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## Defending the Indo-Pacific Liberal International Order: Lessons from France in Cold War Europe For Promoting Détente in Asia

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### **Abstract**

*As tension escalates between the US and China, scenarios for maintaining peace in Northeast Asia imply that secondary powers will perceive increasing incentives to reappraise their respective international roles. This analysis proposes that an analysis of France's Cold War role in Europe and the world under President Charles de Gaulle provides insights into conflict management in an increasingly multipolar international political environment. Their respective interests in preventing a so-called new Cold War emerging between the US and China include avoiding its excessive economic costs, if only because China is a massive trade partner. This study engages in theoretical framework-informed process tracing of de Gaulle's role. It explicates the assumptions that functionally underpinned de Gaulle's policy of soft balancing between the US and China. The analysis explores de Gaulle's contribution to the decay of the Cold War. It illuminates de Gaulle's contribution to a regional international environment that made West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik strategy more feasible politically. This study applies these findings in the formulation of strategy recommendations focusing on Japan. Valid inferences regarding the predominant motivations driving American and Chinese international interaction are necessary for this task. To the extent to which the US and China have entered into a conflict spiral, Japan's hedging towards Washington is further incentivized. Tokyo would necessarily need to convince the Chinese that Japan is no longer Washington's unsinkable aircraft carrier off its coast. Tokyo, like de Gaulle's France, would maintain close relations with Washington, but it would need to project to its interlocutors its commitment to its own strategic autonomy. Tokyo's emphasis on closer relations with liberal democratic Indo-Pacific actors would potentially fit well with a commitment to strategic autonomy to defend the global liberal order.*

**Keywords:** *China, Cold War, hedging, soft balancing, Soviet Union, United States*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Chinese President Xi Jinping “the East is rising, and the West is declining”. This study offers that the relative decline of the US is not likely to be easily managed, not only by China and US allies, but also be the US itself. Hans J. Morgenthau developed a foreign policy typology in his great power focused theory of realism. Wadlow [2] summarizes Morgenthau's theory, i.e., “politics as a struggle for power; maintaining, increasing, demonstrating power; politics of status quo, imperialism and prestige. This triptych was at the base of all his analysis.” Wadlow [2] quotes from an unaccepted grant application that Morgenthau submitted to the Guggenheim Foundation in 1938: “This aspiration for power can assume

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three different guises: maintaining the power that has already been acquired, increasing it or demonstrating it.... Foreign policy is nothing but the will to maintain, to increase, or to demonstrate one's power, and these three manifestations... find their basic empirical expressions in a policy of the status quo, a policy of imperialism and a policy of prestige".

The prestige type of foreign policy was comparatively less elaborated by Morgenthau. "Less well developed was the type of policy likely to be pursued by a state which was declining in terms of relative capability base. Morgenthau advances a third type of policy, that of "prestige", which could have been but inexplicably was not developed to accommodate this situation. Morgenthau turned naturally to psychological concepts to explain state behavior. He could, in the case of a declining power, easily have argued that a policy to maintain the image of the actor at its former capability level for as long as possible would be a natural policy for the declining actor to pursue. Since such policies would likely focus largely on maintaining a previous prestige level, they could well be described as policies of "prestige".

The policy of prestige reflects a great power exercising a level of international influence that surpasses their relative aggregate power capabilities. Morgenthau highlights that the relative power capability decline of a great power is not typically reflected immediately in a commensurate decline in relative international influence. Ross [4] notes, "Morgenthau's 'policy of prestige' is subject to special volatility partly because it involved unpredictable emotions, such as trust, love, humiliation, and awe".

This study hypothesizes that the relative decline of the US with the rise of China will incentivize the European Union to engage in greater degrees of soft balancing. It will aim to maintain cooperative relations with China in coordination with Japan despite US pressure to emplace a containment strategy on China. The policy recalls French president Charles de Gaulle's soft balancing between the US and USSR in the 1960s. A critical difference is China's much deeper integration into the global capitalist commercial and financial system [5]. Soviet and Warsaw Pact commodities-oriented integration in the global capitalist economy was comparatively highly distorted,[6]. It validates that due to this integration, France and the EU will be more readily drawn in Japan into a soft balancing strategy as well. Claims emerged on the eve of the Covid-19 pandemic that global liberal hegemony was progressively incentivizing an international peace [7]. The escalation of the Russo-Ukraine war in 2022 highlighted potential for unintentional outbreak of great power direct violent conflict in the nuclear setting [8]. It illustrates the imperative of soft balancing and hedging strategies against the US by its erstwhile Cold War allies [9].

Great powers typically do not decline gracefully. Nation states are particularly collectively prone to perceive more intense external challenges and stereotype their source, congruent with intense collective affect that associates with it. "The threat perceived by the actor with a declining relative capability, however, is far less easily falsified, especially in the nationalist era. Examples of once great states that gracefully adjust to irreversible decline are difficult to come by. Still peaceful, if not graceful, acceptance of decline has occurred in this era, and in any case as we have argued, if the "policy of prestige" were developed further, the patterns associating with capability decline would be reasonably well handled by political realism" [3, ch.2,91-92].

"Internal factors" are a focus in neoclassical realism to explain the features of transmission of international systemic level change into state foreign policy behaviors [10,86]. The interaction with these so-called internal factors, including nationalistic polity predispositions and populist political entrepreneurial predispositions of particular leaders, are significant.

The US' is in the aftermath of its defeat in Afghanistan following 20 years of combat against an insurgency. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began 18 months after the US withdrawal in August 2021. These events culminated after 4 years of disruption of the Trump administration with its confused response to the Covid-19 pandemic including the scapegoating of China. The American nation state may be relatively more disposed towards a prestige type policy that would likely manifest itself in the Pacific region. Russia's power capabilities do not extend much beyond its nuclear weapons capacity with an economic GDP roughly comparable to South Korea. China's economic interaction with Russia is critical to Russia's maintenance of a

war-fighting capacity in Ukraine. Chinese categorization of the economic development level of states places Russia in the “developing” classification [11,48]. China is the sustained challenger to the US’ global status.

Significant American domestic political groups support de facto recognition of the sovereignty of Taiwan [12]. China, as a nation state, would likely respond vigorously to such a move, setting the stage for escalatory loss of control of the political dynamics of the dispute. The Japanese and European Union authorities would wisely prepare for this scenario in terms of promoting a détente orientation within the American, Russian and Chinese polities. Aside from Taiwan, Japan and South Korea would be most likely to bear the brunt of an escalation in Washington-Beijing hostility. Japan is more likely to pay a price particularly insofar as it continues to allow itself to be perceived by the governments of the Indo-Pacific region as the US’ “unsinkable aircraft carrier” [13,77]. The nuclear setting increases the potential for horizontal escalation to avoid the escalatory potential of direct conflict. Russia’s retribution to US support for Ukraine may well include greater Russian support for North Korean nuclear belligerency to increase both countries’ diplomatic bargaining leverage. The Russo-Ukraine War impacts the equilibrium among the respective national systems of aims of the actors in Northeast Asia. Western allies pressure Seoul to sell some of its large stock of NATO compatible artillery ammunition to Ukraine, thereby potentially worsening relations with Moscow and Beijing [14].

The Japanese government announced a significant expansion of its defense budget in the international systemic context of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Japan has announced its intention to double its military budget to account for approximately 2% of GDP, “aligning Japan with NATO members” [15,para.14]. Explanations for this enlargement include response to consequent increased perceived threat from China, e.g.:

“The most important response in North East Asia to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine came from Japan. In the light of the Ukraine conflict, the Japanese government feared that it would encourage China to invade Taiwan. It therefore decided a historically unprecedented increase in its military budget, breaking with its tradition of pacifism following its defeat in WWII. While the idea of a nuclearized Japan has been taboo in the post-WWII world, more and more voices are being heard in Japan to engage in a nuclear program to defend itself against North Korea and possibly China” [16,7].

Roland [16] does not provide a formal explanation as to why Tokyo perceives an increased likelihood that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan as a consequence of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Questions as to the motivations for Japan for increasing its military budget including heightened threat from China require critical analysis. Greater flexibility in responding to potentially escalating crises, including greater autonomy in relation to the US, is another possible consideration. The Trump phenomenon illustrated to a debatable degree at least the potential vulnerability of the US umbrella nuclear security commitment to Tokyo. The US is demonstrating rising internal political opposition to promote trade liberalization across administrations [17]. Japan moved to become the de facto driver behind the successor to the TPP [18]. The US had been the primary motive force behind Japan’s late accession to the TPP, which would have liberalized Japan’s agricultural market for imports [19]. In return, the TPP would have further institutionalized US- Japan security alliance [20]. Japan promoted what became the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) after Trump withdrew the US signature from the TPP in 2017 [21]. The CPTPP has been signed by but never ratified by the US Congress [22].

As the US continues to focus its crisis responses to the ongoing war in Ukraine, Japan may seek to increase its diplomatic bargaining leverage to allow for greater international tactical political flexibility. Complete dependence on US security guarantees to respond to China’s inexorable rise amidst greater international political turbulence is not practicable. “As Japan’s security concerns vis-a-vis China continue to grow, it is no longer worried about being drawn into a US-led war. Rather, anxieties have grown over whether the United States will actually commit to Japan’s defense” [23,199].

“President Trump, on the other hand, has promoted a radical strategic reshuffling by assuming the “America First” strategy, by withdrawing from the TPP, by questioning the bilateral agreement and military exercises with South Korea, and by initiating a trade war with China. With these steps, worries have spread in Japan regarding the possibility that the U.S. might abandon the Japan-U.S. Alliance and discontinue the extended deterrence, on which its national security has been based” [24,1].

Precedents for foreign policy acts of prestige in the recent past include the Mayaguez incident of May 1975. US President Gerald Ford and his cabinet decided to use force to retrieve the US-flagged Mayaguez freighter and its crew, choosing to do so without first utilizing diplomatic channels [25]. The Mayaguez incident occurred just two weeks after the “embarrassing” and “humiliating” losses and evacuation of the US in the previous month with the fall of Phnom Pen and Saigon [25,58]. Bostdorff [26] similarly inferred that the October 25, 1983, US invasion of Grenada served functionally a nationalist political compensatory purpose. It came on the heel of the bombing of the US marine barracks in Beirut on October 23, 1983: “Literally overnight, Grenada became a condensation symbol of victory and pride, reminding citizens of gains in tangible (power) and symbolic (security, action) resources. Lebanon's failures seemed blunted--almost forgotten--in the aftermath of Grenada's triumph. Most importantly for [US President] Reagan, he replenished his symbolic reserves and accrued a surplus of public good which could be drawn upon during future policy decisions” [26,741].

Comparatively, the Afghan government in Kabul appeared to be vulnerable to defeat by the Taliban as the US client state in South Vietnam. It collapsed with the announcement of the American withdrawal after 20 years of American occupation [27]. An observer may then be sensitive to indications that the US may engage in a compensatory prestige policy. The US would seek affirm its claim to leadership of liberal democracy against various forms of totalitarianism. Recognizing Taiwan would seem to be a likely possibility for this national grandeur response. It would be more likely under a future US Republican administration. Trump's career accelerated and intensified the evolution of the Republican party into a vehicle for American white nationalism. In sum, Republican administrations are relatively more prone to display collective American national grandeur foreign policy motivation [28] [29][30].

Feinstein [31] shows that the so-called rally ‘round-the-flag’ (RRTF) phenomenon for US administrations does not always manifest itself in violent conflicts. It tends to manifest itself when a confluence of international political systemic conflictual circumstances. These circumstances in effect trigger the salience of intense American public national self-identification collective political values. American nationalism tends to equate the nation with the state in the form of its governmental apparatus, particularly, the presidency. If the American prevailing view is that the sovereign American state is seriously under challenge, then RRTF will more likely manifest itself: “RRTF periods have emerged from the *interaction* between events, leadership, and historical circumstances that jointly generated symbolic challenges for individuals who identify with the nation and its state” [*sic*] [31,308]. Note that such perceived challenges to the sovereign state include threats as well as opportunities regarding the influence of the nation. Concern for this influence stems from a range of motivations, such as its defense, prestige and others [29].

The US defeat in Afghanistan occurred in the context of intensifying levels of overall conflict with China. The perceived challenge from the post-Cold War Soviet Russian successor state intervening in Ukraine and elsewhere is mitigated by its overall significantly lower levels of comparative power capability. On the other hand, Moscow provides critical support for the Iran-allied Assad regime in Damascus. The focus on Iran and its allies as threats to American allies in the region incentivizes US hostility to Russian support for the Assad regime. Iran supports militia groups challenging American regional allies: “the so-called axis of resistance — how Tehran and its allies describe proxy militia groups in Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria that receive training and funding from Iran” [32,para.8]. The US prevailing view of the nature of the US-Soviet Cold War significantly shapes prevailing US government attitudes towards the post-Cold War international system.

## 2. THEORY

Kenneth Waltz [33] initially proposed the conceptualization of causation in international relations in terms of three levels of analysis: 1) the foreign policy decision maker level, 2) collective state level and 3) the international systemic level. This study proposes an analysis of relevant trends at the state level. It particularly focuses on American nationalism and its relevance for shaping American behavior towards its Indo-Pacific allies and competitors. It proposes that Japan must publicly engage in function hedging in response to the rise of China and US setbacks in the Middle East and elsewhere. “For many watchers within the region, the United States is broadly seen as being in relative decline, hamstrung by domestic political division and unable to match China’s rate of geoeconomic expansion” [34,86]. In response, as an act of national prestige, the US is increasingly prone to declare a public security guarantee to Taiwan particularly under a future Republican administration.

A hedging strategy has been defined as a state’s reaction to changing power distributions in international relations, located on a continuum between balancing and bandwagoning. It is a response to strategic ambiguity due to uncertainty regarding the foreign policy behavior implications of a shifting comparative power capabilities among states [35]. The cognitive revolution in international relations theory emphasizes the recognition of bounded rationality in international relations theory [36][37]. Its relevance is evident in the impact of uncertainty regarding the further elaboration of this concept of hedging. Koga [38] elaborates on sub-variations of hedging patterns of foreign policy behavior again reflecting the impact of uncertainty regarding various trends on current and future power balances.

A détente strategy may manifest itself in a pattern of Tokyo balancing against the US by participating in China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Tokyo can also demur from following the US lead should Washington jettison “strategic ambiguity” in favor of a formal security guarantee to Taiwan [39][40]. Tokyo can prepare for the need to promote a détente between the US and China. It therefore needs to adopt a more autonomous role in relation to the US in order to shape US and Chinese perceptual and attitudinal trends. These strengthening perceptual trends in Beijing include US containment of China in which Japan plays a critical role [41]. Certain circles within Beijing evidently still view Japan and European actors as well as friendly constituencies within the US as potentially favoring cooperation [42]. Japan can take a leadership role among the democracies of Asia by building relations with India and other states. This leadership strategic framework includes the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership as part of a “geoeconomic” approach to security [43,146]. On the other hand, Japan in late 2022 announced a commitment to approximately double its defense expenditures to 2% of GDP [44]. Media reports started the intentions include making Japan less dependent on US military combat units for “deterrence” [45,para.29]. Yet Japan simultaneously commits to co-developing and purchasing US weaponry and supplies [46]. It may indicate a Japanese intensification of their commitment to playing a US subaltern role in Asia.

This paper seeks to abstract from France’s role in facilitating what became détente with the Soviet Union in terms of the policy option range comparatively available to Japan. France was chosen for this comparison rather than Germany despite the latter being the other one of the defeated axis enemy states referenced in the UN Charter. Cold War Germany occupied a radically different position in international relations. Germany was partitioned into two states with massive conventional and nuclear military deployments of the two opposing alliance systems on a war footing. Postwar Japan, while firmly embedded in US-Japan bilateral institutional relations, was not on the front line of terrestrial military invasion. Military conflicts shifted to the Asian mainland, while one Japanese prime minister explicitly described Japan’s as the US’ “unsinkable aircraft carrier” [47,52][48,para.11].

Direct military conflict is not likely to be emphasized here because it would be suicidal. Japan can play a leading role in hedging between Beijing, Moscow, New Delhi and Washington which implies it has more incentives be more proactive in its geoeconomics security strategy. France was in effect hedging as well in its insistence on public displays of autonomy from London and Washington under de Gaulle. France also claimed

a soft power advantage. Conflict is escalating between Beijing and Washington and Tokyo will respond; the Chinese market will always remain vital to the global economy. France could posture itself as independent under de Gaulle but it remained part of the western alliance. “Under the Fifth Republic, General de Gaulle defined the position of France vis-a-vis the United States by the formula: "Solidarity in storms, independence in calm times"” [49,18].

De Gaulle’s identified French military independence as necessary for French national greatness, i.e., “grandeur” which in turn required a French nuclear force amidst the Cold War [50,663]. De Gaulle supposedly personified the nationalist forces that threatened French sovereignty emanating from different sources including European integration [51]. The de Gaulle phenomenon apparently constituted a nationalist response to the downgraded influence of postwar France. France, like the other western European states, witnessed a dramatic downgrading in their level of international political influence. Nevertheless, the leadership role of de Gaulle in sum allowed France to exploit the Cold War environment to raise France’s prestige in international affairs. France’s tactical formula included portrayal of itself as a balancer between Washington and Moscow through leading Europe, extending from “the Atlantic to the Urals” [52,83]. Its continued reliance upon the NATO political alliance and on the US-dominated capitalist global political economy allows the observer to characterize this balancing as soft. Bailey [85] includes de Gaulle’s public distancing of Paris from Washington as contributing to an international political environment for Cold War détente policies. De Gaulle’s behavior made West German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* more feasible as a strategic initiative. “Changes came from elsewhere too: by the end of the 1950s French leader Charles de Gaulle had taken steps to decouple European integration from the broader US-led Western alliance. He developed an independent French nuclear deterrent in 1960 and by March 1966 had taken France out of NATO’s military structure” [85,255].

De Gaulle’s public differentiation of France from the US was more symbolic than substantive. France did withdraw from NATO military command structures and ordered the closure of US military bases. De Gaulle sought to portray France under his leadership as a third, autonomous force in international relations, while remaining within the North Atlantic community. Raymond Aron thus critiqued de Gaulle for recklessly promoting an image of France in the world that was “contrary to reality” [53,17].

Those patterns are likely to show a divergence from the caricature of Cold War Japan as America’s unsinkable aircraft carrier. Japan is increasingly likely to demonstrate those patterns of behavior outlined by Ye [54] as aspects of a hedging strategy. The thesis of this study is that hedging broadly conceived arguably characterized France’s foreign policy under Charles de Gaulle, specifically soft balancing towards the US and the USSR.

## 2.1 The Assumptions of Postwar US Containment Strategy Targeting the USSR

George Kennan portrayed a Soviet system that was inexorably imperialist and aggressive. Kennan suggested that the Soviet Union was fundamentally threatened by the very existence of the liberal democratic West:

It is the Russians, not we, who cannot afford a world half slave and have free. The contrasts implicit in such a world are intolerable to the fictions of on which their power rests. *The final establishment of communist principles can only be universal.* It assumes a Stygian darkness. If one ray of light of individual dignity or inquiry is permitted, the effort must ultimately fail (quoted in [55,43]).

Kennan saw a monolithic, highly rational ineluctable Soviet enemy, whose foreign policy strategic behavior was highly coordinated internally and focused externally. This caricature stereotype, the diabolical enemy image, does not seriously consider complex internal political contestation shaping the adversary’s foreign

policy making process [29]. It would inexorably probe and exploit opportunities that the messy liberal democratic politics of the Western states would inevitably provide.

Being under the compulsion of no timetable [the Kremlin] has no compunction about retreating in the face of superior force. And being under the compulsion of no timetable, it does not get panicky under the necessity for such retreat. Its political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power (quoted in [55,47]).

Kennan's caricature of the Soviet foreign policy making process is part of the Cold Warrior crisis worldview. It stands in contrast to the inattentiveness and slowness to mobilization followed by uncontrollable militancy of democratic foreign policy making amidst international threats.

I sometimes wonder whether ... a democracy is not uncomfortably similar to one of those prehistoric monsters with a body as long as this room and a brain the size of a pin; he lies there in his comfortable primeval mud and pays little attention to his environment; he is slow to wrath—in fact, you practically have to whack his tail off to make him aware that his interests are being disturbed; but, once he grasps this, he lays about him with such blind determination that he not only destroys his adversary but largely wrecks his native habitat. You wonder whether it would not have been wiser for him to have taken a little more interest in what was going on at an earlier date and to have seen whether he could not have prevented some of these situations from arising (quoted in [55,49]).

Kennan's worldview differences from those of his immediate successors focused on the latter's emphasis on the military tools of containment. NSC-68 represented a shift towards an overwhelming focus on military capabilities and deterring the Soviet Union from using them. It assumed that Soviet growing capabilities reflected the intensity of Soviet commitment to world domination over the liberal West. In sum, it indicated an emerging prevailing view that defaulted towards fighting another world war against a totalitarian aggressor without actually using nuclear weapons. In the Cold Warrior prevailing view, as in the Second World War, the intensely aggressive, diabolical enemy was a monolithic entity that was to be defeated. Its brutal totalitarian dictatorship-maintained authority essentially by promising the delivering of the glory of world domination to its people. Imperial glory justifies their oppression and exploitation to build its vast war machine. In the nuclear setting, it had to deterred and contained and eventually, someday, in the long term, somehow and in some way, not clearly specified, it would wither and die. The internal politics of Soviet regime transformation and US foreign policy in affecting it was at best a secondary concern. The prevailing assumption became that intentions were supposedly ultimately unknowable and unchangeable. It meant that serious foreign policy strategic decisions could not be based on an estimation of them.

Containment hardened into its more military capability-focused approach the articulation of which Paul Nitze oversaw in NSC-68:

The significance of NSC 68 is not that it proposed a new view of the U.S. national security interest but that it privileged Nitze's bleaker, more immediate but ultimately more apocalyptic assessment of the Soviet threat. Soviet intentions could be understood only in the most general terms and provided a poor guide to action. With the Communist takeover in China and the Soviet nuclear test came recognition that regardless of Moscow's intentions, Soviet leaders would have greater confidence and leeway to act. The Joint Ad Hoc Intelligence Committee's assessment that by 1954 the Soviet Union could disable the United States by attacking its cities and military facilities with 200 nuclear bombs underscored the threat. *This assessment was not a prediction, but as an assessment of capabilities it displaced the Kennanite calculation of intentions.* "American national security planners would now

focus primarily on the threat posed by Soviet military capabilities, and less on political calculations surrounding a [Soviet] decision to go to war” [56,54]. That change of perspective, by no means attributable to Nitze, relegated Kennan to the margins [emphasis added] [57,32].

Kennan’s image of the Soviet Union paid lip service to a stronger recognition of the political complexities with the Soviet so-called black box. Kennan’s containment strategy framework comparatively emphasized the functional need for affecting the internal Soviet politics of its foreign policy making process. Perceived Soviet aggressive intentions were to be altered by containment. It would strengthen the more international status quo oriented Soviet constituencies at the expense of the radical revisionist groups favoring imperial expansion. Moscow’s perceived imperialism would be cloaked in communist ideology that in immediate postwar Europe and Asia some would find appealing after the failures of interwar liberalism.

American political discourse during the Trump and into the Biden administration differs from this Cold Warrior view. The prevailing view in Washington perceives its relationship with Beijing as a “strategic competitor,” one of inevitable competition and tension [58,40]. Washington still perceives Beijing’s active collaboration in managing the global political economic system as necessary. The Biden administration’s prevailing view is that a multilateral alliance approach to containing China is perceived as necessary. In this view, it will incentivize Beijing to provide this cooperation without perceiving opportunity to supplant the US-led international order [59]. The June 2021 Brussels NATO summit conference communique declared,

NATO maintains a constructive dialogue with China where possible. Based on our interests, we welcome opportunities to engage with China on areas of relevance to the Alliance and on common challenges such as climate change. There is value in information exchange on respective policies and activities, to enhance awareness and discuss potential disagreements. Allies urge China to engage meaningfully in dialogue, confidence-building, and transparency measures regarding its nuclear capabilities and doctrine. Reciprocal transparency and understanding would benefit both NATO and China [60,para.56].

Aside from the absence of Trumpian populist rhetoric, the policy behavior of the Biden administration has differed little from that of the Trump administration. The entire gamut of Trump-era restrictions characterizing “strategic competition” have been retained by the Biden administration [61,para.1]. This same report notes that the “Europeans watch the emergence of a Manichean struggle between the United States and China with growing trepidation” because of their economic dependence on China [61,para.25]. The same is most likely true for Japan.

## **2.2 The Cold War: Behavior Patterns and Contrasting Explanations**

The US and the USSR did engage in a war, defined as intense competition for influence over world affairs which they each saw, at its height, in zero-sum terms: the other side's gain is the counterpart’s loss. But they conducted this war in ways which resembled very little the wars of the past: a Cold War. The Cold War contest became a struggle for influence preeminence in states which they regarded as having strategic significance. They were vital potential or real allies in containment of the other. The advent of nuclear weaponry led to a fundamental change in international behavior due to unacceptability of direct use of force against the “superpowers.” Clear patterns of behavior emerged in the course of this Cold War nuclear-era contest. Two features defined the Cold War’s unique kind of competition for influence: 1) Critically important “engagements” or “battles” occurred at the non-violent level, 2) The US and the USSR demonstrated a willingness to accept defeat in these engagements to a degree which would have been unthinkable in past wars.



Hybrid warfare is not new. Intense conflict between nuclear powers functionally consists of competitive interference in the internal politics of states [62]. The Cold War antagonists conducted their conflict within the domestic political processes of other states, at times lethally within the so-called Third World states. They engaged in "competitive interference" [63], i.e., 1) they used the domestic politics of third states as the typical arena of engagement, and 2) they struggled for influence preeminence in states which they regarded as having strategic significance. They were vital potential or real allies in attempted containment of each other. External powers ally with local minorities seeking patronage to achieve self-determination, e.g., Kosovar Albanians, Russophone Ukrainians. In the past, conflicts as intense as the Cold War led to general, full-scale war.

Clear patterns of behavior emerged in the course of this Cold War nuclear-era contest and we expect similar patterns in other intense Great Power conflicts today: First, each superpower's functional "sphere of influence" included those countries in which the adversary would accept defeat in a battle for influence in its domestic political process because the adversary saw that counter actions might have a serious escalation potential for leading to a direct superpower (nuclear) military conflict. Second, however, the US and the USSR tolerated a surprising degree of diplomatic independence by small states in their respective spheres of influence. Third, an anomaly of the US-USSR Cold War was evident. Namely, the USSR tolerated American projections of influence deeply into what would appear--according to the "geopolitical" realist school--to obviously be within the Soviet sphere of influence. Yet the US demonstrated far less tolerance for similar Soviet efforts in the Western Hemisphere (e.g.: Nicaragua, Grenada).

The so-called Cold War US-USSR nuclear conflict erupted into violence at times. Proxy wars, e.g., Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Angola), Middle East (e.g., Arab Israeli conflict), were systematic. So, also were sponsored insurgency or counterinsurgency, as in the first stages of competitive foreign intervention in Southeast Asia and Central America. One nuclear power would engage in conventional military engagement with lesser allies of the other nuclear power (Vietnam, Grenada, Afghanistan). These violent conflicts at times did escalate through emergency involvement of superpower patrons to save their allies to the point that nuclear confrontation became a real possibility. The Cuban Missile Crisis and the 1973 Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War were cases.

Both policy makers and the observers, including academia, paid little attention to these political contests. Instead, they tended to focus their strategic analyses on hypothetical engagements involving the actual use of nuclear weaponry. Intense international conflict between nuclear powers in the era of nuclear weapons demonstrates the following patterns. Dropping of nuclear bombs is generally unthinkable as an option which a government consciously chooses. Each side fears the danger of unwanted but uncontrollable escalation of a violent conflict to a nuclear level while preventing a catastrophic conventional defeat. Each side chooses policy options at the non-violent level (such as covert subversion) or a level of violence too low to be likely to escalate into nuclear engagement. A strong tendency was to accept defeat at either the non-violent or violent levels rather than to risk serious escalation.

By cataloging the situations in which one or the other side accepted defeat, a picture of the US and USSR spheres of influence emerges. This picture is very different from what "geopolitical" strategists might expect. By this indicator, what we called "Eastern Europe" was essentially part of the Soviet sphere of influence. The Caribbean was essentially in the American sphere of influence. The US acquiesced in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The USSR acquiesced in Guatemala in 1954 and in Grenada in 1984.

But the US and the USSR tolerated a surprising degree of diplomatic independence by small states in these spheres of influence. The US grudgingly tolerated Cuba's alliance with the USSR. The USSR tolerated Yugoslavian and Romanian flirtations with the West. One anomaly of the US-USSR Cold War lay in the USSR tolerating American projections of influence deeply into what would appear--according to the "geopolitical" school to be obviously within the Soviet sphere of influence. The USSR acquiesced to the imposition of the Shah's dictatorship in Iran in 1953 by a coup which the CIA orchestrated to a significant degree. Iran had a 1700-kilometer border with the USSR and is many thousands of miles away from the US.

The Americans actively resisted the effects of the Soviet invasion of neighboring Afghanistan in 1979. But the US demonstrated far less tolerance for similar Soviet efforts in the Western Hemisphere, e.g., Nicaragua, Grenada. American practitioners and academics having a concern with strategy have consistently overlooked these patterns. Gaddis notes the role of the CIA in West Europe in the 1940s in passing.

**2.3 Differing Assumptions for Soviet Cold War Motivation Leading to Competing Explanations of the Motivations for Chinese Influence Expansion**

As Table 1 shows, the American prevailing view of the cause of the Cold War was Soviet belligerency with imperial expansionism as its primary motivation. In this definition of the international postwar situation, US belligerency, i.e., the use of deadly force in international relations, e.g., in Korea and Vietnam, was a defensive response. Soviet support for its regional clients in Asia, Africa and Latin America was the predominant strategy for Soviet hegemonic expansion. The onset of the nuclear setting in 1945 made direct great power conflict too costly, thereby incentivizing indirect and covert as well as plausibly deniable means of expansion. Orchestrating coups and encouraging insurgencies utilizing clients pursuing their own particular agendas under Soviet tutelage required a parallel response from the US military and covert security services. At times, both so-called superpowers would directly intervene to support an endangered client regime, e.g., the US in Korea and Vietnam, and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The term, containment, encapsulated the US postwar strategy for confronting the Soviet Union [29]. Successful containment would deny the Soviet authorities the imperial conquest it needed to legitimate its rule over a coercively controlled and exploited Soviet public. In this “Cold War victory school” view, the US ultimately succeeded in this long-term strategy [87,281]. Despite some postwar setbacks stemming from episodic poor US presidential leadership, Reagan delivered the fatal containment blow to the Soviet system, contributing to the reformer Mikhail Gorbachev’s rise in the USSR.

**Table 1: Proposition One: The US-Soviet Cold War Was Due to Soviet Imperialist Motivation**

<b>Proposition One</b>								
<b>State</b>	USA	USSR	UK	France	FRG	India	PRC	Japan
<b>Power Potential</b>	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Base rating:</b>								
<b>Intensity of perceived challenge from international system within the polity.</b>	4	1	6	6	7	4	2	9
<b>Direction of perceived challenge from international system within the polity [3].</b>	T(hreat)	O(pportunity)	T	T	T	O	T	T

Cottam [3] depicts in Proposition One a definition of the situation in which this hypothetical individual perceives the Cold War as essentially a value conflict. This view is comparable to the situation leading up to the Second World War. This observer interprets Soviet behavior reflecting an intensely aggressive, diabolically clever foe that perceives a marvelous opportunity to expand its influence against a decadent West. The other major powers are unwilling to recognize the seriousness of the threat. The inferred policy

prescription of this individual would be for the American leadership to alert the publics of the US and its allies to this danger. The US must encourage a will to resist the Soviet Union, not only to prevent further expansion but also to seek to roll back its influence as in Central America. The highly rational Soviet adversary would then accommodate to this demand once persuaded of the will and determination of this effective American leadership. A danger would be the rise of future American leaders who underestimate the aggressive intent of the monolithic Soviet enemy, which the highly rational Soviet leadership would exploit. Long-term success would require a succession of American leaders who would be vigilantly alert to the aggressive threat and maintained American willingness to make the necessary sacrifices for addressing it [3, ch. 2, 160].

This view of the Cold War prevails today in Washington which assumes that American Cold War leadership was effective in containing the USSR, forcing it to attempt to reform. These purported lessons are being collectively transferred to frame American relations with China. The large postwar security establishment created for implementing containment have incentives to continue perceiving self-servingly the world within a Cold War frame. This tendency reflects the adage that when a tool set gives a place of primacy to its array of hammers, then problems are more likely to be seen as variations on a nail.

The picture above is a depiction of one hypothetical observer's view of the Cold War, seeing it as a value conflict focused on the international level, i.e., Soviet and US conflict. In this definition of the situation, the observer sees Soviet foreign policy motivation as belligerently aggressive. It is a diabolically clever, cynically rational actor engaged in a long-term plan to dominate the international community [29]. This view characterizes the prevailing view in Washington regarding the Cold War that the US allegedly won by successfully containing the USSR. Transference of this image to Beijing appears increasingly in US rhetoric, and Beijing appears to be aware of it and its danger. They repeatedly make references to US Cold War thinking, as if the US would have a problem with such a depiction. Indeed, the Americans would applaud it because of the prevailing view portrayed of it in the image above. Beijing appears to be implying that the Cold War was a perception-based conflict due to mutual misperception of threat. They imply that the US made mistakes during the Cold War, including in Southeast Asia. China does not intend to invade and dominate anyone, as the US feared was an option by Moscow.

Cottam [3, ch. 2, 161] notes that he hypothetical individual in Proposition One viewed India as the Soviet Union's only major power ally at the international system level. India was not as intensely interested in exploiting opportunities to expand its influence, but a vital factor was the effectiveness of the US in restricting opportunities for India to expand.

As noted earlier, the focus of this study is on governmental policy. Japan is depicted as perceiving threat at a comparatively low intensity level rather than viewed as perceiving opportunity to expand its trade. It arguably would differ if the focus were on the perceived policy of the broader Japanese polity, i.e., including its industrial community. In that case, this hypothetical individual may portray the Japanese polity as having at this time a prevailing view that perceives opportunities to expand with high intensity concern. Should a trade war breakout in this scenario, then Japanese industry would call upon the Japanese government to give its full assistance in promoting the objectives of the industrialists. The intensity of Japanese government concern with perceived threat would increase greatly in such a scenario. During the Cold War, the Japanese government was focused on the Soviet threat. It was not an economic one and a low intensity concern, despite the significantly more intense concern prevailing in its American ally.

### **Implications of Transposing Proposition One to Today's PRC**

A component of the current escalating conflict between the US and China includes the trade war component. The Chinese governmental apparatus is relatively intensely concerned with defending and promoting its international corporate enterprises as having been critical for China's development. It indicates that China is likely to perceive high intensity threat from the US utilizing its global trade and finance public and private

sector assets to contain Chinese global influence. Chinese corporatism within a one-party authoritarian framework cause the Chinese polity and government prevailing views to be congruent.

US assets in the trade war include the status of the US dollar as a dominant world currency. According to Randall K. Quarles, US Federal Reserve vice chair for supervision, the dollar's position is not seriously challenged. "[I]ts power is grounded in trade linkages, deep financial markets, the rule of law in the United States and credible monetary policy from the Fed [US Federal Reserve] itself." Quarles, commenting on reports of China and other states moving to establish a central bank digital currency (C.B.D.C.), declared none of these factors making the dollar dominant "are likely to be threatened by a foreign currency, and certainly not because that foreign currency is a C.B.D.C." [64,para.9-10].

From this perspective, Japan risks being collateral damage should conflict intensify between Washington and Beijing within increasing pressure to restrict trade with China. Tokyo therefore would benefit from increasing its diplomatic bargaining leverage by supporting the development of the eurozone and increasing ties with the EU more broadly. Japan and the EU did announce a trade agreement soon after the new Trump administration withdrew American participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Japan will therefore support EU integration be preparing for the decoupling global economic integration from American security hegemony. France did something similar in relation to European integration.

Cottam [3,ch.2,161-62] proposes that those extreme Cold War US foreign policy decision makers advocating a roll back strategy towards the USSR held the most simplified diabolical enemy image of the USSR. The monolithic diabolical enemy stereotype was an obstacle to seeing the dynamic political complexities in the policy making processes within the Soviet Union. They would be less likely to perceive tactical options for achieving their strategic objectives. The possibilities for encouraging change in the target polity other than over the very long term would be less likely be perceived. Success for the rollback strategy would therefore require an alert, mobilized population in the initiator state that is motivated to sustain the necessary great sacrifices over many years. A less militant form of containment as advocated by George Kennan in the late 1940s would be seen by the rollback advocate as not fulling comprehending the threat. This danger stems from the inexorable aggressiveness, the monolithic decision making and extraordinary rationality of the enemy. The rollback advocate would see the more moderate containment advocate as lacking the necessary will and resolve to deter the diabolical enemy.

The validity of this portrayal of the disagreement between extreme rollback and moderate containment advocates seems to receive confirmation in that the extreme rollback assumptional worldview seemed to gain primacy during the Korean War and was institutionalized throughout the US foreign policy establishment. Kissinger's *modus vivendi* high level tactical approach to the Soviet Union in Europe as the essence of détente came under attack from more hardline cold warriors. Represented by individuals such as Donald Rumsfeld, they became ascendant in Washington after the purported lack of resolve of the Carter administration that allegedly permitted Soviet gains in Africa and Central America. Hence, the sudden collapse of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the USSR itself caught the American foreign policy establishment, including mainstream academia, by surprise.

The second propositional picture (below) regarding the Cold War legacy describes a hypothetical observer, Proposition Two, who views the Cold War as the result of mutual suspicion. The Cold War was not ultimately a value conflict, i.e., Soviet belligerency was not due to perceived opportunity to expand against an ineluctably desultory West. Rather, it was due to perceived threat from the West, leading to assertive policies which confirmed Washington's (mis)perception of Soviet aggressive imperial motivation. In sum, the best Soviet defense is a good Soviet offense, behavior reciprocated by the West, as both sides sought to contain the other, i.e., a conflict spiral. This dynamic characterized Europe in the leadup to the First World War. In Proposition Two, the USSR was essentially a status quo power, misperceived as imperialist.

Table 2 highlights the abstraction of a largely sidelined view of the source of the Cold War in Washington. It portrays the US-Soviet conflict as a conflict spiral [88]. Moscow and Washington misperceived the belligerency of the other as stemming ultimately from the other's purported imperial expansionism. This

alleged imperial drive had its source in the perception purportedly prevailing within the ruling circles of the threatening other that the defensive self was politically degenerate [29]. In sum, the imperialist other viewed the defensive self as lacking political capacity to generate and sustain the will and determination to sustain resistance against the imperial other. To disabuse the imperial other of this misperceived degeneracy, the defensive self, had vigorously to contain the imperial other wherever the alleged imperial other probed for distraction and weakness. From the US prevailing view perspective, failure to meet the challenge wherever the postwar Russian Eurasian superpower attempted to expand its neo-colonial Soviet Communist empire would be disastrous. It would repeat the tragic 1930s mistake of appeasing Hitlerian Germany. Acquiescence to Soviet expansionism would likely serve to confirm and strengthen the perception of degeneracy allegedly characterizing the West within Moscow's ruling circles. Appeasing Moscow would thereby likely make Soviet Russia more belligerently aggressive, not less. Moscow and Washington were both striving to contain the other. Each side's belligerency was mistakenly interpreted by the other as confirming this imperial motivation.

**Table 2: Proposition Two: The US-Soviet Cold War as a Perception-Based, Spiral Conflict**

<b>Proposition Two</b>								
State	USA	USSR	UK	France	FRG	India	PRC	Japan
PPB rating:	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Intensity	3	4	5	5	6	5	3	7
Direction	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	O

According to Cottam [3,ch.2,162-63] all of the major actors on the eve of the outbreak of major power war in 1914 had come to (mis)perceive adversarial aggressive intent. Those actors outside their respective alliance systems were (mis)perceived as imperialistic expansionists. In reality, they were belligerent defenders aiming to communicate assertively their resolve to resist the (mis)perceived imperialist expansion of the other. The appropriate strategy for deescalating this conflict would be one of détente. The aim as purpose would be to communicate to all the major actors that the danger they had perceived was rooted in misunderstanding of the intentions of the other major actors.

According to Cottam [3,ch.2,163] the hypothetical individual in Proposition Two held a definition of the international situation that did not focus exclusively on the Soviet-American conflict. This observer saw the sources of Indian foreign policy behavior in a medium-intensity perception of threat from a US-allied Pakistan. The Cold War partially shaped this individual's definition of the situation confronting India. This same individual viewed Japan as perceiving a minimal intensity of threat from the USSR. It was thus rather concerned with exploiting perceived opportunity to advance Japan's commercial interests at a mild level of intensity. Had this individual shifted focus to the Japanese polity more broadly, then a higher intensity of perceived opportunity may be registered.

### **Implications of Transposing Proposition Two to Today's PRC**

The parallels with the post-Trump administration period lies again in the Chinese authoritarian corporatist one-party capitalist political economy. It functionally equates the Chinese polity with the Chinese government. Hence the Chinese prevailing view has perceived a comparatively more intense perception of opportunity to advance its commercial interests until the Trump administration. Trump administration policies following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic have shifted this Chinese prevailing view from opportunity to threat. This shift is evidenced in Beijing's increasing restrictions on political autonomy in Hong Kong. It reflects the conspiratorial view in the institutionalized imperial stereotype that characterizes the People's Republic of China.

The hypothetical individual in Proposition Two in 2021 would note the acceleration in the intensification of conflict between Beijing and Washington since 2017. The Obama administration's vaunted pivot to Asia followed the crisis refocus of the G.W. Bush administration to the Middle East. The 2017 inauguration of the Trump administration led to the high-profile escalation of a trade war with the Chinese in early 2018. It set the political frame for scapegoating of China by American and global politicians appealing for domestic political support with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic 2 years later. The Biden administration has not reversed the substance of Trump's trade policies, while reasserting US leadership to meet the perceived global challenge from China. Part of the Chinese response has been an intensification of its control over Hong Kong.

The Trump administration's trade war with China was a demagogic appeal to US manufacturing centers that have experienced dislocation due to trade liberalization. Trump's tariff policies on Chinese imports did not result in an increase in manufacturing employment in the US [65]. Little concern is evinced in the US media regarding how Beijing reacted to these policies. Beijing's response is characterized by efforts to deter the US and its allies from changing the status quo, with a particular focus on Taiwan's status. Deterrence is a strategic policy against a perceived threatening enemy.

Cottam [3,ch.2,163-64] highlights the importance of forming an accurate understanding of the intentions/motivations behind a great power's belligerency. If the hypothetical individual in Proposition One has a valid comprehension of the sources of Soviet belligerency, then adopting a détente strategy may possibly be calamitous. P1 assumes that Soviet Cold War belligerency was due to perceived opportunity to expand influence because the Soviet Union confronted an ineluctably desultory West. A détente strategy in such a case would disastrously confirm the Soviet prevailing view of Western degeneracy, i.e., the West is a paper tiger. When push comes to shove, the West will make peace, as London and Paris did with Hitlerian Germany during the 1938 Munich crisis. Appeasement as a calamitous strategic error is understandable in these terms. 1938 appeasement of Germany wrongly assumed Berlin's belligerency was primarily due to a hostility to Germany's interwar humiliation, severance and subordination. A real Cold War détente strategy assumes belligerency derives from misperceived threat. Gorbachev launched a détente strategy towards the West after assuming control in the mid-1980s.

Similarly, if Proposition Two definition of the situation is valid, then a containment strategy would be potentially calamitous. It mistakenly assumes that Soviet belligerency was due to a perceived marvelous opportunity by an imperialist, revisionist Soviet leadership to expand Soviet influence. Western containment-founded belligerency risked confirming that Soviet (mis)perception of threat. The Soviet leadership's belligerent reaction to project will and determination to resist would contribute further to the conflict spiral.

The essential analytical aim is to determine the West's perception of the sources of Beijing's belligerency towards opposition in Hong Kong and shows of force towards Taiwan. A containment strategy assumes that the target's belligerency has a foundation in the perception of a marvelous opportunity against a hopelessly disorganized, unfocussed West. Resolute, long-term containment as the appropriate strategic response aims to communicate resolve and generate deterrence. A detente strategy assumes the target's belligerency has a foundation in misperceived aggressive, imperialist intent on the part of the initiator.

China's behavior comports more closely to an insecure status quo power responding to intensifying conflict with other great powers. It may derivatively perceive an opportunity towards the post-colonial, multiethnic states of Asia to assert its subjectively defined territorial rights in these areas. The US similarly derivatively perceived opportunities to expand its influence in the so-called developing world during the Cold War to contain competing Soviet expansion. The intensity with which the US perceived these derivative opportunities were congruent with the intensity of threat that the US perceived from Moscow.

### **Nation States vs. Multinational States**

One necessary factor for explaining the comparative sluggishness of the USSR in responding to American influence expansion onto its border states lies in the USSR itself. The USSR was a multinational state, with roughly half of population ethnically Russian. The other 14 titular Soviet republics contained a host of other primary intensity self-identification ethnic, sectarian and racial ingroups. The Soviet governing apparatus relied primarily on coercion to maintain the integrity of the Soviet state. It did so but in combination with accommodation and reconciliation of national political self-expression demands among conflicting groups [28]. It contrasts with the US, which is a colonizer immigration-based, territorial nation state. The Soviet authorities ultimately failed in constructing a prevailing, primary intensity self-identification of the modal Soviet citizen with the Soviet territorial community. The significance of this distinction is evident in the more pronounced tendency of the US to project power globally during the Cold War. As a nation state, the US collectively was more prone 1) to perceive the external environment in terms of threats and opportunities for the American nation state; 2) to stereotype the sources of those perceived challenges, and 3) to overestimate its relative power capabilities [28]. Post-Soviet Russia is a nation state [28].

China is also a nation state. China's relative power capabilities continue to increase. It is thus more prone to display foreign policy behavior patterns more congruent with the US as well as with the post-Soviet Russian nation state than with the old USSR. Stereotyping and the collective affect that associates with it is more prone to characterize the prevailing view of the definition of the international situation in a nation state polity. The parameters will be more vulnerable to narrowing in terms of the collective ability to perceive and act on a broader range of policy options. Crisis decision making dynamics are more prone to emerge and escalate in a self-reinforcing cycle, risking loss of control of the political dynamics of the crisis.

The assumptions underpinning Cold War deterrence theory were that the USSR was a coldly rational, monolithic actor. It calculated the costs and benefits of incentives that US containment policy applied when under superior American leadership with the resolve to resist the ineluctably aggressive USSR. In reality, the multi-national nature of the authoritarian Soviet polity lessened the impact of volatile public opinion on Soviet foreign policy making. The Soviet leadership could withdraw from Iran after the Second World War and choose to acquiesce to the CIA-orchestrated 1953 coup in Iran and withdraw from Austria in 1955. The nationalistic public opinion foreign policy constraints and demands on the Chinese and American and post-Soviet Russian leaderships are comparatively greater [28].

The nationalistic political decisional latitude constraints on the Chinese leadership seem to be recognized by some analysts. The political decisional latitude available to the Beijing Communist authorities to acquiesce to the recognition of Taiwan's sovereignty is acknowledged by some Western observers. Taiwan aside, blockading Beijing's logistical access to its recently constructed military bases on South China Sea atolls is noted by some as likely to lead to a Chinese military response. Brands and Cooper [66] cite a *Newsweek* report:

Retreating in the South China Sea would be a great humiliation for the Chinese leadership; one imagines that Beijing would be willing to accept a great deal of pain rather than submit to it. After all, Chinese leaders repeatedly have made clear that they view the South China Sea as both a part of China and a vital national interest, and as Fu Ying, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress of China, has warned, "The people won't tolerate if we lose territory yet again" ([66,19, citing Broder [67]).

The anti-imperialist, nationalist foundations of the Chinese Communist state in seeking legitimacy from Chinese public opinion appear to be acknowledged here. This quote reflects the portrayal by the Chinese authorities of modern history as one of external imperial intervention to partition the Chinese national community. The Communist authorities claim credit for rectifying much of this de facto or de jure partitioning but the irredentist process continues towards Taiwan as well as the South China Sea.

Brands and Cooper [66] recommend what they call a contain/offset hybrid strategy in dealing with China. Their recommendation appears reminiscent of the early containment strategy recommendation of George

Kennan. Kennan emphasized not only military capabilities, but an emphasis on the economic and cultural elements of containment.

Capitalism and trade are the focus of the Chinese leadership in its one party-state led authoritarian corporatist development approach. It disincentivizes perceptions that the PRC is a radical revisionist state with a revolutionary ideology in the postwar nuclear setting. As part of this softer containment strategy, Brands and Cooper do not advocate formal recognition of Taiwan as an option. Rather, the US can offset conflictual Chinese expansionist moves “by incrementally expanding the U.S. defense relationship with Taiwan or other regional parties” [66,23]. It would be the framework for a strategy to respond to Chinese expansion with policy responses that assume a differentiation among constituencies within the Chinese polity. The Chinese military may advocate a belligerent, assertive stance. Business constituencies that promote more cooperative attitudes must not be alienated by militant containment policies, not to mention rollback.

The Biden administration perceives significant complexity within the foreign policy-making process of the Chinese government. Increasing threat to US’ self-perceived national security interests derives from the growing capacities of the foreign policy bureaucracies of the Chinese state. Beijing’s allocates an increasing proportion of its developing national resources towards increasing the capacities of Beijing’s diplomatic instruments. Beijing is utilizing these increasing capacities. The prevailing view in Washington is that this behavior indicates increasing challenge to the current international institutions both reflecting and supporting US hegemony.

These formal and informal international institutions are the so-called rules-based international order. Concurrently, this same prevailing view still perceives Beijing as having vested its interests in the global economic international system. This system has played a critical function until now in rapidly developing Beijing’s economic resources. This component of the prevailing view still assumes that powerful economic constituencies constrain Beijing’s belligerency. Reports note, for example, that the Biden administration and Beijing have agreed to include China in the recent initiative to adopt a global corporate tax regime. “Despite the recent animosity, the United States was able to help coax China into joining the global tax agreement that [US Treasury Secretary] Ms. Yellen has been helping to broker. The Biden administration believes that China wants to be part of the multilateral system and that fully severing ties between the two countries would not be healthy for the global economy” [68,para.44]. These public statements critique the more belligerent Trump administration policy that placed tariffs on a range of Chinese goods as well as requiring Beijing increase US imports. China has not met these import targets. The Biden administration continued the Trump administration’s focus on China’s human rights abuses within its economic production chains. It has developed further these economic sanctions on particular Chinese corporations and individuals it declared as utilized forced labor.

The portrayal by Brands and Cooper of the Chinese state actor shifts towards a more monolithic portrayal of the Chinese foreign policy making process: e.g., “Part of the trouble, no doubt, lies in the sheer difficulty of meeting a calculated Chinese offensive that is simultaneously audacious and subtle, one that is changing the geopolitical status quo profoundly but incrementally, in ways designed not to provoke a decisive response” [66,13].

Behavioral tendencies toward both incremental and crisis exploitation of perceived opportunities to expand influence characterizes the post-Cold War nation state. It is particularly likely if the polity devotes a significant portion of its resources to the creation and maintenance of a substantial foreign policy and national security establishment. These vested bureaucratic and economic interests in foreign engagement will tend to lobby to defend and increase their respective allocations of national resources. They will tend to perceive and portray a definition of the external situation accordingly, emphasizing the importance of their respective advocated aims for the national interest. The foreign policy process of any state functionally serves to reconcile the competing and conflicting aims of these contesting political constituencies. Concluding that Beijing’s long



term influence expansion is due to a plan that is simultaneously audacious, subtle and incremental is problematic. It comports with a depiction of the Chinese foreign policy making process as monolithic.

### US Strategy

In comparison, the expansion of US influence, globally since 1989 was not part of a “plan” that is simultaneously “audacious” and “subtle,” but it is obvious nonetheless. US military interventions have accelerated since the end of the Cold War. The US relied upon the system of alliances that it constructed during the Cold War. Those great power actors that are not components of the system would functionally respond. The US authorities have come to perceive those responses as indicative of intent that is at least dysfunctional. The US-led authorities’ prevailing view is that Beijing’s purported challenge is to the US-led postwar order than created and protected postwar prosperity, security and democracy.

The June 14, 2021, NATO summit communique portrayed China as a challenger “to the rules-based international order” [60,para.55]. Along with the NATO meeting, a US aircraft carrier and accompanying fleet steamed into the South China Sea. China condemned NATO for hypocrisy and sent a large number of aircraft over waters south of Taiwan [59]. The US willingness to reserve to itself and its allies the final word on interpreting these rules has been evident at crisis points in the post-Cold War era. They include the 1999 NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia without UN Security Council authorization. NATO bombs struck the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three [69].

The association of liberal values with nationalism is the essence of soft power in the form of perceived transnational appeal of ideology. The appeal of Nazi ideology was part of the *zeitgeist* but the nuclear setting makes national social competition indirect. The Beijing consensus may be appealing to multiethnic states in which coercive authoritarianism will characterize the regime. If conflict spirals and intensifies to genocidal levels, then these genocidal conflicts do not make them particularly attractive places for FDI by global MNCs. They may be appealing to Chinese MNCs but Chinese MNCs are now under assault from the West.

It is noteworthy that the Chinese authorities defend their coercion against Uighurs as necessary to develop them and liberate their women from subservient abuse in traditional societies. In terms of development models, China will still be focused on successful growth policies. The ability not only to develop but mass produce and implement it as an infrastructure within the community will be the yardstick for evaluating these systems.

Wu [70,183] critiques the longstanding US policy of “strategic ambiguity” towards Taiwan’s autonomy. Wu notes that escalating policy conflicts between the US and China includes heightened debate in the US as to its long standing one China policy. Wu observes that jettisoning this by declaring the US commitment to supporting Taiwan’s sovereignty would be costly. Wu assumes that Japan would automatically commit itself to supporting the US position.

Additionally, a clear and strong strategic assurance would force other major powers in the region to make similar declarations—Japan among them—to defend the democratic island. The United States would then have to strengthen its military preparations and spending in East Asia to be able to respond to any sudden contingencies in East Asia. Similarly, Japan would also reinforce its security and diplomatic cooperation with Taiwan. Australia and India, other major powers nearby, might then be required to rearrange national security blueprints and respond military to an attack on Taiwan from China. By the logic of this interpretive framework, an increased military presence in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea may raise the possibility of military accidents between China and the U.S.-led alliances, potentially escalating to a general military conflict [70,183].

Rigger [71,12] outlines the function of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) that the US Congress adopted in response to the Carter administration’s normalization of relations with Beijing. “The TRA satisfies no one;” Beijing resents its continuing commitment to Taiwan’s security, while many Taiwanese and Americans would

prefer full recognition of Taipei's sovereignty. Rigger also highlights the high cost to the US of jettisoning the TRA, noting Republican calls in the pre-Covid-19 pandemic era to recognize the liberal democratic state.

The power differentials that Hans Morgenthau pointed out regarding Japan remained. A set of several large islands, Japan does not have the landmass access to natural resources on a scale anywhere nearly comparable to the US and China. France as part of European integration had access to European economic resources under American military hegemony to facilitate economic integration with Germany. Japan is dependent upon freedom of sea navigation for its survival. It therefore would view itself as particularly challenged by Chinese efforts to seek hegemonic control over the South China Sea. It may reinforce Japan's dependence on relations with the US but in the nuclear era direct confrontations would be suicidal. The US is not likely to move militarily against China if it attempts to take control over Taiwan with military force.

### **Competing Japanese Foreign Policy Strategy Prescriptions**

The strategy policy prescription for Japan is to formulate a strategy for soft balancing in order to undercut the emergence of a prevailing view that Tokyo favors changing the status quo. Japan should impress upon Washington the importance of not recognizing Taiwan independence. Japan's surreptitious but publicly reported participation in war game exercises, couched as relief operation exercises with the US to defend Taiwan are problematic: "US and Japanese military officials began serious planning for a possible conflict in the final year of the Trump administration, according to six people who requested anonymity. The activity includes top-secret tabletop war games and joint exercises in the South China and East China seas" [72,para.2].

Reports highlight that Tokyo is increasingly clear in public alerts from government officials that Beijing's attitude towards Taiwan has increased in belligerency [73][74]. These reports indicate that Tokyo's attitude is to coordinate with the Biden administration with the aim of deterring Beijing. These reports do not include evidence of conflicting positions within the Japanese government. Within this study's framework, an important debate would be as to whether Beijing's increasing belligerency is due to intensifying perceived threat or opportunity from Washington. The value component of the Taipei-Beijing dispute is the basis of the conflict. It is Chinese irredentism towards national territory that Beijing's prevailing view sees as separated from the homeland due to a history of imperial intervention. The issue here is whether this prevailing view now sees the US as increasingly prone to reverse its previous commitment not to recognize Taipei's sovereignty. The Beijing prevailing view then would be that the US has imperial intentions. The rhetoric emanating from Beijing supports that inferred worldview. The question then becomes whether Beijing's rhetoric is a stalking horse rather for perceived opportunity. In the latter view, Beijing's belligerence aims to exploit American weakness due to American internal political polarization. An adherent to the latter view would likely argue that the failure to contain Chinese expansion under Xi Jinping has reinforced Beijing perceptions of America's decline. This decline is due to the inherent relative superiority of Beijing's political system [75][76].

This study design focuses on identifying the assumptions which political actors have that define their competing definition of the international situation. The focus of the empirical approach in this study is on the imagery that the relevant actors have each other as their respective underlying assumptions guiding their decision making. The aim is to identify two competing, most plausible propositions regarding the definition of the situation as being most accurate from among several with a reasonable degree of confidence. The methodological challenges confronting the analyst here are such that the foreign policy decision makers do not simply accept them as the valid basis for national security policy decisions. Rather, the validity of these propositions should be explicitly tested by the foreign policy decision maker building in such tests into foreign policy. These tests include predictions regarding how the target state should respond. The target's belligerency may have imperialist motivations against a (mis)perceived weak-willed, irresolute initiator state. The target state's belligerency may also be due to defensive motivations against a (mis)perceived dangerous threat from the initiator state. The initiator state's détente strategy should tend to encourage further aggression from the

former and encourage reciprocation from the latter. If détente leads to further aggression, then a containment strategy by the initiator state should be formulated.

The salience of American nationalism rose in predominance in US foreign policy during the Nixon administration as frustration with the violent stalemate continued [30]. The failures of US policy in the Middle East will witness a simultaneous, greater likelihood of the US advancing its influence elsewhere against a targeted challenger. US recognition of Taiwan's independence would publicly institutionalize the US commitment to Taiwan's sovereignty as a close democratic ally in opposition to Communist China. As noted earlier, such an American policy change would intensify political pressures on Japan and other American allies to substantially increase their allocation of resources to security. Their support for the American action will impact their economic interests in China. Earlier business community commentary noted that the US and Chinese economies were interdependent to the point that Beijing and Washington would not significantly sanction the other lest it hurt itself. The actions of the Trump administration belie this earlier claim, e.g.:

[T]he US and China are actively seeking to 'decouple' their economies from each other through greater self-reliance. This is evident from federal government-driven efforts in the US and from China's latest five-year plan (2021-2025). This is also in stark contrast to their interdependency (dubbed 'Chimerica') in the 2000s, when policymakers in both Washington and Beijing feared that any substantial actions to punish the other side would also hurt themselves. The Trump era changed that, and it is still possible that trade tensions could rise again under Biden. Meanwhile, the US and China have stepped up their geopolitical competition worldwide. This threatens to divide the world, or at least the Indo-Pacific region (the prime focus of this struggle), into loose US-led and China-led camps in areas such as trade, security and technology. Within those spheres of influence, the process of 'globalisation' could continue, but it would not be the same globalisation of the 1990s-2000s [77,3-4].

This political pressure for economic “decoupling” has been justified in terms of “national security” [78,29]. Postwar Japan outsourced its national security policy to Washington. As the intensity of conflict in Beijing-Washington relations escalates, cost to Japan's business community will pay an escalate as well. to the extent that Japan continues to function as a US client state. To avoid this scenario, Japan will need to develop an autonomous security policy capability and change its relationship with the US to be perceived in Beijing as an autonomous actor.

With regard to these emerging realities of this new world order, how then would existing international institutions, especially the United Nations, and other institutions with the charge of aspects of conflict resolution, adapt? The US and these institutions addressed this question more implicitly than explicitly, and they did so in a similarly informal manner. The defining characteristics of this response occurred in the course of crisis management responses. The response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 gave definition to the functional alterations. The US, and in particular President Bush, quickly demonstrated the extraordinary importance of the role which the US assumed as the “one remaining superpower” [28,247].

In the containment phase of the Gulf War, Operation Desert Shield, Bush set into motion the orchestration of an operation which included over thirty governments as well as most relevant international institutions. Bush did permit these institutions, however, to exercise leadership within very narrow limits. He reduced the role of the United Nations to being little more than a support group. The US denied the Arab League and even those Arab governments who chose to cooperate even the expression of an Arab solution to a crisis which was essentially an Arab one. The US isolated and openly scorned those Arab and regional governments which refused to cooperate.

In contrast, the dealt far more respectfully with government of the USSR and the members of NATO which were striving to continue their relevance. Bush viewed maintaining their support as important and it thereby gave them some leverage. Still, US preeminence was the essential feature of this operation.

This analytic frame can similarly relate nationalism to Morgenthau's quality-of-leadership factor [79,116-17] ([cited in [28,151]). In generating a response which he desired, this study already noted Franklin Roosevelt's exceptional facility with which he was able to manipulate national symbols. A willingness to make the sacrifices necessary to give the nation a strong voice in world affairs, along with the reinforcement of a commitment to the national community and the regime representing it, was the response which he generated. Making possible the mobilization of American manpower and resources to confront a serious external challenge was the response which Roosevelt, in particular, desired.

The role Charles de Gaulle was able to play as president of France illustrates the importance of this aspect of leadership. The world's prevailing view of the ability of the French government to project influence in world affairs was that it was below the level of one of the world's great powers describes the world context in which de Gaulle served, with the capability image of France in much of the world being one of serious decline [28,151-52]. To support a foreign policy which was largely in tune with his image of French capability, de Gaulle was able to rally the French people to fulfill his deep commitment to the persistence of French grandeur at the great-power level. At the level of influence which he desired, de Gaulle largely succeeded, briefly, in projecting it [28,152].

Chan [80] calls for Australia to explore a foreign policy formula which the author labels as strategic hedging. In sum, Australia should forge trade agreements and security alliances with the Indo-Pacific's mid-range powers. It should not continue to be critically dependent economically on access to the Chinese market. Chan highlights the underdeveloped trade and security relationship that Canberra has with Seoul. Congruently, Canberra should reduce its over reliance for its security needs through its security alliance with the United States.

Of course, Chan highlights the importance of Japan, but Chan underestimates the critical necessity for Japanese leadership in this regard. The importance of Japan stems from this very strong power potential base as the third largest economy in the world. It is also among the most technologically advanced states. Of great significance is that it is, like France, a nation state. It therefore has the power capability resources to mobilize its material and technical resources to pursue foreign policy objectives.

Partly for this reason, one may comprehend the insistence in Tokyo to hold the 2020 Summer Olympics in 2021 despite the low level of population vaccination against Covid-19. Tokyo's urgency in moving forward reflects the nature of interstate competition in the nuclear setting in which the Covid-19 global pandemic has magnified global awareness of complex interdependency. Vaccine diplomacy competition is another example of these trends in which competition with China reflects presenting the polity as a development partner. Beijing fully intends to hold the 2022 Winter Olympics with the coronavirus with its population fully vaccinated. The 2022 Winter Olympics also may well be boycotted by the self-described democratic societies including the US, Japan and India.

Ye [54,23] outlines that according to the literature the elements of a hedging strategy include "soft balancing, accommodation, pure containment, balancing without containment, and counter-dominance." Ye notes that these conceptualizations highlight the inadequacies of a simple dichotomy balancing versus bandwagoning, but Ye suggests that this categorization may obfuscate the essential political factors driving this behavior. This analysis suggests that evolving prevailing views of the motivations perceived as driving other great power actors shape these behaviors. Japanese establishment constituency views regarding the stability and reliability of the US in maintaining peace in the Pacific may well become less coherent. The Japanese military, for example, may favor maintaining a close security alliance with the US even as the overall US-China relationship displays intensifying perceptions of challenge regarding each other. The Japanese business community, however, will surely note the importance of cooperation with Beijing to maintain access to the market of its largest trading partner. The Japanese foreign policy making process seeks to reconcile these conflicting pressures among these establishment constituencies. Japanese foreign policy behavior patterns will change as well.

In so doing, de Gaulle's initiatives raised the level of prestige that France gained in world affairs despite losing its empire, at times involving massive violence as in Southeast Asia and Algeria. Japan's complete defeat in the Second World War allowed the American occupation to remove the Japanese military from the postwar establishment authority system. The remaining establishment authority components filled the void, so that economic interests within the framework of American hegemony dominated postwar Japanese foreign policy. Its corporatist development elite were left unchallenged due to the absence of establishment constituencies demanding a place of primacy for Japan in international security diplomacy. The absence of such a security constituency contrasts Japan with postwar French, Russian and American foreign policy and their evolving respective strategic foci.

The critical strategic approach to peace maintenance in the Indo-Pacific which this paper aims to present would recommend support for expanding Japan's defense capabilities. The Trump administration pressured the Abe government to increase its annual military defense spending to 2% of GDP, doubling the heretofore ceiling of 1% [81]. This postwar ceiling has been allegedly symbolically significant, presumably in terms of serving as an indicator of postwar Japanese foreign policy motivation. A recent defense minister, Nobuo Kishi, in the immediate post-Abe government under Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, was the younger brother of Shinzo Abe. Abe was the grandson of former wartime minister and postwar prime minister Nobosuke Kishi. This ancestry highlights the continuing centrality of the civilian establishment elite in leading Japan's evolving strategic response to accelerating change in the international order. Kishi advocated jettisoning the 1% ceiling as a necessity to respond to Chinese influence expansion over the Senkaku islands.

"As Shinzo Abe, Kishi was a member of the revisionist far-right Nippon Kaigi, and several other center-right groups. He supported the revision of the Constitution's "pacifist" Article 9, and he advocated tougher policies against China [82]. Kishi expressed concern regarding Chinese foreign policy intentions before the European Parliament's subcommittee on security and defense. China's policies include decision to increase China's military budget to what would be four times the size of Japan's annual military expenditures. They include militarization of South China Sea islands. Kishi declared that Beijing's policies should be "observed vigilantly" in order to "preserve peace"; "China has been in beefing up its military capacity very rapidly and we are not sure what the Chinese intentions are" [83,paras.6,2]. This statement implicitly states that a valid estimation of the sources of Chinese assertiveness is necessary. China's belligerency may derive from a prevailing view that the US and its allies are comparatively politically divided and unable to organize effective resistance to China's growing influence. If this influence includes threat and use of deadly force to achieve objectives, e.g., reunification of Taiwan, then an effective containment strategy is necessary to undermine this prevailing view. Chinese belligerency derives from a prevailing view that the US and its clients seek to overthrow the Chinese regime and its authorities.

A pattern perhaps exists comparable to that in Stalin's Moscow. Formal and informal, public and private sector institutional influences on Chinese society aim to polarize Chinese society and weaken authority control. In this worldview, these "splittists" utilize liberties in Hong Kong and hypocritically exploit human rights issues to undermine the unity of the Chinese nation. The founding of the Chinese Communist Party in opposition to foreign intervention and partition remains a foundational legitimation principle for CP rule among the CP elite. A third scenario builds on the history of imperialism in China in that Chinese belligerency is reflects a renewed collective self-confidence in China's relative power capabilities. The stereotyped nature of foreign powers as the victors over China during its period of weakness and humiliation resulted in an unacceptable status quo, e.g., the de facto independence of Taiwan. As China then redresses this institutionalized international relative marginalization of China, the US and its allies and clients will assuredly resist. This resistance must be overcome with cautious but firm long-term resolve, will and determination which only the current Chinese regime can provide. The potential for a cold war-type conflict spiral is evident in this third case as it does in the second. The third also perceives opportunities through indirect competition via corporatist capitalist production development intervention in the so-called developing world.

The rise of reactionary populist nationalism in the US and its downgrading of alliances implies greater potential for destabilization of the postwar US-dominated order. American setbacks, e.g., defeat in Afghanistan, increases the possibility for compensatory responses that appeal to American nationalism. One likely scenario would include recognizing Taiwan through a formal security guarantee. In this increasingly unstable environment, Japan continuing to be perceived as a client state of the US risks it being perceived as part of a US neo-colonial control or subjugation strategy towards China. Japan can engage in soft balancing through emphasizing the elaboration and development of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPATPP). Japan can emphasize its membership in a community of states committed to human rights promotion. After Trump's successful 2016 presidential campaign that rejected the TPP, a US president is unlikely to have the political decisional latitude to join the CPATPP. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) includes China as well as South Korea, so human rights are unlikely to be a concern. Hence, Japan should emphasize trade negotiations under the CPATPP framework.

Japan's immediate post-Cold War effort to legitimate its increased autonomy and influence in international affairs focused on gaining permanent membership on the UN Security Council. In 30 years since the end of the Cold War, this effort has been unsuccessful. It would be desirable insofar as Beijing would view Tokyo as not continuing to allow itself to continue to be perceived as a handmaiden of US foreign policy. Acquiring a more autonomous image would not necessitate expelling US military bases from Japan.

Bradford [34] outlines Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) strategy without focusing on the internal political dynamics driving two of the major foci of this strategy: the US and China. Bradford [3485-86] asserts that "for many watchers within the region, the United States is broadly seen as being in relative decline, hamstrung by domestic political division and unable to match China's rate of geoeconomics expansion. Still, the United States remains an important-often the most important-military and security partner for most states in the region. Similarly, it remains the leading global security partner of all the extraregional powers reviewed in this study." Erickson and Wuthnow [84,14] note US General Douglas MacArthur's description of Taiwan as "an unsinkable aircraft carrier and submarine tender." The Taiwan US legation itself within the last twelve months publicly reminded the American public of MacArthur's description in appealing for stronger US support against Beijing [85].

### **3. CONCLUSION**

US domestic public pressure on the current and future US administrations to recognize formally Taiwanese sovereignty will most likely intensify. Japan must mediate between Beijing and Washington to encourage détente. To do so, Japan must be perceived as having the capability to pursue and defend its vital national security interests. These interests include preventing the escalation of US-China relations to the point that the US would grant such recognition, while demanding that Japan support the US position. The Japanese must be in a diplomatic bargaining leverage position to oppose these demands in this hypothetical scenario.

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