore, by the time the Clinton administration assumed office it was assessed that the US ability to influence the trajectory of the reform process in Russia had diminished significantly given the Yeltsin government had begun introducing liberal shock therapy for over a year then.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁷⁹ Horovitz and Götz, "The Overlooked Importance of Economics," 861.

⁷⁸⁰ This is the strategic rationale underpinning the Clinton administration emphasis of bringing Russia into the community of "market democracies". *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 2.

⁷⁸¹ Quoted in Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 90.

⁷⁸² Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 92.

⁷⁸³ *Russia and U.S. Foreign Assistance: 1992-1996*, Congressional Research Service, March 20, 1996, 1-2.

⁷⁸⁴ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 89.

By the end of 1993, the Clinton administration determined that the IMF would be the primary vehicle through which the US, and the West, would support Russia in its transition. Such a move would side-step Congress, enable Washington to exert greater leverage on and influence over this process given its large voting share in the institution, and revitalize the IMF seeking a new role in the post-Cold War era.⁷⁸⁵ There were many problems with such an approach, such as the fact the IMF had little to no history of working with ex/communist states (especially the size of Russia), was largely focused on macro-stabilization and not political reform, and operated via the issuance of loans not grants (as the latter were used during the Marshall plan).⁷⁸⁶ A further complicating factor was that the IMF was being pulled in two directions. One was to distribute loans and financing on the basis of Russia meeting certain macro-economic targets such as bringing down inflation, currency stabilization, and cutting government spending/debt. The other was the periodic intrusion of US pressure to give financing to help support Yeltsin politically against his domestic opponents regardless of whether Russia had met these standards.⁷⁸⁷

This became very apparent by the mid-1990s with the Clinton administration wanting to help Yeltsin win re-election and push back against an increasingly hostile Parliament. In the years before this, the IMF largely operated on its own, being focused on macroeconomic issues within Russia. Though there were mounting concerns about the reform trajectory, Russia's war in Chechnya, and the growing rise of oligarchs controlling large swaths of the Russian economy, the Clinton administration assessed that Yeltsin was their best chance to bring about a stable, capitalist, and democratic Russia.⁷⁸⁸ Furthermore, there were some signals that Russia's economy was trending in positive direction, with tens of thousands of businesses being created, inflation falling from 2,600% in 1992 to 131% in 1995, and predictions Russia's GDP would actually grow in the latter part of the 1990s with estimates between 2.2 and 4% in 1996 and possibly 6% in 1997.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁵ Nigel Gould-Davies and Ngaire Woods, "Russia and the IMF," *International Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1999): 1–21.

⁷⁸⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 100.

⁷⁸⁷ John O. Smee, "The IMF and Russia in the 1990s." IMF staff papers 53, no. 1 (2006): 151–194.

⁷⁸⁸ Interview with Dr. James Goldgeier.

⁷⁸⁹ *Russia and U.S. Foreign Assistance*, 5.

Regarding the rest of Europe, the Clinton administration continued its support for the Western European integration project around the EU and sought closer ties between the two, especially in terms of ensuring their support for the establishment of the WTO. The administration, though, retained concerns about the trade deficit, specifically with Germany. The Clinton administration emphasized the need for other advanced states to open their markets to help fuel the engine of the global economy, in effect criticizing the political economic models large continental states like Germany and France followed.⁷⁹⁰ The level of animosity, however, over trade balances with its European partners never reached those defining the US relationship with Japan.⁷⁹¹ The US did stress however there needed to be evident and tangible benefits to the US from growing economic relations. As stated in the 1994 NSS, the US expected EU integration would mean more jobs for the US by establishing a vibrant continental economy with a larger internal market.⁷⁹²

Balancing these concerns was the need for growing macroeconomic management with these states. Like the previous Bush administration, the Clinton administration advocated major European powers and the EU to reach out to the CEE and FSU states to establish pathways for their eventual inclusion in the economic and political organizing of the continent. The US had already supported IFIs, the IMF chief among them, to assist in helping these states transition towards market based economies under neo-liberal logics.⁷⁹³ Another effort to facilitate greater inter-linking between the two subregions was the dismantling of CoCom, removing barriers to trade via export controls and replacing it with the Wassenaar Agreement in 1996 which included Western European, CEE and FSU states with a focus on members reporting weapons transfers to non-Wassenaar states.⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹⁰ *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 17-19.

⁷⁹¹ Lael Brainard, "Trade Policy in the 1990s," *Brookings Institute*, June 29, 2001, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/trade-policy-in-the-1990s/>

⁷⁹² *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 22.

⁷⁹³ Markus Rodlauer, "The Experience with IMF-Supported Reform Programs in Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 20, no.1 (1995): 95–115.

⁷⁹⁴ Lipson, "The Reincarnation of CoCom."

Changes in Europe: The establishment of the EU occurred almost simultaneously with the establishment of post-Soviet Russia, in and around 1992.⁷⁹⁵ Unlike Russia, the FSU and CEE, EU states had emerged from the ending of the Cold War in relatively sound economic shape, with no disruptions to their political economic project. The ending of the Cold War, furthermore, did not bring about a significant rethink in the Western European integration project, showcasing it had developed robust buy-in and interest longevity beyond the strategic circumstances of necessary consolidation in the face of a divided continent with a rival superpower. Moving into 1993 and 1994, it became increasingly clear that the US would remain engaged in Europe, especially diplomatically and militarily. There were, though, uncertainties about the future economic orientation and strategy of the US in the post-Cold War era.

The Clinton administration's heavy handed economics approach to Japan, and other Asian states, was causing concerns of a more unilateralist and aggressive American posture of 'righting' its trade balance after being freed of the strategic logics of the Cold War which lead it to downplay such issues.⁷⁹⁶ Furthermore, there was a growing American fixation with the Asia-Pacific, specifically East Asia, as the emerging centre of gravity of the global economy and American trade potential. Such a fixation could displace Europe as a US foreign policy priority, exactly as a time when European-led processes and institutions seemed increasingly unable to address the myriad of challenges stemming from the geo-strategic and political changes occurring in CEE and the FSU. The US, furthermore, was the EU's largest and most important trading partner, making continued close relations important for many European states.

Simultaneously, furthering internal consolidation and making overtures to CEE and the FSU remained a challenge for the new EU. While the Clinton administration believed that they were moving too slowly to connect with these countries, the EC/EU did establish a number of institutions specifically designed to help them in their political and economic transitions. This included the establishment of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 1991 and the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Georgia (TACIS) in 1992. The EBRD offered

⁷⁹⁵ Fyodor Lukyanov, "Russia-EU: The Partnership That Went Astray," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 6 (2008): 1107.

⁷⁹⁶ Cronin, "The United States and Asia in 1994."

financial assistance in developing market economies and was heavily influenced by the US as the largest shareholder in promoting neoliberal principles of economic management and having the bank collaborate with several private investors and creditors. However, the assignment of funding to specific projects during the early to mid-1990s was quite low compared to the liquidity of the bank, reflecting European members' concerns of political and human rights standards in recipient states.⁷⁹⁷ The EU, though, did commit to expanding its membership to CEE states during the 1994 Essen Summit, but there remained few details about how this would be done and whether the EU would help these prospective members attain the standards necessary to join the organization.⁷⁹⁸

The TACIS program was smaller in scale and focused on assisting in specific technical areas, specifically around good governance projects. Russia was the largest recipient of TACIS' funding, receiving €2 billion between 1991 and 2006.⁷⁹⁹ These programs were still seen by Washington as piecemeal and not sufficient for ensuring the continued bringing together of the continent. Furthermore, Russia refused to sign on the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) due to a feeling that doing so signaled Moscow being a junior partner as well as the growing EU-ization of Europe squeezing out the independence of other states and power centres. This became one of the first times it was clear that while Russia wanted to be a European power and part of the European community, it did not want to become a junior member of the West's inclusive ordering designs for Europe.⁸⁰⁰ Russia and the EU were able to establish formalized relations with the 1994 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), serving at the foundation upon which other agreements would be developed throughout the post-Cold War era.⁸⁰¹

Changes in Russia: The Yeltsin government throughout the early to mid-1990s had continued with its shock therapy approach to transforming the Russian state and

⁷⁹⁷ Steven Weber, "Origins of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development," *International Organization* 48, no. 1 (1994): 1–38.

⁷⁹⁸ Fischer, *The United States, the European Union and the Globalization of World Trade*, 138.

⁷⁹⁹ Irina Busygina, *Russia-EU Relations and the Common Neighborhood* (London: Routledge, 2018): 88.

⁸⁰⁰ Tom Casier, "From Logic of Competition to Conflict: Understanding the Dynamics of EU-Russia Relations," *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 376–394.

⁸⁰¹ Busygina, *Russia-EU Relations and the Common Neighborhood*, 87.

economy towards a liberal-capitalist one. However, the most vocal government proponent of this approach, Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar had been replaced by Viktor Chernomyrdin given growing domestic politics concerns of the inability of the shock therapy approach in stopping Russia's shrinking economy. While inflation had been brought down significantly and the risk of food shortages had been resolved by 1993/94, government debt and the overall financial situation remained serious issues. Despite the change in government, Russia continued to allow deep involvement of the IMF in virtually every area of government operation related to the economy.⁸⁰² Given its limited economic mandate, the IMF struggled to develop ways and strategies to promote liberal reformist elements in the Russian government and elite, and sometimes faced push back from more old guard elements wary that the IMF did not have Russia's interests at heart.⁸⁰³ The US only began in the mid-1990s to pressure the IMF to execute its Russia programming increasingly from the perspective of helping ensure Yeltsin and liberal reformers remained in power.

By the mid-1990s the Russian economic cratering had halted somewhat, with forecasts of GDP growth for the latter part of the decade. However, the extent of privatization had obscured the intensive oligopolistic takeover of the economy into a select few hands.⁸⁰⁴ The Yeltsin government continued to largely rely on IMF financing and guidance rather than directly asking the US or other European states for economic assistance. Yeltsin was eager for Russia to join the G7 following individual meetings with member states at the 1994 G7 Summit in Naples, to demonstrate Russia being on the inside of an important global club but still as an independent power. Russia sought its complete membership in all IFIs, including applying to join the GATT in 1993. Russia's economic links with CEE declined significantly during this time as many of these regional states look westward for trade and other economic opportunities with Western Europe and the EU. Russia-CEE trade did not entirely disappear, and remained strong between the FSU states, but Moscow was increasingly placed in a difficult position as CEE states refused their overtures to establish a FTA unless they established one with the EU first.

⁸⁰² Gould-Davies and Woods, "Russia and the IMF," 19.

⁸⁰³ Smeets, "The IMF and Russia in the 1990s," 38.

⁸⁰⁴ Christopher Monday, "Privatization to Putinization: The Genesis of Russia's Hobbled Oligarchy," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 50, no. 4 (2017): 303–317; Marshall I. Goldman, *The Privatization of Russia: Russian Reform Goes Awry* (London: Routledge, 2003).

This was an unrealistic condition at this time given the EU's focus inward and Russia's continued economic turmoil.⁸⁰⁵

Closing of the Critical Juncture (1995)

By the mid-1990s the US economic approach to Europe had consolidated into three lines of efforts. The first was the continued economic cooperation with the emergent EU, both in terms of global economic management as well as a series of agreements to reduce barriers to trade and investment between the two. Such a course was solidified as the more unilateral and aggressive US approach to trade began to erode around this time given its economic rebound and the completion of the Uruguay Round establishing the WTO. These developments minimized American concerns about relative economic gains and the need for European states to reform their Social Democratic/Rhineland capitalist models. The second was the consolidation of Western European allied support towards the American effort to ensure the eventual inclusion of CEE, and some FSU, states into their regional security and economic networks as a combined joint project. Given the slow nature of EU acceptance, NATO membership efforts would be pursued first and then membership into the Union would follow. Such an approach would signal the West's desire to eventually include them, creating conditions and incentives for these states to remain engaged. Furthermore, growing assistance from IFIs and regional institutions, like the EBRD, would ensure these states continued down a largely neo-liberal track in re-organizing their social, political, and economic systems. The final line of effort would be continued assistance to Russia's economic and political transformation, predominantly indirectly through the IMF but with increased American pressure on the institution including political support for Yeltsin and reformers in its financing decisions. There was no pressure on European allies to further economic relations with Russia or include Moscow in its expansion plans.

Shoring Up Activities: By the middle of the 1990s, the US and the EU were embarking on a series of agreements to further open and integrate their economies. The declaratory groundwork for these was the New Transatlantic Agenda of 1995, where both parties pledged to create a "New Transatlantic Marketplace" which would expand trade, create

⁸⁰⁵ Dezseri, "Abandoned Brotherhood," 14-16.

jobs, and help the overall global economy.⁸⁰⁶ From this Declaration a number of agreements were signed in the following years including the Transatlantic Business Dialogue and the Transatlantic Economic Partnership to further relations between business communities and continued integration in a number of sectors including telecoms and information technology.⁸⁰⁷ Western European allies, as well, were instrumental in bringing about the creation of the WTO in 1995 with the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round. As stated in the 1995 Agenda, the US and the EU “...have a special responsibility to strengthen the multilateral trading system, to support the World Trade Organisation and to lead the way in opening markets to trade and investment.”⁸⁰⁸ These commitments eased American concerns of a more closed, inward looking, and protectionist EU emerging in particular and moves towards regional trading blocs inhibiting Washington’s long-held goal of creating a global trading regime. Such a sentiment was captured in the 1995 NSS which stated the US would support continued EU integration in creating a “vibrant’ economic partner and market”.⁸⁰⁹ For Western European states, creation of the WTO and the establishment of its trade dispute mechanisms were seen as important restraints on American economic unilateralism. As well, by the middle of the 1990s the US was becoming more confident in its economic standing, less aggressive towards its partners, and was seen by many allies as a vital partner for the management of continental security and economic matters, especially in CEE and the FSU.

Expansion towards the East: The US moved quickly in the early 1990s to prioritize furthering relations with CEE states and including them in their hegemonic project in Europe, far faster than many of its Western European allies were comfortable with. Despite general signals, such as those within the Essen Summit Declaration, it was not until the mid-1990s that the US was able to reach an agreement with the EU of a general 1-2 approach to integration of CEE. NATO, which was reaffirmed as the “centrepiece” and “indispensable link” between the US (and North America) and Europe in the 1995 Transatlantic Agenda, would move first in building a plan to bring these states into the alliance giving them time to develop the standards necessary to qualify for EU

⁸⁰⁶ *The New Transatlantic Agenda*, 1995, 2,

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/210469/New-Transatlantic-Agenda_EN.pdf

⁸⁰⁷ Fischer. *The United States, the European Union and the Globalization of World Trade*, 130-132.

⁸⁰⁸ *The New Transatlantic Agenda*, 4.

⁸⁰⁹ *National Security Strategy of the United States* (February 1995), 34.

membership which was expected to take longer.⁸¹⁰ As a result, the US was able to link the EU and NATO projects together and thus retain its hegemonic standing on the continent and preventing any closed nature of the EU bloc becoming distant from the rest of the continent given this Open Door policy and approach. Furthermore, the primary partners in CEE states economic transitions were IFIs, like the IMF, and regional bodies, such as the EBRD, largely followed neoliberal economic approaches the US supported. As well, CEE countries emerged from the Cold War with smaller economic contractions and faster rebounds compared to many FSU states, making them more suitable partners to begin such expansion.⁸¹¹ They were more economically developed, smaller in terms of population and economies and eager to join; conditions which made such integration easier than with other FSU states, namely Russia.

Engagement with Russia: Efforts to assist with Russia's economic and political transitions would continue primarily via the IMF for the US. Washington would increasingly pressure this institution into offering financial packages and other products based on political calculus, specifically supporting the Yeltsin government against his domestic opponents, and not solely neo-liberal economic factors. This created difficulties for the IMF in terms of programming between meeting these two competing mandates, specifically the political one given the institution had no mandate or experience in basing decisions on these factors.⁸¹² As well, the percentage of the US aid Russia received compared to FSU states began to decrease during this time, falling to 45% by 1995.⁸¹³ Despite these shrinking contributions, expanding the "community of market democracies" to include Russia continued to be a declaratory priority of the US with continued aid and assistance.⁸¹⁴ While some economic indicators were trending in a positive direction for Russia, others were not including a stubbornly high debt, inability to create an economic framework with CEE states, and a complete lack of attracting FDI into the country.⁸¹⁵ Russia and the EU, however, in 1995 completed a trade agreement on tariffs which were

⁸¹⁰ *The New Transatlantic Agenda*, 1.

⁸¹¹ Many CEE states, as well, had been already trading to a significant degree with OECD countries before the end of the Cold War which helped in their transitions. Fischer, *The United States, the European Union and the Globalization of World Trade*, 147. See, also, *The First Ten Years: Analysis and Lessons for Eastern Europe*, The World Bank, 2002, 34.

⁸¹² Smee, "The IMF and Russia in the 1990s," 12.

⁸¹³ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 118.

⁸¹⁴ *National Security Strategy of the United States* (1995), 12.

⁸¹⁵ For example, by the mid-1990s, Russia was only receiving approximately 1% global FDI. Fischer, *The United States, the European Union and the Globalization of World Trade*, 133.

particularly favourable to Moscow, and would further their growing economic relationship throughout the post-Cold War era. The EU quickly became Russia's most important trading partner, accounting for 40% of Russian exports and a third of their imports.⁸¹⁶ The EU would continue with its support for reform in Russia largely in the form of technical assistance via TACIS rather than aid. The US largely stayed out of EU-Russian economic relations, though the Clinton administration was becoming more amenable to letting Russia into the G7 to encourage its continued transition via a seat at a major forum and increased socialization within the Western club.⁸¹⁷

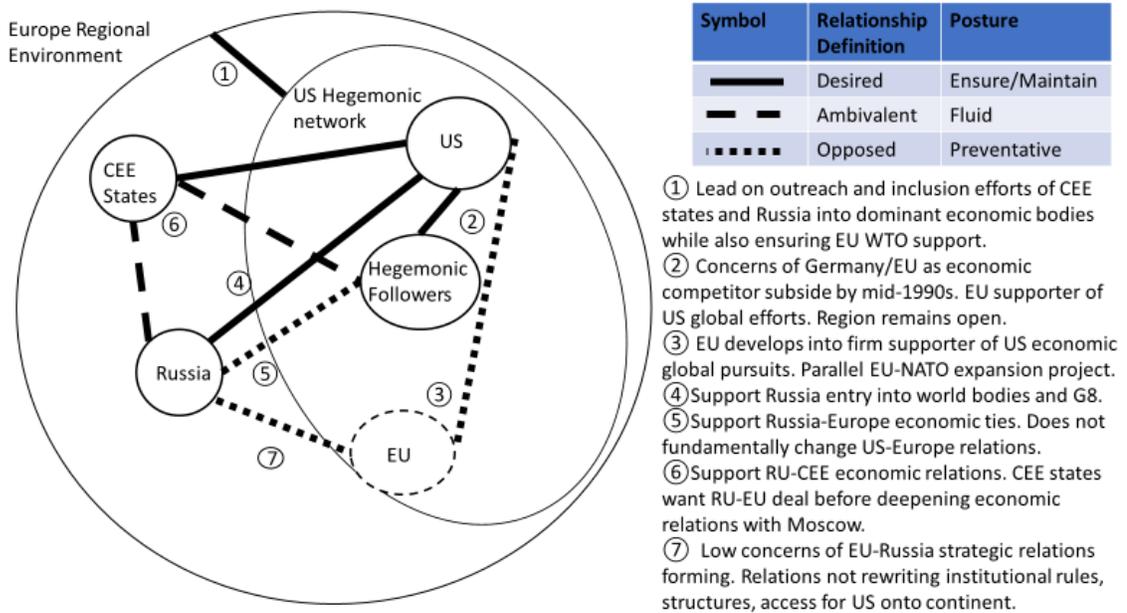
Addressing Network Concerns

The network concerns and the US responses to them for this case are represented in Figure Twelve displayed below. The case speaks to how the US took the lead in furthering European integration after the Cold War while also ensuring this emerging continental bloc, embodied most visibly in the EU, would remain a loyal hegemonic partner, especially in terms of furthering the construction of a global trading system. Russia was awkwardly positioned within these American ordering goals, with Moscow wanting to be included in major regional and international institutions but unwilling to become just another European state, giving up its great power status, by becoming embedded in the transnational authority of the EU. To the US, and its European allies, Russian admittance into the EU was never seriously considered also. While the EU worked to further relations with Moscow as part of its plan to promote a democratic Russia in Europe, by the mid-1990s their push for institutional expansion increasingly marginalized any possible room for Russia, or any other power outside the EU, from existing on the continent. The expansion of the NATO-EU bloc across the continent was primarily driven from Washington's perspective by its long regional strategic culture which sought a continent "free and undivided", but one firmly embedded within and supportive of the larger US economic hegemonic project.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid. The EU tariff on Russia on average was 1% while the Russian tariff on the EU was almost 20%.

⁸¹⁷ Gordon S. Smith, "G7 to G8 to G20: Evolution in Global Governance," *CIGI G20 Papers*, No. 6, May 2011.

Figure 12: Network Concerns in the European Economic Environment



Maintenance of Economic Network Dominance in Regional Environment: The US took the lead in ensuring European allied support for expansion of relations towards CEE and the FSU. While European allies were generally supportive of these moves, the US ensured a more accelerated process was pursued by tying NATO and EU expansion together as two sides of the same hegemonic project. Doing so was motivated by a desire to ensure the nascent EU did not become a more autonomous, insular, protectionist, and semi-closed economic bloc by including CEE and FSU states which were developing along neoliberal lines given the involvement of IFIs there. This framework ensured hegemonic network expansion on the continent in forms and processes conducive to US interests around ensuring a continent that is “free and undivided”. There were, furthermore, no rival economic bodies or forms of ordering which challenged this project. By the mid-1990s the US, now less concerned about relative gains and regional trade pacts, furthered a number of agreements with the EU which ensured the institution remained a loyal hegemonic supporter at the international level and had greater authority to determine the timing and criteria of membership expansion and internal market regulations on the continent. Given Russia’s size, uncertain impacts on its inclusion, and lingering concerns about its future trajectory, neither the US nor its European allies were willing to pursue a more aggressive course to bring it into this

European economic ordering project for that would have most likely entailed changing the foundational nature of it.

Ensuring Hegemonic Followers Remained Subordinated Within Economic Network:

Concerns about Western European allies being too insular in the development of the EU (specifically possibly moves towards protectionism for this emerging market), willingness to contribute to the maintenance and expansion of the world trading system, and resolving their trade imbalance gave way by the mid-1990s due to a mixture of structural changes and specific pursuits to ensure they remain hegemonic followers under broad US leadership. This included the importance of trade balances with and the social capitalist systems of developed allied states dissipating due to the US rebound economically and Western European states' support for the completion of the Uruguay Round leading to the establishment of the WTO. The tethering of security, via NATO, and economic, via the EU, continental projects, ensured Western European states remained followers of US leadership regarding continental ordering.

Oppose Hegemonic Followers Becoming More Autonomous: The joint NATO-EU expansion project ensured Western European allies remained strategically supportive as followers within US hegemony both internationally and regionally. The project constituted the broad contours of European ordering in the post-Cold War era, in line with the US regional strategic cultural preferences of US control over such matters, limiting European autonomy, and in general a desire to reconstitute the continent into a whole, inclusive regional order which would serve as a valuable hegemonic partner for the US. Western European states were not opposed to expansion, but eventually came to support the more expedited US desire to establish relations quickly with CEE to help ensure continued American involvement on the continent, specifically regarding security. For the US, binding NATO and EU expansion as primary goals of these institutions diminished any Western European autonomous predilections about how to organize among themselves.

Have Direct Control of Hegemonic Entry of Outside Major and Minor Powers: In relatively short order in the early 1990s, the US was able to construct, and gain regional allied support for, approaches towards inclusion of CEE and FSU states, including Russia, into the liberal capitalist economic order. IFIs, specifically the IMF, took the lead on economic

transition assistance of these states while the US ensured Western European and EU support for its regional expansion agenda, tying security and economic projects together via NATO and the EU. Russian entry into these was not seriously considered given its size, uncertain political future, and concerns it still harbored some vestiges of being a great power. Inclusion of CEE and Baltic states proceeded given these states were small, more advanced in terms of their economic transitions, and did not have any great power hangups of retaining an autonomous position.

Oppose Strategic Relations Forming Between Outside Major Powers and Hegemonic Followers: Western European allies largely followed the lead of the US in the overall approach towards economic relations with Russia, namely via the IMF. Regional allies appeared, like the US did, reluctant to construct large aid and financial packages on their own. Such a result further embedded their role and support for employing IFIs in macro stabilization roles, advancing the neo-liberal logics underpinning the global financial system and the development of the WTO. Whether the US would have supported, opposed, or offered an alternative to a more European led and funded effort towards Russia is unclear. Concerns in the late 1980s and early 1990s that European allies may develop regional economic development along more closed, protectionist, and social democratic/less neo-liberal lines were largely extinguished by the mid-1990s. As a result, Russia faced a largely united US-Western Europe in terms of the economic approach towards it. While there were some concerns of the growing intrusiveness of the US in pressuring the IMF to base programming decisions on political rather than purely economic criteria to help Russia, the overall IMF first approach was supported by the Western Europeans.

Oppose Strategic Relations Between Outside Minor and Major Powers: There were no serious concerns about economic relations forming among Russia, FSU and CEE states which would rise to the level of strategic significance in terms of forming its own hegemonic bloc. This was because virtually all CEE states and many FSU ones wanted closer economic and security links to the West as protection against any future Russian aggressiveness, all of them (including Russia) were working with the same IFIs and regional bodies to help in their transition towards market economies, and that Russia was unable to establish a FTA with these states which condition any such move with Moscow establishing one with the EU first. Furthermore, Russia's establishment of the

CIS, which included moves towards creating a common customs union between them, was not a powerful economic bloc given the small sizes of the economies involved and the fact they were largely similarly economically structured - natural resource intensive with small internal markets - which oriented them externally to seek energy customers.

Opposing Strategic Relations Forming Between Drifting Hegemonic Followers and

Outside Major Powers: As will be detailed below, the EU and Russia throughout the

post-Cold War era continued to augment economic and diplomatic linkages between

them. This was a development which the US supported given the belief that

interdependence (especially economically) would assist in eventually turning outside

major powers like Russia into more liberal, democratic, and especially loyal followers of

American hegemony given the benefits accrued from inclusion and difficulty in opposing

it directly or finding alternatives. By the mid-1990s, US-EU relations were firmly

established, with a joint commitment to supporting the WTO, furthering economic trade

and globalization along neo-liberal lines, and linking NATO-EU expansion projects

towards Eastern Europe and parts of the FSU. As a result, Western European states and

the EU retained their hegemonic followership status and roles, truncating any moves

towards autonomy and more closed EU-Russian economic pact against US interests.

The US approach to the European Economic Environment in the Rest of the Post-Cold War Era

Throughout the post-Cold War era, the US would continue to develop their bilateral economic relationship with the EU though no FTA was signed between them despite regular calls to establish one, especially from the Europeans. A final push to establish one was pursued via The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership in the 2000s and 2010s but ultimately led nowhere and was terminated by 2019 in the face of fierce opposition by the Trump administration.⁸¹⁸ Such an ending was unsurprising given the visceral approach towards FTAs the Trump administration pursued, reflecting and fueling a larger shift back towards protectionism in the US which continues under the Biden administration (but with less overt antagonism in terms of calling out allied trade partners in public). This, however, does not explain the inability to establish a FTA in the

⁸¹⁸ Alasdair R. Young, *The New Politics of Trade: Lessons from TTIP* (Newcastle Upon the Tyne, UK: Agenda Publishing, 2017).

before the Trump administration took power. Simply put, FTAs were not an American priority, with NAFTA being an exception, for successive US administrations in the post-Cold War era beginning with Clinton. This broad pattern can be explained by: 1) US economic rebound decreasing such concerns to expand market access for exports; 2) major allies in the EU and Japan had supported, and outside powers were eager to join, the establishment of the WTO which the US believed was the best vehicle to create a global trading system that would reduce national barriers to trade; and 3) regularized interactions, specifically in the G7/8 (and then to a more limited degree the G20) and within Western dominated IFIs, existed to manage macro-economic issues affecting the global economy.

Trade issues continued to be important, but they were not the most important in US foreign policy and grand strategy. They did appear to be in the early 1990s when the US was facing an uncertain international environment and deeply concerned about its slow economic growth generating calls to redistribute priorities with the end of the Cold War. As the US economy rebounded, being in the lead position within a number of emerging sectors such as information technologies, relative gains in trade with respect to other advanced economies decreased in political importance.⁸¹⁹ Overcoming technical and political opposition to FTAs, therefore, became less urgent with a decreased willingness to spend political and financial capital in resolving. Instead, the US and EU, which remained each other's most important trading partners⁸²⁰, continued to work to deal with trade and economic issues in more surgical, silo, and issue-specific channels.

Moving into the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was growing convergence on the timing of membership expansion into both NATO and the EU. While initially foreseen as a sequential process, with NATO membership coming significantly earlier than EU membership given the latter's more stringent entry requirements, the expansion rounds for both occurred roughly at the same time and involved the same CEE and Baltic states

⁸¹⁹ This is apparent by the fact that despite the heightened emphasis on prioritizing American exports to reduce its overall trade balance during the early 1990s, between 1990-1995 exports were up 30%, but imports were also up 34% maintaining the persistent trade deficit. Fischer, *The United States, the European Union and the Globalization of World Trade*, 19.

⁸²⁰ "U.S.-EU Trade and Economic Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, December 21, 2021.

in the 2000s.⁸²¹ While spacing between acceptance into both organizations has returned currently, and noting some differences in their memberships, in general this pattern of NATO membership as a prelude to and assisting in eventual EU membership has continued.⁸²² This seems to be the case with the EU receiving membership applications from Georgia and Ukraine in 2022, both of which still have MAPs, developed in the late 2000s, to join NATO as well; a process which has been disrupted by Russia's military conflicts against both states but has not entirely ceased.⁸²³ This behavior demonstrates the symbiotic and convergent nature of these processes towards the same goal: the construction of an all-inclusive European security-economic bloc which resides and identifies firmly within the transatlantic community principally led by the US.

Regarding relations with Russia, the US would continue to rely on the IMF, and other IFIs, to be the principal partner of Moscow's economic and political transitions. Despite some improvement in macro-economic terms, in 1998 the Russian financial crisis (set off in part due to the Asian financial crisis and the sudden drop in oil prices) caused massive internal economic and political upheaval, with private investors fleeing the state and Yeltsin forced to ditch Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. The IMF and WB responded quickly with a \$23 billion aid package, but this did not stop the crisis. Rather, Russia recovered, rather quickly, by 1999-2000 due to an increase in oil prices and not due to any deep institutional reform.⁸²⁴ By this time, the use of IFIs as the emergency response mechanisms for financial crises was the preferred method of the US and its supporters. The financial crisis, though, only furthered resentment in Russia about the

⁸²¹ The first NATO expansion round of the post-Cold War era in 1999 brought Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic in the relationship. In 2004, the second NATO expansion round occurred almost simultaneously as that of the EU expansion round and included virtually all the same states. These included Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joining the EU along with the Baltic states, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania, which joined NATO in 2004, gained membership in the EU in 2007. Then in 2009 Albania and Croatia joined NATO. Croatia was admitted into the EU in 2013 while at the time of this writing Albania is still waiting. Finally, while both Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020) are the newest NATO members, they have not been admitted into the EU yet.

⁸²² For example, Austria and Cyprus are in the EU but not NATO, while reversely Turkey is in NATO but not the EU.

⁸²³ Dan Sabbagh and Jennifer Rankin, "All Nato Members Have Agreed Ukraine Will Eventually Join, Says Stoltenberg," *The Guardian*, April 21, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/21/all-nato-members-have-agreed-ukraine-will-eventually-join-says-stoltenberg#:~:text=The%20Nato%20secretary%20general%2C%20Jens.further%20military%20aid%20for%20Kyiv>

⁸²⁴ Joseph Stiglitz, "The Ruin of Russia," *The Guardian*, April 09, 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/apr/09/russia.artsandhumanities>

nature and trajectory of the liberal shock therapy approach of President Yeltsin, who while remaining in power in the 1990s was increasingly constrained given the rise of his political opponents.⁸²⁵ During this time, it became increasingly evident that democratic reforms were significantly lagging, an indication that the Clinton administration's approach to Russia transformation was too tied to reformers (namely Yeltsin) rather than focused on pushing and supporting efforts towards democratic reform itself.⁸²⁶

Trade between the US and Russia would remain low throughout the post-Cold War era. By 2021, Russia was the US' 23rd largest trading partner, accounting for 0.8% of total US trade while the US accounted for 4.4% of Russian total trade.⁸²⁷ These levels are decreasing even further with the imposition of severe sanctions against Moscow in 2022 for its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.⁸²⁸ Despite these low levels, the US remained a firm supporter of Russia's entry into the WTO, with Moscow applying to join the organization in 1993. It took 18 years for Russia to achieve membership in 2011, following years of disagreement with WTO member Georgia due to the 2008 conflict between the two.⁸²⁹ While the Yeltsin government became disheartened by the slowness of WTO acceptance, his successor President Putin (and his successor President Medvedev) reinvigorated this bid.⁸³⁰ This was supported by the Obama administration as part of the US attempted reset with Russia in the aftermath of the 2008 war in Georgia.⁸³¹

In contrast to its relationship with the US, Russia's trade ties with the EU grew rapidly in the post-Cold War era. This relationship was principally defined by Russian oil and gas exports to EU states and Moscow importing manufactured goods from them. By

⁸²⁵ An example included the inability to bring back Chernomyrdin as Prime Minister, having to accept the Primakov's government which was supported by Yeltsin's opponents in the Duma.

⁸²⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 107.

⁸²⁷ "Russia's Trade and Investment Role in the Global Economy," *Congressional Research Service* (January 17, 2023): 2.

⁸²⁸ While sanctions were first levied following Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for separatist elements in the Donbass in 2014, the 2022 were far more severe in terms of scope and coordination with allied powers over assets and oil exports.

⁸²⁹ Warner, "Moving Borders."

⁸³⁰ David A. Dyker, "Russian Accession to the WTO-Why Such a Long and Difficult Road?" *Post-communist Economies* 16, no. 1 (2004): 3.

⁸³¹ Åslund and Hufbauer, "The United States Should Establish Permanent Normal Trade Relations with Russia," 57.

2000, Russia accounted for 49.6% of the EU's natural gas imports.⁸³² By 2020 the EU was Moscow's number one trade partner, accounting for 38% of Russia's total trade. Russia, however, was only the 5th largest trading partner for the EU, accounting for 5.8% of the Union's total trade volume.⁸³³

Furthering economic relations reinforced and reflected continued diplomatic engagement between the EU and Russia throughout the 2000s and 2010s. Despite concerns about NATO expansion, Russia under President Putin, assuming office in 2000, continued to orient itself largely towards Europe. President Putin continued to formalize the conception of a 'Greater Europe' in creating a common trading area and energy market between the EU and the CIS states.⁸³⁴ The EU was supportive of furthering the relationship in this direction as well, with the organization in 1999 releasing the 'Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia' which stated "A stable, democratic and prosperous Russia, firmly anchored in a united Europe free of new dividing lines, is essential to lasting peace on the continent" and that it would look towards creating a EU-Russia free trade area.⁸³⁵ Indicative of these closer relations, the two signed the Four Common Spaces agreements in 2003, furthering their interactions in economic, security and justice, external security and research, education and cultural spaces.⁸³⁶ Such an agreement seemed to give Russia more of a voice in economic and security issues on the continent, a position they had long craved in the post-Cold War era with a more independent EU which was not as aligned with the US, another key Russian objective.⁸³⁷

Closer relations, specifically with Germany and France, enabled Russia to withstand growing American pressure on Moscow's growing assertive foreign policy. This included Washington calling out Russia for using temporary termination of oil and

⁸³² Øistein Harsem and Dag Harald Claes, "The Interdependence of European–Russian Energy Relations," *Energy Policy* 59 (2013): 788.

⁸³³ "EU trade relations with Russia," *European Commission*, accessed April 14, 2023, https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/russia_en

⁸³⁴ Marek Menkiszak, "Greater Europe: Putin's Vision of European (Dis)integration," *Centre for Eastern Studies*, no. 46, October 2013.

⁸³⁵ "Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia," *European Council* (June 1999)1-2.

⁸³⁶ "EU/Russia: The four "Common Spaces," *European Commission* (March 18, 2005) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_05_103

⁸³⁷ Busygina, *Russia-EU Relations and the Common Neighborhood*, 91.

gas transfers as blackmail over Ukraine during their gas dispute in 2006.⁸³⁸ Furthermore, despite some European sanctions and their expulsion from the G8 following the seizure of Crimea and supporting breakaway forces in eastern Ukraine, EU-Russia energy relations continued largely unaffected. This included the 2015 agreement to create the Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Russia's Gazprom and five major European gas companies, making EU-Russia energy relations far less dependent on transit pipelines through Ukraine. The Europeans, especially Germany and France, continued supporting Nord Stream 2 even in the face of sanctions threatened by the Trump administration in 2017 against those involved in the pipeline.⁸³⁹

Despite these developments, tensions continued to grow between the two beginning in the late 2000s and ultimately led to a major breaking of the relationship in 2022 with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. For the EU, the dominant logic held that increasing economic interdependence and regular diplomatic relations would over time lead to a more liberalized Russia, especially the regulatory power underpinning the EU market which Moscow would want to maintain access to. For Russia, maintaining its stature and independence as a great power was important with the Putin regime believing EU dependence on Russian energy would downplay their critiques of Russian internal behavior, as evidenced regarding its human rights record and the war in Chechnya, leading them to accept and respect Russian interests in its 'near abroad', specifically the FSU states.⁸⁴⁰ Russia did not subscribe to a Europe=EU model, but there was a growing sense that there was to be no two pillars underpinning the regional geopolitical environment: a Western one led by the EU and an eastern pillar led by Russia. Instead, EU-NATO expansion would continue unabated leaving Russia with the option to shed its great power sense of self and submit to junior partnership within these processes or be forced to try to blunt these developments and/or look for other geopolitical partners. Western expansion further East, towards Georgia and especially Ukraine, and supporting various color revolutions there bringing into power more Western, liberal oriented regimes wanting EU and NATO memberships was apparently a red line for the increasingly authoritarian and anti-Western Putin regime.

⁸³⁸ Harsem and Claes, "The Interdependence of European–Russian Energy Relations," 784.

⁸³⁹ Marco Siddi, "Theorising Conflict and Cooperation in EU-Russia Energy Relations: Ideas, Identities and Material Factors in the Nord Stream 2 Debate," *East European Politics* 36, no. 4 (2020): 551.

⁸⁴⁰ Casier, "From Logic of Competition to Conflict," 377.

With its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the major European states and the EU as a whole have largely aligned with the US diplomatically, financially, and militarily in supporting Kyiv as well as levied extensive and intensive sanctions against Russia, unprecedented in terms of being so comprehensive against such a large economy as Russia's.⁸⁴¹ Furthermore, in less than a year the EU has largely diversified its energy imports away from Russian dominance, including growing reliance on North African and US energy sources.⁸⁴² For Russia, this rupture has accelerated its reorientation from Greater Europe to Greater Eurasia, specifically with China (and to a more limited extent India) which has become a major economic and political partner of Moscow. As the Putin regime looks east it has abandoned EU-CIS integration and moved towards how to integrate Russia's Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), a customs agreement with several FSU states, especially in Central Asia, and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Whether China, and other Asian partners, can make up for the loss of trade with the EU remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The most prominent feature of this case, as it was for the European security one, is the continued marginalization and exclusion of Russia from the dominant economic networks emerging and expanding over the continent in the post-Cold War era. According to LP theory, this is largely a product of, and evidence showcasing, Russia's low and ever declining functional importance to the US in the maintenance of their hegemonic networks in this core region. Specifically, its small economic size, limited connections to the European and global economy, and lack of appeal as an economic model (especially in contrast to the dominant regional economies in Western Europe) do not warrant sizable investments from the US and its allies in helping Moscow revive and transform its economy or to offer membership into the nascent economic bodies, specifically the EU, emerging at this time. While both the US and Western European states promoted Russian inclusion and partnership with IFIs, most importantly the IMF,

⁸⁴¹ Evan A. Feigenbaum Adam Szubin. "What China Has Learned From the Ukraine War," *Foreign Affairs*, February 14, 2023, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/what-china-has-learned-ukraine-war?utm_medium=social; "Russia Sanctions Database," *Atlantic Council*, accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/econographics/russia-sanctions-database/> (accessed:

⁸⁴² "Infographic - Where does the EU's gas come from?" *European Council*, accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-gas-supply/>

that would take the lead on the West's approach to helping Moscow with its economic and political transitions, Russia was simply not vital enough to be fully included in the regional hegemonic project.

There is agreement with the assertion that if a common geopolitical threat confronted both Russia and the West (as there was in the years following the Second World War between the US and Western European states with respect to the Soviet Union), the US and its allies would have been more willing and able to dedicate far larger sums of material and technical assistance to Moscow.⁸⁴³ However, there are two major deficiencies with LP theory's account of this case, even while acknowledging the absence of such geopolitical pressure. First, why were CEE and the Baltics worthy of entry into the EU but not Russia given all these states would be, according to Mastanduno, non-lynchpin states? What differentiates these states, especially considering they were all liberalizing economically and politically, looking for stronger relations with the West, and for inclusion in the economic order? Second, what was Russia's position on the economic development of Europe, specifically did it share the same sentiment as the US and the Western European states regarding the expansion of the EU into the east creating a single political-economic bloc for the continent?

NC's account provides answers to these questions which are important in understanding Russia's placement and role *in the context of* the specific hegemonic ordering designs the US, and its allies, had for Europe. There is no prima facie reason why inclusion of CEE and Baltic states is more important than Russia. It is only when one considers the American regional strategic cultural approach to Europe that this distinction begins to make sense. Specifically, the US pushed for European security and economic integration within the dual NATO-EU transformation and expansion project to consolidate the continent as "free and undivided" within the Transatlantic community under US leadership, limiting the autonomy of European states in organizing their own geopolitical affairs while ensuring their continued hegemonic followership as the most important bloc for the US. European integration, in short, was good for the US in terms of providing stability on the continent, having a large, wealthy market for exports, and being a supporter on extra-regional issues. Inclusion of CEE and the Baltic states into the

⁸⁴³ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 60.

NATO-EU project was a relatively easy move given their small size and desire to join the West. Expansion, furthermore, to include these states removed possible instability arising in this region, given its history and the ongoing war in the Former Yugoslavia. Such outreach and plans for inclusion ensured these states came into the neo-liberal economic order via IFIs which would influence their political-economic development and blunt against any moves on the continent towards the formation of a more closed, insular, and protectionist economic bloc. The fusion of NATO and EU expansion into a singular project, furthermore, ensured European states would be aligned with and follow the large-scale preferences of the US regarding continental hegemonic expansion. Including Russia in this process, however, was a different story.

While losing sizable territory, population, and economic power with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia remained a very large state, with a long lived imperialist strategic culture whose political future was uncertain. Russia was too big and unpredictable to be quickly included in this process. Furthermore, Russia, unlike the US (and some European states), never believed in the Europe=EU (and NATO) hegemonic formulation. While Western European states never subscribed to this belief in a declaratory sense and did call for a strong Russia in Europe in the 1999 Common Strategy, in practice EU expansion, backed by the US, was a homogenizing project over the entire environment into a common economic and diplomatic body. Russia wanted to be in Europe, to be seen and treated as a European power, but one independent and separate from the EU. Instead, Russia conceived of Europe as having a Western pillar led by the EU and an Eastern one led by Russia, not so much the CEE states but the FSU composed of natural resource exporters. Such an approach, though, was in direct conflict with the US/Western European hegemonic plans. This did not inhibit growing economic links and trade between Russia and the EU, but NATO-EU expansion was to continue unabated within the broad alignment of US hegemonic preferences. Russia was a bad fit in this continental hegemonic project for which the US was able to ensure allied support, leaving Russia marginalized and increasingly pushed out of the European landscape.

Chapter 9: Cross-Case Analysis

This chapter conducts a series of cross-case analyses as the second part of the research design, enabling an evaluation of how well Lynchpin (LP) theory and Networked Centrality (NC) explain prominent patterns among them. This process moves the focus from determining these theories' explanatory power *within* each case as stand-alone and separate objects of study (which was conducted in the first part of this project throughout Chapters Five to Eight) to determining their explanatory power across the entire case collection via a tripart *between* case analysis. The cases have been arranged into three groupings: 1) cases involving the same region/OMP; 2) cases involving the same domain (economic or security); and 3) a broader examination of the East Asia/China cases versus the Europe/Russia ones. This approach highlights the deficiencies of LP theory in explaining the patterns across these cases as functions of non-lynchpin/lynchpin determinations and how Networked Centrality (NC) offers a better explanation of these cases as stemming from the different approaches to economic and security ordering in East Asia versus Europe due to the different US regional strategic cultures towards them.

The first grouping – ‘within region’ comparisons – comprises of two case pairings: 1) the East Asia security and East Asia economic cases; and 2) the Europe security and Europe economic cases. According to LP theory there should be little variation between the cases within either pairing given they are dealing with the same OMP. For the first pairing, there should be sustained efforts by the US to include China in both its regional and economic and security networks, including changing the nature of these to accommodate them. In the second pairing, there should be evidence of sustained marginalization and exclusion of Russia in economic and security networks in Europe, though LP does not offer an expectation of whether these networks are to change due to other factors and forces. For NC, given the reactive nature of the American regional strategic culture towards East Asia and the lack of major network concerns there it is expected there were no major changes to the internal and external functioning of its regional economic and security networks. Such a condition greatly benefited China even though they were not the central focus of these actions. Regarding the second pairing, given the proactive nature of American regional strategic culture and the presence of network concerns there NC expects there to be major changes to regional security and,

more limitedly, economic networks. Such a situation disadvantaged Russia even though they were not the main focus of these actions.

The second grouping – ‘domain’ comparisons - also comprises of two case pairings: 1) East Asia security and Europe security cases; and 2) East Asia economic and Europe economic cases. For LP theory, it is expected that there will be great variation within both these pairings given the cases each deal with a different OMP. In the first pairing, it is expected major efforts were made to accommodate China, including restraining other hegemonic activities and pursuits, into the East Asian security network whereas it is expected that little to no effort was made to accommodate Russia in the European security environment, with Moscow losing out to other hegemonic activities and pursuits. Great variation is also expected for the second pairing regarding the economic cases, with major changes to the US East Asian regional economic network undertaken to include China whereas there were no major changes to include Russia in the European regional economic network. NC expects variation between the cases in each pairing as well, but for different reasons. It is expected the US took a far more overt leadership role in altering the structure and functioning of its economic and security networks in Europe as opposed to East Asia given their different network concerns and how these were addressed based on the relevant regional strategic culture. There were two major commonalities, however, that NC also expects among these cases. First, the US maneuvered to be the lead in strategic relations and negotiating the relationship between OMPs and their followers. Second, the US was more concerned about strategic alignments as expressed by support for/non-opposition to its institutional designs than it was about controlling or inhibiting relationships forming and economic flows growing among its allies and OMPs.

Finally, the last category of comparison explores the East Asia/China cases and the Europe/Russia cases, with a particular focus on the role of these regions with larger, global American hegemonic networks and grand strategy. Given LP theory does not provide a specific accounting of the reasons for and nature of US hegemonic ordering towards each region, and how these connect back up to the global level, this section will focus on further exploring how the US region-specific strategic culture influenced the way the US perceived these regions in terms of ordering pursuits, end states, and purposes as global supporters.

This process is laid out in Table Five below. Upon completion of these comparisons, significant observations will be listed in the concluding section of this chapter and will feed into the project's overall findings.

Table 5: Cross-Case Analysis by Grouping

Grouping	Pairings	Examination Focus
Within Region	1. East Asia security vs economic cases 2. Europe security vs economic cases	Regional strategic culture influence on security and economic ordering in same region/OMP
Domain	1. East Asia security vs Europe security cases 2. East Asia economic vs Europe economic cases	Regional strategic culture influence on security and economic ordering in different regions/OMPs
Between Regions	1. East Asia cases vs. Europe cases	Regional strategic culture influence on regions' intersection with larger hegemonic networks/ordering

Within Region Comparisons

East Asia/China Security vs. East Asia/China Economic Cases

There are three major commonalities between these two cases which are of relevance in evaluating the explanations put for by LP theory and NC. First, the ending of the Cold War did not result in seismic changes to the nature of the security and economic environments there. Second, this period marked the beginning of a growing sense of regionalism in structuring economic and security institutions and dialogues, being primarily led by smaller states. Third, the US, by and large, retained the form and

function of its regional security and economic networks, not seeking a greater leadership role in but also not opposing the growing regional institution building indicated in point two.

Coming out of the Cold War, the dominant features of the security and economic environments in East Asia were largely unaffected. There was neither a mass collapse of regional communist states (except for the Soviet Union itself) nor the disintegration of a rival alliance (as there was no Warsaw Pact equivalent in East Asia). The demise of the Soviet Union did lead to a drastic reduction in its regional military power and forced its regional patrons to pursue new sources of security and assistance, such as North Korea and Vietnam (which pursued this requirement in very different ways). Norms and practices of avoiding tight alignments and developing exclusive military-security pacts continued to be held and promoted among many non-US allied regional states, resulting in hedging remaining a prominent regional practice. Furthermore, there was no large democratic wave emerging throughout the region, though democratization was occurring within key allies and partners such as South Korea and Taiwan. Economically, the region continued to experience deepening trade flows within it, specifically anchored by Japan and then eventually China by the 2000s. While some states remained wary of Japan's growing economic power, specifically possibly being a catalyst and enabler of a more autonomous regional leadership role, this did not disrupt trade ties with Tokyo. Furthermore, despite ongoing and unresolved maritime and territorial disputes and historical tensions among many powers (such as the many various claimants in the South China Sea disputes, China and Japan over historical tensions and claims in the East China Sea, China and Taiwan, and Japan and Russia over the Kuril Islands) economic flows continued to grow between them.

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a growing movement of regional organizing emerging from within East Asia itself, creating forums to discuss economic and security issues. These efforts were largely spearheaded by smaller states, specifically in Southeast Asia and facilitated via ASEAN, which promoted a normative framework of inclusion, non-binding commitments, and eschewing any moves towards developing exclusive blocs or pacts. These forums were seen as meeting sites to share and exchange views and positions, rather than creating policy specific agreements. They served as the foundation from which other processes and arrangements would stem in

the years ahead, specifically regional FTAs. The region's major powers in Japan and China did not take overt steps to try to lead these efforts. Japan, mindful of its historic legacy in the region and the nature of its regional economic linkages, preferred the maintenance of largely politically unstructured forms of trade and investment which had greatly benefited them since the 1970s. China, on the other hand, was trying to re-affirm regional links following the Tiananmen Square massacre, embedding itself within these processes to avoid US scrutiny and attempts to single it out.

The relatively unchanged nature and functioning of the US security network in East Asia was due to the complementary nature of security trends and developments that supported its hegemonic position and posture. There were concerns about some internal-local conflicts (such as in Cambodia and Indonesia-East Timor) and the future of North Korea's nuclear ambitions, but these were not seen as threatening US hegemonic networks nor the entire region. Over time, furthermore, the US became accepting of regional efforts to create security organizations on the condition that these were led by smaller states, were not of an exclusive nature, and did not compete with or challenge the legitimacy of the US hub-and-spoke alliance system.

The maintenance of existing alliances (especially the leading regional power in Japan), the lack of alignment orientations towards another power or group, and hedging being the predominant feature of regional security politics reinforced American acceptance of the heterogeneous nature of the security environment. The US focused on ad-hoc and issue-specific groupings of allies and others to deal with regional matters as they arose rather than moves towards constructing an overarching framework to bring all together. The maintenance of the US presence, furthermore, was welcomed by regional states as a check on great power ambitions of the region's largest states in Japan and China.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the US increasingly saw East Asia as an emerging economic centre in the global system which warranted growing involvement and presence there. But this desire ran up against domestic pressures for the US to pull back commitments and re-balance trade and security relationships which were seen as disproportionality benefitting allies, with Japan top of mind. By the mid-1990s however, the US became less concerned about relative gains regarding trade and more concerned

about the negative effects its economic coercion disposition, introduced in the first year of the Clinton administration, was having on its regional standing and relationships. As the US became more confident economically and in its unipole position, it became less concerned about Japan as an economic rival and determined that the use of economic coercion against all but a small subset of economically marginal East Asia states (like North Korea and Myanmar) to promote other interests, like democracy and human rights promotion, was unhelpful. Continuing this strategy risked spurring growing Asian regionalism against the US as an unpredictable and unilateral outside power. The US, therefore, fell back into acceptance of the heterogeneity of the region in terms of regional organization and domestic practices.

The US did not have a specific regional building project of economic or security organizing for the region. The Pacific Community concept was largely amorphous on specifics as it was more a move to blunt against any closed form of ordering taking hold by tethering East Asia into the larger Pacific construct. With major powers silent on economic organizing, the region coming into the WTO and other IFIs, and American access ensured, the US supported local efforts but did not feel the need to be heavily involved. Finally, the US focused on specific partnerships with other states in macroeconomic management, specifically Japan, rather than seeing the region as a hegemonic bloc which needed greater coordination, cooperation, and inclusion in an American led regional economic project.

Moving onto differences, there are two prominent, and interrelated, ones. The first is the difference in the promotion of expansion of its economic but not security networks by the US. The second is China's deep inclusion in the former but not the latter.

The US was focused on inclusion of all major, and many other, states' support for the Uruguay Round in the establishment of a truly global trading regime. The US did not pursue a more regional leadership role in economic organizing, but it acted to ensure the region remained open and influenced by IFIs. This was particularly evident in US moves to block efforts which it saw as trending in a more closed Asian direction, such as Malaysia's East Asia Economic Caucus or Japan's promotion of the AMF. Regarding the security network, the US was not seeking its expansion or to further integrate its existing

allies among one another. Instead, the US pursued separate 'strategic partnerships' with non-allied powers in furthering security relations as a distinct line of effort alongside retaining its alliance-based relationships.

China, both directly and indirectly, largely benefited from US efforts in the East Asian security and economic domains. China was a major focus for the US during this early period. This was most evident in the economic domain, with the US quickly reversing its conditional MFN approach back towards automatic approval, siloing economics from other aspects of the relationship, and eventually being the lead agent in China's inclusion into the WTO. The US understood, even in the early 1990s, that China was a large emerging economy with massive potential and influence. However, the lack of US leadership in trying to bind China into regional security and economic institutions indicates its importance did not cause a fundamental rethink in America ordering pursuits, including the fusion of its economic and security networks. Furthermore, China's inclusion into the economic order as a non-democratic and not fully capitalist state was not unusual in the post-Cold War era, with China joining many others, like Vietnam, as the US pushed to virtually include all but the smallest and most isolated states into it.

With no peers materially and the only overt rivals being smaller 'rogue' states, the US became increasingly comfortable with China's growing economic and military power developments. Part of this was because China had backed down after the US exercised its military power during the 1995/1996 Taiwan Straits crisis. This created the impression that while China was a challenge the US would have to contend with moving forward, when push came to shove China would back down during a crisis and suggested there was a limit to the willingness and ability for Beijing to oppose US hegemony. While there was a strong belief underpinning the engagement strategy that overtime China would eventually trend towards an economic and political liberal direction, there was equally a strong sentiment that China would never be able to catch up and challenge American power and hegemony in a serious, comprehensive way.⁸⁴⁴ As a result, the US developed

⁸⁴⁴ This did not mean, however, that the US did not have to make any adjustments to ensure this reality remained. Rather, the thinking, prominent in many US administrations but especially that of George W. Bush one, was that important investments in strategically significant military capabilities would ensure the US lead over China to such an extent that Beijing would not just be

approaches to engaging and including China which were commensurate with its existing regional security and economic networks, with each continuing to run as separate pursuits without requiring a fundamental rethink of these to adjust to the changing power dynamics unfolding in the region.

The results for LP theory are mixed for these cases. While China was brought into the economic order it was largely not included in the US regional security network. While Mastanduno argues that this can be explained by US assessments that China was not ready for security binding in the 1990s, it remains unclear why the US would not at least have developed a plan to reform its security network to try to ascertain their inclusion, even if partially. Instead, a loosely structured 'strategic partnership' and ad-hoc, issue-based groupings became the default US attempt to include China in its security network. It is clear the US by the mid-1990s was determined to bring China into its economic network at the global level, but at the region level the US was not a leader in shaping the direction and function of the region's growing political organization of economic relations. Such a stand-off, reactive posture is puzzling if China was assessed as being a lynchpin power which required economic binding that the US would want to be the lead on. Indeed, the lack of American drive in pursuing a leadership role in the growing regionalism efforts seems at odds with its repeated assertions that East Asia was rapidly becoming the more important economic and security region in the world, especially one with a lynchpin power sitting outside its formal hegemonic networks. Furthermore, the predominant pattern of consistency in the US approach to East Asia is one which LP theory struggles to explain in general.

In contrast, NC's offers a more coherent account for the non-major changes to US regional networks in East Asia given the preferences for addressing network concerns as informed by its regional strategic culture. The US approach was one focused on reactivity and the prevention of unwanted geopolitical developments, specifically alternative network building by major powers, and not one of being proactive in the development of a specific regional order. The network concerns, furthermore, in the early 1990s were mostly about and addressed by shoring up activities within its

unable to catch up but also eventually give up any predilections of trying to compete with the US in this manner. Silove, "The Pivot before the Pivot."

existing hegemonic networks, specifically its security one with the retention of Japan as a hegemonic follower. Given the absence of new geopolitical dynamics emerging in the region, the US was not pressured into adopting more expansionist and transformationalist hegemonic pursuits. It was undisturbed by regional heterogeneity if it retained its favourable position in the region. There was, specifically, no grand plan to bring the entire region under its hegemonic network at the regional level. Adjustments were made to its networks, specifically economically, but these were largely the continuation of existing trends rather than the start of fundamentally new direction in US regionally hegemonic pursuits. The economics-first approach of the Clinton administration was quickly abandoned once it became apparent these actions were undermining the US position in Asia and the fact that the US had become a more confident economic power once again by the mid-to-late 1990s. The lack of network concerns and a strategic culture which favoured the status-quo facilitated the space in which China could grow its power, join in the region's economic and security institution building, and avoid sustained US confrontations as long as they did not seek to become institution and network builders; a disposition they maintained through the 1990s and into the 2000s.

Europe/Russia Security vs. Europe/Russia Economic Cases

There are three major commonalities between these two cases of importance in comparing LP theory and NC expectations and explanations for them. First, the end of the Cold War brought large changes to the security and (more limitedly) economic environments in Europe. Second, there was expansion of the pre-dominant regional security (NATO) and economic (EU) networks from Western Europe into CEE. Third, Russia was excluded from membership in both these organizations, though it did not want to join either.

The ending of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union had major ramifications to both the security and economic environment on the continent. Most importantly, it led to the collapse of the dual military-economic alliance system dividing the continent with the ending of Soviet hegemony in CEE and the extinguishment of communist states on the continent. In its place emerged liberal-capitalist states in CEE and among many of the independent republics, including Russia, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The violent collapse of the Former Yugoslavia raised

concerns about the possibility of ethnic based conflict in CEE as well as weariness as to whether Russia's recent, and historically unique, domestic liberal turn and external turn towards the West would coalesce into a long-term and decisive change in its imperialistic strategic culture and practice. Paralleling these developments on the eastern part of the continent was the growing economic and diplomatic consolidation in Western Europe with the birth of the EU from the EC. There was some growing sentiment, specifically voiced by France, of European powers playing a more meaningful leadership role over security ordering and determining their own approach to relations with the newly liberalizing and democratizing states of CEE and the FSU.

Due to the radical changes in the security environment in Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the US had both internal concerns regarding the future of NATO and external concerns regarding the aftermath of the collapse of Soviet hegemony, the Warsaw Pact, and communist states in CEE and the FSU. The Bush administration was more concerned about Europe becoming a more autonomous actor (specifically advocated by France) while the Clinton administration was more concerned about Europe being unable to deal with the plethora of security challenges affecting the continent (most importantly the wars in the former Yugoslavia). The main common factor shared by both administrations however was the deep-seated belief European states could not be left to manage security affairs on the continent. As a result, NATO was transformed both internally, in terms of functions and mission mandates, and externally, in terms of being the lead network connecting the two halves of the continent under a common institutional framework, to ensure US influence over the security trajectory of the continent. Such moves were not vigorously opposed by many, with much of CEE craving integration with the West and many allies accepting the importance of the US security presence and leadership in continental stability. NATO was to be the primary, unchallenged, security network on the continent, increasingly becoming the only game in town. As a result, throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s NATO increasingly became used by the US as the best way to deal with a large collection of security issues both on and off the continent, including out of area operations, democratic consolidation in CEE, and be the primary counterpart to Russia.

The US supported the continued economic and diplomatic integration of Western Europe, building on fifty years of work towards an economic union which was seen as

instrumental in ensuring conflict among major European powers did not return. It was also becoming a more coherent international actor, one which Washington wanted to ensure its support in creating the WTO. The US, therefore, did not try to break up this bloc or allow tensions to reach acrimonious and relationship-damaging levels. Instead, the US moved quickly to develop relations with the EC/EU, including a joint affirmation of the centrality of NATO and develop a specific strategy to strengthen relations with CEE states. In this way, the hegemonic security and economic ordering project became fused, with the agreement that NATO membership would come before EU membership for these states. The economic organizing of the continent came under greater US influence as IFIs became central in the economic futures of CEE and FSU states, including Russia. By the mid-1990s, the EU was firmly within the US hegemonic orbit, both in terms of continental ordering designs and internationally as a necessary partner in the creation of the WTO.

The new post-Cold War environment was to be one of homogeneity within US hegemonic networks, leaving Russia as a partner to but not a member in these dominant continental projects. Russia was perpetually squeezed out of these landscapes as the US sought to bring the continent under its predominant forms of hegemonic ordering to bring about a Europe that is “free and undivided”. Processes and forums Russia was not able nor willing to join. This was particularly evident in the security domain with the NATOization of the continent, which pushed other institutional and normative paths to the side. Some of these efforts aided Russian security in many ways, such as in restraining the recently united Germany and acceptance of Russian leadership over security issues involving CIS members. But in other ways such moves harmed Russia, specifically President Yeltsin and other reformers’ chances of steering the state in a more pro-Western orientation. Such moves did not primarily manifest as security risks of Russia being physically attacked by an enlarged NATO, but more so demonstrated Russia’s lost influence and shrinking role as a European power. It is unclear, also, if the Clinton, or any subsequent, administration ever considered offering NATO membership to Russia and if Russia would ever seriously consider joining.

The same phenomenon exists in the economic environment. Russia wanted to develop a closer partnership with Europe, specifically the EU, but did not want to become part of it. Russia desired to remain a separate pillar with its own unique interests

and pursuits. It did not subscribe to the Europe=EU approach to economic ordering (like its opposition to the Europe=NATO for security ordering). Russia was able to forge a new economic relationship with Europe, specifically around natural resources, but this was not enough to leverage Europeans into restructuring the economic relationship into something where Russia had more power and status in a new continental economic arrangement which formally included them. Russia, given its size and lack of economic development, was not seen by either the US or its European allies as a viable candidate for EU membership. Furthermore, Russia was not interested in joining the EU but being seen as a close but separate European power.

Moving on to differences, there is one major one between these cases: the degree of American tolerance of its European partners' autonomy in terms of progressing economic and security relations with Moscow. The US was not overly concerned about European states developing economic linkages with Russia. Trade continued to grow between the two throughout the 1990s, with the EU eventually becoming Russia's number one trade partner and Russia the EU's number five partner. Furthermore, the US worked with its European partners to help provide further funding, through regional institutions and IFIs, to Russia to help with its recovery and transition. In contrast, in the security space the US positioned itself between Russia and its European allies in a way which made it the primary conduit between them, reinforcing America's role as the predominant and most influential security actor in the region. This was done via a direct US-Russia strategic relationship separate from those of its other continental partners and through the US being the de facto leader of NATO, the preeminent European security organization that Russia had to engage with. Such a relationship was formalized with the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997. These moves effectively pruned any possibility of Russia developing separate security relations with other European powers given their membership in NATO and acceptance of US leadership of this body.

LP theory's expectations for these cases hold up relatively well in the sense that Russia did not gain membership into the dominant US-backed regional security and economic networks. There are, however, three limitations of note. First, the theory does not address that Russian non-membership in these is not simply a function of denial and non-consideration by the US and its allies but also due to Moscow's unwillingness to join them. Second, Russia does maintain its leadership disposition in most of the FSU space

with US support and backing. Third, LP theory does not explain what the motivations were underpinning US hegemonic expansion. The last point, furthermore, is critical when examining non-inclusion of Russia in these processes as a function of its non-lynchpin status. Specifically, why are CEE states, all of which are non-lynchpin powers, included but not Russia? What differentiates these non-lynchpin states in American hegemonic decision-making towards Europe? State by state assessments of such status cannot explain this variance.

NC provides a more comprehensive account of the motivations underpinning US hegemonic activities in Europe. It elucidates why the US pursued hegemonic expansion of its regional networks and how this shaped the context within which US-Russian relations proceeded. Changes to US hegemonic networks in Europe were not driven to include new lynchpin powers, as there were none, but rather to shore up its follower base in Western Europe and cement its leadership position over continental ordering in the wake of the collapse of Soviet hegemony in CEE. Informing these motivations was the US regional strategic culture which framed Europe as a system which needed to be brought under its hegemonic control. As a result, the US took the lead in internal changes to its networks, specifically its security one, and employed these to connect both parts of the continent together. While some followers had reservations about the pace and direction of these American actions they were not wholly opposed, while many in CEE welcomed them. The latter were included not because they were by themselves vital for the continued maintenance of US hegemony on the continent, but because their inclusion was part of a broader plan to ensure American undisputed leadership in how it pursued its goal of ensuring Europe became “free and undivided”.

Russia, however, was a difficult fit within these plans for it did not want to simply become a junior follower like the other European major powers had become. As a result, even tepid opposition to US preferences and actions were seen as unacceptable to Washington with Russia increasingly being dealt with separately and isolated at the strategic level. The US was opposed to Europeans having a free hand in continental ordering, and instead ensured their support through the dual expansionist project involving NAO and the EU. However, once the centrality of US regional networks was reaffirmed, the US was OK with relations, specifically trade, forming between Russia and the rest of Europe.

Domain Case Comparison

East Asia/China Security vs Europe/Russia Security Cases

There are three major commonalities regarding US maneuvering in the security environments in both Europe and East Asia in the early part of the post-Cold War era. These were: 1) ensuring continued followership of its allies within the network it leads; 2) securing an advantageous position within the larger environment with no other network rivals; and 3) progressing relations with Outside Major Powers (OMPs) separately rather than bring them into the fold along with existing hegemonic followers.

During the transition to and throughout the early period of the post-Cold War era, the US worked to ensure the continuity of NATO internally, including incorporating the newly unified Germany. Despite some force drawdowns resulting from the BUR, the US retained a sizable military footprint on the continent and its dominant leadership role in the organization, reflecting and furthering the acceptance by its continental allies of its predominant role in security ordering on the continent. By the mid-1990s even the most vocal allied critic, France, had accepted the necessity of continued US leadership and thus ended any real debate about a more European-led/based forms of security ordering. Similarly, in East Asia the US reaffirmed many of its bilateral alliance partnerships, with new defence agreements reached by the mid-1990s with Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Of particular importance was ensuring Japan remained its principal regional ally given its size, location, and potentiality of becoming a serious competitor should it pursue a more autonomous path. While its alliances with Thailand and the Philippines atrophied during this period, alternative arrangements were available (such as Singapore hosting US naval forces), these frameworks were not permanently discontinued with Bangkok and Manila, and in the latter's case military relations began to rebound by the mid-1990s.

Retention of these allied commitments assisted the US in retaining its central position regarding regional security ordering by situating itself between these followers and OMPs. Doing so disrupted the possibility of separate strategic relationships forming between these two groups in terms of working together regarding security ordering in these changing regional environments. In Europe, the US consolidated its leadership in NATO among its allies as the mechanism within which it would address regional security

network concerns and was the primary vehicle of the West in negotiations with Russia regarding regional security. Such positionality allowed the US to hinder any ability of cooperation and coordination among Russia and other Western powers in promoting possible other arrangements to anchor European security ordering, such as the OSCE. The US occupied an unrivaled regional position in architecting the security institutions and heavily influencing the geopolitical dynamics of the region. In East Asia, the US secured a similar position in between China and Japan, though there was not much concern about relations between these two reaching a point where they were discussing and coordinating on regional security ordering. Instead, the US was able to develop good relations with both while ensuring rivalry among them did not become destabilizing.

Finally, American security relations with both China and Russia were pursued separately from its existing security networks. Neither power was brought into these networks. It was simply unrealistic to believe either of these powers was able and willing to be bound into these alliance networks as de facto junior followers given their histories as major/great powers and tense relations with existing allies within these. Attempts to restructure these networks to do so would have most likely radically altered the nature and functioning of them, including the US ability to lead them. Furthermore, the US opposed creating or supporting the emergence of new networks to manage regional security affairs which could include these outside powers. Instead, these relationships were to be pursued in parallel to that of its existing security networks, though these were not always operating in silos. For example, minilateral groupings were established with these powers to deal with specific regional security issues, such as Russia's inclusion in the Contact Group regarding the war in Bosnia and China's (and Russia's) inclusion in the Six Party Talks regarding North Korea's nuclear weapons program. These, however, were largely ad-hoc, issue-specific bodies and not permanent, integrated additions to the US regional security network.

Moving on to differences, there are two prominent, and interconnected, ones between these cases. The first is the extent of changes to the security network in Europe compared to the relative perpetuation of the status quo of these in East Asia. The second is the more immediate tradeoffs the US confronted in addressing network concerns and progressing relations with OMPs in the European case as opposed to the East Asia one.

In Europe, alliance politics, specifically multilateral pacts led by a superpower, and zero-sum strategic alignments had been predominant features of the security environment throughout the Cold War. This produced a history of high-level strategic dialogues between the US and the Soviet Union, including force agreements and conversations about ordering in Europe. These practices continued in this transition era, with the US regularly discussing such matters with Russia which implied the continued importance of Moscow as a security power on the continent even in its diminished state. The US, however, was unwilling to fundamentally rethink the continental security order, relying on alliance politics via NATO to address regional security concerns and goals. NATO was to be the primary vehicle to retain the followership of its allies (stomping out any autonomous predilections in the security space among them); expansion into CEE to tie together both subregions of the continent; and employment in dealing with regional conflicts.

The US, also, was sensitive about any attempts to promote alternative security ordering dynamics and organizations, which placed Russia in an awkward position as they wanted to be part of the West but unwilling to follow the path of other European major powers in becoming junior hegemonic followers. Moscow's brief, but unserious, advocacy for being included in NATO was seen more as an attempt to disrupt NATO expansion than a meaningful desire to become a hegemonic follower.⁸⁴⁵ Furthermore, the US never considered, at least for the near-medium term, including Russia for doing so would risk fundamentally altering the nature of the alliance given its size, nuclear power status, unpredictable future, and still tense relations with many on the continent, especially CEE. The latter were easier to incorporate quickly into the security network given their small size, desire to join the West, and were seen as effectively blunting the likelihood of instability, war, and mini alignments emerging in this sub-region. It was an easier task to accomplish, supporting the overall objective of ensuring a free and undivided continent. As a result, the US and Russia were increasingly on opposing sides

⁸⁴⁵ Such a sentiment was captured in former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's suggestion that the real purpose of Russia stating it wanted NATO membership, specifically to be admitted first before other CEE and FSU states, was simply to disrupt and derail the entire process. If the Yeltsin Government truly wanted NATO membership it would most likely have resulted in a visceral backlash among nationalist forces with the very real possibility of overthrowing the government and the collapse of the Russian political system. Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 253.

of these ordering debates, with the US successfully positioning itself in between Moscow and the other major European powers. This ensured the latter remained within NATO and committed to its new continental (and off continent) purposes with the US being the lead in managing continental strategic relations with Russia, resulting in these two pursuits increasingly being done separately and in an increasingly zero-sum manner.

In East Asia, alliance and alignment dynamics were not as pronounced during this transition period given the absence of a regional rival pact against the US and its hub-and-spoke alliance network during much of the Cold War. Unlike in Europe, the US did not possess a specific ordering vision or project for the region and thus there was no desire to significantly re-purpose and structure its existing regional security network. There was no equivalent sentiment of bringing about an Asia-Pacific region which was free and undivided. Instead, the US operated more on a precautionary principle to avoid undesired developments from emerging. In East Asia, there were some concerns but the solution to these largely reinforced the status quo in terms of the structure and purpose of the security network. The US shored up its most important regional alliances (especially with Japan), reached out to establish a security relationship with other regional states (like China), and was supportive of the growing push for establishing security forums and dialogues led by smaller powers given their non-binding, non-pact, and non-exclusive nature.

Within this environment, China could more easily avoid security ordering debates and disputes with the US as compared to Russia in Europe. It was not strongly advocating specific positions on these matters, including trying to recruit other regional states to support any specific institutional configuration. While China regularly emphasized opposition to 'hegemonism', an indirect critique of the US superpower position and influence, such expressions were not taken too seriously by the US given their amorphous nature. They were seen as a signal more of discomfort with the status quo rather than as a determination and actual plan to change this. Furthermore, China was able to successfully embed itself in the emerging security regionalism of nebulous institutions which many others in the region, including many US allies, also supported. Beyond the US hub-and-spoke alliance, there were no other legacy institutions or newly emerging security pacts being promoted by others which could have caused difficulties for China in determining how to respond. The US regularly consulted China on regional

security issues (such as Cambodia and North Korea), but there was no relationship, as there was with the Soviet Union/Russia, on discussing security ordering as a whole with Beijing in East Asia as a near-peer and head of a rival pact. China was seen as a big and important power regarding regional security, but given the lack of regional network concerns, China's relatively low-key posture on ordering issues, and the US regional strategic culture favouring preservation or promotion, the simultaneous pursuit of managing relations with Beijing and furthering its other regional security pursuits did not involve many immediate trade-offs.

There is much variation between these cases as expected by LP theory, but the cases are not complete opposites of each other with China's inclusion in the US regional security network in East Asia and Russia's exclusion in the US regional security network in Europe. Instead, security relations with China were pursued separately from those with existing allies and other partners in a largely atomized way. Furthermore, the US did not pursue creating a security relationship with Beijing that was analogous to its existing alliance ones or those of other strategic partnerships in the region, such as with Singapore. There was, as well, no evidence that the US seriously considered altering its security network to include China in any meaningful way. Therefore, the major difference between these cases was not US efforts to include China and exclude Russia, but that the security network in East Asia did not undergo any major internal or external changes whereas in Europe the security network underwent both sizable internal and external changes. LP theory does not explain this difference for the driving forces behind it do not primarily concern China or Russia.

NC provides an explanation for this difference by focusing on how the different motivations and ways the US maneuvered to maintain its hegemonic security position against network concerns which were principally internal in nature, specifically about shoring up the followership of existing members. In East Asia, this manifested in the preservation of the status-quo given there were no serious external network concerns warranting a reconsideration of the structure and functioning of its security network nor challenging the central tenets of its regional strategic culture. There was no grand plan to bring about a specific security order in East Asia which was all-inclusive in this new era. In Europe, however, the US was dealing with several network concerns regarding restraining any autonomous moves by allies in taking the lead on continental security

matters as well as concerns about the future of CEE. Bringing together both parts of the continent, furthermore, through a US-led security network expansion project would preserve its leadership position and assist in bringing about a continent “free and undivided” which was considered a major American strategic goal in creating a peaceful and stable continent full of hegemonic followers. Such efforts left little room to integrate Russia into them, with Moscow increasingly on the opposing side of US moves, while Washington could pursue relations with China largely separately from its other security relationships, feeling no pressure or need to try to bring these processes together in a new or modified security network given the lack of external network concerns it faced there.

China/East Asia Economic vs Russia/Europe Economic Cases

There are three major commonalities regarding US maneuvering in the economic environments in both Europe and East Asia in the early part of the post-Cold War era. First, initial concerns about the possibility of closed economic regional pacts emerging in both regions eventually gave way by the mid-1990s with the US supportive of, but not taking an active leadership role in, economic regionalism efforts. Second, the US did not try to obstruct or severely condition growing economic links between its allies and OMPs. Third, the US promoted the inclusion of both China and Russia into the world economic system, including its major institutional bodies.

Entering the post-Cold War era, the H Bush administration was concerned about the possible balkanization of the world economy into closed regional pacts, specifically in Europe and East Asia, which would undermine its interests in bringing about a truly global trading regime. At the same time, however, the US was also contributing to these stresses with its efforts to create a free trade regime in North America, which culminated in the establishment of NAFTA in 1994, and its increasingly assertive approach, especially during the initial period of the Clinton administration, towards addressing trade deficits which caused concern among many about the future disposition of the US economically. By the mid-1990s these American concerns had largely dissipated. In Europe, the US was able to secure European support for the WTO, maintained access to the continent via deepening ties with the EU, and ensured a more neo-liberal direction took hold on the continent given IFIs prominence in helping CEE and FSU states transition their economies. In East Asia, the US admittance and participation in regional

economic bodies with smaller powers taking the lead in their construction and operations, combined with 'Asian-only' forum promoters largely sidelined, eased US concerns about any sort of closed economic bloc emerging there. The US has also rebounded economically by the middle to latter part of the decade while its peers continued to struggle with slow growth. These dynamics helped soften aggressive American trade tactics and lessen the importance of relative gains regarding trade balances. With these regions remaining economically open and the US being a leader in many emerging technology fields, there was less concern about intra-regional trade and economic flows having a negative effect on the US economically and strategically.

Stemming from this reassurance, the US did not seek greater leadership roles in regional economic institutional development in either core region. This included non-interference in the economic relations and flows between allies and OMPs. In East Asia, the US supported growing economic regionalism including the embedding of China into the regional economy and its accelerating trade ties with its close hegemonic followers such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. American interventions at the regional level of economic management were few and largely focused on disrupting attempts of larger powers bringing about new regional institutions, most evident in the visceral American opposition to Japan's AMF proposal. In Europe, trade relations would begin to grow rapidly between Russia and Western Europe from the mid-1990s onwards.

China was a good fit into and benefited from the US economic hegemonic disposition towards East Asia, especially with the reduction of the primacy of economics and economic coercion in American foreign policy post-1995. China keeping quiet on regional economic ordering also assisted in not raising US concerns or shifting its largely hand-offs approach regarding adopting a regional leadership position. Rather, the US established direct links with China and led in the efforts of its inclusion in the global economic system, specifically the WTO. The US rebounding as a confident economic power was also beneficial to China as it became less sensitive to trade imbalances with Beijing and not too concerned about China's growing economic power and clout in Asia and beyond. Such efforts reinforced and reflected the US approach to East Asia of working with specific partners and minilateral groupings rather than becoming more involved in being the leading power in creating an expansive regional economic regime

like NAFTA. As a result, China was able to re-wire regional economics around itself, and increasingly the global system, without much American reaction or worry.

Russia was a more awkward fit within the US economic hegemonic disposition towards Europe. Neither the US nor its European allies were willing to dedicate significant financial assistance directly to Russia, which had to work with the IMF principally in rehabilitating and transforming its economy. There also appeared no real path for Russia's inclusion into the EU unlike the other CEE and some FSU states. The latter wanted to be included, were smaller economies, and had shallower economic depressions, making it easier to make plans to include them. Russia, however, was not interested in joining this pact but promoted rethinking economic arrangements across the continent, specifically being respected as a sort of Eastern European pillar and counterpart to the EU as a Western European pillar. While trade ties deepened between Russia and Western Europe, Moscow increasingly faced a continental economic environment that Europe=EU, an equation supported by the US and CEE states but not shared by Russia. As a result, Russia was largely (self)excluded from the economic hegemonic regional project though it was included in global economic bodies, including the G8 and eventually the WTO.

Moving on to differences, there are four major ones between these cases. First, there was a difference in the nature and level of US support towards assisting in the economic development of China and Russia. The US led the effort to include China in the WTO, tying this effort with the establishment of PNTR between the two. This two-sided approach emerged by the late 1990s as China continued to make sizable changes to its domestic economy. Russia, on the other hand, was dealt with primarily via IFIs, specifically the IMF, rather than directly by the US, though Washington used its leverage in these institutions to promote its preferences on this file. This difference in approaches was in part a function of the very different economic positions each occupied. Both states were transitioning away from command style economies, but China was far along in this process and in a stable macroeconomic situation whereas Russia was just beginning this transition and dealing with a sizable economic contraction. China seemed more ready for further economic integration in the global system whereas the focus on Russia was on macro-stabilization which required far more direct financial and technical support. These

approaches were in line with the predominant neo-liberal thinking at this time for where these states were economically.

Second, the trade potential of China was assessed as far more valuable to the US directly and more generally towards the global economy than that with Russia, with the former having increasing influence on US decision-making while the latter seeing decreasing support and priority throughout the 1990s. However, this fact taken in isolation does not tell the whole story. Rather another consideration, which is the third difference between the cases, was that the US was more supportive of the growing institutionalization of the EU than it was for the development of any sort of East Asian equivalent. As a result, Russian inclusion in the former was largely a non-starter given its size, beleaguered economic state, and unwillingness to join. The US did not force Russian inclusion or push for a fundamental rethink in European economic organizing given the risks to the entire EU project. In East Asia, China was able to further embed itself in the regional economy as there was not a similar all-inclusive economic-political body being developed with rigorous entry standards. Regional states were happy to further trade and investment with China given the loose nature of the emerging economic regionalism which was not being led by a single or group of major powers.

The final difference is with respect to the relationship between these economic networks and their security counterparts. The US was more active in tethering economic and security network projects, specifically towards expansion, in Europe compared to East Asia, where they remained largely unchanged and separate. This variance was due to the US desire to firm up the former as a hegemonic bloc, to be employed on and off the continent, whereas the goal of the latter was to ensure it did not develop a strong sense of Pan-Asianism which could have led to the emergence of a closed regional economic bloc.

As expected by LP theory, the US was far more determined to bring China into the global economic system in the 1990s than Russia. However, LP theory does not offer an explanation as to why the US was not more involved in the regional economic institution building in East Asia with the desire to shape the rules of and forms of engagement defining China's growing economic relationship with the world and develop a competitive edge against others which Washington was concerned would take

advantage in their absence. Furthermore, while LP theory is correct that the US did not work hard to include Russia in regional economic networks in Europe, this account leaves largely unacknowledged and unexamined the growing economic relationship between Russia and the rest of Europe despite the absence of Russia in the EU (which it did not want to join) or the creation of a new pan-European economic institutional system. Also, Russia was included into the global economic system, though an argument can be made that if it was a lynchpin power then Washington would have worked far harder and more expeditiously to include them in the WTO and develop a more direct economic relationship.

For NC, inclusion of China into the world economic system was part of a larger push to include virtually all outside states throughout the 1990s. China was seen as a future economic power whose inclusion was important for the US both directly in terms of trade potential and indirectly in terms of being tethered into the US-based system. However, China's inclusion was not of such importance as to cause a fundamental rethink in the US overall economic approach to East Asia, specifically becoming more of a leader in organizing regional economic pacts. The US regional strategic culture approach of being precautionary over being proactive in East Asian ordering was preserved given the lack of external network concerns and the fact the US had recovered its economic confidence which ended its brief flirt with a more zero-sum geoeconomic approach to regional relations. Had the US not rebounded economically as it did in the mid-to-late 1990s, it is possible it would have maintained this approach which could have resulted in a far more conflictual relationship with China (and others in East Asia). This possibility will be explored further in the concluding chapter.

In Europe, the US continued to support EU integration given the organization's continued alignment with American global economic imperatives while also ensuring their support for IFI assistance to CEE and FSU states. The US did not push for Russia's inclusion in the EU nor advocate the development of a new continental economic system. Part of this can be explained, as LP theory emphasizes, due to Russia's non-importance but it also is due to the absence of network concerns which would warrant such moves. The US had successfully blunted any attempts of its European allies in leading and determining the approach to CEE and FSU economic engagement and the possible emergence of a rival, closed economic pact. Further efforts into influencing the

regional economic landscape were not necessary. Had the US continued with its economic struggles into the latter part of the 1990s and/or the EU proceeded down a more closed economic route, the American approach to the continent and Russia may have changed quite a bit. These hypotheticals, like the East Asian ones mentioned above, will be addressed in the concluding chapter.

Between Regions Comparison

When looking at American approaches towards these regions as a whole, there is one primary distinction between US actions and activities in Europe compared to East Asia during the transition to and early period of the post-Cold War era. In the former case, these were largely informed by a regional strategic culture which treated the region as a system whose unity was important to US hegemony. In the latter case, these were based on a regional strategic culture which did not have a conceptualization of the region as requiring such a structure nor occupying an equivalent level of importance in US global hegemony.

Europe was seen as an important hegemonic bloc whose cohesiveness (politically, economically, and strategically) and followership under US leadership was vital in the preservation of US continued hegemonic standing and influence over the continent and internationally as part of the Transatlantic community. Given this impulse, and the emerging network concerns arising in and outside the network, the US maneuvered to orient its regional networks towards internal transformation, external expansion, and successful fusion of the economic and security aspects of these into a mutually supportive effort with European backing. NATO was increasingly being transformed as an expeditionary force and deployed to out of area operations. European support, including from the EU, was important for maintenance of the global economic system in forums such as the G7 and for establishing the WTO. Combining NATO and EU expansion linked Western and Eastern Europe into a consolidated bloc of democratic-capitalist states. Such a project opposed and left little room for other forms of organizing, placing Russia in an increasingly marginal position. Moscow did not want to join these processes but also protested their totalizing drive of including the entire continent under US-backed hegemonic networks in NATO and the EU.

Given their experiences as superpower rivals and managers from the Cold War, the US found it difficult to develop a new type of relationship with Russia. This is particularly evident in moving beyond zero-sum framings of issues pertaining to order and influence (e.g. regular insistence that Russia did not have a veto over NATO expansion) in exploring new ways of thinking about continental order management (e.g. beyond alliance based security arrangements). While such a relationship placated Russia's sense of still being a great power (exemplified by the regularity of summitry between the US and Russian presidents throughout the 1990s), it became over time a straitjacket for the US increasingly saw Moscow more as an obstacle to manage than a partner on the same level as them. Even mild concerns and suggestions by Moscow, such as promoting the prominence of the OSCE, were seen as unacceptable challenges to US ordering preferences. This friction furthered the practice of the US managing hegemonic followership maintenance and network expansion on one track and furthering relations with Russia on another.

East Asia was seen as a very important region of the future, given its economic potential and number of large local powers, which the US wanted to ensure it had a very favourable position within. But it was not seen as so important in the early 1990s as to warrant a sizable US effort to try to bring it together into a hegemonic bloc akin to Europe. Rather, the US would continue with its focus on bilateral, and in some circumstances multilateral, forms of engagements with key partners and powers. East Asia was seen as a very diverse region making it very difficult to engineer region-wide institutions under US leadership. Nevertheless, the lack of US effort to propose new groupings and frameworks is surprising. American focus was more on shoring up relations with important allies and bringing in others, like China, into the global economic system. These foci resulted in the US largely ceding leadership in the economic field at the regional level. Part of this is explained by the lack of network concerns motivating such a response, but more importantly the US did not have a specific impulse to order the region into a system the way it did in Europe.

The lack of internal and external changes, therefore, to its security and economic networks was not the result of a failed pursuit to do so, being frustrated by regional opposition including from China. Rather, neither China nor any other actors or developments threatened the US preferences stemming from its regional strategic

culture to a degree which warranted transformation of these. Preservation of the regional status quo was the goal. Over time, China became an increasingly important factor and consideration in American actions and activities in East Asia but in the 1990s it was able, for the most part, to keep a low profile, isolate areas of tensions (such as Taiwan) from affecting other aspects of their relationship with the US, and did not assert its need to be treated like a major power separate from others in the region and wanting more of a say and role in regional ordering.

Major Observations

Several observations emerge from this tripartite cross-case analysis which elucidates key patterns of US hegemonic actions and activities in Europe and East Asia in the early period of the post-Cold War era. These patterns, which emerged during this critical juncture, would concretize into the dominant pathways and structures of US hegemonic ordering in these core regions throughout the post-Cold War era and form the contexts heavily influencing the nature and trajectory of relations with China and Russia during this period.

Economic and Security Organizing: The US in the post-Cold War era wanted, with a few exceptions which were mostly with respect to rogue states, all countries to join the global economic system, specifically the WTO. The US, however, was not interested in proposing or joining FTAs, with the important exception of NAFTA as a means of shoring up its own home regional economic base. Economic issues, therefore, were largely pursued at bilateral and global but not regional levels.

In contrast, US promotion of others joining its security networks was more varied and region specific. There was no move towards creating a new or combining existing security networks into a more global level type of arrangement. In East Asia, the form, function, and membership of the security network remained largely the same: focused on territorial defence, non-integration of existing allies, and with new security arrangements and partnerships with regional states being add-ons and largely pursued separately from one another. In Europe, however, the form, function, and membership of the security network changed considerably: moving from territorial defence to expeditionary-out of area operations, a defensive alliance towards a political-democracy club, and expansion to include many CEE states and the Baltic countries.

Another important distinction between the two core regions was the relationship between security and economic networks. In Europe, the US maneuvered to tether the two primary security and economic networks -NATO and the EU - together into a mutually supportive plan of consolidation in Western Europe and expansion into CEE. In East Asia, the US did not try to combine or link its security network, the hub-and-spoke alliance system, with the growing regional efforts of creating economic agreements and institutions, with these two domains largely treated separately by the US.

Consistency Versus Experimentation: Another key difference between East Asia and Europe was the consistency in the US hegemonic approach towards the latter compared to the former. In Europe, the US largely maintained the imperative of ensuring the centrality of NATO on the continent, transforming its military functions and missions to be used beyond territorial defence and becoming a more political organization as the primary conduit between Western and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the US supported continued political-economic integration of the EU, even during their consternation regarding the bilateral trade relationship with Germany and concerns about the possibility of a 'Fortress Europe' emerging during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In East Asia, the incoming Clinton administration initially diverged from the Bush administration's focus on "saving the furniture" in the region in terms of prioritizing its existing relations and overall beneficial geopolitical position.⁸⁴⁶ Instead, the Clinton administration began employing economic forms of coercion to pursue discrete economic and non-economic policy goals within several regional relationships simultaneously but in a disconnected manner. This approach affected allies, partners, and others. This abrupt change exemplified that the US did not possess a particularly strong sense of how the region should be ordered or its role and purpose within it during this period of change. This made it more susceptible, initially, to the infusion of other priorities which entered the foreign policy mainstream such as human rights and trade balances. The Clinton administration's more muscular disposition, however, was not a coherent regional approach but rather an attempt to repurpose a series of bilateral relations towards discrete, narrow interests without much consideration for their

⁸⁴⁶ Green, *By More Than Providence*, 452.

cumulative impact and effect on the US position in East Asia. However, once this degradation was appreciated, specifically via Lord's 'malaise memo', the Clinton administration reversed course and adopted a more region-wide approach which was by and large in line with the previous Bush administration based on geopolitical interests.

The difference in these trajectories - consistency in Europe and experimentation before returning to the norm in East Asia - reflected the different orientations the US held towards each. In Europe, there was a more clear, specific group of preferences regarding regional ordering and desired end-states which was durable and remained even amidst other concerns and issues in American foreign policy during this period. The US regional strategic culture towards East Asia was more amorphous, being reactive towards stemming undesired developments rather than proactive in furthering the development of a specific regional order. The Clinton administration's early, aggressive, and isolated pursuits in East Asia, therefore, were reversed and replaced by an approach more in line with its traditional disposition towards the region once it became apparent these were having a negative effect on their hegemonic presence there.

Europe Over East Asia: In explaining the differences in US posture and organization in Europe versus East Asia to counter the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Ikenberry asserted that in the former case the US was less powerful and therefore needed more from its allies, leading to the creation of a multilateral alliance and promotion of an economic union to rebuild these powers in an integrated manner. In contrast, in East Asia the US was more powerful and therefore did not need as much from its allies, settling for a largely disconnected hub-and-spoke structure of separate alliances and no push towards economic regional integration.⁸⁴⁷ Carrying this logic into the post-Cold War era and replacing the threat referent of the Soviet Union for wanting to ensure no major hostile regional power/group emerged in these core regions, it seemed the US was more powerful in Europe and thus needed less from its allies, while in East Asia it was expected to become less powerful and thus need more from its allies. Furthermore, East Asia was seen by the US as the future centre of gravity of the global system, especially economically, but one with an uncertain geopolitical future. In contrast, Western Europe was consolidating into a political-economic union with Russia as a greatly diminished

⁸⁴⁷ Ikenberry, "American Hegemony and East Asian Order."

power, creating conditions for greater European management of continental affairs. This would have freed up the US to focus more on East Asia, creating new structures and processes to consolidate its position and transform the region into a more hegemonic bloc as it had in Europe.

This change of regional priority, however, did not occur. Rather, the US became more involved in continental ordering in Europe, wanting to ensure allied and region wide support for its expansive hegemonic endeavors with itself in the key leadership position. In East Asia, the US largely retained its hegemonic position and posture, neither assuming a more assertive regional leadership role in coordinating economic and security matters nor presenting a clear ordering project it wanted to bring about. As a result, Europe remained the more important core region, with the US seeking more influence on and direction over continental ordering there and ensuring its followers' inclusion in and support for economic and security activities both on and off the continent as a hegemonic bloc.

OMPs Room for Maneuver: At a macro-level, China and Russia share many parallels in terms of their inclusion in US hegemonic networks. Both were brought into the global economic network, eventually gaining membership in its major institutions, but were not included in the US regional based security networks. China was able to secure PNTR with the US and entry into the WTO before Russia, but this is in part due to the fact that it had applied earlier than Moscow (1986 versus 1993). The US, as well, did not transform or create new security networks to include these powers. Another similarity was the way in which the US ensured it was strategically positioned between these powers and its major regional allies. While Washington did not try to extinguish relations forming between these two, especially economically, their actions in this period minimized the chances of strategic alignments, different ordering dynamics, and challenges towards US centrality and leadership from emerging. The US wanted to control the processes of these powers' relationship with and possible entry within these networks.

The major difference in Russian and Chinese cases was these powers' room for maneuver in the face of US regional hegemonic actions and activities. Russia's space was severely constrained as the US focused on creating a Europe undivided, free, and whole via the expansion of its hegemonic networks there. Russia could not escape

ordering debates and dialogue with the US, which had successfully ensured continued alignment of its Western European allies towards this project thus denying Moscow possible partners to rethink how to re-order continental affairs. Russia was persistently portrayed as a state whose future was 'uncertain', implying its unsuitability, even if it did want to join, for entry into the major US/backed regional hegemonic networks at that time.⁸⁴⁸ China, on the other hand, had far more room to maneuver given the US was not looking to re-order East Asia under an all-encompassing framework or vision as it was in Europe. In this environment, China was able to maintain a relatively low profile, avoided getting caught in ordering debates with the US, and became further embedded in the region's ongoing development of nascent economic and security institutions. While China was regularly characterized as having a 'repressive regime' during this period, signaling American opposition to the nature of its government, this did not bring about greater American pressure and scrutiny given the East Asian region was defined by such political heterogeneity that the US did not see as threatening in and of itself to its hegemonic position there.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁸ Such characterizations populated many NSS throughout the 1990s and featured prominently in the assessment of Russia in the 1997 QDR.

⁸⁴⁹ This characterization was found in many NSS throughout the 1990s. The US, within official documents, did not begin to acknowledge the possibility of China becoming a major military, and thus possibly a revisionist, power until the latter part of the 1990s, starting with the 1997 QDR (p. 22). Even within these assessments, however, the focus was more on how China's growing power would unnerve its neighbours which could jeopardize regional stability rather than Beijing becoming a direct competitor and rival of the US. When and why the US began to interpret China as a revisionist rival warranting greater attention and changes in American regional approaches is explored in the conclusion.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

This concluding chapter has three main and interconnected points. First, it provides an overview of the major findings and conclusions of the dissertation regarding American hegemonic ordering and maintenance in Europe and East Asia during the period of study. Second, it explores how these findings influence and inform future areas of academic research, with relevance both for and beyond the US case. Third, it explores some possible trajectories of US hegemony over the next decade or two in the core regions of Europe and East Asia as it begins to confront Russia and China as revisionist rivals.

This chapter is laid out in five sections. The first section presents the major findings and insights from the dissertation. Specific emphasis is placed on the differences in dominant US preferences and practices regarding ordering in Europe and East Asia which heavily influenced its actions in the early 1990s and which consequently conditioned the spaces for relations with Russia and China to develop. The second section examines the ways in which Lynchpin (LP) theory and Networked Centrality (NC) complement one another in presenting a more complete explanation for the differences in US approaches towards Russia and China in the post-Cold War era. The third section lays out the theoretical contributions of this dissertation. These include more general ones concerning the study of hegemony and strategic culture as well as specific ones regarding American hegemony and how American regional strategic cultures influence its manifestation in different regions and domains. The fourth section details possible future research areas. These include expanding the work regarding American strategic culture towards other regions of importance to American hegemony; investigating the forces which bring about change and/or continuity during critical junctures; and variation in revisionist challenges which trigger different responses from a hegemon.

The final section explores possible future trajectories of US hegemony in both Europe and East Asia during this emerging era of strategic rivalry with both Russia and China. This includes how the US regional strategic culture towards and the network structures in each region present opportunities and challenges for the US in reorienting its hegemonic networks and supporters against these powers if rivalry with them continues to become a dominant and sustained systemic feature of international politics.

Alternatively, a trajectory where strategic rivalry peters out will be explored, including speculation on the conditions and forces which could bring this about. It is not only external challenges which will influence the future of the US as a hegemonic power, however. The final section briefly covers the issue of continued domestic elite and public commitment to the hegemonic project itself which is, as it was in the early 1990s, witnessing a period of strain and re-examination currently.

Major Findings

This project has demonstrated that the US possesses very different conceptions of and preferences for hegemonic ordering in Europe and East Asia, which stem from and reinforce distinct regional strategic cultures toward each of these core regions. These regional strategic cultures constituted the lens within which the US identified, interpreted, and determined the ways to address network concerns which emerged in these regions in the transition to and early period of the post-Cold War era. Europe and East Asia occupy a common space of priority in US hegemony given their core region status. As a result, there exist a common set of concerns regarding the continued centrality of American hegemonic networks in both. These concerns were particularly relevant during the late 1980s and early 1990s as the US maneuvered to ensure its networked centrality in the aftermath of the Cold War. However, the approaches to address these concerns in each region were distinct due to the differences in the regional strategic cultures which influenced American sensitivities to these concerns and informed how best to address them.

During this period, neither China nor Russia was the central consideration in these determinations. While the US wanted to develop a more cordial relationship with both to bring them gradually and selectively into the hegemonic fold, in the early 1990s this goal did not significantly influence other American hegemonic regional activities, especially in terms of limiting it. Advancing stable relations with Russia did not hinder the US' growing focus and determination to reach out and eventually include CEE and some FSU states into its European hegemonic orbit and it did not appear that accommodation towards China led to the US shelving or significantly altering its hegemonic plans in East Asia. Furthermore, there existed broad similarities between the ways the US positioned itself in between China and Russia on the one hand and its hegemonic followers on the other, especially regarding its security network. This disrupted the formation of possible

alternative strategic relations between these states, ensuring the continuation of the American centrality in determining the future ordering dynamics and forms in these regions.

Focusing on relations towards Russia and China does not explain the major pattern differences among the East Asian and European cases, namely the determined expansion of American hegemonic networks in the latter but not the former. Rather, other concerns internal to the membership of existing hegemonic networks and the different regional strategic culturally informed preferences were more influential. In Europe, the US wanted to ensure not only the continued followership of its hegemonic allies regarding continental ordering but also the coherence of this grouping as a hegemonic bloc due to its importance to maintenance of US hegemony globally. NATO underwent practical and declaratory changes to ensure it remained the predominant security network on the continent, becoming fused with the deepening integration via the EU in Western Europe via the two-pronged NATO/EU expansion project into CEE. The US remained the pre-eminent leader of the West in engaging Russia as the de facto head of NATO, preserving alliance-based politics as the primary ordering form in Europe even in the absence of a rival alliance.

In East Asia, the US was mostly focused on ensuring the continued followership of its most important followers, specifically Japan, in preserving the status-quo rather than pushing for network expansion. East Asia was not treated as a system that needed greater consolidation into a hegemonic bloc to service US regional and global interests. In the absence of undesired regional developments forming, specifically greater ordering prerogatives among the region's major powers, the bilateral based approach to the region remained the predominant form of hegemonic organizing, with the US largely dealing with Japan, China, and others separately.

These internally focused efforts, termed shoring up activities, played a major role in understanding the actions and priorities of the US during the early period of the post-Cold War era, and how these efforts formed the foundation upon which its new grand strategy proceeded within these regions. Therefore, changes undertaken by the US towards its hegemonic networks were not focused externally in terms of adding new members and functions, but more importantly in ensuring the continued followership of

its allies, disrupting possible independent organizing among themselves and/or with Outside Major Powers (OMPs) like China and Russia. The interplay between shoring up activities, as the primary goal of US regional policy, and engagement with OMP pursuits, as the secondary goal, produced different opportunities, constraints, and tradeoffs. These developments unevenly benefitted China and hurt Russia without being the main rationale for them in either region.

Russia faced a very constrained environment given the US focus on ensuring the followership of its hegemonic followers through a security and economic expansion project, based on a strategic culture emphasizing wariness for autonomous European continental organizing and treating the region as a system and hegemonic bloc. There simply was no space for Russia, which did not want to be in these institutions, to maneuver on these matters in creating a different political order on the continent. In contrast, China faced a more benign and malleable environment given the US was largely focused on preserving the geopolitical status-quo rather than introducing a new specific ordering vision and program for the region, adopting a more wait and see approach which did not require a more radical intervention in the larger environment to ensure its networked centrality. As a result, China was a good 'fit' alongside US shoring up activities, being able to maintain a low profile, embed itself in the region's nascent institutional organizing, and not confront a more ambitious US seeking greater consolidation of the region into a system needing greater hegemonic oversight.

An underappreciated aspect of this topic is the importance of secondary sub-regions, specifically Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, in understanding US hegemonic efforts in Europe and East Asia, indicating it was not simply major power relations which influenced these developments. Rather, changes within these sub-regions and their connections into the larger regional structure played a key role in influencing US regional strategy. In Eastern Europe, the US acted to bring the sub-region into the Western orbit in an accelerated way, preventing other approaches by European major powers from forming on how to manage and interact with this sub-region. These moves, also, limited the possibility of mini-lateral alliances and conflicts emerging and capitalized on the growing capitalist-democracy, pro-Western trends there to fully bring in this sub-region, a source of conflict among European powers historically, to the hegemonic fold. In Southeast Asia, the development of a burgeoning regional identity,

institutional formation, and desire to play a key role in the politics of East Asia were not seen as a threat to the US but instead an important counter force to any possibility of growing leadership and coordination among the region's major powers, including Japan and China. ASEAN, furthermore, had shed its historical alliance-based logic and evolved into a regional body upon which to build regional institutions which were inclusive, non-binding in their outputs, and reinforced hedging and non-alignment as important elements in the region. These were developments which reinforced the centrality of the US regional position through its hub-and-spoke alliance framework given the absence of other alternatives.

A final major finding is that the American regional strategic cultures towards Europe and East Asia remained resilient in shaping the US responses in these regions despite major changes in the regions themselves, and within the US, including a new government and growing domestic concerns about the costs of maintaining American hegemony. There were strains, and to some extent deviation (most prominently the short lived geoeconomic approach towards East Asia during the first 18 months of the Clinton administration), but the fundamental elements of the US regional strategic cultures towards Europe and East Asia were preserved. This was not a foregone conclusion, especially given calls for reorienting American focus on domestic as opposed to international issues and related concerns about American economic conflict with Japan and to a more limited extent Germany and the EC/EU. If the US had continued to economically stagnate into the mid-to-late 1990s this may have led to more drastic changes to US foreign policy and strategic culture. There are many different trajectories this could have unfolded along, but there are some that would have possibly favoured Russia while disadvantaging China.

If the US had been more focused on drastically cutting international costs, they may have been less involved in Europe and accepted more European-led ordering efforts, including possibly with Russia as a member. Furthermore, if the US had developed a far more visceral approach to trade, tensions could have mounted with the EC/EU which could have damaged efforts to develop a united approach regarding continental ordering, opening opportunities for Russia to try to take advantage of such cleavages. In East Asia, the US could have doubled down on its geo-economic approach which would have raised tensions with many Asian states. China could have benefitted

from such a condition by finding common purpose with other Asian states in a more united approach against the US. However, this trajectory would most likely have had far more downsides for China than opportunities and benefits. These included a possibly more ambitious regional leadership role for Japan as it became increasingly untethered from the US hegemonic system given the frictions between Tokyo and Washington; the US being far more sensitive to trade imbalances towards them, introducing far more intrusive and burdensome conditions on their economic relationship; and possibly the US blocking or severely hindering China's inclusion in the GATT/WTO process.

Lynchpin Theory and Networked Centrality: Towards a Synthesis?

Despite being analyzed in this dissertation as rival explanations, there are a number of areas of overlap, congruency, and complementarity which warrant examining possible ways in which LP theory and NC can be employed jointly in developing a more fulsome explanation of US approaches towards China and Russia in the post-Cold War era. As argued by NC, in the early 1990s neither China nor Russia was central to American hegemonic maintenance activities in Europe or East Asia. Relations with Russia and China were largely conditioned by larger actions undertaken towards the entire regions to address network concerns which were largely internal in nature. Over time, Russia, as a bad fit with US hegemonic plans and efforts in Europe, continued to be marginalized as an independent European power whereas China was able to grow in power and influence without excessive US interrogation given that it was a good fit with American hegemonic plans and efforts in East Asia. In short, Russia faced a far more hostile environment given US determination to act decisively to address network concerns via network expansion, with even minimal Russian opposition to such plans increasingly seen as unacceptable by Washington. In East Asia, the US did not have such a system-oriented regional strategic culture influencing the way it identified, interpreted, and addressed network concerns during this period, with the US focused on preservation rather than expansion of its existing networks. This situation benefitted China greatly in not having to face such radical changes to the regional environment as Russia had to.

The US was unwilling to seriously rethink the strategic dynamics and ordering logics in Europe to include Russia more fully, as this would have likely necessitated many changes to the nature and functioning of its hegemonic networks there, such as

the possible development of a concert system. In East Asia, furthering relations with China did not undermine its existing regional hegemonic networks. In short, the US did not face the same sharpness of trade-offs in managing relations with China and its other hegemonic activities in East Asia as it did in managing relations with Russia and its other hegemonic activities in Europe. By the late 1990s, the trajectory of relations with both states had become well entrenched and would continue down these pathways for the next two decades largely unchanged. Specifically, China became increasingly central in US East Asian policy and action, most evidently in the US promotion of their inclusion into the regional and global economy, demonstrative of its growing power and influence in the region and in US decision-making. Russia, on the other hand, was locked into a new arrangement with NATO which re-affirmed the position of Russia as existing outside the major continental hegemonic networks. As a result, the functional importance of China in East Asia grew while Russia's decreased during this era, further cementing the path dependencies which were laid down in the early-mid 1990s during the Critical Juncture. The US became, furthermore, increasingly unlikely to alter these approaches given that doing so in Russia's case, such as seriously considering Moscow issues with NATO expansion, was seen as tantamount to compromising on core US grand strategic interests affecting the entire continent and thus were non-negotiable. Regarding China, its rise in power and influence had not led to new strategic dynamics emerging in the region and thus the status quo continued, bolstered in part by the American belief that China would eventually have to reform into a more suitable candidate for hegemonic entry or resign itself to a power focused on grievances but without the ability to fundamentally alter the geopolitical realities of its region which favored the perpetuation of US hegemony.

As a result, throughout the post-Cold War era these trajectories helped facilitate the growth of China's importance and the diminishment of Russia's importance, as argued by LP theory. It is important to keep in mind this was not simply a material development, based on the different power trajectories of these powers, but also due to the ways in which the US viewed the commensurability of these engagement efforts with its other regional hegemonic activities. For example, compromising with Russia on European ordering, especially NATO expansion, was seen as unacceptable as doing so could undermine its entire regional ordering agenda. In terms of China, their importance economically had a growing influence on the US, but China was also an increasingly

critical element in the US narrative about the purpose of its post-Cold War approach of engagement and it was thus reluctant to admit this project was not panning out as desired. The linking of these powers to different elements of the US hegemonic project, therefore, further contributed to the stickiness of the relational pathways followed -non-negotiation with Russia on ordering affairs in Europe and non-admission that China was at best not becoming a desired hegemonic partner and at worst turning into a rival – given such acknowledgements could undermine many underpinnings of the US approach to hegemonic ordering in the post-Cold War era in general.

As a result, there are ways to combine the insights and explanations from LP theory and NC into an understanding of the determination and evolution of the engagement approaches the US pursued towards China and Russia in the post-Cold War era. Such possibilities, however, would most likely not result in a neat and complete synthesis of the two approaches given the emphasis on different factors influencing US hegemonic pursuits, namely LP theory's focus on lynchpin/non-lynchpin determinations (which are largely based on power trajectories) and NC's focus on distinct regional strategic cultures held by the US towards Europe versus East Asia in addressing network concerns. Nevertheless, the employment of both in further exploring the paths of these relationships (and possibly others) remains plausible in generating a more fulsome understanding of them.

One area which requires further theoretical and empirical study is the current state of enmity and rivalry which defines the US relationship towards both China and Russia. Such a situation signals the failure to a sizable degree of the engagement strategy, which at a minimum was designed to ensure these states remained mildly revisionist and at its most ambitious was meant to engender their transformation into hegemonic followers. An interesting common characteristic of these cases is that despite being offered different bargains by the US (as explained by LP theory), both powers are increasingly turning towards more overt forms of revisionism against American hegemony. There are most likely several explanations for these developments, but one possible and particularly pertinent one would be the inability of the US to significantly influence the major components of the strategic cultures held by both powers which were unwilling to fully shed their great power identities and prerogatives. Both Russia and China wanted to have good relations with Washington during this era, but not at the

expense of becoming the new Germany or Japan in relation to US hegemony. As a result, over time both powers became increasingly dissatisfied with the strategic status-quo in their home regions given the rigidity and staying power of US hegemonic networks in marginalizing other ordering possibilities.

Another issue to explore further is the multiple meanings and manifestations the term 'importance' can have when discussing the influence of China and Russia on American hegemonic ordering. Specifically, it appears that, despite some worry among hegemonic followers of the future commitment of the US as a hegemonic power given the divisiveness within its domestic politics, revisionist activities by China and Russia are reinforcing US hegemony and its leadership role in many ways. As a result, both Russia and China appear to be important outside pressures breathing new life and purposes into these networks. How the US is and will continue to reorient these networks against these rivals will be further explored in the last section.

Project Contributions

This project makes contributions to three fields of study: hegemony, strategic culture, and Historical Institutionalism. These contributions are divided into those that are more general to these fields of study and those that are specific to the US case. General contributions will be detailed first before examining the US specific ones. These contributions form the foundation upon which new streams of research are proposed in the following section.

General Contributions

Hegemonic Ordering: The network concern framework could be a useful model to understand the emergence, evolution, and functioning of other non-US hegemonies. In particular, the framework provides a typology to classify and study concerns which are internal to the hegemonic networks, external in the environment, and the inter-play between these two as a hegemon attempts to ensure the dominance of its networks in regional environments of importance. This framework, therefore, operationalizes the three main features and goals of all hegemonic systems - desire and ability to lead, generating and maintaining preponderant power bases, and ensuring followership or at least acquiescence of others to the hegemon's leadership - into a manageable number

of 'concerns' which can be studied. Furthermore, Networked Centrality is a meso-level approach to understanding the evolution of hegemonic systems, specifically during historically sensitive periods when large-scale reconsiderations by the hegemon about their nature and functioning moving forward are possible. This approach does not understand hegemony as simply the summation of atomized actions and relations or simply the hegemon possessing a big and detailed grand plan of action. Rather, this framework enables both the identification of network concerns and how the hegemon's preferences and habits influence how it interprets and addresses these concerns, which will be further explored in the strategic culture sub-section below.

Another contribution of this dissertation is providing a more nuanced understanding of revisionism and the threshold at which the hegemon begins to respond more forcefully in the face of such challenges. In this study, the threshold was not the development of economic and military power bases but rather when major powers translated these power bases into alternative institutions and networks which raised concerns in the hegemon that these may alter strategic alignment dynamics in core regions. Such activities were threatening not only because they provided alternative networks to those of the hegemon but demonstrated that another major power (or group of them) was moving towards becoming a network manager and leader, roles associated with being a hegemon. This does not diminish the impact of territorial aggression in motivating the hegemon to respond (as is the case presently with the US in Europe due to Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine), but this form of revisionism may be less relied upon moving forward given the risks of nuclear war with nearly all the world's major (and some minor) powers possessing such arsenals. As a result, future hegemonic competition may become more focused on rival institutions and network building rather than on challenging the territorial status-quo via warfare.

Strategic Culture: This project is in large part based on the assertion that the ways in which hegemonic powers behave in terms of the structuring, maintaining, and defending of their hegemony is informed by the strategic culture held by the hegemon, and not simply the environmental realities and constraints they face. As a result, differences in hegemonic systems are in part due to the differences in the prominent preferences and practices underpinning a specific hegemon's strategic culture. Strategic culture, however, is not a monolithic, macro, overarching, and forever unchanging set of

preferences and habits which serve as a one size fits all approach to the entire global system or realm within which a hegemonic system operates. Rather, there are distinct, but not mutually exclusive, subcultures which compete and constitute the overall strategic culture.

This project contributes to this ongoing scholarship about strategic subcultures with a specific focus on how hegemons can have region-specific strategic cultures which inform the nature and functioning of their hegemonic networks within particular regions. Even though hegemons can face similar concerns across various regions, the ways in which they deal with them can be different based on the specific characteristics defining its relevant regional strategic culture. As a result, there is not necessarily a holistic approach to constructing and maintaining hegemonic systems which is applicable to each region the hegemon operates in, producing carbon copies of ordering forming a nearly identical pattern. Instead, focusing on the differences among regional strategic cultures facilitates explanation of regional variation within a particular hegemonic order, both temporally and spatially, based on how these constitute the lens through which hegemons interpret and respond to network concerns within regions.

Historical Institutionalism: This project makes an important contribution to Historical Institutionalism, not in terms of theory and concepts but rather about appreciating that critical junctures can be important causal periods even when continuity defines them more than change. Critical junctures should not be solely defined by when they produce large scale change but rather are moments where large-scale change was more permissible and plausible compared to other periods in an institution's life. Indeed, it could be argued that when such periods arise and continuity prevails these cases are just as theoretically and empirically interesting and relevant, if not more so, than cases where large scale change occurs. Rather than being a dichotomy, this project contributes to more nuanced approaches to critical junctures regarding both their processes and results incorporating elements of both change and continuity.

The question becomes less about whether change or continuity occurred as either/or paths and more on what accounts for change on some levels and continuity on others. This brings the focus further into the critical junctures themselves and examines the relationship between influential forces and factors which preceded the critical

juncture, those which brought about its opening, and those emerging within the juncture itself. In this study, regional strategic cultures were treated as an antecedent condition (existing before the critical juncture) whose interaction with changes occurring within the US and the regions of focus during the critical juncture ultimately produced an adjusted, but not radically different, approach towards hegemonic ordering in Europe and East Asia. As explained in the previous sub-section, the regional strategic culture acted as a lens to filter and inform US focus and action during the critical juncture period of the early 1990s to address network concerns stemming from both regional and global structural changes. In this case, these changes were not of such severity as to threaten the foundations of the regional strategic culture itself which largely reproduced its dominant features and forms in these regions.

US-Specific Contributions

American Hegemony: The major contribution of this project to the study of American hegemony is examining its nature and evolution in a networked manner, especially within core regions during periods of change where network concerns motivated US responses and actions to maintain and entrench its networked centrality. As examined above, this work explains the revisionist thresholds which trigger more drastic and significant changes in US grand strategy, at least during its period as an unrivaled superpower. In the cases examined, the US did not act forcefully against the material developments of China and Russia and continued to, despite these powers' growing opposition to many aspects of US hegemony, attempt to bring them into the hegemonic fold to a certain extent.

The continuation of these approaches can be explained by the 'stickiness' of the pathways pursued towards both which solidified by the mid-1990s as part of larger grand strategic approaches towards Europe and East Asia. The US was accruing positive returns from these approaches in the immediate term which marginalized the influence of other developments, leading to the the growing dissatisfaction of these powers and their increasing turn towards more open forms of revisionism and contestation. Moreover, given that these became baked in during the early 1990s to address network concerns when neither power was the primary American focus in Europe or East Asia, reorientation may have been seen as a monumental task which would require massive

changes to the entire US post-Cold War grand strategy, a prospect seen as prohibitively difficult.

When revisionism manifested into clear acts of opposition which moved beyond specific issues and towards posing a larger challenge to US hegemonic networks and their centrality in these core regions, however, this broke the institutional stickiness defining these approaches and enabled new possibilities of retooling and reconstructing US grand strategy. This situation is currently ongoing and should be understood as a critical juncture marking a new, but still somewhat unclear, path for US hegemony moving forward in this emerging era of strategic rivalry and non-unipolarity.⁸⁵⁰ These issues will be further explored in the concluding section.

Further to the idea of which revisionist thresholds trigger more fundamental changes in US grand strategy, in the post-Cold War era the US largely saw Chinese and Russian opposition as more of issue-specific frustrations which could be managed without requiring major changes to the dominant preferences and habits of the US in terms of hegemonic ordering in Europe and East Asia. As a result, the US did not fully appreciate that these matters constituted and contributed to the growth of more strategic level revisionism by these powers, signaling not just their opposition to the hegemonic status quo but a determination to oppose it in more overt and sustained ways.⁸⁵¹ Militarily challenging the status quo in the case of Russia and alternative institution building, especially economically, by China throughout the 2010s ignited a rethink in US grand strategy towards these states given their growing ability to alter regional environmental realities to the detriment of American hegemonic networks. Though both powers are seen differently by the US in terms of the types and severity of the challenges they pose, both are treated as revisionist rivals which warrant at a minimum sizable recalibrations in, and possibly for more fundamental changes to, US grand strategy in Europe and East Asia.

⁸⁵⁰ What type of polarity system the world is becoming is highly debated within IR theory, but there is a near unanimous consensus that the unipolar arrangement of the 1990s has ended and is unlikely to emerge again any time soon. Even if the US retains its superpower position it is unlikely to achieve the same degree of difference in many power categories compared to other powers that it did in the 1990s. "Did the Unipolar Moment Ever End?" *Foreign Affairs*, May 23, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ask-the-experts/did-unipolar-moment-ever-end>

⁸⁵¹ Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic*, 153-154.

American Strategic Culture: The major contribution this project makes to the study of American strategic culture is that the US possesses, at least for the Europe and East Asia cases, distinct strategic cultures towards regions regarding their importance to US hegemony, their ordering vision for the region, and the role of the US in them. These regional strategic cultures, and not the material realities of the regions alone, account for the variation in American priorities and actions in these regions. They provided a lens through which the US interpreted and determined the ways to navigate the uncertainties in these regions during the early period of the post-Cold War era. In short, the differences in American shoring up activities and engagement with Outside Major Powers stemmed from the influences of these regional strategic cultures in informing how to approach these pursuits. These cultures did not change substantially during this period given that network concerns never reached a level which required a more fundamental rethinking of them, as they did in the first half of the 20th century when the US became increasingly determined to order relations among states internationally as expressed in institutions like the League of Nations and arms control agreements. Furthermore, pressures on the American leadership to focus more inwardly on domestic politics and fears of growing geo-economic rivalry with allies dissipated by the mid-to-late 1990s. As a result, the central tenets of the American strategic culture and its European and East Asian regional strategic culture variants remained largely intact.

This state of American hegemonic confidence commonly associated with the post-Cold War era did not immediately emerge with the ending of the Cold War. Rather, in the early 1990s the US was nervous about its hegemonic standing in both Europe and East Asia, specifically the continued followership of its allies and therefore its ability to continue to shape the political dynamics and alignment patterns there. It was, as outlined above, also facing internal pressures to pull back internationally and adopt a more aggressive approach towards trade with allies. The US, therefore, was not a confident unipole at this time but very much concerned about allies, outside powers, and whether hegemony still paid. The regional strategic cultures helped guide the US in addressing network concerns in these regions. Allies re-affirmed their followership roles, Outside Major Powers wanted good relations with Washington, the US became the leading economic power in a new era of technological development, and the domestic political situation remained conducive to continued American hegemony given no major tradeoffs, especially economically, were required in sacrificing domestic interests for

international ones. A final point of importance is that the emergence of a clear and durable American grand strategy in the post-Cold War era rested upon the development of an equilibrium at both, and between, international and domestic levels in terms of forces and feedback loops which reinforced this trajectory and marginalized alternatives.

Future Areas of Research

Five future areas of research are proposed which stem from this dissertation. Many relate not only to the US case but other hegemonic powers, both past and potentially future.

The first area of research is to investigate whether the US has distinct regional strategic cultures towards other regions and if so, what their main characteristics are. Two obvious candidates would be the Middle East and the Americas. The Middle East is a good candidate as it has occupied much American foreign policy focus and action in the post-Cold War era and could be seen as a possible core region in US grand strategy. The Americas, which could include both continents and/or be investigated separately, are vital for US grand strategy given this is their home region where for two centuries the US has argued they exercise a de facto sphere of influence via the Monroe Doctrine. Furthermore, the US sees Europe as a system which needs to be brought and kept together in a tight, all-inclusive way whereas East Asia is not seen in these ways. Is it possible that the US views all other regions more like East Asia, a region where the US does not feel compelled to bring it together as a single economic-security bloc, compared to Europe? If so, what drives this distinction between Europe and everywhere else?

The second area of research is to further study the emergence and evolution of regional strategic cultures, how they interact with one another, and ultimately how they tie back into the overall strategic culture of a hegemonic power. As discussed throughout this dissertation, regional strategic cultures are not seen as completely distinct and separate entities but stem from larger preferences and habits from the overall strategic culture. This type of research could either focus on a specific hegemon which has a presence in multiple regions and/or compare multiple hegemons and the constellations of regional strategic cultures they possess. This work, furthermore, could be situated in a specific temporal period, as this dissertation was, in examining regional strategic cultures

at the same time or could be done in a longitudinal manner to examine their evolution, and what causes them to change over time.

Relatedly, another research stream would be to examine the role and impact of critical junctures in affecting US grand strategy. While some have taken up this task, there remains a dearth of examination and explanations for the forces which alter the balance between continuity, adjustment, and change to the US strategic culture and how these influences are reflected within American grand strategy.⁸⁵² How does strategic culture evolve (or not) in the face of challenges to its dominant logics and features? Challenges in this respect refers to those both in the international environment (specifically the rise of peer rivals) and within the US itself (such as the loss of domestic, specifically elite, support for the hegemonic project or possibly in extreme cases for the state project itself). Of particular interest would be determining whether fundamental changes to strategic culture occur when facing significant challenges both externally and internally and/or whether challenges at only one of these is sufficient to trigger such changes. These types of investigations will help in understanding, and differentiating, changes in grand strategy in terms of those that are more surface level, to deal with challenges but remain based on the dominant strategic cultural logics, and those that are more fundamental in terms of stemming from deeper changes to the foundational logics of the strategic culture itself.

A fourth possible research stream would be to investigate how existing hegemonic systems, specifically their structure and functioning, influence the ways in which rivals construct and pursue their revisionist agendas in pursuit of an alternative hegemonic system. For example, will the institutionalized nature of the current US hegemonic order influence the ways in which China pursues its revisionist agenda? Is China more likely to try a partial take-over of the system and then change it from within (at it appears to have done for the past number of decades) or will Beijing increasingly try to establish and secure membership for its own hegemonic constructs which are exclusionary in nature and overtly oriented against the US? Is such a trajectory, furthermore, more likely given the US is pursuing such an exclusionary strategy among its own alliances against China?

⁸⁵² For example, see Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*.

Moving towards a larger view of the history of hegemonic orders and change, is there a broad-based pattern of change over the past few centuries of the major ordering devices of hegemonies from empires to alliances to commitment-based institutions? If so, is this due to the influence that existing hegemonic orders have on aspiring hegemonies who in part model their hegemonic alternatives on them given how successful they have been for the reigning hegemon? This type of work, which emphasizes historical patterns of change and continuity based on learning and copying between hegemonies and rival would-be hegemonies could be contrasted with explanations that the form of hegemonic systems is more internal to the nature of the hegemon itself as emphasized by strategic culture. This, however, does not need to be an either/or examination but rather open possibilities to study the influences between such external developments and internal ones, and how these feed into the overall hegemonic disposition of an aspiring hegemon seeking to gain power in an environment with a reigning hegemon or other undesired system of power in place.⁸⁵³

The fifth and final area of research is comparing normative ordering projects by hegemonies of who is in and who is not in a particular region. As this project demonstrated (and despite declarations by Washington and others to the contrary) there was a prevailing sense that Russia was not 'in' Europe given its opposition to the nature of US and EU hegemonic ordering there. There was increasingly no place for Russian hegemonic based interests, specifically in wanting to preserve some sort of influence over its former allies in CEE and the FSU. While Russia continues to have power in Europe and geographically can be seen as part of the physical region, it is clear Russia is not seen as a European power in terms of being member of or subscribing to the dominant norms, relationships, and institutions which involve most European states.

⁸⁵³ Gilpin emphasized learning as an important process through which rising powers copy and benefit from developments produced by the hegemon, but this was more in relation to technology and the diffusion of such knowledge rather than organizational forms and functions. Mathew Specter recently has argued that many of the foundational strategic theorists of Germany and the US in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when both states were emerging as great powers, advocated copying strategies and pursuits which had, in their opinion, led to the success of the established great powers, such as France and especially Great Britain. In particular, both German and American scholars (like Friedrich Ratzel and Alfred Mahan) advocated the establishment of overseas colonies, empire building, and developing naval power. Mathew Specter, *The Atlantic Realists: Empire and International Political Thought Between Germany and the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022).

There is a possibly similar development happening towards China in East Asia among the US and its allies there. Specifically, this can be seen the growing advocacy of reformulating what had previously been known as the Asia-Pacific into the Indo-Pacific region, delineating not just a change to the region's geographic boundaries but usually accompanied by a normative overlay of the region being 'free and open'. There is no overarching consensus shared by the proponents of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept, but China increasingly sees such regional framing as an attempt to constrain and possibly contain them.⁸⁵⁴ States like Japan, a leading proponent of the FOIP construct, argue this is not exclusionary towards China in its motivation and/or practice, though it seems unlikely China will be offered membership in many of the new minilateral groupings and institutions increasingly populating the region and based on FOIP principles.

Many of the leading proponents of the FOIP, furthermore, hold major reservations about China's growing power and ambition and are increasingly working together with the US through several minilateral security and economic groupings. The more inclusive nature of the region which was promoted and supported by many in the 1990s is giving way to an environment of competing systems, a trend which creates growing discomfort for many regional states, specifically in Southeast Asia.⁸⁵⁵ While it is acknowledged that China is obviously in East Asia and is a, if not the, regional power there, like Russia in Europe in the 1990s it is increasingly excluded in the dominant ordering schemes being pursued by the US and its allies. A study of the processes which led to Russia's further exclusion from European security and economic institutions and processes in the 1990s, and whether these influenced Moscow's increasing turn towards revisionism via military aggression, may have many relevant theoretical and practical insights for thinking about US grand strategy in East Asia/the Indo-Pacific region currently. Especially considering it seems the US is increasingly determined to limit, if not outright exclude, China in many

⁸⁵⁴ Kei Koga, "Japan's 'Indo-Pacific' Question: Countering China or Shaping a New Regional Order?" *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (2020): 49-73.

⁸⁵⁵ A key concern for many states in Southeast Asia is that ASEAN will increasingly lose its place as a coordinating mechanism and site for regional dialogues and engagements in favor of more direct engagements between larger powers and the plethora of minilateral groupings emerging among the US and its allies. Sung Chul Jung, Jaehyon Lee, and Ji-Yong Lee, "The Indo-Pacific Strategy and US Alliance Network Expandability: Asian Middle Powers' Positions on Sino-US Geostrategic Competition in Indo-Pacific Region," *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 127 (2021): 53-68.

of its expanding hegemonic institutions and relationships, it is important to consider whether such action will raise or lower the prospect of military conflict.

Networked Centrality in an Era of Strategic Rivalry

This final section raises some possible pathways for and tensions within American hegemonic ordering in Europe and East Asia in this emerging age of strategic rivalry. Of particular interest is how successful the US will be in reorienting its hegemonic networks against Chinese and Russian revisionism and retain their centrality as the dominant force in these core regions. Two scenarios are explored: one where deepening rivalry continues and one where rivalry peters out. Moving beyond external conditions and rivals, the final section comments on whether there will remain sufficient domestic political support for the US to remain a hegemonic power in its traditional form. This investigation of both external and internal strains on American hegemonic maintenance is motivated by the similarities between the current period and that of the early 1990s which this project has focused on. While there are considerable differences between the two, both periods are defined by simultaneous changes internationally and growing domestic concern about the role of the US internationally.

Continued Rivalry

It is evident the US is increasingly trying to re-orient its hegemonic networks against Russia and China which are seen as rivals. While such efforts have slowly been building since the early 2010s, these have accelerated over the past five years and signal that a new era in US grand strategy has emerged. A central issue in determining how successful the US will be in utilizing its hegemonic networks against these rivals is the degree of support they receive from their allies and close partners. Many of these states are concerned about Russian and Chinese revisionism, but they are also concerned about some of the ways in which the US is pursuing its rivalry against these powers and, more fundamentally, the long-term commitment of the US as a hegemonic power. This is leading to some tensions among American allies and other emerging powers in terms of tightening their alignment with the US across various domains versus maintaining their autonomy.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the US interprets Russia and China as two different types of challengers. Russia is more of a spoiler and disruptor, able to severely

undermine peace and stability in Europe but unable to introduce and maintain an alternative hegemonic order. On the other hand, China is a near peer which is seen as having the ability and willingness to not just counter US regional (and possibly global) hegemony but introduce an alternative hegemonic system with itself in the centre. China, as well, is a far more consequential and central power in the economic environment of East Asia (and globally) as compared to Russia in Europe. Whether the US will be successful in its efforts to combat these rivals does not solely rest on the nature of the challenges they pose, but as well on how American actions in response to these are influenced by its regional strategic cultures towards Europe and East Asia.

In Europe, Russia military aggression in Ukraine and grey zone forms of coercion directed at many regional states are further entrenching US networked centrality over the continent. Russia's actions have motivated many states in CEE, and some in the FSU, to seek closer security and economic relations with the West, with the US the clear leader in organizing the military, economic, and diplomatic strategy to support Ukraine, which has been able, so far, to blunt Russia's ability to achieve a quick victory. While France and Germany were initially trying to emphasize negotiations and keeping relations with Russia somewhat open, the US has been able to outflank them with support from CEE states and others in building a unified approach against Russia, which includes far ranging and robust sanctions, a near complete decoupling of Western European dependence on Russian oil and gas, and a determination to support Ukraine.⁸⁵⁶ As a result, the US strategic culture has been reaffirmed in Europe through these efforts via multilateral organizing, emphasis on acting as a bloc of democratic states, restraining other European powers trying to pursue a different path to the management of the diplomacy of the war, and entrenching the indispensability of the US as the security provider on the continent.

While some on the continent, specifically France, continue to harbour desires for Europeans to develop a more autonomous path in terms of managing continental affairs,

⁸⁵⁶ Radek Sikorski, "Europe's Real Test Is Yet to Come: Will the Continent Ever Get Serious About Its Own Security?" *Foreign Affairs* 102, no. 4 (2023), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/europe/european-union-defense-war-ukraine-radek-sikorski?utm_medium=newsletters&utm_source=weekend_read&utm_content=20230708&utm_campaign=NEWS_FA%20Weekend%20Read_070823_Europe%E2%80%99s%20Real%20Test%20Is%20Yet%20to%20Come&utm_term=FA%20Weekend%20Read-012320

Russian aggression will most likely continue to reinforce strategic alignments of the continent towards the US.⁸⁵⁷ Russian aggression does pose serious threats to the security on the continent, but the US will be able to continue to direct its hegemonic networks against them, reviving habits and practices which were prevalent in the Cold War. These include a focus on integrated territorial defence via NATO and, if the sanctioning regime continues, possible resurrection of a new CoCom to diminish the vestiges of Russian economic influence via its resource wealth and damage Moscow even further financially and technologically.⁸⁵⁸

In East Asia, the US faces a daunting challenge in retaining its networked centrality given China is more powerful than Russia combined with the differences in the nature of the regional environment and the US hegemonic networks there. As mentioned above, China is a far more important and integrated power in East Asia than Russia is in Europe, which creates concerns in other regional powers about the damage to their economic relations with China given the growing animosity between Beijing and Washington.⁸⁵⁹ While many states which constitute the US regional security alliance are concerned about China's growing power and coercive practices, there is little to no history of them working together in a deep and integrated way to bolster defence, diplomatic, and economic relations to counter these. Finally, the US regional strategic culture does not see East Asia as a system, as it sees Europe, which necessitates building such tight linkages between various actors in an integrated and not simply bilateral way. As a result, the US does not have a history of being a regional leader in terms of advocating for a specific ordering vision, especially one which brings together multiple states under a common set of linked institutions and processes. While the US proposed the TPP, it ultimately left this process and does not seem interested in rejoining.

⁸⁵⁷ Anchal Vohra, "'Strategic Autonomy' Is a French Pipe Dream," *Foreign Policy*, July 03, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/03/strategic-autonomy-is-a-french-pipe-dream/>

⁸⁵⁸ One such example is the imposition by the G7 and Australia of a price cap on Russian oil designed to limit the ability of Moscow to generate revenues to sustain the war in Ukraine. Andrea Shalal, "G7 Coalition to Keep Russian Oil Price Cap at \$60 Per Barrel," *Reuters*, April 17, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/g7-coalition-keep-russian-oil-price-cap-60-per-barrel-source-2023-04-17/>

⁸⁵⁹ Lee Hsien Loong, "The Endangered Asian Century: America, China, and the Perils of Confrontation," *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (2020): 52-64.

The principal institutional strategy the US appears to be adopting in East Asia/the Indo-Pacific region is the growing use of minilateral security, economic, and technological pacts with a number of long standing allies and close partners.⁸⁶⁰ These are not formal alliance type agreements aimed at China, but they are motivated by the concern generated by China's growing power and therefore regional desires to keep the US engaged and present in the region. As a result, the US is in a beneficial position given its still sizable in-region military and economic power as well as its central location in bringing these allies and others together in these new institutional arrangements. However, there are three risks the US needs to navigate to ensure it retains this advantage.

First, the US, so far at least, appears largely focused on a strategy of excluding China, specifically in advanced technologies and supply chains, rather than offering real alternatives to the services and goods offered by China's institutional networks, including economic investments via the AIIB and BRI and regional FTAs.⁸⁶¹ If the US is to become a leader in bringing together a more linked economic and security approach to the region, it will need to offer economically competitive alternatives to effectively compete given the growing trends in East Asia towards more, not less, integration and interdependence. Second, the stability of US-China relations is central in ensuring the stability of the entire region, a condition from which all have benefited. Many states in the region are wary that the burgeoning rivalry between these powers could become unconstrained and open the possibility of a large war. The US needs to demonstrate and convince those in the region that its actions are not contributing to such dangerous possibilities.⁸⁶² If not, it may risk losing its standing in the region as the security provider, specifically ensuring the status quo in a number of contentious maritime and territorial disputes which involves deterring would-be revisionists without eliciting too much concern in them that they feel compelled to act soon and aggressively.

⁸⁶⁰ Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "Explaining the Rise of Minilaterals in the Indo-Pacific," *Observer Research Foundation*, September 16, 2021.

⁸⁶¹ This is most evident in the Biden's administration's Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Anthony Rowley, "Biden's Indo-Pacific Economic Plan is Yet Another Example of 'With Us Or Against Us' Oversimplification," *South China Morning Post*, May 22, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3178542/bidens-indo-pacific-economic-plan-yet-another-example-us-or-against>

⁸⁶² Van Jackson, *Pacific Power Paradox: American Statecraft and the Fate of the Asian Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023).

Finally, the US must avoid pushing its allies and partners too hard towards complete, across the board alignment regarding measures to counteract Chinese power. Many of these states, and other unaligned regional powers like India, are increasingly concerned about China and are looking to further relations with the US. Furthermore, the regional practice of hedging is beneficial to the US given that it prevents China from recruiting committed followers to its project and helps retain the US alliance system as the most potent geopolitical force in the region. As a result, the US should not try to compel allies and others into any sort of single, all-inclusive economic-technological-security pact as these will simply cause divisions and hamper US efforts to ensure its networked centrality.⁸⁶³ The US should encourage growing leadership efforts of its allies and others as well in bringing forth such arrangements and not feel compelled to lead from the front all the time.

Of particular importance for the future of US networked centrality in these cores regions is the degree to which US grand strategy towards Russia and China shifts from *balancing*, the building up one's own power resources and facilitating favorable strategic alignments, towards *containment*, the undermining of the power resources and favorable strategic alignments of these powers.⁸⁶⁴ In Europe containment is already very present, with ongoing sanctions against Russia and sizable aid to Ukraine alongside ongoing balancing efforts including the resurrection of the *raison d'être* of NATO as an anti-Russian aggression pact and its expansion towards new members like Finland and Sweden. In East Asia, balancing efforts are increasing with growing security and economic linkages between the US, its regional allies, and other important powers like India. China's power and actions are obviously the major strategic rationale for these developments, especially growing military cooperation and integrated defence capabilities, practices, and commitments. Alongside these efforts, containment elements are emerging as well, specifically in advanced technological sectors such as micro-chips where the US is trying to get the major high end chip-producing states, which are all

⁸⁶³ For example, the US will need to accept that despite growing mutual concerns about China, India will continue to prioritize its strategic autonomy and avoid complete alignment with, and especially followership under, US hegemony. Jeffery M. Smith, "Strategic Autonomy and U.S.-Indian Relations," *The Heritage Foundation*, November 09, 2020, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/commentary/strategic-autonomy-and-us-indian-relations>

⁸⁶⁴ On positive and negative balancing see: He and Feng, "Why Is There No NATO in Asia?"

close US allies and partners, to agree to limiting their exports to China.⁸⁶⁵ The extent of such efforts remains unclear, but the chips export control matter illuminates a critical development in these deterrence towards containment efforts: the mobilization of allies in both core regions against Russia and China. Examples of these efforts include Asian allies' support for economic sanctions against Russia and weapons and aid provision to Ukraine, and European allies' growing interest in developing their own Indo-Pacific strategy and American pressure towards a more unified approach on exports controls against China on high end technology. It remains unclear how successful the US will be in managing these cross-regional efforts and dynamics, some of which may pose difficulties such as regional concerns over any possible role and presence of NATO in East Asia.⁸⁶⁶

A final feature of a future of growing rivalry between the US on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other is the burgeoning strategic relationship between Moscow and Beijing, which is based in part on their joint desire to bring about a less US/Western centric international system. Relations between the two have grown steadily since the mid-1990s and have deepened significantly over the past five years across diplomatic, security, and economic domains.⁸⁶⁷ While their relationship at present is not one of a military alliance or strategic pact, defined by joint commitments to come to each other's aid during conflicts and in general endorsing and promoting each other's core interests, there are concerns that US actions, specifically creating networks aimed against them, could help drive them closer together into further alignment and possibly form a more overt anti-Western hegemonic bloc. How the US will respond to these dynamics remains

⁸⁶⁵ Chris Miller, *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology* (New York: Scribner, 2022).

⁸⁶⁶ Concern about any growing role and presence of NATO in Asia does not solely stem from Asian states but within the alliance itself, as evident by France's blocking of a plan to establish a NATO liaison office in Japan. It is speculated that part of the rationale behind Paris' objection to this plan is that it is seen as inhibiting their ability to develop a separate approach to the Indo-Pacific region. Stuart Lau and Laura Kayali, "Macron Blocks NATO Outpost in Japan amid Chinese Complaints," *Politico*, July 07, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-block-nato-outpost-japan-china-complaints/>

⁸⁶⁷ Dmitry Gorenburg, Elizabeth Wishnick, Paul Schwartz and Brian Waidelich, "How Advanced is Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation?" *War on the Rocks*, June 26, 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2023/06/29000/>; Alexander Lukin and Dmitry Novikov, "Sino-Russian Rapprochement and Greater Eurasia: From Geopolitical Pole to International Society?" *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 12, no.1 (2021): 28-45; Marcin Kaczmarek, "Convergence or Divergence? Visions of World Order and the Russian-Chinese Relationship," *European Politics and Society* 20, no. 2 (2019): 207-224.

uncertain, with some arguing Washington must try to drive wedges between them, taking advantage of long lasting cleavages, to prevent such a possibility from emerging, while others argue continuing to treat them as separate and distinct rivals is the best approach, especially given that the US has powerful allies and mechanisms for dealing with each in Europe and East Asia.⁸⁶⁸

Sino-Russia relations, however, go beyond bilateral elements and include efforts to build coordination mechanisms and a common identity among the leading non-Western major powers. This is most evident in the development and evolution of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) as an international institution. The body remains more of a talking shop with few binding commitments or specific efforts to further joint interests, but there are tentative signs they may be moving towards greater policy development and coordination to limit US power such as creating an alternative reserve currency to rival the US dollar.⁸⁶⁹ It is unclear if these states are willing to accept the risks to align their interests in such tight and binding ways, however, especially if China tries to assume more of a *primus inter pares* position in the organization.⁸⁷⁰ If they do, however, it is expected the US would move more assertively to try to break up such a scheme given this body is now offering alternatives, without US involvement, which challenges the financial anchor of US hegemony.

Such developments may reflect and portend a more multipolar world emerging, as many have argued, making it harder for the US to corral important powers towards a common set of actions against its revisionist rivals in Russia and China.⁸⁷¹ Even if such a world emerges, however, the US still retains the followership of many of the world's most important economic and military powers which will, if they remain together, by far be the

⁸⁶⁸ For an example of the former argument see Crawford, "How to Distance Russia from China". For an example of the latter argument see: Adam P. MacDonald, "China-Russian Cooperation in the Arctic: A Cause for Concern for the Western Arctic States?" *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 27, no. 2 (2021): 194–210.

⁸⁶⁹ Joseph W. Sullivan, "A BRICS Currency Could Shake the Dollar's Dominance," *Foreign Policy*, April 24, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/04/24/brics-currency-end-dollar-dominance-united-states-russia-china/>

⁸⁷⁰ Oliver Stuenkel, "BRICS Faces a Reckoning," *Foreign Policy*, June 22, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/22/brics-summit-brazil-russia-india-china-south-africa-putin-nonalignment-global-south/>

⁸⁷¹ For example see: Ashley J. Tellis, "America's Bad Bet on India," *Foreign Affairs*, May 01, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/india/americas-bad-bet-india-modi>

most powerful bloc in the international system.⁸⁷² As a result, the maintenance of these networks, especially ensuring the continued followership of its allies, in the early 1990s maintained the foundation from which these are now being orientated increasingly against Russia and China. Such an ability showcases one of the most important and valuable features of the US hegemonic system: its fungibility in being oriented towards new priorities and functions, enabling it to adapt to new strategic environments which makes it likely, if the US remains committed to its hegemonic project, to survive and become a, if not the, major force in this new environment as it did during the post-Cold War era.

Rivalry Peters Out

A second, and usually less explored, trajectory is that of rivalry petering out in the medium-term future. While growing enmity and rivalry against Russia and China continues to deepen and form the major driving force of US grand strategy currently, there are several ways in which strategic rivalry may be a relatively short-lived era occupying a period closer in length to that of the post-Cold War era than that of the Cold War one. The latter period, furthermore, is commonly argued to be analogous to or at least providing important lessons learned for the US currently.⁸⁷³

One possibility is that the US ceases to try to maintain its hegemonic networks and role as a hegemon. This could be brought about slowly over time given the gradual erosion of US power and influence, especially in core regions, in the face of new strategic alignment dynamics emerging with the rise of new powers and with reconsideration of the geopolitical realities of existing US allies. These could include states bandwagoning with a new aspiring hegemon like China and/or joining a different ordering system like a concert between Russia and other European powers. This could also emerge quickly, either through a destructive war against one or both of these powers and/or the collapse of the US internally. It seems, given the discussion in the

⁸⁷² Furthermore, nearly 75% of US-backed securities and other financial instruments in the international system are in the hands of allied states. Colin Weiss, "Geopolitics and the U.S. Dollar's Future as a Reserve Currency," International Finance Discussion Papers 1359. *Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.17016/IFDP.2022.1359>

⁸⁷³ For example, see: Brands, *The Twilight Struggle*. For a counter argument for how US-China rivalry will not be a new Cold War see: Thomas J. Christensen, "No New Cold War: Why US-China Strategic Competition Will Not be Like the US-Soviet Cold War," *The Asan Institute for Policy Studies*, September 10, 2020, <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/no-new-cold-war-why-us-china-strategic-competition-will-not-be-like-the-us-soviet-cold-war/>

continued rivalry section above, that purely external pressures will not lead to such an outcome on their own, but would also require a seismic change in the American strategic culture which would come about due to domestic changes as well. Such a possibility is examined in the last section.

Another possibility is that the US will rebound in its confidence as an economic power, especially in terms of being a leader in emerging advanced technology sectors. Doing so would make it less sensitive to relative gains of others. This could help alleviate concerns of China becoming an economic superpower and replacing the US as the world's hegemonic power. These concerns provide the context within which much of US grand strategy is based currently, namely that China is a once in a generation peer rival which may be the greatest challenger the US has ever faced given its size, economic and military power, and entrenchment in the global and regional economic systems. If the US retains its economic advantages, however these concerns could be lessened and may shift the strategic paradigms in other states, such as China, away from overt rivalry towards lower levels of competition given the assessment that they cannot catch up let alone replace the US as the economic superpower.⁸⁷⁴ Whether the US would ease its current, growing protectionist and 'Made in America' industrial strategy and return to an emphasis on free trade is unclear in this scenario as these measures could be seen as being decisive in the US returning to, and keeping, its economic pre-eminence. Alternatively, the US may, as it did in the mid-to-late 1990s, quit seeing other economic powers as rivals and end its more geo-economic strategy aimed at righting trade balances and market shares through political negotiations and economic coercion. The result, therefore, could be a US that is neither a major promoter of free trade nor one opposed to it but somewhere in between.

A final possibility is that China and Russia stagnate as revisionist powers. This could come about through failed attempts to alter the regional status quo by force, motivating others to work with the US to oppose them to such a degree that these powers' abilities to try to bring about a different strategic reality is defeated. This appears to be the case with Russia in Europe as its war in Ukraine has failed to conquer this state

⁸⁷⁴ On the role of how states' vision of the future can affect their foreign policy and grand strategy see: Daniel W. Drezner, "The Perils of Pessimism: Why Anxious Nations Are Dangerous Nations," *Foreign Affairs* 101, no. 4 (2022): 34–43.

or get European states and the US to respect its self-proclaimed sphere of influence in the European parts of the FSU. Russia's aggression has mobilized European states around the US and re-energized American hegemonic networks as the vehicles to counter this.

Similarly, China may try to militarily alter the status quo in East Asia which could also fail and rally regional states against it and towards the US. The risk of direct conflict between China and the US is higher compared to Russia in Europe given the nature of the most likely states and places for Chinese military aggression (namely Taiwan and the South China Sea), but if China is seen as the clear aggressor by the region and its military expansionism falters this may cause a rethink in Beijing about future aggression given these negative results. In scenarios where these powers' aggression has been defeated and with regional dynamics increasingly opposing them, the US may over time try to reconstitute relations with both to some degree if they demonstrate a retreat from opposition to US hegemony. The extent of any such efforts would most likely not be akin to those of the post-Cold War era defined by the engagement strategy, but rather under a new framing of these powers as weary, disgruntled states who are most likely never to become hegemonic followers but are no longer threatening to be revisionist rivals.

The other way these powers' revisionist impulses could stagnate is that their domestic challenges continue to consume a larger share of resources and thereby limit their ability to dedicate these towards achieving external objectives. Russia is facing a more immediate and dire situation of the two given its population decline, anemic economic growth, major environmental risks, an ever-tightening sanctions regime by the West, and possibly some cracks in elite unity due to the failure of their military campaign in Ukraine. China, on the other hand, faces longer-term but just as, if not more, serious internal issues regarding the slowing down of its economy, an aging population, and managing the emergence of a middle class not used to the struggles and hardships of previous generations. It is unclear also if China's economic model can eclipse the US in terms of innovation, or whether it will go the way of the Japanese keiretsu system which was good at learning to copy existing technologies but not in developing new ones.⁸⁷⁵ These issues do not mean these powers are at risk of collapse but that they may

⁸⁷⁵ George Magnus, "Is China Turning Japanese?" *China Dialogues*, March 08, 2023, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/cff/2023/03/08/is-china-turning-japanese/>

become faltering powers due to the inability to marshal and deploy the power assets necessary to achieve specific foreign interests and objectives, including their broader goal of creating more favorable strategic realities which necessitate undermining, if not replacing, US hegemonic networks at global and regional levels.⁸⁷⁶

In this scenario, China and Russia would remain major powers and challengers to the US but would not be seen as posing, individually and/or collectively, existential challenges to the future of US hegemony. This would be especially so if these powers' stagnation was coupled with a US return to being a confident power, especially economically. These two developments could ease efforts to anchor the entirety of American grand strategy on strategic rivalry against these powers. However, a condition of rivalry could continue and deepen despite these favourable structural changes depending on the depth and intensity that these changes have had on US grand strategy during this period of American concern and uncertainty about its international position. Specifically, these influences could produce a new path dependency guiding the US regardless of these power trajectory trends, combined with the fact rivalry may serve as a new organizing principle to re-energize and update its hegemonic networks.

The US Changes Fundamentally

As discussed above, the US is well positioned to remain the leading power strategically in Europe and East Asia given the resiliency and fungibility of its hegemonic networks in responding to this new era of strategic rivalry in relation to Russia and China. Even if the US share of material, specifically economic, power continues to decrease as a percentage globally (though such trends should not be exaggerated given the US share of 25% has remained relatively steady since the 1970s), its central location in and ability to closely coordinate and work with most of the world's other major powers through its economic and security networks will help in maintaining the robustness of American hegemony moving forward. Strategic dynamics associated with the growing assertiveness and aggressiveness to challenge the status quo by Russia and China are also reinforcing alignment patterns towards the US as worried regional states seek out responses to these actions and trends. At the same time, the US has been experiencing several disruptions internally, specifically the growing polarization in its domestic political

⁸⁷⁶ MacDonald, "Overcoming American Hegemony," 95-97.

system and society which threaten to undermine the widespread elite and public consensus towards its hegemonic project. The biggest threat to the continuation of the US as a hegemon and the maintenance of its hegemonic system, therefore, may not be external but internal.

The Trump administration is commonly seen as exemplifying and fueling the continued undermining of the US domestic political system and many central foundations of its foreign policy, international posture, and image. As a result, the Trump administration is pegged as marking the definitive conclusion of the US post-Cold War grand strategic approach based on promotion of free trade, expansion of liberal institutions and ideas, and engagement efforts towards China and Russia. While the US did not decisively break away from many of its long-standing hegemonic institutions, commitments, and practices during Trump's tenure, despite the president's bombastic threats to do so (which is evidence of the continued strength of the strategic culture which remains deep within many elements of the US elite), if he had won (or in the future wins) a second term it remains unclear if such radical moves would have been (or be) enacted. Examples include leaving major bodies including the WTO and NATO, a large-scale drawdown of US forces abroad, and the growing use of economic sanctions and other coercive instruments against adversaries and allies.

The Biden administration has pursued an approach more in line with the traditional American hegemonic disposition and proclivities, but it is unclear if the Trump administration was an anomaly or ushered in a new era of strategic uncertainty for the US with the tenor and content of American foreign policy possibly swinging back and forth depending on which party is in power.⁸⁷⁷ Such volatility and inconsistency will continue to raise concerns among allies and others about US dependability, especially in confronting great power challengers, which may motivate them to develop (or revive) new ordering constructs and mechanisms among themselves.⁸⁷⁸ Even if the US returns to a more predictable disposition and pattern of behavior commonly associated with its

⁸⁷⁷ Daniel W. Drezner, Ronald R Krebs, and Randall Schweller, "The End of Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 3 (2020): 107–117.

⁸⁷⁸ It is important to keep in mind, however, that most allies quickly abandoned these efforts when the Biden administration came into office, possibly signaling their inability to sustainably pursue such projects even in the face of such uncertainty about the future of the US. Kelly and Poast, "The Allies Are Alright."

role as a hegemonic power, there are trends which have outlived the Trump administration and appear to be becoming new elements in US grand strategy which allies and other will have to contend with regardless of who is in power in the White House. The most prominent examples include a growing emphasis on 'Made in America' industrial policy resulting in the decreased emphasis on trade agreements and comprehensive efforts to selectively decouple the economic relationship with China, especially in high-end technology sectors and supply chains.

The situation the US faces right now resembles that of the early 1990s in many ways, especially a domestic reconsideration of its hegemonic position and role. In particular, there is some degree of nervousness about the trajectory and competitiveness of the US economically in relation to other powers, that the US is too focused externally at the expense of addressing internal challenges, and growing demands that allies and others do more of the burden sharing internationally.⁸⁷⁹ Similar issues existed in the early 1990s, but largely dissipated as the US regained its confidence given its unchallenged unipole status, leading position in a number of emerging economic areas, and the ability to do hegemony 'on the cheap'. The emergence of these stable conditions precluded more serious examinations of and changes to the US strategic culture which underpinned the American hegemonic disposition and identity. Furthermore, even without major geopolitical competitors in the post-Cold War era, the security community was able to maintain the fundamentals of the US hegemonic system and presence, especially in Europe and East Asia, under new declaratory purposes and rationales.

There are of course major differences between that period and the current one, including the presence of rival powers as well as far deeper political and cultural divides within the US. It is expected that the US will continue to frame and engage Russia and China as rivals which need to be countered, but if and how the US will continue as a hegemonic power depends in large measure on the nature of its domestic constitution moving forward. This issue, in turn, consists of three distinct but interrelated questions. First, will the US remain a superpower, possessing a preponderance of power resources. Second, will the US remain a liberal power, in terms of its domestic political nature and its preferences for international arrangements. Third, will the US want to remain a leader

⁸⁷⁹ Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed."

in international organizing, specifically in relation to its traditional allies and close partners. There are many different combinations of answers to these questions which will influence how the US behaves internationally in general and in responding to these rivals.

By the mid-1990s American grand strategy had settled into a new trajectory, but one largely based on long held foundations due to the stability and reinforcing relationships which existed at both international and domestic levels. Presently the US appears to be moving along the path of strategic rivalry as the central anchor in its grand strategy for this new era, but how it will pursue this competition, including its disposition towards the international system, allies, and others, remains uncertain in large measure because domestic dynamics remain highly volatile. The networked nature of US hegemony has served it well in preserving this system through many different geo-strategic periods, challenges, and changes and most likely will continue to do so in this newly emerging era, but the degree to which the US remains committed to this project is unclear. Until a new equilibrium emerges at, and connects both, the international and domestic levels, American grand strategy will not coalesce into a new, clear, dominant trajectory.

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