Obama and the Emergence of a Multipolar World Order

Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy

CHRIS J. DOLAN

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Acknowledgments

The idea to research and write this book was born somewhere over the ocean on a transatlantic flight to Brussels in May 2015. I was traveling to Europe to teach a course on international law. I spent the next five weeks living with my son Braiden in the Netherlands collecting research, and traveling to and from various locations across Europe, attending conferences, and conducting interviews while teaching a course on international law. The book expanded from one word into lengthy working manuscripts presented at conferences and other academic meetings on various continents.

Writing a book about Barack Obama during the 2016 presidential election and Brexit was like drinking from a fire hose. All that I thought I knew about U.S. foreign policy was turned upside by the mayhem and confusion of that election year. The tumult of that election bled its way into this book as an impulsive, undisciplined, and inexperienced candidate in Donald Trump defeated the status quo candidate in Hillary Clinton.

Following Trump's victory, my assumption was the status quo was being undermined. Wrong. Things already changed eight years ago with the Great Recession and thirteen years ago with the U.S. invasion of Iraq. I was the one catching up to an America exhausted by war, resentful of its allies, frustrated with the economic recovery, and more nationalist and yearning to recapture something from its past.

This book is an examination of Obama's foreign policy choices and the degree with which they were shaped and constrained by the pressures of a changing international system and shifting domestic politics. It is a study about Obama's frustrations with leading U.S. foreign policy through the reemergence of a multipolar world and the fraying of the so-called U.S.-led world order.

Throughout the research process, I attended and met policymakers, journalists, elected officials, military commanders, and scholars from around the world at meetings convened and sponsored by the National Commission on U.S.-China Relations, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. They provided me with their insight and suggestions throughout the research process. I also want to thank Lebanon Valley College for its generous support and for providing me an environment to interact with students who serve as constant source of inspiration.

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Introduction

President Obama and the Foreign Policy Landscape

President Barack Obama was elected in 2008 to lead the economy through the housing and financial crises, Great Recession, and to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq. Calling for "nation-building here at home," Obama moved quickly to regulate financial services, stem job losses, return to economic growth, and reform the U.S. health-care system (quoted in Sestanovich 2016). Most presidential elections are not about foreign policy or international relations, so it is not surprising that voters may not perceive or understand the extent to which American power and prosperity are intertwined with the international system. But 2008 was different. The global economy was in free fall, unemployment skyrocketing, and millions around the world losing trillions of dollars in their homes, businesses, and other assets in what was the greatest economic emergency since the Great Depression. The European Union was experiencing its own crisis with the Greek economy imploding and other southern European economies shedding jobs and threatening the eurozone. The center of gravity in the international system was already shifting to Asia and the Pacific with China and India rapidly developing and expanding their wealth and reshaping the global economy. Meanwhile, throughout the 2008 campaign, Obama argued that the U.S. military foray in Iraq undermined U.S. national security, risked America's global image and U.S. leadership, and took the focus off the global war against Al-Qaeda and securing Afghanistan. As president, Obama (quoted in Myers and Cooper 2009) would state, "It is time for us to transition to the Iraqis," and encourage them "to take responsibility for their country and for their sovereignty." Obama saw it as necessary to adjust U.S. foreign policy in response to domestic and international pressures and to an emerging multipolar world brought on by the decades-long movement of global power from West to East.

The ultimate challenge for Obama was responding to the crisis of confidence in the rules-based international order brought on by the Great Recession, which threatened to undermine the international network of rules, institutions, norms, alliances, and relationships developed by the United States and its allies in the wake of the Second World War. For over seventy years, the order prevented the outbreak of another major power war, resolved interstate conflict, incentivized and expanded international trade and foreign direct investment, and encouraged cultural exchange. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy sought to make the order much more flexible and open to encourage economic growth and development, leading to several so-called states like China, India, and Brazil. Millions have been lifted out of poverty, education levels improved, and the global middle class has expanded. The United States has also opened its economy to trade and financial investment as well as to cultural exchange with other countries through open and flexible arrangements, which in turn enable it to become a wealthy and powerful country (Ikenberry 2012: 159–277; Thornberry and Krepinevich 2016: 27).

Given economic and political crises disrupting the international order and the changes reshaping the domestic context, Obama was cautious in his approach. Although his detractors criticized him for "leading from behind," Obama explained that his strategic vision and foreign policy agenda were premised on the following guiding principle: "Don't do stupid shit" (see Lizza 2011; Parsons et al. 2014; Rothkopf 2014). Obama (quoted in Rothkopf 2014) even used baseball metaphors, "You hit singles; you hit doubles. Every once in a while we may be able to hit a home run." Consequently, Obama steered U.S. foreign policy toward a reduced global role by moving away from Bush's unilateralism and ideological neoconservatism and adapting to an increasingly multipolar international system (Danforth 2016).

Obama began by rebalancing U.S. foreign policy priorities to the growing Asia-Pacific and encourage its allies in Europe and the Middle East to provide more for their own security. He conveyed his frustration with long-standing U.S. allies, accusing them of behaving a free-riders who wait for the United States to act and fail to share the burden. The president also recognized the limits of American power and resisted pressures to use U.S. military force abroad (Ikenberry 2012: 279–332; Thornberry and Krepinevich 2016: 27–28). This was most apparent in Syria where he believed another military intervention would be harmful and dangerous, even contradicted himself by supporting U.S. participation in the NATO intervention in Libya. Obama sought to move U.S. foreign policy toward a lesser, more focused American role much to the consternation of his critics.

The external and domestic crises confronting Obama and much of the liberal democratic world masked what now seems more and more apparent:

the transition in the international order away from post–Cold War American hegemony and dominance to a more competitive, multipolar international system. The challenge for the new, largely inexperienced Obama was deciding how best to navigate these critical events and position U.S. foreign policy in a way that would rebalance American interests within the diversity and complexity of a world in transition. The crisis of confidence provided rivals and challengers like Russia, China, and Iran with unique opportunities to disrupt, reshape, or challenge U.S. foreign policy in Europe, East Asia and the Western Pacific, and the Middle East. While it is debatable as to whether these actors have the capability of undermining seventy years of building and maintaining the U.S.-led rules-based international architecture, it is certainly worth examining the extent to which the Obama administration responded to challengers.

Obama initially took a pragmatic look at where in the world U.S. interests are most at stake. In the Middle East, Obama promised in the 2008 election to withdraw U.S. military forces from Iraq, rebalance toward Iran by lifting sanctions and negotiating the multilateral nuclear agreement, diversify and boost domestic energy extraction, and encourage states in the region to provide their own security and regional stability. Such a move would allow U.S. foreign policy to rebalance or pivot to emerging markets and security challenges in Asia and the Pacific and contend with the rising power of China, perhaps greatest geopolitical challenge to the United States in the twenty-first century. In Europe, Obama believed that a reset of U.S. relations with Russia would create a stable balance of power between the Russian leadership and NATO and the European Union, allowing the United States to prioritize the Asia-Pacific.

Obama's "Pivot to Asia" likely signaled to America's Sunni allies, NATO and the European Union that the United States was ignoring them. Of course, Obama did not see it that way. While the president would continue to uphold NATO in Europe, he sought to emphasize points of cooperation with Russian president Dmitri Medvedev on such issues as missile defense and international terrorism that would both ensure collective security of America's European allies and recognize Russia's sphere of influence. However, NATO and the European Union expanded right to Russia's borders, leading to what could be described as the reemergence of East-West tensions. In the Middle East, Obama sought to quickly withdraw American ground forces from Iraq, rebalance toward Iran to establish what his administration believed could be a stable regional balance of power between Saudi Arabia and Iran that would not demand another U.S. military intervention. But in the absence of a strong American military presence in the Middle East, Sunni governments were worried about the rising power of Iran, especially its nuclear ambitions. Obama's foreign policy goals were designed to obviate

future U.S. military interventions in the Middle East and reduce America's military footprint in Europe.

However, the Arab Spring of 2011 resulted in the collapse of regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, prompted NATO to intervene in Libya, and precipitated tragic civil war in Syria. The U.S. military withdrawal from Iraq empowered the Shiite government to target Sunnis, many of whom consented to the Islamic State (IS) in both Iraq and Syria. The weak Iraqi government and autocratic Sunni governments relied mainly on the Obama administration to retake ownership of security in the Middle East. Russian military intervention on behalf of the Assad regime forced millions of civilians to flee for Turkey, Jordan, and destinations in Europe empowering far right-wing groups and politicians to spread their hatred of displaced persons, Muslims, and immigrants. The NATO-led mission to topple Muammar Gaddafi in Libya convinced Russia that American foreign policy remained focused on regime change and led only to instability and chaos in the Middle East. Then, in Ukraine, the Russian-backed government of Viktor Yanukovych was overthrown by pro-Western groups seeking to move Ukraine closer to the European Union and NATO. Russia concluded that the United States and Europe could not be trusted leading to its annexation of Crimea and intervention in Eastern Ukraine in support of rebels opposed to Western-backed president Petro Poroshenko. The challenges and struggles in the Middle East and Europe demonstrated that the Obama administration could not downgrade the U.S. role in these critical regions to upgrade and prioritize the American role in Asia and the Pacific.

Overall, President Obama accomplished an array of foreign policy objectives, having initiated considerable change in U.S. foreign policy over the course of his eight years in office. His "pivot" to Asia was made in response to considerable global challenges from China and designed to reassure is allies and new partners in Asia and the Pacific. Also, Obama can point to the killing of Osama bin Laden, successful conclusion of the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran, normalization of relations with Cuba, diplomatic engagement with Myanmar, boosting U.S. domestic energy extraction, the Paris Climate agreement, and improvement of America's image around the world. While these alterations indicated that the United States was setting new goals and objectives, at the same time, the Obama administration was also under pressure to maintain the global status quo, secure the international order, and act as the guarantor of security with allies in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

Although the international landscape was changing, Obama's foreign policy was also shaped by internal challenges and domestic politics. The Great Recession, rising economic inequality, transformation of the American workforce, an upsurge in nationalism and hyper-partisanship constrained Obama's governance of foreign policy. The rising costs of war drained America's fiscal

resources, forcing it to maintain a risky course of financing government operations with borrowing and cutting investments in domestic programs. Also, U.S. foreign policy was diverging away from traditional allies in Europe. The narrative of U.S. foreign policy during the Obama administration is the United States being hampered by internal divisions and contending with a transition from hegemony to multipolarity. To explain the impact of changes in the international system and external pressures on Obama's foreign policy choices and preferences, the next section reviews concepts on both the systemic and domestic levels emphasizing the complexities and dynamism of international-domestic interaction.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book argues that to contend with external pressures and domestic political forces and domestic-international interactions during and in the wake of such critical events as the U.S. war in Iraq and the Great Recession, Obama had to readjust U.S. foreign policy after over seventy years of promoting American hegemony and defending the global status quo. It examines the range of external pressures and challenges brought on by multipolarity, domestic political consequences, and foreign policy choices confronting President Obama. It will look specifically at continuity and change in U.S. foreign policy toward Europe, Asia, and the Pacific and the Middle East. The book asks: To what extent have complex and dynamic international-domestic interactions shaped and determined the direction of U.S. foreign policy under Obama? What were the most important and consequential external and internal pressures shaping Obama's foreign policy? How did the Obama administration respond to an increasingly multipolar world?

Chapter 1 establishes the conceptual framework by reviewing the empirical research and theory in international relations and foreign policy. To understand the Obama administration's foreign policy choices and the extent to which preferences were subject to continuity and change, we need to situate international-domestic interaction at a higher level of abstraction by conceptualizing both the international system and domestic politics. Macro-level concepts set the stage for delineating the proximate impact on Obama's foreign policy choices and decisions.

Chapter 2 argues that President Obama presided over an international system that was shifting away from a U.S.-led order sustained by American foreign policy toward one that was becoming more multipolar brought on by complex and dynamic external and domestic pressures and crises. It starts off by examining the evolution of the rules-based international order and the extent to which it evolved from the bipolar system of the Cold War to

unipolarity during the post–Cold War to the transition to a multipolar international system. It then examines domestic and international pressure points in the wake of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and the Great Recession. These and other critical and shifting events ushered in a multipolar international system that would challenge the Obama administration to make changes and adjustments to over seventy years of U.S. foreign policy. Obama would be challenged to adapt U.S. foreign policy to develop new alliances and oversee shifting balance of power systems, with the most important and consequential decisions being brought on by the costly and risky military intervention in Iraq, the Great Recession, collapse of U.S. labor-intensive manufacturing and the emergence of hyper-partisanship, widening economic inequality, increases in U.S. energy extraction, emerging markets and the rise of China, and major power balancing by Russia and China. These events and crises would determine and constrain the extent to which Obama was able to lead U.S. foreign policy and the foreign policymaking process.

Chapter 3 assesses Obama's foreign policy strategy toward Europe. While the Obama administration viewed NATO as both an instrument and symbol of collective security situated within the prevailing international order, it was at times frustrated by so-called free-riding allies and burden-sharing challenges. Even though the United States sought to maintain collective security in Europe through NATO, its eastward expansion since the end of the Cold War made any reset of relations with Russian untenable. The chapter then assesses the economic components in the transatlantic relationship and identifies the most important consequences for the future of U.S.-European relations. In the end, however, the United States and Europe seemed to be moving in opposite directions during the Obama presidency with Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as symptoms of a potential broader transatlantic divergence.

Chapter 4 focuses on the opportunities and costs associated with Obama's prioritization of Asia and the Pacific in response to the rise of China as a geopolitical challenger to the United States. Obama's rebalance to Asia was an expansion of America's interests and presence in Asia and the Pacific, especially in Southeast Asia and was seen by China as an attempt to contain its rise. Obama's rebalance and expanded U.S. role in the region rested on his pursuit of U.S. membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and additional troop plans and rotational deployments in Singapore, Australia, and expanded naval patrols and freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea. Furthermore, Obama's move to closely align with India, the world's largest democracy with an economy growing faster than China's, meant that the U.S. pivot to Asia included the Indian Ocean. However, the rebalance carried tremendous risks for America's global security and economic interests as it came at the same time Obama was seeking to draw down from the Middle East, end the war in Iraq, and reset relations with Russia.

Chapter 5 examines Obama's attempt to shift U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East away from regime change to offshore balancing based on establishing a regional balance of power between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Obama administration believed that to complete its rebalance to Asia and the Pacific, it had to draw down U.S. security commitments in the Middle East. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama promised that, if elected, he would end the war in Iraq and shift American military resources to Afghanistan. His 2009 speech at Cairo University conveyed his intention of seeking a "new beginning" in relations with the Middle East. However, the Arab Spring toppled autocratic governments in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, but the NATO intervention in Libya led to civil war. The popular uprising in Syria led to a devastating civil war and refugee crisis; the civil war raged in Yemen prompting a disastrous intervention by Saudi Arabia, and the rise of the IS in both Syria and Iraq. In response, Obama launched airstrikes against IS and reversed its military gains, successfully concluded the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran, and expanded the use of Special Operations Forces and drone strikes while resisting the redeployment of thousands of American ground troops. Obama struggled to incentivize Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Arab allies to provide their own security and establish a balance of power with Shia Iran, often overlooking the Sunni-Shia divide. Consequently, Obama was largely unable to scale back U.S. military commitments to the region.

Chapter 6 concludes by suggesting that domestic and international pressures ushered in a multipolar international system shook the rules-based international order and transformed over seventy years of liberal internationalism and consensus in U.S. foreign policy. The devastating effects of the U.S. military intervention in Iraq, the Great Recession, and emerging markets in Asia drove the international system toward multipolarity. In response, President Obama cautiously sought to adjust long-standing U.S. foreign policy by prioritizing Asia and the Pacific, drawing down and scaling back from the Middle East, and resetting U.S. relations with Russia. However, Obama had to reintroduce force in the Middle East with the rise of the IS in the wake of the U.S. military withdrawal from Iraq and the Syrian civil war and in Europe in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine. Obama also struggled to accommodate the rise of China and failed to see that Russia had no interest in integrating within the prevailing international order opting instead to disrupt democratic norms and institutions. Most important, the uneven U.S. domestic economic recovery and widening economic inequality in the wake of the Great Recession led many to abandon liberalism and globalism. This ultimately contributed to the 2016 presidential election of Donald Trump who promised to turn the United States away from globalization, question long-standing U.S. alliances, and return the United States to what he and his followers perceived as a forgotten era of American greatness.

Chapter 1

Structure, Power, and Actors in Foreign Policy

Obama's foreign policy can be explained in terms of complex and dynamic systemic-domestic interactions and in response to internal and external pressures. It holds basic assumptions about the structure of the international system and domestic politics in foreign policy. Some international relations scholars have prioritized the international system (Mearsheimer 2014: 1–28; Waltz 1979: 38–59) while others give more weight to domestic political factors (Dafoe, Oneal, and Russett 2013: 201–202; Doyle 1986: 54–77). Oatley (2011: 311–312) criticizes this debate by claiming that systemic factors often explain international relations to the exclusion of domestic politics and vice versa. As Hill (2003: 28) claimed, "Foreign policy making is a complex process of interaction between many actors, differentially embedded in a wide range of different structures." According to Gourevitch (1978: 882), "We all know about interaction; we all understand that international politics and domestic structures affect each other." The interaction of domestic and international actors and structures are both crucial to the formulation and conduct of foreign policy.

In building the analytical framework, this book will highlight and integrate theoretical explanations and concepts relevant to foreign policy that exist on different levels of analysis. The study of foreign policy has deep connections in the policy sciences, owing much of its academic significance to realist doctrine developed by Hans Morgenthau (2005: 27–49) who shaped foreign policy scholarship and practice during the Cold War. Morgenthau developed universal explanations regarding the behavior of nation-states by linking the concept of power to the pursuit of the national interest. Morgenthau's work was grounded firmly in the long history of nation-states practicing foreign policy and rested on long-standing concepts supporting theoretical explanations of power.

To capture the complexity and dynamism of foreign policy choices and preferences, both the structure of the international system and domestic-level politics are involved in the making of foreign policy. According to Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1962: 74), "The central concept of decision-making may provide a basis for linking a group of theories which hitherto have been applicable only to a segment of international politics or have not been susceptible of application at all." Foreign policy is shaped by coalitions of actors that exist within and beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, flowing from domestic and international politics and involving bargaining, compromise, and trade-offs among competing international and domestic forces (Neack 2003: 8–9). In developing the notion of "two-level" bargaining games, Putnam (1988: 427–460) argues that policymakers must contend with both domestic-level and international-level interests that are sometimes aligned or, at other times, in opposition. East (1978: 143–147) contends that the greater the number of contested issues in the international system, there will be less ideological conflict because more bargaining behavior in foreign policy will take place.

The analytical framework of this book is that there are intimate and reciprocal connections and interactions between the structure of international system and domestic politics that influence foreign policy. To capture and explain foreign policy change and continuity during the Obama presidency, we need complex and dynamic multi-variable explanations at multiple levels of analysis. The goal is to incorporate changes in the relative distribution of capabilities within the international system brought on by key world events, such as the 2008 Global Recession and the U.S. war in Iraq while also delving into the nation-state level to assess extent of international-domestic interactions. But this book does more than just assess the case of Obama's foreign policy using a multilevel analysis argument. It also concentrates on his foreign policy decision-making and the foreign policymaking process by building a contextual analytical framework.

THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND ITS IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY

This book analyzes Obama's foreign policy choices within the broader context of the international system. Within any system, a change in one unit causes changes in the others with actors responding in regularized ways. To understand international politics from the level of the international system, we can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences of Obama's foreign policy through relations and exchanges with other actors, namely majors and regions of the world seen as vital to U.S. national interests.

The realist approach sees states, relentlessly driven by the pursuit of power and security, as the most important actors in the international system. With no one central authority enforcing agreement, states are pushed to maximize their security and autonomy in an anarchical, self-help environment characterized in terms of conflict and competition. The result is vast imbalances in power as some nation-states possess more material wealth and resources to influence others, allowing them to get what they want when they want it. Alterations in the distribution of power or in the relative power relationships among the great powers brought on by wars and other systemic crises can change the structure of the international system.

For classical realists, the condition of anarchy is a Hobbesian state of nature in international politics that, for most nation-states, does not exist in domestic politics (Morgenthau 2005: 113–180). Morgenthau (2005: 149–154) maintained that political leaders must develop and build domestic support among foreign policy elites in pursuit of the national interest, but counseled against aligning with the broader yet an unpredictable and erratic public. Morgenthau (2005: 17–25; 181–245) was adamant in his view that hindrances to the attainment of national interests and threats to the survival of the nation-state are primarily external to it.

Neorealists give the condition of anarchy in the international system an explanatory role. Waltz (1959: 1–15) has sought to distinguish the internal attributes of states from the overall international system by moving the core realist canon toward a neorealist framework. For Waltz (1959: 16–41; 80–123; 159–186), human nature and leaders (first image) and the nature of nation-states (second image) do not on their own sufficiently explain recurring patterns of behavior in the international system nor do they adequately explain why different political system types exhibit certain similarities. Waltz argued that alterations and problems in international relations are driven largely by his third image: anarchy in the international system and its implications for nation-states (Waltz 1959: 159–186; 1979: 102–128). Waltz's (1959: 1–15; 1979: 1–17) theory-building elucidated Morgenthau's classic realist notions by explaining how anarchy in the international system influences international relations irrespective of domestic politics. He also uses the principle of anarchy to differentiate structural theory of the international system from a theory of foreign policy in that systemic theory explains "why states similarly placed behave similarly despite their internal differences," whereas foreign policy theory explains "why states similarly placed in a system behave in different ways" (1996: 54).

Because security is a perennial concern in an anarchical international system, nation-states will react to changes in the relative distribution of capabilities by passing the buck (encouraging or hoping another nation-state will contend with rising powers and threats) or balancing against challengers

by pursuing allies or building up their own capabilities (Gilpin 1981: 9–49; Mearsheimer 2014: 267–333; Organiski and Kugler 1980: 64–100; Walt 2002a: 121–154; 1987: 1–49; Waltz 1979: 102–160). Balance of power theory suggests that anarchy can lead nation-states to enter new alliances or resort to force to survive or attain their national interests. The neorealist focus on anarchy in the international system is based on the absence of formal governing authorities that have the power to enforce laws and hold nation-states accountable to them. As Waltz (1979: 121) states, "Balance-of-power politics prevail wherever two, and only two requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive." Anarchy allows for both good and bad outcomes and any behavior to take place because there is no governing authority above nation-states to come to their rescue when balancing behavior occurs.

A security dilemma can arise in which foreign policy actions taken by a nation-state designed to increase its security, for example, boosting defense spending or entering new alliances, could lead other nation-states to respond in kind. The increase in tensions can produce conflict even if both nation-states do not want it. Rising powers are likely to balance against dominant powers by investing in and building up their military and technological capabilities (internal balancing) and/or by pursuing alliances with other nation-states (external balancing) (Waltz 1979: 102–128; Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little 2007: 9–10). Dominant powers may contain or prevent rising powers from threatening their survival and security by engaging in the same form of internal and external balancing, compelling rising powers to follow what they believe is the prevailing order and other systemic rules (Copeland 2000: 1–34; Levy 1987: 82–107; Mearsheimer 2014: 1–54; Waltz 1979: 38–59). Rising powers are often overwhelmed and vanquished because the international system conditions nation-state behavior over time and provides strong incentives for challengers to remain within the prevailing international system and follow the behavior of other nation-states (Resende-Santos 2007: 1–41; Waltz 1979: 102–128).

Since the burden of maintaining hegemony and fending off rising powers can weaken dominant powers, realists often point to offshore balancing as a useful strategy for hegemons to utilize favored powers in regions faraway to check the rise of potential hostile powers (Layne 2002: 233–259; Schwartz and Layne 2002). Hegemons can maintain equilibrium by encouraging preferred nation-states to balance against challengers without having to resort to direct intervention themselves. As Mearsheimer argues, "Regional hegemons attempt to check aspiring hegemons in other regions because they fear that a rival great power that dominates its own region will be an especially powerful foe that is essentially free to cause trouble in the fearful great power's backyard. Regional hegemons prefer that there be at least two great powers

located together in other regions, because their proximity will force them to concentrate their attention on each other rather than on the distant hegemon" (Mearsheimer 2014: 41–42).

Offshore balancers are hegemons that seek to block rivals and challengers in distant or unfriendly regions by relying on preferred states or allies in the immediate region and supporting them with financial assistance, diplomacy, and armaments (Mearsheimer 2008; Walt 2011; 2002a: 121–154). As Walt (2011) contends, "Offshore balancing isn't just a strategy for hard times; it is also the best available strategy in a world where the United States is the strongest power, prone to trigger unnecessary antagonism, and vulnerable to being dragged into unnecessary wars." Offshore balancing is a key norm and practice in the history of American foreign and diplomatic relations (Gaddis 1994: 142–154; Hanrieder 1994: 1–17; Layne 1997: 86–124; Mearsheimer 2008). The logic of offshore balancing suggests that dominant powers can recommit military forces in response to rapidly developing threats to regional balances of power. When passing the buck is not a realistic strategy in the face of threats, military force can restore the regional balance of power. As the argument goes, a more restrained and removed approach can reinforce stable balances of power in distant regions with minimal obligations and fewer resources.

Offshore balancing holds that global hegemony led the United States to overreach with its invasion of Iraq, a prolonged eight-year war that killed hundreds of thousands, drained America's resources, harmed its global image, and accelerated its decline. The costs to the United States for preserving the global status quo began to exceed the benefits as others were not hampered by the burden of hegemony (Kennedy 1987: 514–535). Gilpin (1981: 185, 187) observes "Once a society reaches the limits of its expansion, it has great difficulty in maintaining its position and arresting its eventual decline." He goes on to suggest that "in time, the differential rates of growth of declining and rising states in the system produce a decisive redistribution of power and result in disequilibrium in the system" (Gilpin 1981: 185, 187).

Defensive realists recognize that the anarchic international system lead to competitive pressures and even conflict (Grieco 1990: 485–507; Jervis 1988: 101–126; Posen 1984: 7–33; Snyder 1997: 1–78; Van Evera 1999: 1–13, 117–192; Walt 1987: 1–49; Waltz 1979: 38–59). Defensive realists contend that if a nation-state becomes too powerful, balancing will occur as others will invest in their military power and form an alliance or coalition with dominant powers balancing against rising powers regardless of domestic-level factors and political leadership (Waltz 1996: 322–346). Since the ensuing security dilemma leaves the rising power less secure, defensive realists contend that it will ultimately consent to the status quo rather than continue to maximize its power. Defensive realists also emphasize that modern technologies (i.e.,

weapons of mass destruction) and nationalism are systemic variables influencing the security dilemma states face (Glaser 1994/1995: 50–90; Jervis 1978: 101–126).

Offensive realists argue that states can never be confident of their own security and, consequently, should be wary and skeptical of the power maximizing behavior of other states (Gilpin 1981: 9–49; Mearsheimer 2014: 1–54; Zakaria 1998: 3–12). To survive under competition and anarchy, major powers struggle to build their offensive capabilities in their search for security because the structure of the international system fosters intense competition, conflict, and aggression (Mearsheimer 2014: 29–54). Although offensive realists expect that a threatened nation-state will balance against rising powers, they believe balancing may not adequately serve its needs. This inadequacy allows for a strategic and aggressive nation-state to exploit its adversaries through effective internal balancing to maximize power (Mersheimer 2014: 1–54).

However, defensive and offensive realists see little room for domestic politics and foreign policy analysis in theory-building efforts. Which realist perspective is most appropriate for analyzing foreign policy? Defensive realism provides relatively accurate assumptions of the international system and offensive realism advances convincing explanations of the incentives and impediments facing states. Both help international relations scholars understand foreign policy analysis in terms of power, security, opportunities, and constraints. While neorealists focus on the structure of the international system in determining the relative distribution of capabilities, as opposed to foreign policy, nation-states must still pursue foreign policies that maximize their security consistent with their national interests.

Nation-states are critical actors because they hold power to influence others and shape outcomes. The nature of power is situational and multidimensional with one specific capability applicable in every circumstance. Therefore, national attributes and other variations, namely size, natural resources, geography, demographics, technology, and military and economic capabilities impact and affect the direction of foreign policy (East 1978: 143–148; East and Hermann 1974: 269–273; Kean and McGowan 1973: 220–222; and Salmore and Salmore 1978: 103–120). Larger nation-states with significant or growing material capabilities and natural resources are likely to be more assertive and active in foreign policy. They tend to be difficult to contain or defeat, but harder to unite given the diversity of cultures and interests. Access to natural resources, especially energy, minerals, water, and commodities will determine whether a nation-state can attain its national interests, meet consumer demands, and develop their infrastructures. The ability of a nation-state to extract and manufacture oil and natural gas, minerals, and commodities and develop its agriculture will determine the relative distribution of

material capabilities, national wealth and power, and national security. Since the Second World War, the United States has made access to energy a critical national security interest given its "stupendous source of strategic power and one of the greatest material prizes in world history" (DOS 1945).

While geography pushes nation-states to exploit natural resources and build agriculture capacity, it also drives foreign policy decisions because nation-states need access to land passages, waterways, and ports to engage in exploitation. The seaways are an especially vital component in geopolitics, leading great powers to develop their naval capabilities to patrol critical chokepoints to influence world trade and energy transportation. Since the Carter administration, the United States has sought to protect freedom of navigation and secure free passage with military force. Geography plays an essential role in determining whether borders and physical proximity are catalysts for conflict (Kaplan 2013: 23–37).

Furthermore, demographic characteristics are likely to shape foreign policy decisions. Nation-states with larger populations are under pressure to meet the demands of their citizenries and will seek material resources with trade, foreign investment, migration, conquest, or conflict (Choucri and North 1975: chapter 1). Today, Europe, Japan, and Russia are experiencing falling birth-rates, low replacement levels and migration, and aging populations, escalating fiscal pressures and possibly leading to relative shifts in the distribution of power. The ability of the United States to attract immigrants is among its most important strengths in functioning as a great power. Moreover, changing population characteristics impact age and gender distribution, ethnic and religious composition, health and educational levels, and disease burdens, which directly impact national levels of human development.

The relative distribution of wealth in the international system and the size of a national economy are critical to understanding foreign policy behavior. To influence the power potential of others, nation-states can practice economic statecraft in their foreign economic policies with economic sanctions or tariffs to influence others or apply targeted sanctions against groups and individual leaders. The state of the contemporary global economy leads international institutions that comprise the modern international economic architecture, namely the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, as well as multinational corporations, to determine the extent to which economic capabilities influence foreign policy. Levels of economic dependence are characterized by national debt, fiscal deficits, imports and exports, foreign direct investment, and the prices of materials, commodities, and manufactured goods.

One of the most important foreign policy tools for any nation-state involves the ability to project military power. In an anarchical international system, great powers with enough wealth and economic power possess significant

military force, allowing them to practice coercive diplomacy or aggressively apply pressure on others. With a foreign policy strategy of compellence, a nation-state can threaten others with military force to get them to do something and with deterrence, it can punish others if they act in ways that run contrary to their national interest. Nation-states possessing the destructive capability of weapons of mass destruction and recognize that others possess a second-strike capability will likely refrain from taking aggressive military action. However, effective compellence and deterrence is dependent on following through on threats and having the credibility to follow through with their commitments to act on behalf of their allies or against their challengers. The bulk of U.S. foreign policy is comprised of America's ability to exercise military force on a global scale, possession of world's most advanced defense systems, and vast formal and informal alliance networks to compel and deter potential rivals.

Theories within realism help explain national attributes, external pressures, and incentives that shape foreign policy. Balance of threat predicts that nation-states will generally balance against the greatest threats to their survival, security, and interests based on geographic realities, military and economic capabilities, and perceived intentions. If the capabilities, location, and behavior of another nation-state are deemed threatening, then the threatened nation-state will pursue a foreign policy strategy of balancing. They will form and maintain alliances, bandwagon with others, or engage in other alliance tactics, namely buck-passing and chain-ganging (Mearhseimer 2014: 1–54; Walt 1987: 1–49).

Hegemonic stability theory expands on the argument that powerful nation-states can dominate the entire international system, or at least some elements within it, to bring order and stability to systemic anarchy (Ikenberry 1998/1999: 43–46; Krasner 1976: 317–320; Mearsheimer 2014: 29–54; 234–266). A dominant nation-state can build and sustain an international order by producing nonexclusive collective goods in the form of international institutions, rules, norms, and desirable outcomes that benefit all nation-states in the system. Hegemonic stability theory argues that an international order can emerge if international relations are underwritten by the dominant nation-state and maintained by the distribution of power. Depending on such factors as economic dominance, war, and the political makeup of the international system, hegemonic dominance can persist for long cycles or waves and then experience system transitions (Modelski 1987: 513–533). Modelski (1987: 513–520) claims that a cycle begins with a nation-state expanding into a preponderance of power following a major war. It uses hegemony to build and maintain an order that benefits itself and others. The system ends when the order falls into disrepair and power disperses and decays resulting in a multipolar system that can lead to conflict and war as rising powers move to recast and dominate the system.

The maintenance of order and stability is hampered by the free-rider problem, in which some nation-states will maximize the benefits of order and avoid paying the costs of producing them. To overcome the free-rider problem, the dominant nation-state can provide free-riders with material or moral incentives (democracy, human rights, arms, capitalism, technology, trade, investment, etc.) or pressure them into paying more for the benefits of system order and stability (Gilpin 1987: 364–408; Keohane 1984: 135–181; Kindleberger 1973: 242–254). Gilpin (1987: 25–64) adds the notion of dynamism with his realist explanation that history is a series of cycles of birth, expansion, and fall of dominant nation-states with hegemons declining because of rising costs of system maintenance, free-riders, the threat of rising powers.

Hegemonic stability theory explains contemporary globalization premised on a rules-based international order that emerged at the end of the Second World War. That order will last only if the United States as the dominant nation-state remains committed to the liberal norms, rules-based institutions, and free trade principles that comprise it (Gilpin 1988: 591–613; Shirk 2007: 225–270). Hegemonic stability theory posits that the position of the dominant nation-state could be undermined, leading aspirants to view the distribution of power as fundamentally imbalanced. However, challengers must demonstrate to others in the system that they not only have the capabilities to enforce the rules and norms throughout the international system, but the willingness to do so and a commitment to distribute benefits to others.

On the one hand, a rising China was benefiting economically from the prevailing international order. On the other, China was developing new technologies and weaponry capable of challenging the U.S. Obama's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. Consequently, many U.S. foreign policymakers no longer viewed China rising peacefully because it is no longer weak. Now that China is much more powerful, it wants to reshape the international system in ways that reflect its national interests. Given that security is paramount, the United States and China will engage in intense security competition, look for opportunities to exploit each other's vulnerabilities, and gain leverage even in the absence of armed conflict.

Power transition theory (Organski 1968: 1–25) builds from hegemonic stability theory with its focus on parity as opposed to balance. Unlike structural realists who believe that balance of power and the relative distribution of capabilities leads to stability in the international system, power transition theorists believe parity, or an equilibrium of power, can be dangerous prelude to war (Siverson and Miller 1996: 57–73). The international system is led by the dominant nation-state or status quo power, which provides and upholds a global order premised on rules and norms that define the parameters of the system; however, the international order can be undermined by aggressive or revisionist states (Kissinger 2014: 1–10; Schelling 1966: 190–220; Schweller

1994: 72–107). The prevailing international order can collapse into war if the capabilities of both dominant and rising nation-states reach parity (Lemke 2004). Differences exist among nation-states, but only in terms of their capabilities and position within the international system. According to Tammen and Kugler (2006: 40), "Under balance of power, relative power equilibrium insures the peace. Under power parity or power transition, relative power equilibrium increases the probability of war." Organski (1968: 294–295) observes that the international system is much more stable and peaceful with a large power imbalance because "a preponderance of power on the one side . . . increases the chances of peace, for the greatly stronger side need not fight at all to get what it wants, while the weaker side would be plainly foolish to attempt to battle for what it wants."

Power transition theorists presume that dominant nation-states will work to maintain their positions of global supremacy and that the positions of rising powers are likely to strengthen relative to dominant nation-states. Rising powers can become dissatisfied with the ways in which the dominant nation-state is upholding the international order or distributing benefits and could perceive themselves as being disadvantaged by the status quo (Tammen and Kugler 2006: 35–55). Dissatisfied nation-states can challenge the status quo and revise the order in its favor, although the dominant nation-state will not willingly give up its position as it was hard fought (Mearsheimer 2014: 334–359). Power transition theory predicts, for example, that if China keeps rising and building its power and capabilities, it will become dissatisfied with the global status quo and that a great power rivalry or war with the United States will take place. The dominant nation-state, the United States, must find a way to accommodate China's rise or contain it as a challenger (Kim and Gates 2015).

The international system may not always send clear messages about rising threats and rapidly unfolding power transitions. The emergence of China in East and South Asia has complicated American foreign policy, leading Mearsheimer (2014: 360–402) to argue that the United States will work with regional states to contain China's rise as a peer competitor. Liberals maintain that the United States will accommodate its peaceful rise (Etzioni 2013: 45–60; Nye 2002: xii, 25–27; Steinfield 2012: 1–19) or pursue engagement strategies (Nye 2011: 207–254; Ross and Feng 2008). Sometimes threats clearly present themselves. Oren (2002: 1–32) contends that Israel adequately read Egypt's buildup in the Sinai in 1967 and launched a preemptive strike in response to a clear and imminent threat to its survival.

The stability of the international system and system management affects the distribution of capabilities, balancing behavior, and hegemonic stability (Kindleberger 1981: 1–20; Krasner 1976: 317–347). In bipolar and multipolar systems, power is dispersed with relative distributions of capabilities.

Bipolar systems are difficult to manage and regulate formally because the two power centers cannot influence the behavior of the other bloc, forcing each to engage in informal system management by directly confronting one another. In a multipolar system, constant interaction takes place among the various power centers with alliance networks changing in response to alterations in the relative distribution of capabilities and interests throughout the system. A unipolar system, in which the distribution of capabilities is concentrated in one nation-state and most commonly associated with hegemonic stability, may be the most stable since the dominant nation-state or hegemon enforces rules and norms in furthering the system. When the hegemon declines, and loses power to challengers or rising powers, system management and stability is at risk. Changes in the number of major powers or shifts in the distribution of capabilities could alter power relations and change the international system. Exogenous changes, namely technological and military capabilities, could lead to alterations in the international system. The next section focuses on the extent to which changes in the international system and external pressures impact and are influenced by domestic politics.

DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Explaining foreign policy behavior on the level of the international system alone and with neorealist concepts provides an incomplete analysis. Given its focus on agency, foreign policy analysis provides scholars with important tools for incorporating and integrating concepts. As conceptualized by Valerie Hudson (2007: 4), who leads scholarship in foreign policy analysis, "One may be examining not a single decision, but a constellation of decisions taken with reference to a particular situation. Furthermore, decisions may be modified over time, requiring an examination of sequences of decisions." The whole process of making foreign policy needs to be explained because the "explanandum of foreign policy analysis includes the process and resultants of human decision making with reference to or having known consequences for foreign policy entities" (Hudson 2007: 2).

This has made foreign policy analysis an all-encompassing and complex subfield within international relations examining the process of foreign policy decision-making in its entirety as opposed to policy (Mintz and Derouen 2010: 3–36). According to Bueno de Mesquita (2002: 7), "When we examine international affairs through the lens of domestic decision making we provide a way to think about how properties of the international system are shaped by local considerations as part of the larger strategic fabric of politics." This approach views foreign policy as a function of the ways in which individual- and group-level foreign policy decision-making takes place within

the domestic setting of the state that includes national identity and culture (Hudson 2007: 37–124). Therefore, foreign policy is largely a function of the purposive thinking and practicing of foreign policy decision-makers in the complex and dynamic politics of the foreign policymaking process.

How a nation-state views itself through the lens of the public and other societal factors determines foreign policy. The ways in which foreign policy elites perceive national roles influence the dynamics of foreign policy choice and behavior (Hess 1963: 542–559; Holsti 1970: 233–309; Renshon 1977: 2–14; Walker 1987: 81–93). Scholars have also examined the influence of such domestic political imperatives as culture (Almond and Verba 1963: 1–62; Wiarda 2013: 1–18), pressure groups (Chittick 1970: 1–13; Dahl 1973: 7–10; Hagan 1987: 339–365), media framing and mass views (Baum and Potter 2008: 39–65; Boettcher and Cobb 2006: 831–854), executive-legislative political structures, and the extent to which public opinion shapes foreign policy behavior (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989: 123–142; Almond 1950: 2–7; Hayes 2012: 767–791; Holsti 2002: 514–528; Holsti and Rosenau 1979: 1–56; Lipsett 1966: 19–24; Mandelbaum and Schneider 1978: 81–98; Mueller 1973: 1–17).

Furthermore, there can be significant disagreement between mass- and elite-level understandings and interpretations of national identity. According to Page and Barabas (2000: 344), "The most conspicuous gap between citizens and leaders is a familiar and long-standing one: more leaders than citizens tend to be 'internationalists' at least in the simple sense that they say they favor the United States taking an 'active' part in world affairs." Roles and conceptions are also contested at the elite level with conflicts among policymakers impacting foreign policy decision-making and foreign policy preferences (Ashizawa 2008: 571–598; Cantir and Kaarbo 2012: 5–24; Kaarbo 2003: 156–163) According to Rogowski (1998: 115–136), differences in behavior and preferences among domestic-level political actors and forces impact the orientation, credibility, stability and coherence, strategy, and mobilization of foreign policy.

Research also focuses on specific policies as outcomes of foreign policy processes, emphasizing foreign policy actions and the importance of state boundaries (Carlsnaes 2002: 331–349; 1992: 245–270; Hermann 1978: 25–47). Given that survival is the top priority of any bureaucratic organization, government agencies and departments safeguard their own interests and protect their turf in foreign policy decision-making. According to Allison and Zellikow's (1999: chapters 1, 3, 5) study of the Cuban Missile Crisis, President John F. Kennedy and his advisers' consideration of three options, invasion of Cuba, airstrike, naval quarantine, diplomacy, and doing nothing were largely a function of three conceptual models of foreign policy decision-making: rational actor (Model I), organizational politics (Model II), and

governmental politics (Model III). The rational actor model suggests that the state as a unitary rational actor will clearly identify the problem, sets forth goals and objectives, determines available policy choices, analyzes benefits and costs of choice, and then carefully selects the foreign policy action that results in the highest payoff at the lowest costs. However, during critical events, when foreign policy decision-makers are confronted with threats and face limited time frames to frame a policy choice, the rational actor model may be difficult to use in practice. Organizational politics highlights standard operating procedures, bureaucratic culture, and processes of organizations in shaping foreign policy with decisions shaped by precedents and operational routine. Governmental politics occurs when advisers and organizational leaders in the bureaucracy represent different and competing interests in the foreign policymaking process.

Foreign policy decisions are likely to be the outcomes of push-pull, tug-of-war factors between governmental departments with political battles waged by the most influential individuals with political knowledge of the inner workings of government. Allison and Zellikow (1999: chapter 6) maintain that while foreign policy decisions can satisfice or even appeal to different groups that do not ostracize important political actors, Halperin's (1974: 2–19) study of bureaucratic behavior under Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson during the Vietnam War demonstrated the large extent to which bureaucratic interests hampered and impeded U.S. defense policy.

Nation-states may not be effective in responding to changes in the international system and external pressures. While the international system may send clear signals to nation-states about alterations in the relative distribution of capabilities, those signals must be filtered through the perceptions of domestic political leaders (Wohlforth 1993: 32–58). Moreover, in their perceptions of international politics, leaders often misinterpret external factors, possess incomplete information, fail to identify appropriate policy responses, and often do not adequately assess the implications of their actions (Cottam 1977: 54–92; Hermann et al. 2001: 83–131; Holsti and Rosenau 1979: 1–54; Jervis 1976: 117–200, 319–338; 1988: 101–126). Sometimes nation-states did not behave in ways Waltz expected them to. According to McAllister (2002: 1–25, 245–264), in the wake of the Second World War, U.S. foreign policy anticipated the reemergence of Germany as a major power in Europe leading to "a latent tripolar system" as opposed to established bipolarity. Victor Cha argues that it was American leader perceptions, not changes in the relative distribution of capabilities, that shaped the informal U.S.-led alliance network with South Korea and Japan (2016: 40–64). These studies demonstrate that purely systemic theories of international relations are incomplete since foreign policy behavior is likely driven by leader behavior.

While international politics involves the search for order, it must also include domestic politics and the internal forces shaping the foreign policymaking process. President Obama searched for new ways of remaking and recasting U.S. foreign policy at a time when the prevailing international order was breaking down. The United States emerged from the Second World War in a powerful position leading to a seven-decade long foreign policy of maintaining the global status quo with its economic resources, advanced technology, and military power; however, the contemporary emergence of China, the U.S. intervention in Iraq, and economic crises led to emergence of a multipolar world, forcing the Obama administration to adjust and adapt to a more pluralist international system. While all presidents must contend with changing domestic and global conditions and events, President Obama confronted multiple domestic and global crises and an emerging multipolar system that required him to embrace responsive adaptation strategies and a major restructuring of U.S. foreign policy (Rosenau 2003: 212–216). The forces of political and economic change reached their apex with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the U.S. residential housing bubble and financial crisis, Great Recession, rising powers, and emerging markets. These events altered U.S. foreign policy and continue to have consequences for American politics and society, the foreign policymaking process, the U.S. economic system, and global environment.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS, INTERNATIONAL-DOMESTIC INTERACTIONS, AND FOREIGN POLICY

Given that the international system shapes domestic politics and vice versa, to capture and explain the degree of foreign policy and preferences available to leaders, we need to integrate the domestic and international spheres shaping American foreign policy. While the international system and national attributes provide us with a conceptual framework for setting parameters to assess the effects of foreign policy, state-society relations drive foreign policy decisions (Rose 1998: 144–172). The unyielding supposition that the anarchical structure of international system determines foreign policy behavior (Mastanduno 1997: 49–88; Mearsheimer 2014: 29–54; Waltz 2000: 5–41) is unsatisfying to some who observe domestic-level political variables (Schweller 2008: 103–130; Sterling-Folker 1997: 1–45; 2009: 99–138; Taliaferro 2006: 464–495; Zakaria 1998: 181–192). According to Rose (1998: 165), realism "knows one big thing, that systemic forces and relative material power shape state behavior. . . . Yet people who cannot move beyond the system will have difficulty explaining most of what happens in international relations." Neoclassical realism is a good starting point because it can help us

to understand that the internal dynamics of states impact grand strategies and the extent to which international-domestic interactions shape foreign policy behavior (Dueck 2006: 1–20; Schweller 2008: 1–45; Sterling-Folker 2009: 99–138; Taliaferro 2009: 194–226).

Neoclassical realism bridges the divide between the structure of the international system and foreign policy behavior by extending neorealism into understanding grand strategy, foreign policy outcomes, and the internal dynamics of states (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008: 22–97; Christensen 1996: 3–31; Dueck 2006: 1–20; Layne 2006: 15–38; Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell 2016: 139–188; Rose 1998: 144–172; Schweller 1998: 15–38; Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman 2009: 1–41; Wohlforth 1993: 32–58). Even though Waltz (1996: 54) stated that "international politics is not foreign policy," neoclassical realism connects Waltz's emphasis on the international system with Morgenthau's (2005: 159–164) focus on explaining foreign policy. Opportunities and constraints in the international system shape and interfere with foreign policymaking after transiting through domestic institutions and interests and elite policymaker perceptions (Rose 1998: 144–172; Zakaria 2007: 13–28). Neoclassical realism maintains the central importance of nation-states seeking power and security under conditions of anarchy in the international system in neorealism but includes domestic-level factors in explaining foreign policy behavior. It also identifies areas of convergence and difference between constructivism, liberal theory, and neoliberalism, and foreign policy analysis (Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell 2016: 139–188; Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman 2009: 1–41).

Neoclassical realists agree with neorealists that foreign policy is formed by the nation-state's relative material power capabilities in the international system but they maintain that concepts within defensive and offensive realism are not always exact or incorrect. Relative material capabilities can shift according to factors external or internal to the nation-state. They contend that systemic factors are indirect and more complex than what neorealists maintain given that such factors can only impact foreign policy only through the domestic-level (Lobell 2003: 19–42). According to Walt (2002b: 211), this "places domestic politics as an intervening variable between the distribution of power and foreign policy behavior."

Neoclassical realism connects the neorealist focus on causality, accuracy, and precision in the study of how states behave in an anarchical international system with the classical realist emphasis on domestic institutions, state-society relations, and leader perceptions in shaping foreign policy preferences and choices (Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman 2009: 1–41). Neoclassical realism argues that nation-states respond to changing conditions in the international system by exploiting international opportunities and contending with external constraints with their foreign policy choices and preferences.

Neoclassical realists accept the neorealist argument that the political environment of the international system leads nation-states to formulate foreign policies to contend with external pressures and changes in the distribution of relative capabilities with their foreign policies, neoclassical realists add that these systemic factors and changes trickle through the internal dynamics of nation-states (Sterling-Folker 1997: 1–45). However, neoclassical realists do not accept the neorealist argument that domestic-level factors are unimportant and reject the argument that theories of foreign policy are distinct from theories of international relations (Barkin 2009: 233–246; Wivel 2005: 355–380).

While structural realist theory on its own assumes there are no domestic political and economic forces that constrain foreign policymaking, neoclassical realists focus on processes through which foreign policy is formulated and conducted. Foreign policy outputs are determined and shaped by the interactions among the international system and domestic-level factors, such as state-society dynamics, the design of political authority structures, strategic interests, socio-economic forces, elite opinion leaders, and cultures (Byman and Pollack 2001: 107–146; Kitchen 2010: 117–143; Ripsman 2009: 170–193; Rose 1998: 144–172; Schweller 2004: 159–201; 2008: 46–68). Schweller (2004: 164) states, "Domestic processes act as transmission belts that channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces (primarily changes in relative power). Hence, states often react different to systemic pressures and opportunities, and their response may be less motivated by systemic-level factors than domestic ones."

Given that influential domestic interest groups have a stake in determining foreign policy outcomes, they will apply pressure to policymakers and advisers, legislators, and other executive officials to ensure policies are favorable to them and their members (Casey 2001: 3–45; Dueck 2006: 1–20; Lobell 2009: 42–74; Ripsman 2002: 27–62; Tsebelis 2002: 17–64). In other words, nation-states are not completely autonomous from domestic political forces and, consequently, must negotiate and bargain with non-state actors regarding the allocation of materials and resources devoted to foreign policy goals (Barnette 1992: 3–50). Foreign policy outcomes are driven by intense interstate competition for power in the international system and shaped by a complex array of domestic-level factors (Tang 2009: 799–803).

Structural explanations that focus exclusively on the structure of the international system determining foreign policy must be augmented with an understanding of the internal dynamics of nation-states. Foreign policy is the product of complex and dynamic systemic and internal political, economic, and societal forces that are not always consistent. Nation-states can engage in what Schweller (2004; 2008) describes as "underbalancing," in which they fail to develop alliances or capabilities when confronted with others amassing power. Domestic-level factors, namely government vulnerability, social

cohesion, elite cohesion, and elite consensus, can feed and direct policy in response to external opportunities and constraints (Schweller 2008: 46–68). Haas (2005: 4–39) argues that the political ideology of a dominant group and Narizny (2003: 203–220) claims that the political interests of subnational actors can drive the state toward underbalancing behavior. When domestic political authority structures are fragmented or when societal forces are stronger, governments cannot respond to external pressures from the international system. Driven by the nature of their regimes, nation-states could even pursue expansionary goals to their own demise as with totalitarian regimes in Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan (Snyder 1991: 1–65).

Sometimes, major powers launch risky, expensive, and prolonged military interventions or diplomatic efforts in far off regions that either do not threaten them or are peripheral to their critical national interests because leaders are threatened by a loss of prestige, status, or relative power (Taliaferro 2006: 464–495; 2004: 1–28). Since the end of the Cold War, the United States launched several military interventions because no other nation-state could stop it. At the height of its power, the United States seemed certain that its role in the world was to uphold the global status quo, integrate nation-states into liberal international institutions, and topple rogue states.

Neoclassical realism provides a rival theoretical explanation to structural realism given its focus on the foreign policy choices of nation-states in addition to their relative power and position within the international system (Dessler 1989: 441–473; Sterling-Folker 1997: 1–45). According to Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman (2009: 4), neoclassical realism is also based on the notion that "unit-level variables constrain or facilitate the ability of all types of states—great power as well as lesser states—to respond to systemic imperatives." In doing so, it challenges scholars to rethink the agent-structure discussion in the theoretical literature. Even though neoclassical realists recognize that the structure of the international system shapes and determines foreign policy choices, that structure must still be deciphered by domestic political institutions foreign policy decision-makers. Domestic-level policy actors must contend with the political implications and effects of external pressures and opportunities in the structure of the international system. Neoclassical realists maintain that while systemic factors explain long trends, foreign policy is the product of complex and dynamic political, economic, and societal forces that are not always consistent (Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman 2009: 1–41; Wivel 2005: 355–380).

Neoclassical realism does not seek to develop an entirely new theoretical framework to explain foreign policy analysis and international politics. Rather, it is concerned with which realist explanation is best suited to understanding foreign policy at a specific time or place. Neoclassical realists perceive realist theory as mainly contextual and focus on the nature

of international conditions serving as a framework for international relations and foreign policy (Kitchen 2010: 117–143; Rose 1998: 144–172). By centering their analyses on the international conditions facing states and domestic-level forces, neoclassical realists provide a more comprehensive theoretical explanation by emphasizing the specific determinants of foreign policy and the structure of the international system (Taliaferro 2004: 29–54; Zakaria 1998: 3–12).

We can also highlight the contributions of liberal theory. As Doyle (2008: 59) states, "Liberals pay more attention to domestic structures and individual differences than do realists." Several studies have argued in support of incorporating domestic politics into understanding international relations (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992: 95–180; Huth 1996: 141–194; Milner 1997: 3–66; Peterson 1996: 2–10; Russet 1993: 3–40; Rosecrance and Stein 1993: 3–21; Snyder 1991: 1–65). Keohane and Nye (2001: chapter 1) conceptualized "complex interdependence" in their observations that multiple international channels allow subnational actors to influence governments, and Moravcsik (1997: 513–553) argued that domestic interest groups and individuals are some of the most influential actors in the international system. Democratic peace scholars study the influence of political institutions, culture, and public opinion as force for peace (Dafoe, Oneal, and Russett 2013: 201–214; Hayes 2011: 767–791; Lektzian and Souva 2009: 17–37; Maoz and Russet 1993: 624–630).

An almost endless cycle of international-domestic interactions links states with non-state actors and shapes the extent of foreign policy continuity and change. Although the U.S. government enjoys sovereignty as a state actor, foreign policymakers must contend with external pressures and opportunities in the international system and as well as with domestic political actors, namely Congress, interest groups, public opinion, and media that operate with varying degrees of influence within foreign policymaking processes (Feaver et al. 2011: 563–583; Howell and Pevehouse 2005: 209–232). While presidents can express a set of national interests, not all domestic political actors will agree and are likely to engage in intense competition for influence. This pluralist approach attributes foreign policy decision-making to bargaining among domestic political actors, including the multinational corporations, the public and interest groups.

The extent of international-domestic interaction shapes the degree of foreign policy change or continuity and the willingness and capability of foreign policy leaders to adjust and adapt to shifting global events. Policymakers function within political environments defined by competing and entrenched interests, institutions and organizations, markets, ideologies, cultures and historical milieu interacting with international politics (Allison and Zelikow 2001: chapter 5; Hudson 2007: 103–164; Katzenstein 1996: 7–26; Lapid

1995: 3–9; Putnam 1988: 427–460; Rosenau 1966: 27–92; Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 2002; Sprout and Sprout 1956: 1–21). Most and Starr (1984: 383) argue for a micro-level analytic approach to state- and decision-level interactions in explaining foreign policy change by focusing on what they describe as "foreign policy substitutability," which "suggests that through time and across space, similar factors could plausibly be expected to trigger different foreign policy acts."

The foreign policymaking process tends to emphasize and reinforce the status quo with periods of incremental change and policy adjustment. According to V. O. Key (1964: 70), "The system—the established way of doing things—constitutes a powerful brake on change. . . . These patterns of behavior, traditional modes of action, group norms, or social equilibria—the concept employed in their description may no matter—possess a powerful capacity for their perpetuation and resist movements that would disturb them." Political actors must regularly contend with external and internal conditions and feedback loops and are challenged with finding ways of adjusting to degrees of change (Easton 1965: 23–34).

Systems tend to resist change and will maintain equilibrium but can be punctuated at times by rapid and abrupt changes brought on by critical events that force the political leadership to abandon the status quo and implement foreign policy change because policymakers, society, and the global environment oppose the continuation of the prevailing order (Rosenau 1966: 27–92, Truman 1951: 7–22). Hoffmann (1968: 3–51) contends that maintenance of the status quo during periods of crisis produce contradictions that force change. This can result in ineffectual and inadequate foreign policies often determined by military doctrine (Posen 1984: 13–80; Snyder 1984: 15–40; Van Evera 1999: 7–34).

Foreign policy change impacts and influences various levels of analysis in international relations, allowing for greater interaction between and among individuals, states and markets, and the international system (Rosati 1994: 221–264). The extent of change in the foreign policymaking process is determined by culture, history, and international political and economic events that pervade and infuse domestic actors such as media, public opinion, elite decision-makers, and bureaucratic organizations that could steady the political system and mitigate the effects of change (Goldmann 1982: 230–266; Hermann 1990: 3–21; Holsti 1982: 7–10). Foreign policy change can take different forms: refinement or minor change, reform or moderate change, and major restructuring of foreign policy.

Even when global events demand major restructuring of foreign policy, the foreign policymaking process tends toward incremental change. Maintenance of the status quo or the inability to anticipate or respond to major international and domestic conditions will produce political dysfunction and crisis within

a political system until necessary changes take place (Rosati 1994: 221–230). There is an ambiguous link between, on the one hand, the global order that U.S. foreign policy has maintained for over seventy years and, on the other, state actions, social forces and market dynamics, and international events shaping and influencing each.

Ideas, culture, and discourse also help explain international-domestic interactions. While constructivist explanations emphasize the significance of norms and intersubjective meanings at the systemic level, some constructivists examine domestic-level normative and ideational forces as well as the degree with which language constitutes meaning that transcend international and domestic boundaries (Barnett 1999: 5–36; Duffield 1999: 765–803; Katzenstein 1996: 7–26; Tannewald 1999: 433–468; Wendt 1992: 391–425; 1999: 1–40). According to Smith (2001: 38), "Social construction starts from the assumption that actors make their worlds, and this assumption lies behind most of the foreign policy literature." Walker and Schafer (2006: 11) have focused on political leaders' operational codes, an approach that "captures the subject's beliefs about self's best approach and strategy [in international relations] *and* self's beliefs about other's likely approach and strategy." Cottam (1986: 2–6) research on images highlights how leaders use perceptions of other nation-states to develop cognitive balance and positive images of themselves in foreign policy decision-making.

More recent constructivist research focuses on the role of international norms, culture, and foreign policymaking. Checkel (2005: 801–826) observes that the socialization and internalization of international norms within political institutions in Europe can be understood in rationalist terms of strategic calculation, role playing, and normative suasion. Some constructivists emphasize strong linkages between culture at the mass level and foreign policymaking at the elite level (Catalinac 2007: 58–100; McCourt 2011: 1599–1622) while others do not perceive those connections although they concede that mass-level cultural identities and values can limit the foreign policy choices of elites (Berger 1998: 17–20; Duffield 1999: 765). Constructivism's focus on intersubjective meaning provides us with conceptual tools to link domestic and international politics and overcome the agent-structure problem (Johnston 2005: 1013–1044).

Integrating neoclassical realism, liberal theory, and constructivism is essential to building an understanding of the Obama administration's foreign policy through the lens of systemic-domestic interaction. Liberalism's focus on international institutions and domestic political pressures, constructivism's emphasis on ideas and identity, and neoclassical realism's attention to elite-level leaders and foreign policymakers in shaping foreign policy strategy and outcomes provide important conceptual explanations of the complexities and dynamism of external-internal exchanges.

Chapter 2

Breaking Away from the International Order

International and Domestic Pressure Points

This chapter highlights the extent to which the post–Second World War international order, which was premised on over seventy years of reliably predictable U.S. hegemony, began evolving into a multipolar order during Obama's presidency that fundamentally impacted U.S. domestic politics and reshaped U.S. foreign policy. The chapter then turns its attention to a constellation of domestic and international pressures and crises facing Obama that threatened to undermine the rules-based international order and deplete American resources and power, forcing the new president to transition U.S. foreign policy toward a multipolar international system. One of the most challenging pressure points was absorbing the rising defense costs of maintaining a vast global network of alliances. In addition, the costly and risky military intervention and war in Iraq, the residential housing bubble, financial crisis, and Great Recession made it more difficult to allocate resources to balancing against Russia in Europe and China in the Asia-Pacific. These crises were placed on top of a U.S. economy that was transitioning from labor-intensive manufacturing, experiencing widening economic inequality and a shrinking middle class, an increasingly partisan public, and competing with emerging markets around the world. These immediate and long-term external and internal pressures would determine and shape the extent to which Obama was able to lead U.S. foreign policy in an emerging multipolar international system (Kellogg 2016).

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Since the end of the Second World War, U.S. foreign policy promoted and defended the global status quo. U.S. foreign policy was predictable, anchoring

the international system on a rules-based international order comprised of international institutions, shared norms, and formal and informal alliance networks to maintain postwar peace through U.S. hegemonic stability. With an understanding of how catastrophic another fundamental breakdown in international order could be with another world war, the U.S. developed mutual and shared norms and created and upheld rules-based institutions to stabilize the international system, promote economic prosperity, and fuse the United States to its allies (Ikenberry 2009a: 17–21).

During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union shaped and dominated the contours of the bipolar international system, engaged in an intense nuclear arms race, and competed for power in developing areas of the world. U.S. foreign policy sought to prevent another collapse of the international order by containing the spread of Communism and spreading prosperity through free and open trade and foreign investment.

The fear of Europe and the Asia-Pacific falling under the control of a hostile state drove the United States to sustain networks of military alliances (North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)), trade pacts (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/WTO, North American Free Trade Agreement), global financial organizations (International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Group of 20). This system reflected American interests and grounded on norms of liberal democracy, collective security, conflict resolution, and economic stability and would govern presidential leadership of foreign policy from Harry Truman to George W. Bush. U.S. allies came to rely on a predictable pattern in U.S. foreign policy of sustaining a rules-based post–Second World War international order. American presidents would shape the postwar international order, but in doing so, became committed to maintaining its norms and institutions.

The postwar international order was designed to bind U.S. foreign policy to its allies. The concept of a "liberal" international order was a political construct to serve U.S. national interests. The security and economic features of the order emerged in the immediate wake of the Second World War with the Euro-American alliance system premised on the Atlantic Charter (1941), the Bretton Woods agreement (1944), the United Nations Charter (1945), the Marshall Plan (1947), and the North Atlantic agreement (1949). According to Ikenberry (2012: 219), "The United States was more willing to make multilateral commitments to Western European partners than to others" because of shared norms and the evolution of formal security and economic partnerships. In exchange for American restraint, other Western states would integrate within flexible and open arrangements and agreements that formed the postwar order and would incorporate other states hoping to reap the benefits of multilateral institutions and democratic norms (Ikenberry 2002: 213–238; 2009a: 5–11; 2012: 159–220).

Several "logics of liberal order" would evolve and expand over the course of the next seventy years, the norms and pillars of which still shape the international system (Ikenberry 2012: 279–323). These include an open world economy, the domestic welfare state, international economic and financial institutions (IMF, the GATT/WTO, World Bank), bilateral and multilateral security arrangements (NATO, Australia-New Zealand-United States agreement, U.S.-Japan alliance), liberal norms and progressive change, and American hegemony. During the Cold War, the United States and its allies united to contain the Soviet Union and its Communist allies. Following the collapse of the Cold War, the United States and its allies worked to integrate as many states as possible into prevailing international institutions (Beisner 2006: 642–656; Ikenberry 2009a: 19–20).

These logics formed "strategic bargains" that underpin a rules-based international order premised on open and flexible arrangements (Cha 2016: 7, 14, 20; Ikenberry 2001a: 21–79; 2002: 213–238; 2012: 35–78, 207–219). The United States would restrain itself from dominating or conquering other states, in effect reducing its own freedom of global action. In other words, the United States restrained itself and bound itself with its allies; that is, they prioritized resistance to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, maintained flexible frameworks to develop and open the global economy, and protected U.S.-led security arrangements. The United States embedded itself within global alliance networks, assumed leadership of international institutions, vigorously upheld free trade and foreign investment, and sought to promote human rights and the rule of law. The expanding international order would encourage other states, namely China, India, and other emerging and developing states, to develop and integrate within international institutions in open, flexible, and multilayered arrangements in trade, financial and currency exchange, bilateral and multilateral security and economic agreements, and other informal networks and partnerships. The might of the U.S. dollar in international currency markets bound states to the U.S. economic model of open trade and investment.

In Europe, U.S. foreign policy was focused on containing Soviet expansion. NATO quickly became central to this endeavor in both Europe and beyond. The United States came to itself as the principle bulwark of European security, enabling it to wield considerable influence within a transatlantic alliance system premised on collective defense; that is, NATO was central to upholding and maintaining the institutional and normative pillars of the contemporary European security system (Ikenberry 2012: 79–157).

Informal bilateral and multilateral arrangements in the Asia-Pacific provided the United States with opportunities to exercise significant influence in these critical regions for ensuring access to markets and move its forces closer to regional challengers to contain their rise. In the absence of formal

institutions, such as NATO, the United States provided collective goods in the form of client-based military and commercial networks that secured waterways and chokepoints, developed trade and financial relationships, and stabilized keys allies, namely Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines (Cha 2016: 7, 14, 20; Ikenberry 2012: 35–78).

The cost for the United States was in assuming the burden of responsibility for stabilizing the international system and safeguarding democratic norms. In other words, the United States would uphold and honor its end of the bargains in exchange for other states complying with and integrating in the international order to mitigate the potential for chaos (Ikenberry 2001b: 20). Strong and effective norms and rules based on mutual consent lead to a more stable and legitimate international system (Ikenberry 2011: 56–68; 2009b: 71–87; 2003: 2001b: 17–24). It was cheaper for the United States to uphold the postwar international order with norms and international institutions than to unilaterally maintain it on its own.

The United States underwrote the rules and norms of the postwar international order with its vast array of bilateral and multilateral security alliances and overseas military bases, support for the World Bank, WTO, and IMF, and its ideological desire to spread neoliberal norms. Kissinger (2014: 282) argues, the United States assumed the lead "to defend and expand democracy, the rule of law, and free markets, the United States and its Western allies institutionalized this liberal, multilateral order, and then worked hard to extend the reach of Western institutions once the Cold War ended."

The stability of the postwar world economic order rested on the Bretton Woods framework of establishing money-lending practices for the recovery and development of integrated, shoring up currencies based on gold and monetary exchanges fixed on the U.S. dollar and open trading systems that would benefit states invested in the order. The United States sought to develop a system of international finance and trade that would commit international institutions and wealthier countries to support international development goals and monetary reforms in poorer countries (Helleiner 2014: 29–51, 258–278). The dollar held up what many believed was a U.S. economy and, by extension, a world economic order, that was immune to crisis. Also, America's allies were linked to it via bilateral and multilateral defense arrangements that made them largely dependent on the American-led security perimeter. America's allies had no alternative but to exist within this international order (Gaddis 2005: 162–196; LaFeber 2006: 78–84; 1994: 85–92). Consequently, the differences between the United States and its allies, particularly in Western Europe, were downplayed to maintain unity of common purpose against the USSR and Communism.

The Cold War has been referred to as the "long peace," in which the two superpowers did not directly go to war against one another (Gaddis 1986:

99–142). Given the reality of nuclear deterrence, the United States and Soviet Union were unwilling to use nuclear weapons against the other. Both conventional military power and nuclear arms likely contributed to the stability and security of the international system (Kennan 1976: 683–684). But it was through vast global economic arrangements that allowed the United States and its allies to build a considerable measure of wealth and economic power through trade and financial investment. This enabled the United States to underwrite the stability of international institutions, like the IMF, World Bank, and GATT. The long peace of the Cold War was part of a cycle of a larger order-building project.

However, the economic and financial components of this system began eroding with the collapse of the Bretton Woods framework. Economies destroyed during the Second World War were rebuilt with American assistance and caught up to the United States. As a result, the United States became much more vulnerable to global economic fluctuations and international energy markets. China was opened and became more integrated with global financial markets having built an export-led economy. Western Europe and Japan reconstructed their war-ravaged economies. Moreover, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) demonstrated that it could directly impact global energy markets and oil prices by driving extraction up or down.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and collapse of the Cold War provided the United States with new opportunities and uncertainties in waging foreign policy. However, U.S. foreign policy seemed to meander in the absence of a major counterweight to its power and influence. Although the United States emerged victorious and was viewed as the world's remaining superpower, there were notable failures. This was certainly different than the bipolar Cold War system when ideology and East-West tensions led the United States and NATO and Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact to wage wars and fight conflicts through proxy states as opposed to major wars to eliminate the rival bloc of power. Alliances structures and international organizations were long term and driven by fixed and permanent strategic interests.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communist governments in Eastern Europe, the United States commanded almost unrivaled influence in the international system characterized by the scope and range of its global power, organizational abilities, prodigious military capabilities and wealth. With the end of the Cold War, governments were worried about what they viewed as a unipolar international system in which there was no counterbalance to U.S. hegemony. Neoconservative advocates of unipolarity and hegemonic stability believed the United States could stabilize the international system with regime change, enforce democratic norms onto others, and ensure the continuation of the global status quo.

While the disintegration of the Soviet Union signified the collapse of the Cold War and East-West tensions, the end of the bipolar international system was a process of slow fragmentation. Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev's embrace of political openness (glasnost) and economic restructuring (perestroika) in the 1980s helped facilitate the end of the Cold War. The lack of strong Soviet opposition to the U.S.-led coalition to eject Saddam Hussein's Iraq from Kuwait in 1991 indicated that Soviet foreign policy was accommodating the anti-Iraq coalition.

Seeking to maximize American global power and take full advantage of the so-called unipolar moment, post–Cold War U.S. foreign policy defended the status quo by maintaining the political, military, and economic components of an international order created in 1944. As Krauthammer (1990: 11) argued, "The immediate post-Cold War world is not multipolar. The center of world power is the unchallenged superpower, the United States." During the 1990s, Cold War–era institutions like NATO endured and expanded eastward, gobbling up former Soviet allies and republics in Eastern Europe at the same time the European Union enlarged, and Russia foundered. The WTO, IMF, and World Bank worked to sustain and extend the model of market-based trade and finance and resisted granting China greater influence in the global economy as its grew at an unprecedented rate. Globalization showed the primacy of the United States around the world, although intrastate wars, ethnic conflict, and gross human rights violations took place in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi during the first decade of the post–Cold War era. The United Nations failed to embrace necessary reforms, address its clunky bureaucracy, and restructure the permanent membership of the Security Council.

The collapse of the Cold War and bipolarity forced U.S. presidents to react to changing and shifting domestic and international forces. Although considered a success in foreign policy, President George H. W. Bush led the United States through the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War as well as Persian Gulf War I but was consumed by the 1991 recession and tensions within the Republican Party. President Bill Clinton sought to contain China by dispatching naval forces in the Taiwan Straits and embraced democracy promotion and used American military force for humanitarian goals in Bosnia and Kosovo but withdrew U.S. forces in Somalia and failed to intervene in Rwanda. The continued deployment of thousands of U.S. ground forces in the Persian Gulf became a symbol of American meddling and interventionism, a target for terrorists and a source of political instability in the region.

While the U.S. economy expanded, and budget surpluses produced, much of the financial deregulation that took place during the Reagan Administration was accelerated by Clinton, Congress, and the Federal Reserve System, ultimately leading to the 2008 financial crisis. Following the September 11

terrorist attacks by Al-Qaeda terrorists, President George W. Bush produced the most sweeping transformation in foreign policy since the Cold War with his embrace of preventive war, preemptive military force, construction of a vast homeland security and surveillance apparatus, and assertion of U.S. hegemony. The Bush Doctrine held that the United States could overturn regimes it believed were threatening to undermine the global status quo. After regime change was launched in Afghanistan and Iraq, America's global image and international credibility eroded, and the American public turned against those wars and grew more resistant to military intervention and so-called "nation-building" efforts.

After the September 11 terrorist attacks, U.S. global leadership entered a new phase. President George W. Bush produced the most sweeping transformation in foreign policy since the Cold War with his embrace of preventive war, preemptive military force, construction of a vast homeland security and surveillance apparatus, and assertion of U.S. hegemony. The so-called Bush Doctrine held that the United States could overturn regimes it believed were threatening to undermine the global status quo. Although the Bush administration thought the international order would be defined by the global war on terrorism, in hindsight it contributed to the erosion of American hegemony and ended U.S. foreign policy's post–Cold War unipolar moment (Krauthhammer 1990: 23–33; Mastanduno 1997: 49–88). The U.S. invasion of Iraq delegitimized American hegemony as years of war spread chaos throughout the Middle East. American human rights abuses against detainees at Guantanamo Bay, secret U.S. detention centers, and at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq damaged America's global image as a symbol of liberal democracy.

While the U.S. invasion of Iraq delegitimized American hegemony, the U.S. residential housing and financial crises consumed both the Bush and Obama presidencies. The crises afflicted the entire world, contributing to the Great Recession and leading to a crisis of confidence in the international order. While the international order was supposed to contain conflicts and prevent economic crises, it was the United States that started these fires.

Obama was elected in 2008 to end the war in Iraq and recover from the Great Recession. However, then came the Arab Spring, which rocked long-standing U.S. interests in the Middle East, a region deemed vital to securing international energy markets and U.S. national security interests. It also challenged Obama to confront a decades-long U.S. strategy of propping up dictators in the face of popular movements. Obama's reluctant approval of U.S. participation in the 2011 NATO intervention that toppled Gadhafi in Libya highlighted the failures of military intervention when regime change is not followed up by nation-building. Libya would contribute to his hesitancy to topple Bashar al-Assad in Syria, providing fertile ground for the rise of the IS in Iraq and Syria. Atrocities committed by IS and Assad, as well as

the Russian intervention on behalf of Assad's forces, led to refugee crisis that overwhelmed U.S. allies in the Middle East and Europe. This stoked nationalist anger in Europe and the United States while also allowing Russia to assert its interests in the eastern Mediterranean. In Europe, when Russia intervened in eastern Ukraine and annexed Crimea, there was little Obama could do. Russia's actions reflected its frustration with American disregard of its status as a great power as well as the eastward expansion and enlargement of NATO and the European Union. Moreover, the economic growth and military expansion of China as well as the emergence of India forced Obama to rebalance U.S. interests to the Asia-Pacific region as these large and expanding economies were becoming primary drivers of international trade, investment, and energy.

It was during Obama's presidency that the number of democracies around the world declined the most (Luce 2017: 82–83). Freedom House (2016: 3, 5) reported that after years of increasing political freedom around the world, the number of countries expanding freedom has declined every year since 2008. In fact, numerical scores on political liberties and civil rights in declining freedom countries outnumbered scores in improving freedom countries. According to *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, which measures public trust in government and elites based on electoral process and pluralism, government functioning, political participation, democratic political culture and civil liberties, scores declined in roughly seventy countries in 2016 compared to 2015 (Economist 2017).

Many nation-states were following a pattern observed by Jack Snyder almost twenty years ago who argued that new democracies emerging at the end of the Cold War could devolve into authoritarianism because abrupt and rapid transitions to democracy, social change, and deep ethnic divisions muddle linkages between elites and citizens (Snyder 2000: 10–29). Fragile domestic political authority structures may threaten new leaders who carve out their own coalitions out of fear of a coup attempts, often leading to state collapse. Or, if governance and pluralism are weak, citizens and leaders may be motivated by a strong sense of nationalism and embrace authoritarianism to enforce order and stability.

There are dangers when nation-states with little to no history of pluralism or liberalism experiment with democratic governance (Zakaria 2007: 199–238). As Mansfield and Snyder (2005: 3, 265) argued, "Dangers that can arise when democratic transitions do not follow an auspicious sequence," one in which "the strong political institutions that make democracy work (such as an effective state, the rule of law, organized parties . . . and professional news media)" arise prior to the development of a pluralist culture. Today, authoritarian governments are firmly in place in Russia under Vladimir Putin, Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Venezuela under Nicolas Maduro,

Poland under Andrzej Duda, Hungary under Viktor Orban, Myanmar under Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and the Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte. These trends challenge Fukuyama's (1989: 1), argument that economic and political liberalism marked "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." Faith in liberal democracy as the logical or inevitable extension of social progression hastened by postwar institutions and norms has been challenged by a sobering nationalist and dangerous illiberal tide.

Under Obama, the rules-based international order experienced a crisis of confidence as the U.S.-led model of growth and development was undermined by economic crises and security challenges. The U.S. residential housing and financial crises led to the global Great Recession, economic inequality, populism and extremism, and hyper-partisanship among other factors are undermining American leadership of the international order the United States created and upheld. China has implemented a military modernization program, acted on its territorial ambitions, and has spread its global economic interests with the "One Belt, One Road" initiative that could recast the economic order. Russia has pushed back against NATO and the European Union, disrupted institutions and democratic elections, fomented extremism, spread misinformation through social media, and redrew borders hoping to recapture its former self and ring in a "post-West world order," as described by Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov (quoted in Talbot and Brandt 2017).

The Syrian Civil War and the inability of the European Union and United States to cope with it and other regional armed conflicts in Iraq and Yemen increased the number of civilian deaths and led to a massive refugee crisis. Terrorist attacks committed by the IS or terrorists inspired by it increased in Iraq and Syria, but several high-profile attacks were carried out in Europe and the U.S. political parties and interest groups in democratic societies engaged in populist, nationalist, and xenophobic reactions by embracing new security measures that would keep out or mitigate displaced persons and migrants.

While the United States did not contend with the same level of refugee flows or terrorist attacks as European governments, Americans have questioned pluralism, democratic institutions, and the U.S. global leadership role in the wake of the Great Recession. New limits on voting, rising private money in shaping campaigns and elections, hyper-partisanship and gerrymandering undermined democratic governance. Ethnic and racial tensions and divisions increased among Americans, leading to an increase in police violence, residential segregation, and uneven economic growth as the Great Recession dramatically increased economic inequality. These developments played out in the form of intense, often angry anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim political debates on immigration and national security with an increase in the number of hate crimes and extremist attacks. America's global reputation

and image as a democracy was harmed as the United States began shying away from supporting democracies around the world.

For decades, the aim of U.S. foreign policy was to bring as many nation-states as possible, starting with former Communist governments under Soviet domination, into the rules-based international order by emphasizing liberal internationalism, trade, investment, and commercial exchange, the benefits of which would lead to peace, prosperity, and stability. While the original institutional and normative components of the international order were concentrated in centers of power in North America, Western Europe, Japan, and Australasia, today it has expanded to Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and East and South Asia. During this evolution, America's responsibility for leading the ever-expanding order also increased, putting pressure on U.S. foreign policy to maintain the overall significance and character of international order through the provision of public goods. In other words, the United States became a status quo power. As Mastunduno (1997: 59) observes, the United States has identified the survival of the global status quo as a priority by "seeking to preserve . . . an order that continues to reflect the design and preserves the dominant position of the United States."

From the U.S. perspective, it was rational for other states to remain within the prevailing and expanding order. Zakaria (2008: 232) asserts, challenger states "want to gain power and status and respect, for sure, but by growing within the international system, not by overturning it." For Ikenberry (2008: 23), "Today's Western order, in short, is hard to overturn and easy to join." But as states like China and India achieve more wealth and their position rises in the international hierarchy, their desire for influence increases.

Today, the contemporary international order is neither "U.S.-led" nor even purely "Western." It is a global conception that incorporated developing countries and emerging markets well beyond the original "transatlantic order or security community" (Anderson, Ikenberry, and Risse 2008: 5). The dilemma for the United States was best to tolerate and accept new and different ideas and directions coming from rising states and emerging markets. The survival of the international order would be determined by its flexibility of its norms and rules as well as the willingness of the hegemon to accommodate the rise of the rest (Acharya 2014: 46–76; Kahler 2013: 711–729; Kupchan 2012: 46–73; Zakaria 2008: 167–214). As Ikenberry (2009a: 21) states, "The problem" is "not how to build binding relations among advanced democracies but how to integrate and strengthen weak or emerging non-Western democracies situated in troubled regions of the world."

International orders come and go, and changes in the actors, institutions, and processes within them take place. But the prevailing international order has kept the international system relatively static from 1945 to the first decade of the twenty-first century, preventing major structural reform and change

from taking place while failing to recognize the emergence of China and India. Prior to 1945, wholesale change in the international system was, at times, violently contested. The international order is rules-based with regularized international processes and institutional behavior. Brexit and Donald Trump are reversions and regressions to the nineteenth-century period of state sovereignty and nationalism, although today interstate war causing change is no longer a regular process. But the British to vote to exit the European Union and American election of Donald Trump president were consequences of powerful nationalist forces on both sides of the Atlantic.

While the causes and effects of the return to great power politics and multipolarity vary from nation-state to nation-state, a common theme is public distrust of established political, social, and economic institutions. The sense among many in the United States and the United Kingdom is that contemporary globalization has left lower and middle-income people behind. Automation and robotics brought on by technology, tax incentives, financial deregulation, and trade deals have empowered and enriched elites with few gains trickling down to everyone else. Some can argue that policymakers did not provide effective and affordable job training and higher education to people impacted by globalization, leaving American communities devastated and distraught. Others argue that the international order the United States built and maintain was never truly liberal. While President Trump and nationalist leaders in Europe can blame immigrants and refugees for unemployment, despair, and economic security threats, the reality is that automation and robotics and domestic policies that failed to prepare enough people for the twenty-first-century global economy were largely responsible for public resentment.

Moreover, the international institutions created after the Second World War, namely the IMF and later with the WTO, came to reflect the special economic interests of politically connected elites who have little interest in sharing benefits with lower- and middle-income people anywhere in the world. According to Douglas Elmendorf (quoted in Goodman 2018: A1) "Many people in Europe and the United States have not benefited very much from overall economic growth over the past few decades, and they are naturally skeptical of the policies and leaders in place. But the solution is not to throw out the liberal order. It is to complement it with government policies that allow people to share in the benefits." However, too many people have questioned the basic tenets of the international order, putting its norms and institutional pillars in doubt. While new policymakers are needed to restore public trust in the international order, nationalist sentiment is trumping globalization and liberalism.

As with the emergence of other right-wing populists in Europe, Donald Trump assumed the presidency on a wave of discontent and anger

with irrepressible globalization and widening economic inequality that increased under past Republican and Democratic presidents. Trump's election in 2016 is a right-wing nationalist reaction to liberalism and globalism that seeks to dust the cobwebs off seven decades of U.S. foreign policy. Trumpism is driven by an angry ethno nationalism that is dangerously inward-looking, resentful, and protective of white identity. In other words, Trumpism cannot even see an international order. In response to a statement by Secretary of Defense James Mattis that "the greatest thing the 'greatest generation' left us was the rules-based postwar international order," President Trump remarked that the order is "not working at all" (quotes in Landler 2017: A1). After 2008, liberals and conservatives began debating the scope and range of U.S. leadership of the international order; under Obama and Trump, that debate deteriorated into an ideological battle between so-called globalists and nationalists over whether the United States would abandon the very international order it helped build and lead.

Even if we assume that Trumpism is temporary, now that the international order is less Western or American, globalism may not even need the United States. Some elements will continue in some iteration, forming what Amitav Achary describes as a "multiplex" world in which multiple key actors are linked through different yet complex relationships. Achary (quoted in Kuo 2016a) describes this world as something distinct from the post–Second World War order in which "power and leadership are increasingly dispersed. Power asymmetries remain, but the ability to create order and provide public goods in economics and security lies not just in the hands of a single power, or a group of great powers, or nation-states, but also with a variety of other actors, such as transnational social movements, corporations, regional organizations like the EU, and foundations (like the Gates Foundation). The power to disrupt order is also dispersed; interstate conflicts no longer threaten it as much as intra-state conflicts or conflicts linked to non-state actors such as extremist groups." The multiplex world is unlike the previous European balance of power system, Imperial British, or post–Second World War U.S.-led orders in that it seems to have differing strata of state and non-state actors as well as multiple regional power networks and institutions (Achary 2014: 1–19, 99–131).

The international order is driving toward multipolarity, having compelled Obama to engage in a long-awaited and long-overdue restructuring of U.S. foreign policy away from American hegemony. In 2008, the same year the global financial crisis hit world markets, the U.S. National Intelligence Council published an edition of its *Global Trends* volume forecasting that while "we cannot rule out a 19th century-like scenario of arms races, territorial expansion, and military rivalries. . . . By 2025, the international system will

be a global multipolar one with gaps in national power continuing to narrow between developed and developing countries. Concurrent with the shift in power among nation-states, the relative power of various nonstate actors . . . is increasing. The players are changing, but so too are the scope and breadth of transnational issues important for continued global prosperity" (NIE 2008: vi). Obama's response was to resist the temptation to isolate the United States from the very global order it helped create and maintain even as that order has become more multipolar (Slaughter 2009: 92).

With the risky U.S. invasion of Iraq and the subsequent Great Recession, security and economic crises threatened to undermine the rules-based international order and create havoc within the United States, reflecting the complexities and dynamism of international-domestic interactions. Domestic political, economic, and social decay coupled with rising powers holding competing views of order weakened and constrained President Obama's ability to lead U.S. foreign policy. U.S. global credibility was questioned by the public as Americans became openly resentful of shoring up allies and providing public goods even as rising powers began challenging the status quo. The United States turned away from globalization as the U.S. public became more insular. The American people no longer saw the benefits of security-provision as U.S. wars in the Middle East continued, fiscal deficits mounted, economic inequality worsened, and hyper-partisanship and gridlock became the domestic political norm.

With its economic expansion to China, India, and other emerging markets, the international order became a victim of its own success as these and other states in the Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Africa began to grow and develop. When new states and markets were included within the order, they benefited, and poverty rates fell in many areas of the world. Today, people are living longer, a trend that began prior to the Second World War, and are less likely to live in poverty. In the two decades following the Second World War, the number of people not living in poverty (living on less than $1.90 per day) began skyrocketing and the number of people living in extreme poverty began plummeting. According to the World Bank, 10.7 percent of people lived on less than $1.90 per day, down from 35 percent in 1990 with over 1 billion people climbing out of extreme poverty during this twenty-three-year period. This trend has been driven by economic growth in Asia and the Pacific, especially China, India, and Indonesia and their relative integration into the global economy. While much of sub-Saharan Africa remains in extreme poverty, and with most of the world's poor living in rural areas where it is more likely people lack basic educational skills, health care, and lack access to safe food and water, people are less likely to live in poverty today (World Bank Group 2016). The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has also reported that the prevalence of global

undernourishment by percent of population dropped from 14.8 percent in 2000 to 10.7 percent in 2015, although world hunger did rise in 2016 (UNFAO 2017).

Moreover, the number of world-wide battle deaths per 100,000 people and the absolute number of war deaths since the end of the Second World War has decreased. While the number of wars increased until the collapse of the Cold War, colonial conflicts ended in the 1960s and 1970s and interstate wars and wars between the major powers have almost become obsolete, although civil wars remain (PRIO n.d.; UCDP n.d.). Given these positive trends, many still believe they have not benefited from contemporary globalization and the international order the United States has upheld for more than seven decades.

But the rules-based international order was designed by the West and for the West. The structural pillars centered on the Atlantic Charter, Bretton Woods, United Nations Charter, Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic agreement. The United States and its allies believed these institutions would provide an open space of rules and norms that bring economic development and eventually democracy to the rest of the world. But for the great powers, namely China and Russia, the international order was always a Western construct that would never fully embrace them. According to Dong (quoted in Rogin 2018), "From the very beginning, this was a Western project and Western-centered. . . . This concept of liberal international order is insufficient and inaccurate in terms of describing what kind of order we are in."

The United States and its allies superciliously assumed that with the collapse of the Cold War the world would embrace liberal politics and norms. But history can be cruel to the arrogant as the Great Recession awoke dormant nationalist and populist forces. Authoritarianism led by Russia and China is on the march with its illiberal variants taking root in Western societies. A multipolar international system defined in terms of geopolitical competition resumed after a period of post–Cold War respite.

Overall, international and domestic politics experienced significant change. During the Cold War, international politics defined and shaped domestic politics and society in ways that sustained an anti-Communist consensus. However, this consensus would breakdown during the Vietnam War and lead to the rise of the political right and left in American politics. While partisan divisions would continue in the unipolar post–Cold War system, the Great Recession undermined global faith in the U.S. economic model and post–Cold War regime change policies upended the reliably predictable pattern of the U.S. national security policy. The international order was stretched and strained, resulting in a multipolar international system that would challenge the Obama administration to make changes and adjustments to more than seventy years of a reliably predictable U.S. foreign policy.

UNDER PRESSURE: OBAMA, FOREIGN POLICY, AND CRISES

Obama's foreign policy legacy would be judged by whether his administration could restore faith in the international order preferable to the alternatives posed by Russia and China. In an emerging multipolar system, we expect the United States as the dominant power to more vigorously and aggressively fend off challengers and maintain the status quo. However, Obama and the American public were less willing to share the burden of leading the international order. The United States and Europe began moving in separate directions, reflecting a divergence among traditional Western allies. The rise of illiberal regimes in Europe and Brexit, the election of Trump and rising nationalism mean there is little political consensus within Western societies on how to respond to both external and internal pressures. The globalization-nationalism debate played out on both the systemic and domestic levels during the Obama presidency and, now under Trump, dominates political discourse prompting many to embrace "America First" notions of non-interventionism and American nationalism.

The Great Recession and Its Impact

The most significant threat to the rules-based international order was the Great Recession and Obama's response to the economic crisis would define his presidency and foreign policy. In the United States, the average American household lost thousands in annual income and the United States shed millions of jobs and trillions in stock values. The loss of income and wealth resulted in a decrease in consumer spending and business investment as well as a loss of approximately 8.4 million jobs in the U.S. labor market or 6.1 percent of all employment between 2008 and 2009. The U.S. unemployment rate approached 10 percent in 2009, the most significant contraction of the labor market since the Great Depression (BLS 2014). And while the U.S. economy recovered from the devastating crisis, the benefits of recovery did no trickle down to everyone else until 2015 when incomes for those in the bottom 80 percent started to expand.

The Great Recession began with the bursting of the residential property bubble caused by permissive deregulatory policies put in place in the United States under Republican and Democratic presidential administrations since the early 1980s. Specifically, deregulation in the financial services and housing sectors led to the multi-trillion dollar property bubble that burst in 2007, causing millions to foreclose on their home mortgages, businesses and consumers to default on loans, and financial institutions to collapse. In the

absence of strong and effective government regulation, the U.S. financial services sector was vulnerable to toxic subprime securities and collateralized debt obligations.

With the failure of large investment and commercial banks, domestic property values in free fall and the home mortgage sector in chaos, this was the most serious financial emergency since the Great Depression of the 1930s. U.S. leading stock market indices plunged from 2007 to 2009 (NASDAQ Inc. n.d.; WSJ n.d.). The most high-profile institution that collapsed was Lehman Brothers, with other investment firms and banks on the brink of failure, and automakers about to go bankrupt in the absence of government intervention. In October 2008, President George W. Bush signed the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, which created the $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) bailout program in the U.S. Department of Treasury to shore up toxic subprime mortgages. With TARP, the federal government took possession of mortgage-backed securities and held them until values recovered or when toxic assets could be removed from the banks that issued them to encourage financial lending. The TARP program staved off asset losses by supplying billions of taxpayer dollars to Citigroup, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Countrywide, Merrill Lynch, JP Morgan, Regions Financial Group, Capital One, and the insurance giant American International Group.

In 2009, President Obama imposed regulations on financial institutions and Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Act to prevent American banks from engaging in risky investments that contributed to the housing bubble and ensuing financial crisis and economic recession. While TARP helped the banks, the bursting of the housing bubble and the financial crisis directly contributed to the Great Recession, resulting in severe unemployment and widening economic inequality. With domestic consumption dominating the total economy, the Great Recession forced the U.S. Federal Reserve to mitigate losses by injecting massive amount of money and credit into the hands of businesses and consumers by cutting interest rates to historical lows.

With the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the acquisition of Bear Stearns by J. P. Morgan, Bank of America's absorption of Merrill Lynch, and the acquisition of Wachovia by Wells Fargo, the passage of Dodd-Frank financial regulations forced large bans to shed some of their subprime lending and securitization practices. This meant the entire system of international finance had to reassess its approach to investment banking, wealth portfolios, income, currency management, and commodity markets. In the wake of the 2008 crisis and the Great Recession, international banks downsized and adjusted to the "jobless recovery" or "new normal" of slower economic growth, lower investment returns, new government regulations, reduced hiring and higher unemployment, less disposable income and lower consumption, and more businesses holding on to their profits (El-Erian 2009; 2010; Nasar 1991).

The collapse of the housing sector, the 2008 financial crisis and the Great Recession as well as the ensuing financial actions taken by the U.S. Federal Reserve System undermined what before 2008 was unquestioned confidence in the U.S. model of financial exchange and market economics. The crisis was not limited to the United States as markets and banks buckled in the European Union with the collapse of the Greek economy, skyrocketing unemployment in Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Spain, a financial emergency in Iceland, and instability in the Eurozone. Global financial services, whose practices were supposed to be based on integrated global regulations and supervision governed by the IMF, threatened the very order it was supposed to uphold and secure. The 2008 crisis revealed a global financial system that was too intimately interlinked, concentrated, and dysfunctional, and with far too much political influence to be fundamentally reformed. Given that a depression was avoided, the United States believed that major structural reforms to global financial operations were largely unnecessary (Kirshner 2014: 106–132). The 2008 global financial catastrophe caused a crisis of confidence in the IMF, the most important institutional pillar of the capitalist order that was originally designed to stabilize and integrate the global monetary system.

Given that the actions in response to the financial crisis were taken by the U.S. Federal Reserve System and not the IMF, the global order of financial exchange was seriously questioned. The IMF failed to predict the financial crisis and contain the global spread. The only major force that acted in response to the crisis was the U.S. Federal Reserve, which through quantitative easing pumped money into the U.S. economy and supplied the European Union. and leading banks in Europe with currency swaps to prevent a total economic meltdown. Put simply, the U.S. Federal Reserve System, not the IMF, supplied the extraordinary and necessary liquidity during the global financial crisis that prevented an international systemic collapse of financial institutions and governments and promote stability and recovery.

The impact of the Great Recession in the United States was far-reaching, resulting in mixed and uneven economic performance during Obama's presidency. Under Obama, 11.3 million jobs were created, less than the 23 million jobs created during the Clinton years yet more than the 1.3 million jobs under George W. Bush. While the unemployment rate reached a high of almost 10 percent in 2009, it dropped to 4.7 percent and job openings more than doubled (BLS n.d.). Due to the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the percentage of Americans without health insurance dropped from 16 percent in 2010 to 8.6 percent in 2016 with 21.3 million Americans gaining health insurance (Cohen et al. 2016).

However, labor force participation dropped by 2.8 percent and average length of unemployment (those without a job for 27 weeks or longer) was higher than it was prior to the Great Recession. The decline in labor

force participation was driven by demographic factors and retirements of post–Second World War baby boomers. Also, corporations and businesses reduced payrolls by millions. The reduction of payrolls during and after Great Recession raised fears of a "jobless recovery." Hiring accelerated early in the recovery, but only after millions of jobs were lost in 2009. At the end of Obama's presidency, the average length of unemployment was eleven weeks longer than it was at the beginning of the recession (BLS n.d.).

Some of the most adverse effects of the Great Recession in the United States were the dramatic reduction in median household income and decline in wages and salaries, spike in corporate profits and stock market indices, expansion in the incomes of the top 1 percent and top 20 percent of Americans, widening of economic inequality, and transformation of the American workforce. Wages and salaries declined from 51.5 percent of GDP in 1970 to 42.5 percent of GDP in 2015 and employee compensation dropped from 58 percent to 53 percent of GDP during this same period (BEA 2017). According to the Congressional Budget Office (2011), from 1979 to 2007, "income grew by: 275 percent for the top 1 percent of households; 65 percent for the next 19 percent; just under 40 percent for the next 60 percent; and 18 percent for the bottom 20 percent." In 2013, median household income was 8 percent less than it was in 2007 (Posey 2016; Saez 2014). It was not until 2014–2015 that median household income increased from $53,713 to $55,775 with middle-class incomes improving by 5.2 percent in 2016 (Posey 2016). Furthermore, the cost of health insurance and health-care costs eroded household income as employee health costs increased approximately 78 percent from 2003 to 2013 (KFF 2013; Lowrey 2014).

The lack of growth in wages and prices since the Great Recession came at the same time the U.S. Federal Reserve was cutting interest rates. Large corporations accumulated vast amounts of cash as profits and/or invested in capital and innovation as opposed to employees and their salaries and benefits (Ewing 2017). Corporate profits jumped by 144 percent during the Obama years, hitting a record $1.73 trillion in 2014 compared to $1.38 trillion in 2006 (BEA 2017; FRED n.d.). Moreover, U.S. major stock indices increased under Obama with the Dow Jones rising 129 percent, Standard and Poor's 500 jumping 167 percent, and the NASDAQ increasing by a massive 267 percent (NASDAQ Inc. n.d.; WSJ n.d.). Driving much of this growth was investments in new technologies, automation, and artificial intelligence, threatening jobs in manufacturing, retail, financial services, and transportation.

Moreover, the benefits of the economic recovery went primarily to the richest and wealthiest Americans (Proctor, Semega, and Koll 2016; Tankersley 2016). From 2009 to 2013, as most Americans struggled to rebuild their incomes, the top 1 percent amassed roughly 85 percent of total income growth in the United States and accumulated almost 100 percent of total

income growth in just fifteen U.S. states. By 2013, the top 1 percent earned twenty-five times more income than the other 99 percent of Americans (Sommeiller, Price, and Wazeter 2016).

While the top 1 percent of Americans clearly benefited from the recovery, the wealth accumulated by the upper middle class (top 20% of income earners) came at the expense of everyone else during the Obama years. As Reeves (2017: 3–4) puts it, "This obsession with the upper class allows the upper middle class to convince ourselves we are in the same boat as the rest of America; but it is not true." Between 1979 and 2013, the top 20 percent in the United States witnessed a $4 trillion boost in income compared with everyone else at roughly $3 trillion (Reeves 2017: 8). This contributed to the belief that economic globalization only benefited the upper and upper middle classes and threatened to rip apart liberal democracy (Piketty 2017: 2, 3, 142, 534, 537).

The Great Recession also rendered those not holding a college degree few opportunities to boost their incomes. Today, education has become a dividing line in American society separating the economically secure from the insecure. In 2015, those holding a college degree earned 56 percent more in income than those holding only a high school diploma, an increase from 51 percent in 1999; Americans with a four-year college degree earn roughly 84 percent more during their lifetimes than those with just a high school diploma, an increase from 75 percent in 1999 (Georgetown University 2011; see Rugaber 2017). Also, non-college graduates experienced a 3 percent drop in income since the Great Recession. In 1967, just 10 percent of the U.S. workforce held a four-year college degree, representing 20 percent of wages and salaries (Georgetown University 2011; Rugaber 2011). Those with just a secondary school diploma and high school dropouts as well as people with some higher education but no degree are and will continue to struggle to find better paying jobs with benefits (Weber 2017). While the Great Recession certainly spurred Americans' interest in enrolling in higher education programs, it is now more expensive than ever to attend state-supported institutions of higher education because state spending per student at public universities in the United States dropped by roughly 20 percent from 2008 to 2015 (Allison 2016). During this same time, tuition and fees increased by 13 percent at non-profit private institutions (College Board 2012). In 2015, two-thirds of Americans between twenty-five and sixty-four years old with a high school diploma held a job, a decline from 73 percent in 2007. During the same time, the percentage of Americans holding a college degree experienced just a 1 percent drop (84% to 83%) (Rugaber 2017).

Globalization fundamentally transformed the American workforce away from labor-intensive manufacturing resulting in a loss of roughly seven million manufacturing jobs from 19 million in 1979 to 12 million workers

today (Muro 2016). While manufacturing as a portion of the U.S. economy fell from 23 percent in 1997 to 18.5 percent in 2016, manufacturing output is much higher today compared to decades ago. From 1987 to 2017, durable goods manufacturing increased by 166 percent and non-durable goods manufacturing has increased by 17 percent (BOL n.d.; Desilver 2017).

The increase in real manufacturing output at the same time the manufacturing workforce lost millions of jobs has been attributed to large capital investments in high-tech robotics, automation, innovations in productivity, and use of highly educated skilled engineers. Put simply, manufacturing output is more productive because there are fewer laborers and more robots (Acemoglu and Restrepo 2017; Muro 2016). Between 1990 and 2007, the use of industrial robots in U.S. labor markets was responsible for the loss of roughly 670,000 manufacturing (Miller 2017). For example, an estimated 400,000 steel workers or 75 percent of the steel workforce lost jobs between 1962 and 2005 even though the volume of steel shipments did not decrease during that forty-three-year period (Collard-Wexler and De Loecker 2015: 131–171).

As the U.S. economy began shedding labor-intensive manufacturing jobs, retail services (department-store sales, entertainment, and financial organizations) added millions of new jobs (Herrman 2017: 16–19). As of 2017, there are 16 million more jobs in retail than manufacturing, with the retail sector now representing 10 percent of the total U.S. labor force (CCG 2017; Morris 2017; WEF 2017). The conventional view was that working in retail services could be refashioned from something that was seasonal and part-time into a stable and structured career because the American middle class became larger and better educated during the economic boom of the 1990s (Herrman 2017: 16–19). However, the average rate of pay in manufacturing is $25/hour with benefits compared to retail services at $12/hour with few to no benefits (Muro 2016). However, retail is likely to experience the same upheaval that eliminated millions of manufacturing jobs as e-commerce, automation, and innovation could eliminate retail jobs (CCG 2017).

Not surprisingly, the decrease in middle-class income in the United States has been accompanied by an increase in the number of Americans living in poverty. Although the poverty rate dropped 1.3 percent to an overall 13.5 percent, which was the largest drop in sixteen years, there were still 3.3 million more Americans living in poverty in 2016 than there were in 2008. The poverty rate in 2016 was 0.3 percent higher than it was at the start of the Great Recession in 2008 (Census n.d.).

Economic insecurity and rising poverty contributed to a corresponding increase in the number of Americans addicted to and overdosing from opioids, including illicit heroin, prescription opioids such as methadone, oxycodone, and hydrocodone, and the synthetic opioid fentanyl (Rudd et al. 2017). Drug addiction rates for Americans earning less than $20,000 per year are

3.4 times higher than those earning more than $50,000 per year (Szakavitz 2016). Although overdose deaths from painkillers and heroin have increased in almost every county in the United States, the largest concentration of deaths from overdoses are in some of the poorest counties in Appalachia and the Southwest with workplace injuries driving the explosion in addiction rates. Between 2000 and 2014, roughly 500,000 Americans died from drug overdoses, which represents a 137 percent rise in deaths from drug overdoses and a 200 percent increase in opioid-related overdoses since 2000 (CDC 2016b). Since 2010, deaths from overdoses involving opioids have more than tripled, roughly double the rate of deaths from cocaine (Park and Bloch 2016). Drug deaths and overdoses from the synthetic opioid fentanyl, as well as deaths from heroin and other opioids, methamphetamine and cocaine, more than doubled from 2015 to 2016 (Katz 2017). In 2016 alone, there was an unprecedented 22 percent rise in drug overdose deaths, an increase from 52,404 in 2015 to 64,000 Americans killed in 2016 (Katz 2017; Park and Bloch 2016). Today, drug overdoses are the leading cause of death for Americans under 50 (CDC 2017; Seeyle 2017: A16).

The Great Recession and uneven economic growth in the wake made it difficult for the Obama administration to find consensus-based solutions to restructuring foreign policy because of the domestic upheaval and international economic impact. Driving this backlash was resentment directed at the upper and upper middle classes and U.S. corporations, which benefited the most from globalization and uneven economic growth in the wake of the Great Recession. We now turn our attention to the political consequences.

The Political Impact

As the Great Recession devastated the U.S. economy and exacerbated existing social problems, the general mood of the country worsened. Since 2001, the percentage of those satisfied with the direction of the United States declined from 70 percent in December 2001 to 28 percent in October 2016 (Gallup n.d.). Moreover, the American political system is now more partisan and ideological than any other time since the Second World War. The partisan gap between the two parties is almost as wide today as it was in the wake of the Civil War, although that gap narrowed at the height of the Cold War largely because of the anti-Communist consensus. Partisan and ideological divisions among Democratic and Republican members of Congress are now wider than any other time in American history (Bump 2016). The opposition party in the U.S. Senate has more aggressively employed the use of the filibuster to stall legislation, making it difficult for legislation to move through the Senate with simple majority control (Ingraham 2014).

Furthermore, the likelihood of congressional gridlock has increased over the last sixty-five years. In 1947–1948, less than 30 percent of congressional

issues were left unlegislated compared with 71 percent in 2011–2012 (Ingraham 2014). This has been driven in part by the incumbency advantage and gerrymandering, as more Americans now reside in landslide districts where Democratic and Republican candidates win by massive electoral margins in general elections. According to Salam and Richie (2017: A19), "The median county in the 2016 presidential race was won by more than *40 percentage points*—triple the median margins in the 1990s."

Today, partisanship is the primary lens through which most Americans perceive one another and key issues (Barber and McCarty n.d.; Chokshi 2016; Pew 2016b). In a 2016 poll, 91 percent of Republicans viewed Democrats unfavorably and 86 percent of Democrats viewed Republicans unfavorably (Chokshi 2016). From 1994 to 2017, the number of Republicans viewing Democrats very unfavorably increased from 28 percent to 45 percent with the number of Democrats viewing Republicans very unfavorably jumped from 16 percent to 44 percent (Pew 2017). During this same twenty-three-year period, partisan divisions widened from 15 percent to 36 percent among Democrats and Republicans on such issues as foreign policy, immigration, race, government aid to the poor and needy, government regulation of business, same-sex marriage, and environmental regulations (Pew 2017).

There are divisions within both political parties on these issues based on age and gender variables; these differences are miniscule compared to the widening gap between Republicans and Democrats on major issues (Bush 2017). While most Americans in the abstract prefer that the United States actively engage with others around the world and reject the view that it should only be concerned with American interests even if it harms others, there are deep partisan differences when it comes to specific issues. While most Republicans prefer that U.S. foreign policy focus on building American economic prosperity, most Democrats believe the focus should be on the promotion of human rights and democracy around the world (Horsley 2017; NPR/IPSOS 2017). On immigration and foreign policy, Democrats viewing immigrants positively increased from 32 percent in 1994 to 84 percent in 2017 and the number of Republicans viewing immigrants positively from 30 percent to 42 percent in the same time. On whether military strength is the most effective way to safeguard peace, the number of Democrats preferring diplomacy versus the number of Republicans supporting military strength increased; 83 percent of Democrats and 33 percent of Republicans today view diplomacy as the best method of promoting peace (Pew 2017).

Also, Republicans and Democrats now have different perceptions of U.S. allies and enemies. For example, a survey conducted in early 2017 revealed that while both parties ranked Australia, Canada, and most European countries as top allies and friendly governments and Muslim-majority countries toward the bottom, Democrats were much more negative in their views of

Russia than Republicans. In addition, Democrats view Cuba, Iran, and Syria less negative than Republicans. Republicans also view Israel a little more positively than Democrats. Perceptions of American allies and enemies of developing nations are likely to be filtered through a racial lens. According to Rivers, "African-Americans rate Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone as allies while white Americans consider these countries to be somewhat unfriendly. Similarly, Latinos, but not whites, consider El Salvador to be an ally. European countries are rated friendlier by whites than by either African-Americans or Latinos" (quoted in Katz and Quely 2017).

The inability to benefit from the economic recovery led many to throw their support behind Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Frustrated and angry American voters embraced Trump's America First nationalist sentiment and engaged in a backlash against an international order they viewed as underwritten by the U.S. military, financed by American consumers, and destructive to American jobs. Many believed they were taken advantage of by disdainful and arrogant elites from above, freeloaders from below, and free-riders from outside the country (Zito and Todd 2018: 246–257). Some were driven by a strong undercurrent of racism and xenophobia resulting from increased exposure to trade (Judis 2016: 21, 30, 98). In majority-white areas where Americans have been exposed to trade, voters abandoned moderate legislators and supported conservative Republicans and in areas with non-whites in the majority, people supported liberal Democrats (Autor et al. 2016: 4). Others simply rebelled against what they saw as unchecked political correctness (Zito and Todd 2018: 167, 210, 212).

The 2008 and 2016 presidential elections revealed that Americans wanted limits on national interests and narrow the scope and range of U.S. involvement in world affairs after decades of active global leadership. In the 2008 presidential election, voters supported Obama's campaign promise to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq, bring the United States out of the Great Recession, and focus on nation-building at home. In the 2016 election, voters wanted Trump to concentrate on American renewal, decrying the diversion of limited resources to what they believe have been global adventures that could have been better invested in the United States (Mandelbaum 2010: 35–100). In fact, almost 10 percent of Obama voters voted for Trump in 2016 who went on to win 194 of 207 counties won by Obama (Cohn 2017; Uhrmacher, Schaul, and Keating 2016). Obama's former foreign policy adviser Ben Rhodes stated (quoted in Douthat 2018), "When you distilled it, stripped out the racism and misogyny, we'd run against Hillary eight years ago with the same message Trump had used: She's part of a corrupt establishment that can't be trusted to bring change." Trump's victory in 2016 was an anti-elitist, anti-establishment protest vote that rejected Hillary Clinton and the status quo she represented.

President Trump's election in 2016 was a real political marker for insurgent nationalists that attacked elites for embracing globalist policies that failed to produce more inclusive economic growth. On the surface, it seems that Trump's "Make America Great Again" came out of nowhere to stand against globalization that defined the international system since the end of the Second World War. However, Trump's election was a symptom of widening political fault lines and significant economic divisions that, for some of his supporters, went unaddressed by his predecessors. As Mandelbaum (2010: 30) states, "On matters of foreign policy the public in effect says to the government: You do what you think serves the interests of the United States. After seeing the result, we'll pass judgement on what you've done. If we don't approve, we'll fire you."

While the conventional view is that Trump's 2016 campaign attracted a very large share of working-class and lower-income voters without college degrees, many without college degrees who voted for Trump were from middle- and high-income households. Surveys reveal that much of his support in the primaries came from more well-off Republican supporters with two-thirds of his base voters with incomes of at least $50,000 per year and one-third from less than $50,000 per year. Even more, Trump attracted roughly the same amount of people without a college degree as previous Republican candidates for president, dismissing the myth that his supporters were primarily not college educated (Carnes and Lupu 2016). In the 2016 general election, roughly 35 percent of people who voted for Trump had median incomes less than $50,000 consistent with the percentage of those who supported him in the primaries. Furthermore, among white Trump voters without college degrees, almost 60 percent fell in the top 50 percent of median household incomes and roughly 20 percent of white Trump voters without college degrees earned more than $100,000 per year (Carnes and Lupu 2017).

The 2016 presidential election was also shaped, to a great degree, by then candidate Trump's pledge to allow fewer refugees and asylum seekers into the United States from the Middle East. Trump's campaign was driven by strong nationalist sentiment and a powerful xenophobia that fears diversity and targets the vulnerable including immigrants and Muslims. By 2015, mass displacement hit a record of 65.3 million people (UNHCR 2016). Among them were 21.3 million refugees, 40.8 internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 3.2 million asylum seekers (Zong and Batalova 2017).

Between 1990 and 1995, there was an average of 112,000 refugees arriving in the United States with the most coming from the former Soviet Union, although the number declined following the 9/11 terrorist attacks (State n.d.). Between 2004 and 2008, the origins shifted with more refugees arriving from Somalia, Laos, Cuba, Myanmar, and Bhutan. During this four-year period, the cap on refugee admissions was gradually reduced, but then increased again by

10,000 in 2008 in response to increases in refugees from Iraq, Iran, and Bhutan. Between 2008 and 2011, the cap on refugees settled at roughly 80,000 and then dropped to 76,000 in 2012 and again to 76,000 in 2013 (MPI n.d.; RPC n.d.; State 2015, various years). In 2016, Obama raised the cap to 84,994 refugees in response to hundreds of thousands of Syrian and Iraqi refugees. In that year, most refugees arrived from the Democratic Republic of Congo, followed by Syria, Myanmar, Iraq, Somalia, Bhutan, Iran, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Eritrea. Since 2006, most refugees came from Myanmar and Iraq (MPI n.d.; RPC n.d.; State 2015, various years). Seeking to drive the number of refugees and asylum seekers down even further, in 2017, President Trump issued a series of executive orders suspending the admission of refugees into the United States to review security procedures, decreasing the total number of refugees of resettling in the United States to 50,000, and banning foreign nationals from Muslim-majority countries (Arbeiter 2017a; 2017b; Trump 2017d; Zong and Batalova 2017).

Refugees and immigrants were also targeted by anti-immigrant groups as having contributed to economic woes, economic inequality, job losses, and the decline of labor-intensive manufacturing (Luce 2017: 60–66). During the 2016 election, most Americans disapproved the admission and resettlement of refugees in the United States with 54 percent of Americans opposing Syrian refugees. In that same poll, 87 percent of Trump supporters and 27 percent of Clinton were opposed to Syrian refugees (Pew 2016a). Regressive attitudes of Americans in Rustbelt states were directed primarily at Muslims and refugees who many falsely believe are susceptible to terrorism.

Based on the official number of Americans killed in terrorist attacks and considering these trends, carried out by jihadists in the United States, one could suggest that the threat posed by Islamic terrorists to Americans is overexaggerated and the labeling of terrorism as an existential threat to the United States was overblown (Mueller 2009: 13–50; Mueller and Stewart 2015: 13–142). Since 9/11, there have been ninety-five victims killed in eleven separate attacks by jihadists in contrast to sixty-eight victims killed in twenty-one separate attacks by far right-wing domestic terrorist (white supremacists, anti-government extremists, and other non-Muslim militants) and eight victims killed in two separate attacks by black nationalist/separatist/supremacist domestic terrorists (New America n.d.; Shane 2015: A1). The murder of forty-nine people in 2016 in Orlando was the deadliest terrorist attack by a jihadist in the United States, tragically amounting to over 50 percent of the victims killed by jihadists (New America n.d.). By comparison, in 2014, there were 11,008 homicides by assailants using firearms with another 22,586 victims killed by firearms in suicides, unintentional, or undetermined deaths, and by legal intervention (CDC 2016a).

Since 9/11, 240,000 Americans were murdered compared to 123 deaths in terrorist attacks (FBI 2015; 2002–2005; Kurzman 2017; 2015). Americans were 112 times more likely to be murdered by guns in shootings by people than by terrorists in attacks in the United States (see Chausse 2015). In addition, 462 people were killed and 1,314 were injured in 2015 in mass shootings that took place in public areas or on U.S. streets, an average of one mass shooting for each day in 2015 (LaFraniere 2015; Mass Shooting Tracker 2017). The data reported above indicate that jihadist terrorist attacks are much rarer than gun-related violence and murders (Ingraham 2015).

Immigrants were also targeted by extremists who falsely accused them of taking jobs away (Buruma 2016). Since 2000, the number of hate groups increased by 30 percent in response to new immigrants and evolving demographics, economic instability, and the presidential election of Barack Obama (SPLC 2016). From 2007 to 2011, there were 293,800 non-fatal acts of violence and hate crimes each year, although two-thirds of all hate crimes are unreported (DOJ 2014). The United States should be more concerned with the activities and operations of homegrown American terrorists and extremist groups than jihadists (Shane 2015).

Moreover, police violence against African-Americans has been on the rise. African-Americans are now three times more likely to be killed by police than other Americans. From 2013 to 2017, national trends showed that out of the 4,717 Americans killed by police 1,193 were African-American. Although African-Americans represent roughly 13 percent of the U.S. population, they are 25 percent of those killed by police. Even more, 30 percent of African-American victims of police violence were unarmed compared to 21 percent of white Americans (FE n.d.; MPV n.d.; PSD n.d.).

Global Economic Competition

Emerging economies play a much greater role in shaping the international system, especially in determining global demand for capital goods and credit, commodity prices, and trade and investment. From 2000 to 2017, share of world GDP based on purchasing power parity in emerging economies grew from 42.6 percent to 58.7 percent compared to advanced economies falling from 56.9 percent to 41.3 percent. During this same period, China's share of world GDP increased from 7.4 percent to 18.6 percent and India's from 4.2 percent to 7.5 percent compared to the United States declining from 20.6 percent to 15.1 percent and the European Union from 23.6 percent to 16.2 percent (IMF n.d.).

When we compare the United States to other major powers, America's primary competitor is China. The United States ($18.57 trillion) leads China ($11.2 trillion) in nominal GDP and China ($21.4 trillion) leads the United States ($18.4 trillion) in GDP purchasing power parity (World Bank n.d.;

2017). Moreover, the United States and China outpace Japan and Germany, the third and fourth largest economies, respectively. Between 1980 and 2017, China's average annual real GDP growth was 8.9 percent compared to the United States. at 2.6 percent (IMF n.d.). However, GDP per capita growth between 2009 and 2016 increased in China from $3,838.40 to $8,123.10 compared to the United States from $47,001.60 to $57,638.20 (World Bank 2017).

However, GDP alone does not provide a complete picture of human development factors and living standards. The human development index (HDI), which is comprised of educational attainment, life expectancy, and per capita national income, reveals significant disparities in economic development of nation-states with similar levels of economic growth (Gertner 2010). For example, China currently is the second largest economy in the world, although the level of HDI is ranked at ninety-one whereas Norway is ranked at thirty for GDP and number one in HDI (UNHDP 2016).

U.S. trade in goods and services is primarily with Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Western Hemisphere (mainly Canada and Mexico) with the Middle East and Africa representing a small fraction of total U.S. trade volume. The United States is also the world's largest recipient of foreign direct investment with amounts invested by other countries increasing from $1.3 trillion in 2000 to $3.7 trillion in 2016 (BEA n.d.). The U.S. investment position abroad is concentrated mainly in Europe, Asia, and North America with a fraction of its investments abroad in Africa and the Middle East. U.S. trade and investment with the Middle East and Africa is far behind other regions mainly because these regions are not well integrated with the global economy, maintain high tariffs corruption, and lack transparency (Akhtar, Bolle, and Nelson 2013).

At the same time, the United States dramatically boosted its domestic extraction of crude oil and natural gas with hydraulic fracturing, making it a net exporter of energy. By 2015, as global energy supplies increased and growth in emerging economies began to slow, namely in China, commodity prices dropped. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reported a 43 percent decrease in crude oil prices from June 2008 to November 2015 (WTI n.d.). EIA forecasts that oil prices are likely to increase because of expected increases in demand from developing economies (EIA 2017b; WTI n.d.). However, as commodity prices fell toward the end of Obama's presidency, the economies of commodity-producing countries contracted and destabilized political systems in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Asia (UNCTD 2015). Although lower energy and food prices helped consumers and businesses in North America, Western Europe, and Japan, countries producing and exporting energy, raw materials, metals and agriculture products like Russia, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Nigeria, Mexico, and Indonesia were hit hard (EIA 2016f; 2016g).

Table 2.1 U.S. Trade and Investment (2016)

Region	*Exports (goods/ services) ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of Exports*	*Imports (goods/ services) ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of Imports*	*U.S. Direct Investment Abroad*	*As a % of Total U.S. Direct Investment Abroad*	*FDI** in the United States ($)*	*As a % of FDI in the United States*
Europe	1.053tn	40	1.061tn	33	3.2tn	60	2.6tn	69
Asia and the Pacific	789bn	30	1.277tn	40	846bn	16	599bn	16
Western Hemisphere*	650bn	25	718bn	22	1.2tn	22	495bn	13
Middle East	109bn	4	103bn	3	45bn	0%	20bn	1.5
Africa	40bn	1	54bn	2	58bn	1.2	4bn	0.5

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis. n.d.. "U.S. Direct Investment Abroad," https://www.bea.gov/international/di1usdbal.htm; "Foreign Direct Investment in the United States Tables Detailed," https://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2017/09-September/0917-inward-direct-investment- tables.pdf," "Table 1.3. U.S. International Transactions," https://www.bea.gov/international/bp_web/tb_download_type_modern.cfm?list=11&Ro wID=37

*Canada, Mexico, Latin America, and Caribbean.

**Foreign Direct Investment.

The Obama administration's position was that lower oil and natural gas prices would insulate the United States from energy-related instability and incentivize its Middle Eastern allies to enhance their own defenses. America's history of risky military interventions in the Middle East and support for authoritarian regimes made matters worse as its Gulf allies came to expect the United States to supply weapons and provide security to prevent challengers like Iran from tipping the balance of power in the region. However, poor allies in Europe and East Asia depend on petroleum imports from the Persian Gulf and Russia, which means they rely on the U.S. military to secure the transportation of energy through vital chokepoints.

Demographic trends are also shaping the movement of power. Global population shifts, along with economic growth outside North American and Europe, have given rise to an expanding middle class and widening access to education, especially in Asia and the Pacific (Wilson et al. 2010). However, China's aging population will likely constrain its economic growth over the long term at the same time India's population shows more stable growth (Luthra 2011). This contrasts with working-age populations declining by 30 percent in Japan and by 20 percent in both South Korea and Russia (Philips 2015; UN DESA PD n.d.; Youwei 2015).

These demographic shifts are likely to shift the balance of power in Asia. For decades, China's rapid economic growth and expansion was driven by its massive, low-wage labor force that produced goods for export and attracted multinational corporations and considerable foreign investment. If current patterns are maintained, China faces a demographic challenge like Japan since the number of working-age Chinese (aged 15 to 64) will decline and contract soon. This could position India as a more influential political and economic power in Asia.

China's demographic problems are starker when compared with the United States Unlike China and Japan, overall population growth in the United States will continue to increase at a stable and smooth pace. The shape of its population pyramid is forecast to not alter much over the course of the twenty-first century due in large measure to an even spread between younger, working-age people, and the elderly. Moreover, America has the advantage of relying on the history of immigration to shape its population and work force. The steady influx of new workers resulting from its relatively flexible immigration policy will likely prevent growth in the number of elderly from significantly outpacing growth in the number of younger, working-age people (Census n.d.; Colby and Ortman 2015; Worldometers n.d.).

Moreover, since 2015, Chinese economic growth has slowed and consumer demand weakened with instability in real estate markets and rising income inequality. These recent trends will have direct consequences for the Chinese Communist Party. According to Youwei (2015), "A regime relying on

performance legitimacy needs continued economic growth to maintain itself in power. With growth already slowing, fear of a hard landing is rising." Given the expansion of the middle class in Asia, there has been a corresponding increase in pre-primary and primary education levels (World Bank n.d.).

These economic and demographic patterns reflect broad shifts in the global distribution of power with the world having become increasingly more multipolar since the collapse of the Cold War. New centers of power in East and South Asia, the Pacific, and Eurasia were emerging. As a result, there is increasing pressure on the European Union, Japan, and the United States to adapt to new multipolar realities and maintain their power capabilities.

U.S. DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND ALLIANCES

When Obama assumed the presidency in 2009, he oversaw an already strained U.S. military and a system of U.S.-led alliances stretched by years of war. The long deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq and the devastating effects of the Great Recession battered. The United States spends far more on its military and national defense than any other nation-state mainly because American foreign policy interests are more ambitious and global than other governments. Since the Second World War, U.S. foreign policy not only protected America's borders, it was designed to uphold the international order with U.S. hegemony. During the Cold War, the United States developed conventional defense forces capable of fighting two simultaneous major wars and maintaining a nuclear force that would project its superpower status. The U.S. military is not only utilized to fight wars, it projects American power, maintains bases, protects and defends allies, and contains and balances rivals and competitors in key regions, namely Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East. Also, the U.S. military conducts routine training missions and patrols on its own or in collaboration with its allies, enforces counterterrorism policies, carries out humanitarian operations in response to natural disasters, deploys its special operating forces, and launches drone strikes and targeted killings with the U.S. intelligence services. Furthermore, the U.S. military secures key chokepoints through which most commerce and natural resources transit.

From 2001 to 2011, U.S. defense spending skyrocketed from $335 billion in FY 2001 to $721 billion in FY 2011 with defense spending as a percentage of GDP increasing from 3.8 percent in FY 2000 to 5.2 percent in FY 2012 (OMB 2015). However, U.S. military expenditures declined between 2011 and 2016 following passage of the 2011 Budget Control Act, which set spending limits on defense and nondefense programs through budget sequestration. In 2013, U.S. defense spending fell by 2 percent of the global share even as global military spending increased by 2 percent (SIPRI 2016; Walker

2014). Meanwhile, nondefense international affairs programs, the less than 1 percent of the federal budget, fell from $57 billion in 2010 to $54.1 billion in 2015 (OMB n.d.). These fund development programs and diplomacy and U.S. consulates and embassies and combats disease, and support emergency preparedness, agriculture and food security, and governance programs.

Since the United States intervened in Iraq, the United States lost its global military edge. Although U.S. defense spending still outpaces China and Russia, America's second and fourth place competitors boosted their defense spending and narrowed the gap. Between 2008 and 2017, U.S. military spending declined by −14 percent in comparison to China and Russia, which boosted their spending by 110 percent and 36 percent, respectively (SIPRI 2017; 2018). Total U.S. defense spending decreased from $714 billion in 2010 to $586 billion in 2015, but increased to $607 in 2016 and to $646 in 2017 due to the mitigation of defense reductions in the 2011 Budget Control Act (OMB n.d). U.S. military spending is now much higher due to increases in personnel and weapons development.

Fiscal pressures caused by borrowing to fund wars and tax cut led the Obama administration cut overseas contingency operations (OCO) and

Table 2.2 U.S. Spending on Defense versus International Affairs ($ billions)

Year	*Total DOD* Spending*	*Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism*	*International Affairs*
2008	686	187	43
2009	695	146	53
2010	714	162	57
2011	710	159	50
2012	670	115	54
2013	600	82	52
2014	606	85	51
2015	586	63	54
2016	606	59	55
2017	634	83	59
2018	674	83	59
2019 (request)	716	89	40
2020 (est.)	733	NA	28
2021 (est.)	743	NA	28
2022 (est.)	760	NA	28
2023 (est.)	778	NA	28

Source: Department of Defense. 2018. ""FY 2017 Budget Request from the U.S. Department of Defense." https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY2017_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf. Walker, Dinah. 2014. "Trends in U.S. Military Spending." Council on Foreign Relations, July 15, 2014. http://www.cfr.org/defense-budget/trends-us-military-spending/p28855; Lynn M. Williams and Susan B. Epstein . "Overseas Contingency Operations Funding: Background and Status.." 2017. Congressional Research Service,. February 7, 2017: https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R44519.pdf. : 24. Office of Management and Budget, White House. n.d. "Table 5.6 – Budget Authority for Discretionary Programs: 1976-2021." Accessed November 17, 2017. https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals.

*Department of Defense.

Table 2.3 National Military Spending

State	Rank 2017	Rank 2016	% Global Military Spending	Change from 2008 to 2017 (%)	Spending as a Share of GDP (%) 2017	Spending as a Share of GDP (%) 2008
United States	1	1	35	−14	3.1	4.2
China	2	2	13	110	1.9	1.9
Saudi Arabia	3	4	4	34	10	7.4
Russia	4	3	3.8	36	4.3	3.3
India	5	6	3.7	45	2.5	2.6
France	6	5	5.1	3.3	2.3	2.3
United Kingdom	7	6	2.7	−15	1.8	2.3
Japan	8	8	4.4	2.6	0.9	0.9
Germany	9	9	2.5	8.8	1.2	1.3
South Korea	10	10	2.3	29	2.6	2.6

Sources: Table adapted from SIPRI 2018.

drawdown in Iraq. Furthermore, the 2011 Budget Control Act and automatic spending cuts required by budget sequestration cut $2.1 trillion in both defense and nondefense spending (CBO 2011; Harrison 2016). The Pentagon also cut 40,000 soldiers and an additional 17,000 civilian personnel at Army installations in the United States on top of the 80,000 soldiers it already cut. By 2017, the number of active duty soldiers was reduced from 490,000 to 450,000, the lowest levels since 1940 when it maintained a fighting force of roughly 270,000 soldiers (DePillis 2015). At the height of the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the size of the Army stood at 570,000 troops (DePillis 2015; Vanden Brook 2015). However, America's wartime footing did not really change from Bush to Obama. While Obama withdrew ground forces from Iraq, more money was allocated to war by him ($866 billion) than Bush ($811 billion) given the reintroduction of military force after the rise of IS (Delman 2016a).

Obama's 2015 National Security Strategy emphasizes "strategic patience and persistence" in responding to threats and challengers (Obama 2015c). His cuts to OCO reflected a strategy of using ground forces for "innovative, low cost and small-foot" approaches (DOD 2012). It reflected Obama's preference to "prioritize collective action" against threats and maintain America's "unique military capabilities" (DOD 2012). As of 2017, the United States maintained approximately 1.3 million active duty military personnel and another 865,000 in reserves. The United States has the third largest number of active duty military personnel behind India (2.1 million) and China (2.3 million) (Armedforces.eu n.d.).

At the same time the Obama administration cut OCO and decreased the number of soldiers, and boosted investments in naval and air capabilities (DOD 2012). Today, the U.S. military possesses thousands of tactical

aircraft and attack helicopters and hundreds of unmanned aerial vehicles and (Lai et al. 2017). While the army led all military branches in defense funding between FY 2004 and 2014 (including OCO), funding for the Navy and Air Force exceeded the Army between FY 2015 and 2017 (DOD 2016). In addition, spending increased on aircraft, missile systems, and ships with assets from the Department of Defense increasing from roughly $904 in 2000 to $1.25 trillion by 2009 (Watson n.d.).

Defense spending on top weapons systems, namely advanced warplanes, attack helicopters, aircraft carriers, destroyers, submarines, and combat ships and cuts made to OCO suggest that Obama's defense strategy emphasized naval and air operations to check and balance the major powers, not small states or terrorists. Moreover, it was the multibillion-dollar acquisition and maintenance of advanced weapons systems and equipment that drove up defense spending, namely America-class amphibious assault warships, F-35B Joint Strike Fighters, MV-22 Osprey tiltrotors, CH-53 Super Stallions and UH-1Y Huey helicopters, search and rescue helicopters, and other weapons systems (Aeroweb n.d.; DOD 2015a; 2015b; Gady 2016b).

As of 2016, the United States had 150,560 military personnel deployed in over 150 countries with most not in active conflict areas (DOD n.d.; Zorthian and Jones 2015). As with previous presidents, the bulk of Obama's force deployment was concentrated in Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East where the United States has expressed national interests, and mutual defense treaties and trade pacts with allies and partner governments. Moreover, host-nations have basing agreements that station and help fund the largest U.S. military deployments, namely in Japan, Germany, and South Korea (DOD n.d.; Zorthian and Jones 2015). Obama continued the long-standing military strategy of maintaining the U.S. military presence in Europe while developing a more flexible "hub-and-spokes" network of alliances in the Asia-Pacific to deter and prevent conflicts (Heisbourg 2016).

In Europe, the United States has long been committed to maintaining peace and security and steadfast in its defense of NATO, maintain collective security, deter Russian expansionism, patrol the Mediterranean with the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet in Italy, and conduct joint training and military exercises in collaboration with European allies. In exchange, trade between the United States and European Union now stands at roughly $699 billion, making the European Union America's largest trading partner. Also, European allies pay over one-third (roughly $2.5 billion) of U.S. military costs with Germany alone contributing $1 billion per year. In addition, intelligence sharing and counterterrorism with NATO and the European Union, and the U.S. military is allowed the strategic benefit of quickly deploying force near vital areas like North Africa and the Middle East, the eastern Mediterranean, and Russia (Fisher and Pecanha 2017; Lostumbo et al. 2013).

Table 2.4 American Boots on the Ground (2016)

Country or Area of Deployment	*Number of U.S. Personnel*
Japan	48,828
*U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility	44,800
Germany	37,704
South Korea	27,558
Italy	11,697
Afghanistan	9,800
Guam	5,647
Turkey	1,590
Belgium	1,196

Sources: Department of Defense. n.d. "Defense Manpower Data Center." Accessed June 2, 2016. https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/index.jsp. Zorthian, Julia and Heather Jones. 2015. "This Graphic Shows Where U.S. Troops are Stationed Around the World." Time, October 16, 2015. http://time.com/4075458/afghanistan-drawdown-obama-troops/.

*Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

In the Asia-Pacific, the United States has been committed to ensuring freedom of movement and commerce in the South China Sea and defending Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Australia. Tens of thousands of U.S. military personnel are stationed in Japan and South Korea and the U.S. Navy Seventh Fleet is headquartered in Japan. Japan pays for 75 percent and South Korea devotes 40 percent toward the costs of the U.S. military presence with the United States retaining certain basing rights. Furthermore, the United States maintains military forces in the Philippines, conducts rotational deployments in Australia and Singapore, and training missions and multinational military exercises in Thailand. In addition, the United States safeguards maritime trade through the South China Sea where half of global trade transits including roughly one-third of the world's crude oil and more than half of liquefied natural gas (Fisher and Pecanha 2017; Lostumbo et al. 2013).

The U.S. presence in the Middle East is driven mainly by its interest in ensuring the safe maritime transportation of crude oil and natural gas through the Persian Gulf, access to energy resources for itself and its allies, stabilizing global energy markets, defending Gulf allies and balancing against Iran and combating terrorism. U.S. Central Command maintains roughly 44,800 personnel in the region and the U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet is in Bahrain. In return, roughly 60 percent in U.S. military basing costs are financed by U.S. allies in the region; the United States and its allies maintain access to oil and natural gas, and regional allies share intelligence and cooperate with the United States against Iran and terrorist groups (Fisher and Pecanha 2017).

The United States has been assuming much more of the financial burden for maintaining its overseas military bases, especially those in Japan, South Korea, and Germany. According to a 2013 U.S. Senate Armed Services report, the United States spends roughly $10 billion per year, with 70 percent

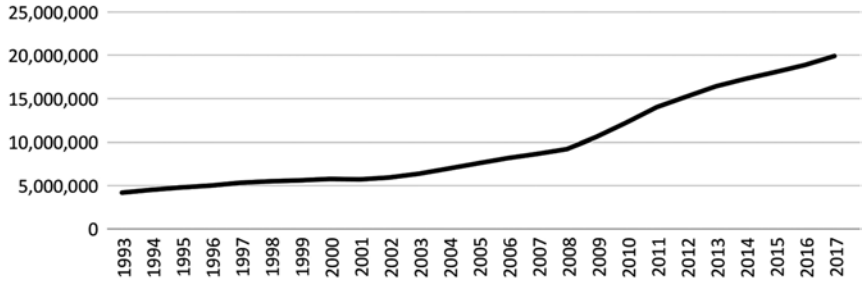
appropriated to these three countries alone not including personnel costs (Senate 2013). The repositioning of U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific region and buildup of ground troops in Poland and the Baltics increased costs.

THE COST OF WAR

The human suffering resulting from the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been staggering as measured by the hundreds of thousands of civilians and combatants killed and millions displaced by war. Under presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, approximately 200,000 civilians have been killed in military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan (Watson n.d.) with 6,907 U.S. military personnel, 1,457 allied coalition personnel, roughly 43,000 Afghan and Iraqi troops and approximately 7,000 private contractors employed by the U.S. government killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan (ICCC n.d.; Watson n.d.). As of 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports 4.4 million IDPs in Iraq with 264,100 Iraqis refugees and 1.2 million IDPs in Afghanistan with 2.7 million Afghan refugees abroad (UNHCR 2016; Watson n.d.). In addition, roughly 10.1 million from Syria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan have been displaced by war (UNHCR 2016; Watson n.d.).

From 2001 to 2017, the total financial cost of U.S. military deployments and use of force in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria has been estimated at $4.8 trillion (Watson n.d.). The costs include homeland security, force depletion, deployments, diplomacy, counterterrorism efforts, and interest, making the last sixteen years of war in the Middle East the second most expensive allocation of defense-related resources behind the Second World War. Medical treatment and disability benefits of wounded veterans and administrative costs are estimated to cost $1 trillion through 2053 given these expenses increase in the decades following military deployments (Watson n.d.).

As it was borrowing to finance war costs, the Bush administration cut taxes and the U.S. Federal Reserve kept interest rates extremely low. At the same time, Congress constrained public investment programs in education, energy, and infrastructure and continued deregulating financial services. With declining revenues and increased borrowing to fund wars in the Middle East, deficits increased, and the national debt skyrocketed. According to Crawford (quoted in Friedman 2016), "Unfinanced war spending has played a significant role in raising the U.S. national debt, such as reductions in taxes and increases in spending, which were policies intended to combat the recession." The United States financed its war costs with borrowing because it embraced debt as an investment much in the same way Americans borrow to pay for higher education, residential property, automobiles, and consumption. War costs will dominate future defense spending, leaving less money



Graph 2.1 Public Debt of the United States, 1993 to 2017 ($ trillions). *Source*: Department of the Treasury. n.d. "The Debt to the Penny and Who Holds it." https://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/debt/current Accessed August 21, 2017.

for investments in military research and development, personnel, and other programs (Blimes 2013; Londono 2013).

The long-term consequences are that there would be even less money to invest in nondefense discretionary programs set through the congressional appropriations process. This includes education and training, law enforcement, environmental protection, infrastructure, transportation, housing, disaster relief, medical research, and international affairs. Spending on discretionary programs has declined relative to national defense and mandatory programs such as Social Security and Medicare (Concord Coalition n.d.).

CHINA AND RUSSIA

China and Russia are the only two major powers capable of challenging American global power and undermining American foreign policy interests. While the United States has sought to keep each within the prevailing international order, China and Russia now share a common and mutual interest in challenging American global power and limiting its freedom of action in Asia and the Pacific and Europe (Feng 2015; Graham-Harrison 2015). For example, China has presented its "One Belt, One Road" or "New Silk Road" initiative along with the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank to build up its neighboring states and other countries as well as diversify its economy and extend its influence from Asia to Africa to Europe.

The United States has considerable advantages in terms of conventional weaponry, although Russia and China are developing anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities; that is, cost-effective ways of denying the U.S. freedom of action by threatening to inflict losses on America's more powerful conventional weapons and capabilities. Russia and China now possess and, in some cases, are sharing anti-access systems with their allies to alter power balances and shape their regions (Sayler 2016).

Table 2.5 U.S., China, and Russia Defense Capabilities

	United States	*China*	*Russia*
Active Military Personnel	1,301,300	2,300,000	771,000
Reserve Personnel	811,000	510,000	2,000,000
Nuclear warheads	7,200	260	7,500
Tanks	8,848	9,150	20,050
Armored Fighting Vehicles	46,000	4,788	30,201
Total Artillery	3,269	9,726	14,533
Self-propelled artillery	950	1,710	5,943
Rocket artillery	1,197	1,770	4,020
Fighter Aircraft	388	1,199	629
Multirole Aircraft	2,062	567	428
Attack Aircraft	470	300	752
Helicopters	5,000	1,627	1,360
Submarines	70	73	61
Destroyers	85	32	19
Aircraft Carriers	20	1	1

Source: Armedforces.eu. n.d. "Armed Forces of the World." Accessed July 6, 2018. http://armedforces.eu/.

China's military buildup in the Western Pacific and territorial expansion in the South China Sea and Russia's move to secure its sphere of influence in Ukraine and Syria are designed to force the United States and its allies out of these geostrategic regions. China and Russia are focusing on anti-ship and long-range missile procurement, autonomous weapons, cyber operations, and artificial intelligence to enhance their freedom of action. China has supplied Iran with arms and weaponry and Pakistan with mobile C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles and air-launched cruise missiles that can destroy India's warships and carriers (Asian Defence News 2012; Gentry 2013; Global Security.org n.d.; Sayler 2016; Williams 2015).

China and Russia have also demonstrated an interest in balancing as a bloc against the United States. Although China trades much more with the United States and has considerable economic interests in the United States, China favors Russia over the United States for several reasons. What could be perceived as long-standing U.S. containment of Chinese economic growth and military capability seemed to be driving China closer to Russia. According to Kancho Stoychev (quoted in Bloomberg 2017), "It isn't surprising that Russians and Chinese chose each other, but it is new. It shows us something very important—that U.S. policy over the last 20 years has driven Russia into the arms of China, which is strange because Russia is fundamentally part of Europe."

Part of the Obama foreign policy strategy was to rebalance against a combined effort by China and Russia to push the U.S. military out beyond areas

and zones each deems to be within their own geographic spheres of influence. Even though it came late, following Russia's annexation of Crimea, Obama boosted U.S. commitments to the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) by increasing ground defense forces in NATO's eastern flank to deter a Russian attack. This included increasing military spending on European defense to $3.4 billion by 2017, funds that will be used for training NATO allies, rotating U.S. forces, and improving infrastructure and weaponry (Masters 2016). The United States concerned primarily with the roughly Russian military intrusions into NATO air, sear, and land defenses.

While Russia may be able to challenge NATO in Eastern Europe and the Baltics and the U.S.-Sunni alliance in the Middle East, China has sought to push the United States away from its coastline. A key element within his rebalance or pivot to Asia and the Pacific was a U.S. military build to counter China's territorial ambitions and island reclamation projects in the South China Sea. The construction of artificial islands meant that China was extending its military capabilities and challenging U.S. allies within the broader first island chain (Freier 2012; Johnson and De Luce 2015). Under Obama, the U.S. Navy boosted its maritime aircraft, advanced attack submarines, and payloads in Asia. China sought to diversify imports by signing oil and natural gas development and pipeline deals with Russia (EIA 2015a).

Stepped-up U.S. air and naval activity have brought U.S. forces close to Russian and Chinese forces inside their self-asserted exclusive economic and air defense identification zones. As Obama saw it, U.S. military patrols were consistent with norms allowing freedom of operations within international airspace and waters. Consequently, this has raised the stakes as Russia and China have made aggressive attempts to intercept U.S. warplanes and ships, dramatically escalating the potential for conflict or collisions among the major powers. The Obama administration was adamant that it had the authority to conduct these military operations and challenge Russia and China beyond their sovereign territory (Brook 2016).

Given the evolving relationship and shared geopolitical interests between China and Russia, the Obama administration has come to view these major powers as its primary competitors and rivals. It boosted military spending in Europe and commitments to NATO to counter Russia and ramped up its force presence in allied countries in Asia and the Pacific to counter China's military modernization and increased presence in the South China Sea. According to Obama's Defense Secretary Ashton Carter (2016), "These challenges reflect a return to great power competition. First is in Europe, where we're taking a strong and balanced approached to deter Russian aggression and we haven't had to worry about this for twenty-five years. Second is in the Asia-Pacific, where China is rising and where we're continuing and will continue our rebalance, so-called, to maintain the stability in the region that

we have underwritten for 70 years and that's allowed so many nations to rise and prosper and win. That's been our presence." Because Russia and China are modernizing their militaries and asserting themselves beyond their immediate borders, the United States must deter these rivals for demonstrating it as the capability of winning conflicts and wars against these major powers. As Carter (2016) states, "In this context, Russia and China are our most stressing competitors. They have developed and are continuing to advance military systems that seek to threaten our advantages in specific areas. And in some cases, they are developing weapons and ways of wars that seek to achieve their objectives rapidly, before they hope, we can respond."

Russia is also a primary military backer of China. From 1992 to 2006, Russia supplied China with $26 billion in weapons and equipment to help China address the massive U.S. weapons and technology advantage. In 2013, Russia provided China with S-400 surface-to-air missile systems, Sukhoi Su-35 fighters, conventional submarines, and agreed to a cybersecurity defense pact with China agreement allowing their governments to share technology and enhance domestic surveillance (Lague 2013).

In response, Obama added $18 billion to the U.S. Future Years Defense Program on research and development in cyber and space warfare, artificial intelligence, stealth technology, drones, precision-guided weaponry, 3-D printing, advanced navigation, networking, and communications to maintain its military edge against Russia and China. As Carter (2016) states, "Budgets often require tradeoffs. . . . So where trade-offs among force structure, modernization and readiness posture needed to be made. We generally pushed to favor the latter too." New investments in high-end capabilities are designed to deter and balance against Russia and China, not low- to medium-level threats like terror groups and smaller rogue states.

While China and Russia have challenged the United States militarily, economic factors are much more complicated. Since 1990, the trend for per capita GDP growth has been faster and more stable in China. Moreover, bilateral trade between China and Russia is more consequential to Russia than to China (Russia-China Investment Fund n.d.). While their mutual trade relationship is roughly $100 billion per year, according to Graham-Harrison et al. (2015), "China is Russia's second largest trading partner after the EU, while Russia only just scraped into a list of China's top 10 trading partners, accounting for barely 3% of the country's total trade volume." China trades more with the United States, markets in Asia and the Pacific, and Germany, and Brazil and its investment is much higher in the United States than in Russia. China's larger trading relations with the United States, European Union, Germany, East Asia and Australia indicate that it has much more at stake with these economies than with Russia (Graham-Harrison 2015; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2015).

China's emergence has redefined global politics, diplomacy, and the world economy. Its massive economy, trade and financial investment might, foreign currency reserves, and military modernization led to the U.S. rebalance to Asia and the Pacific, the origins of which took place under George W. Bush and continued and expanded under Barack Obama. With the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, China is challenging the United States to rethink conventional world trade and challenging established international institutions like the World Bank, WTO, and IMF. But China is not prepared to serve as a responsible international actor or offer a new global economic model that can serve as a legitimate alternative to neoliberalism simply because China developed its economy by embracing some tenets of neoliberalism. According to Fu Ying (quoted in Wyne 2016), although it may be "dissatisfied and ready to criticize," China itself is "not ready to propose a new design. . . . We need to come up with more specific ideas, to reassure others and advance our common interests." But China's military assertiveness in the East and South China seas has driven Vietnam and others toward the United States. While China's territorial designs and ambitions are driven by nationalist sentiment, on the global stage China is prudent, cautious, and more realistic about challenging American global power (Shambaugh 2008: 120, 130, 140, 316).

The challenge for the United States will be to ensure that both liberal norms and formal structures, namely the IMF, WTO, and World Bank, are flexible enough to accommodate China's economic interests. As Ikenberry argues (2016), "Looked at this way, the 'crisis' of the American-led world order is a crisis of success. Over the past 60 years, this order has facilitated positive transformation. . . . Today's struggle is about voice. It is about who sits at the table, how to reorganize the platforms of authority and what should be the new political hierarchy of states. The struggle is playing out within regions and in global institutions."

During the Obama years, the international system was increasingly characterized in terms of multipolarity, not American hegemony. The challenge for Obama was whether the rules-based international order was flexible enough to withstand China and Russia as challengers, integrate emerging markets while contending with their grievances, and open to establishing new rules and reforming formal structures in the wake of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and the Great Recession. For Wyne (2016), "The architecture of any 'new world order' will (appropriately) accommodate the redistribution of power among states and the growing sway of non-state actors." In the next chapter, the book will examine the extent to which the transatlantic alliance was impacted by an increasingly multipolar international system.

Chapter 3

NATO and Europe

Collective Security, Burden Sharing, and Russian Resurgence

From the beginning, the Obama presidency sought to maintain the transatlantic security order and expand Euro-Atlantic economic relations. The NATO has been the primary collective defense instrument providing security and stability in Europe and balancing against Russia. However, since the end of the Cold War, NATO has taken on massive powers and evolved into a larger political project prioritizing the enlargement of its membership through the building and expansion of democratic institutions and norms. Due in large measure to international terrorism and political instability, NATO has engaged in security roles beyond Europe with its 2011 intervention in Libya to topple Muammar Gadhafi and deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

Due to NATO missions taken outside of Europe and taking on new member states in Central and Eastern Europe, the multinational alliance became more stretched and strained. At the same time, most of NATOs military budget continues to be funded by the United States. Although the United States does have the economic and defense capacity to assume this responsibility, Obama often complained about free-riders in the alliance and challenged them to boost their financial contributions to the organization's security budget even as many struggled to emerge from the 2008 financial crisis. While his administration ensured that Europe remained a strategic priority, Obama was reluctant to accept the risks of continued U.S. leadership of the alliance. Criticism directed at NATO allies from President Obama intensified under President Trump, reflecting American concern and resentment about European states free-riding on the United States.

Although Obama and Trump are not the first American presidents to criticize NATO members of free-riding off American resources, the United States and Europe were moving in opposite directions under Obama (Hartley and

Sandler 1999: 665–680; Murdoch and Sandler 1984: 83–101; Sander and Shimzu 2014: 43–60). Moreover, the movement among alliance members toward military burden sharing will be a difficult endeavor, especially given economic disparities within the formal alliance structure (Oneal and Elrod 1989: 435–456; Sandler and Forbes 1980: 425–444; Sandler and Hartley 1999: 22–57; Sandler and Murdoch 1990: 875–894; Schweller 1994: 72–107).

Furthermore, the rise of nationalist sentiment and right-wing movements in the United States and Europe in response to the Euro crisis, immigration, and the Syrian refugee crisis led many to question the purpose of the European Union and NATO. Public resentment and anger at supranational institutions was most pronounced in 2016 when the British approved leaving the European Union in the Brexit vote.

In addition, the enlargement of both NATO and the European Union angered and aggravated Russia, threatening its traditional spheres of influence in Central and Eastern Europe and undermining its status as a major power. Russia responded by intervening in eastern Ukraine following Western meddling and the overthrow of President Viktor Yanukovych. It then seized and annexed Crimea, representing the most significant security threat in Europe since the Second World War. The future of NATO will be determined and shaped by the extent to which it responds to these challenges while recognizing Russia's historic interests to secure its borders.

The Obama administration also sought to intensify economic interdependence between the United States and Europe, largely through the development of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). TTIP was a large multilateral trade and financial agreement that would reduce tariffs and remove obstacles for foreign investment between the United States and European Union. Obama's objective was to maximize U.S. commercial connections with European markets in the wake of slowing labor forces and moderate economic growth relative to more dynamic growth and expansion in Asia and the Pacific and other areas of the world. It was expected that greater trade and financial connections could boost U.S. and E.U. exports, especially in automobiles, metals, and processed foods, expand and diversify consumer markets, protect intellectual property rights, expand transatlantic digital financial and trading networks, and elevate incomes on both sides of the Atlantic. The Obama administration's long-term goal was to safeguard and build on liberal-based trade and financial systems.

This chapter provides an analysis of U.S. foreign policy toward Europe during the Obama administration. It starts off by arguing that the United States has sought to maintain collective security in Europe through NATO. It then describes the role of Russia in the contemporary European security order as well as the evolving and expanding roles played by NATO within that order and beyond. It then assesses the economic components in the

transatlantic relationship and identifies the most important consequences for the future of U.S.-European relations.

THE CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER

In the wake of the collapse of the Cold War and East-West tensions, NATO struggled to find credibility and purpose in the absence of the USSR and Communism in Eastern Europe. The original mission of NATO, to provide collective security in Europe in the face of Communist expansionism, was now gone. However, Europe was confronted with new security challenges and threats to its collective stability with the violent breakup of Yugoslavia beginning in 1991. When NATO intervened in 1995 to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, tens of thousands of NATO troops moved in to stabilize the borders of the newly independent states of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. However, NATO launched airstrikes mainly against Bosnian Serbs and their state sponsors in Russian-supported Serbia. In 1999, NATO again intervened in Operation Allied Force to end the humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo on the side of Kosovar Albanians and brought stability to the region, which was later established and recognized as a newly independent, sovereign state. Four years later, in 1999, NATO intervened in Kosovo to stop the humanitarian crisis and then deployed the NATO-led international Kosovo Force to stabilize the country. As of 2016, NATO still maintains troops in Kosovo to help support new institutions. NATO airstrikes against Serbian forces and the deployment of ground forces in Bosnia and Kosovo after the wars were the first time the transatlantic alliance used military force in post-Cold War Europe (Wright 2016).

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, NATO invoked Article 5 of its charter and launched a large combat mission in Afghanistan to conduct anti-Taliban operations and support the new Afghan government of Hamid Karzai. Roughly 12,000 NATO troops were deployed with the ISAF to stabilize the country, train the new national army and security forces, and conduct counterinsurgency and antiterrorist operations. This was the first major deployment of military force by NATO forces outside Europe since the creation of the North Atlantic alliance at the beginning of the Cold War. Then, in 2011, the NATO joint command center coordinated airstrikes in Operation Unified Protector to topple Muammar Gaddafi in Libya following the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973.

The Obama administration has struggled to maintain a consistent foreign policy toward Russia. In 2009, President Obama sought to reset U.S.-Russia relations during the presidency of Dmitri Medvedev by emphasizing

key points of agreement between the two states. The roots of the reset were based on the perception that after the Cold War, American foreign policymakers no longer considered Russia a major power threat that would counter the West (Asmus 1997). The 2002 National Security Strategy, delivered by former president George W. Bush (2002: 13) at West Point even declared, "Having moved from confrontation to cooperation as the hallmark of our relationship with Russia, the dividends are evident: an end to the balance of terror that divided us; an historic reduction in the nuclear arsenals on both sides; and cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism and missile defense."

Obama's reset was comprised of moves to build mutual understanding in bilateral relations following the 2008 South Ossetia War. This included lessening tensions following the deployment of anti-ballistic missiles from Central and Eastern Europe, helping Russia enter the WTO, and ratification of the New START Treaty. Also, the United States and Russia worked within the P5+1 to negotiate the Iranian nuclear agreement requiring Iran to submit to nuclear inspections in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions and cooperated on building security in Afghanistan. Secretary of State Clinton, the primary author of the Obama pivot or rebalance to Asia and the Pacific, was key to the development of the administration's reset policy.

THE RESET AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Although the strategic reset in U.S.-Russia relations was based on the idea that mutual understanding could take place on a limited number of issues, a genuine retune in relations could only be realized if Russia itself reset it owns political and strategic priorities something it is unwilling to do (Rachwald 2011: 117–126). Long-standing U.S. policy has preferred that large and powerful states like Russia and China consent to the prevailing international order and function within the formal and informal architecture established and maintained by the United States and its allies since the end of the Second World War. To some extent China has accepted and integrated within the world order, consenting to economic rules that enables it to build profit and modernize. On Russia, the Obama administration, like previous U.S. administration, thought it could secure its consent and cooperation on issues that would benefit America's primary global interest, which is to preserve the global status quo. But Russian foreign policy is driven by a strong sense of cultural identity, historical desire to secure its borders from external threats, freedom of action within its near abroad, and the Russian leadership's desire to restore its role as a major power (Larson and Shevchenko 2010: 63–95). As the United States has sought to maintain its position as a global power

and prevent challengers from undermining the prevailing global order, Russia has sought to restore its great power status and convince the United States to respect it interests.

Early in his first term, Obama's goal was to reset U.S. relations with Russia to reassure Russian leaders that the benefits of cooperation far outweighed tension and conflict in U.S.-Russia relations. To be fair, many American presidents have entered office thinking they can improve ties with Russia, only to be left frustrated later in their terms. Motivated by wishful thinking and the naïve hope that the so-called "moderate" Russian president Dmitri Medvedev would accommodate American interests, Obama realize that then prime minister Vladimir Putin, who would be elected to the Russian presidency again in 2012, had intentions of protecting and securing Russian interests in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

At the height of the 2012 presidential campaign, Obama dismissed Republican opponent Mitt Romney's claim that Russia was the "number one geopolitical foe" of the United States and that "resetting" relations with the country would harm U.S. interests (Arquilla 2012; Willis 2012). It did not help Obama when Romney reacted negatively to off the record remarks by the president (quoted in Willis 2012) to Medvedev in early 2012 regarding U.S. missile defense that "After my election, I have more flexibility," to which Medvedev responded, "I understand. I will transmit this information to Vladimir." Following Russia's annexation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine in 2014, Republicans were now able to say, "I told you so," even publicly criticizing Obama that same month for being naïve about Putin's intentions. Echoing sentiments made by U.S. Senator John McCain that Obama was the "most naïve president in history," Romney criticized the president's "faulty judgment about Russia's intentions and objectives" raised during the 2012 campaign (Shear and Baker 2014: A8). As Baker (2013: A1) stated, "The story of the administration's 'reset' policy toward Russia is a case study in how the heady idealism of Mr. Obama's first term has given way to the disillusionment of his second." Although there were some limited signs of agreement on counterterrorism, especially after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, in which 4 people were killed and over 300 were injured in attacks by Chechen radicals, tensions and mistrust were on the rise (LaFranchi 2015).

The bilateral tensions and mistrust that emerged following the return of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency almost seemed inevitable. The United States opposed Russia providing asylum to Edward Snowden, the American security contactor accused of leaking materials and information regarding U.S. domestic surveillance. Russia opposed the Obama administration's repeated threats to use military force against Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad, especially after his use of chemical weapons against civilians in

2013. Russia also resisted increased U.S. military deployments in Europe, enlargement of the NATO, and expansion of the European Union to include former Soviet republics. At times, Russia threatened to use its energy supplies as resource weapons against Europe.

Then, in 2014, Russia flexed its military might following the overthrow of former president Viktor Yanukovych by groups seeking to move Ukraine closer to NATO and the European Union. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and intervened in eastern Ukraine in support of rebels opposed to the new government. In response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and the massing of Russian troops on its border with Ukraine, the United States and European Union implemented sanctions against Russian policymakers and business persons. Obama even dismissed Russia as a "regional power," which operates "not out of strength, but out of weakness" (quoted in Shear and Baker 2014: A8). While Russian annexation of Crimea demonstrates the continued relevance of European security after the Cold War, any attempt that entices Ukraine toward NATO or the European Union could be interpreted by Russia as another move to gobble up yet another former Soviet republic and ally (Asmus 1997: 19–50). However, the United States and NATO might still be drawn into a conflict given Russia's embrace of what seems to be a long-term strategy of thwarting Ukraine from moving outside its sphere of influence. The most dangerous scenario is the possibility of an outright, direct Russian invasion on behalf of pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine (Loyola 2014; MacFarquhar 2014: A8).

Since early 2014, the Ukrainian government has been locked in battle against pro-separatist Russian-backed rebel forces in the eastern industrial region of Donetsk and Luhansk, resulting in thousands of deaths. The United States has accused Russia of intervening on behalf of the rebels with Russian military units, providing them with weapons, training, intelligence, and other logistical support and humanitarian assistance. Although Russia has repeatedly denied these claims, rebels in eastern Ukraine have certainly replicated Russian sponsored tactics used by separatist forces in Crimea and earlier in the ethnic Russian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia.

Pro-Russian rebels in Donetsk and Luhansk held referendums and declared independence as autonomous people's republics, although these have not been recognized by the United States and its allies. After Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over separatist territory killing 298 people including 200 Europeans, the United States and European Union slapped new sanctions on Russia as it blamed rebels using Russian anti-aircraft missiles for the downing of the flight (Lacqoeur 2015: 12, 266). American and European sanctions have not only blacklisted individual Russian leaders and separatist commanders, they have targeted major Russian state banks, corporations, and oil firms like Rosneft, Transneft, and Gazprom. Although

Russia has denied that it armed the rebels, the war continued amid failed attempts to hold shaky ceasefire agreements signed in Minsk in September 2014. Although the war intensified in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, rebel groups and the Ukrainian government did re-enter talks in February 2015 in Minsk sponsored by Russia, Germany, and France and eventually agreed to end the fighting, exchange prisoners, and establish a buffer zone for heavy weapons and rival military forces.

As Obama sought to maintain the U.S. position as a global power and prevent challengers from undermining the rules-based international order, Russia intended to restore its great power status and persuade him to recognize Russia's emerging interests and spheres of influence in Europe and the Middle East. Fifty-six percent of Russians regret the collapse of the Soviet Union, evidence of lingering public nostalgia for the USSR (Levada-Center n.d.). Other polls demonstrate strong Russian support for President Vladimir Putin who has received above 80 percent public approval since 2013 and negative attitudes to the United States until the presidential election of Donald Trump.

But Obama was unwilling to recognize those realities. Obama contended, "They are a smaller country, they are a weaker country, their economy doesn't produce anything that anybody wants to buy except oil and gas and arms. They don't innovate" (quoted in Conway 2016). While Russia may not be able to compete with the United States, Europe, or even China economically on a global scale, it intends to maintain its sphere of influence. It also seeks to reconstitute alliances and upend the rules-based international order by undermining liberal democratic governments. As Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (quoted in Talbot and Brandt 2017) stated, Russia favors a "post-West order" and former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev (quoted in Taylor 2016b) asserted, "The Soviet Union cannot be restored. But a new Union can be established."

The bilateral tensions and mistrust that emerged following the return of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency after mass demonstrations against him almost seemed inevitable. After resuming the presidency, Putin pushed back on Obama by expelling USAID from operating inside Russia, withdrew Russian support from a bilateral agreement on non-proliferation assistance, and began undermining the work of nongovernmental organizations in Russia. Putin also provided asylum to Edward Snowden, the American security contactor accused of leaking materials and information regarding U.S. domestic surveillance, and then instituted a nation-wide crackdown on LGBT groups in Russia.

Obama's failure to enforce his so-called red line in 2013, when he claimed that the United States would not tolerate Assad using chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war, empowered Russia's Shia allies Syria and Iran. Russia also resisted increased U.S. military deployments in Europe, enlargement of

the NATO and expansion of the European Union to include former Soviet republics. Russia also repeatedly threatened to use its energy supplies as resource weapons against Europe. It flexed its military might following the overthrow of former president Viktor Yanukovych by groups seeking to move Ukraine closer to the European Union and NATO. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, and intervened in eastern Ukraine on behalf of rebels opposed to the new pro–E.U. government. Then, one year later, Russia launched airstrikes against American and Sunni Arab-backed rebels in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime to fill the power vacuum left in the wake of Obama's slow withdrawal from the region.

Even though Obama promised to reset bilateral ties with Russia, relations during his second term were at a post–Cold War low. While the United States has cooperated with Russia on several broad security measures, namely the nuclear agreement with Iran, the new START deal on nuclear arms reduction, and agreed to limit missile defense programs, the war in eastern Ukraine between government forces and rebel groups has transformed the relationship from one of cooperation and partnership to suspicion, competition, and uncertainty (Erlanger 2016: A6). Russia is convinced that the 2014 toppling of former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych, who was pressured by Russia to abandon a 2013 association agreement with the European Union and sign a custom deal in exchange for economic benefits, was orchestrated by the United States and civil society groups meddling in the internal affairs. Russia believes the election of President Petro Poreshenko, along with pro-NATO and E.U. movements in Kosovo, Moldovo, and Georgia, represents an attempt to pull even more ex-Soviet republics and former Russian allies away from its sphere of influence (Wilson 2014).

It is an understatement to contend that NATO expansion and E.U. enlargement since the end of the Cold War have angered Russia. Indeed, the 2008 war with Georgia in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, annexation of Crimea and ongoing war in eastern Ukraine are elements in a strategic effort by Russia to push back against the United States and its allies as well as to protect ethnic Russians living in disputed regions (Knott 2015; Laitin 1998: 36–82; Sakwa 2014: 148–182). Russian speakers also make up roughly 30 percent of Latvia, 27 percent in Estonia, and 7 percent of Lithuania (Posener 2016). In addition, Russia has conducted military exercises close to U.S. ships in international waters, harassed U.S. diplomats in Europe, and engaged in cyberattacks and espionage against U.S. government agencies and businesses (Rogin 2016).

Obama and U.S. allies in Europe responded with a series of measures targeting the Russian leadership and to pull Ukraine away from Russia's orbit. First, Obama signed the Magnitsky Act, which imposed sanctions against Russian officials following the death of Russian attorney Sergei Magnitsky. Then, in the wake of the collapse of the Yanukovych government, Obama

extended $291 million in non-military assistance and a $1 billion loan for the new Ukrainian government. The Obama administration also approved $53 million in aid, including million in humanitarian aid and military assistance to eastern Ukraine, raising total U.S. bilateral assistance to Ukraine by $1.3 billion (Morelli 2017: 36–39; White House 2014a). In FY 2016, the U.S. Congress approved $335 million in bilateral security assistance, which boosted U.S. security assistance to approximately $600 million (Morelli 2017; Obama 2014a). Also, the December 2014 Ukraine Freedom Support Act authorizes the United States to provide Ukraine up to $510 million in funding for three years, including $350 million in nonlethal aid and $160 million in military assistance. The act also authorizes the president to impose sanctions on Russian energy and defense corporations (Rupert 2014).

It was the collapse of oil prices that wreaked havoc on the Russian economy as per capita GDP fell from $15,543 in 2013 to $9,057 in 2016 (Smith 2017). Given that 70 percent of the Russian economy and two-thirds of exports are related to oil and natural gas, Russia is constantly threatened by volatility in commodities markets, increased U.S. oil and natural exports, and renewable energy, rendering it even less important to the global economy (Bershidsky 2015b). This will most likely continue to push Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldovo closer to NATO and the European Union and lead Russia to pull Belarus and Central Asia more fully into its orbit as Russia has sought to do with the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (Stratfor 2016).

With the contraction of the Russian economy and deterioration of U.S.-Russia relations under Obama in the wake Russia's annexation of Crimea, Russia has sought to push back against American and European interests within its traditional zones of influence. As a way of enhancing its bargaining position in Syria and defending its influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, Russia has deployed military forces on the ground in Syria and launched airstrikes against targets in Syria in support of the Assad regime (Dobriansky and Rivkin 2015). Although Russia has maintained that its use of force in Syria is part of a broad counterterrorism mission against the IS, it is seeking to protect its interests in the region. Russia also believes the NATO mission toppling Gadhafi in Libya and U.S. support for Syrian rebels have contributed to chaos in the Middle East and will eventually lead to more terrorist attacks by the IS and Al-Qaeda in Europe.

Although Obama and the European Union imposed economic sanctions on Russia, these actions will not reverse Russia's annexation of Crimea and could not prevent the separation of the eastern enclave in Ukraine. Obama and America's European allies seemed less willing to not directly threaten Russian interests because the cost of actively integrating Ukraine into NATO or the European Union outweighed the benefits. The admission of

ex-Soviet republics and Eastern European governments into both NATO and the European Union angered Russia, forcing it to react when it finally developed the willingness and capability of lashing out against Georgia in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Crimea and eastern Ukraine in the name of protecting ethnic Russians who once lived within the old contiguous borders of the ex-Soviet Union (Knott 2015; Laitin 1998: 36–82; Sakwa 2014: 148–182). Russian military action has led the United States and Europe to consent to allow Iran, a principal supporter of Assad, to participate in the Vienna peace talks alongside its primary regional competitor and rival Saudi Arabia which has demanded that Assad step aside (Karam and Keath 2015).

NATO

The war in eastern Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea and interventions in Ukraine, Georgia, Syria have forced NATO to refocus its efforts on maintaining collective security in Europe against Russian expansionism. NATOs European members have pledged to find ways of boosting their defense spending and investing in military programs that can deter threats to alliance members, especially those closer to Russia.

In fact, Russia's annexation of Crimea and intervention in Eastern Ukraine raised fears in Europe, leading many to express their public support for NATO and maintaining the transatlantic security order. From 2016 to 2017, support for NATO increased between seven and ten percentage points in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom where NATO enjoys between 60 and 79 percent public approval. Moreover, people in every NATO member state, except for one, believe the alliance should defend any member attacked by Russia. While populism and nationalism reached an apex in 2016 in the United Kingdom, France, and United States, support for NATO jumped from 53 percent to 62 percent in the United States, 51 percent to 62 percent in the United Kingdom, 49 percent to 60 percent in France, and from 72 percent to 79 percent in the Netherlands. Fear of Russian aggression, namely its annexation of Crimea, intervention in support of rebels in eastern Ukraine, intervention in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime, and interference and meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election are the driving forces behind this increase in public support for NATO (Warner 2017).

At its 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, Obama embraced a new "Readiness Action Plan" that would address security concerns of its Eastern European members. The plan calls for prepositioning supplies and military equipment to Eastern European bases, conducting more air patrols, increasing preparedness, but not engaging in major troop buildups in NATO states near Russia

so as not to violate association agreements with Russian leaders (Cowell 2014). The alliance also established a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and established six command centers in Poland, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with the aim of supporting these forces troops and boosting its eastern defense. These moves have been made on top of earlier decisions to boost the Baltic Air Police mission program, which defends the skies over Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Obama's 2014 move to shore up NATO and balance against Russia came after years of U.S. military personnel reductions in Europe under beginning with G. H. Bush and continuing under Clinton, G. W. Bush, and midway through Obama's second term (Army n.d.; Bumiller 2004; Shanker 2007). There has been an 85 percent reduction in U.S. troops and a 75 percent reduction in basing sites since the apex of the Cold War, when there were roughly 400,000 U.S. troops stationed in Europe compared to 62,000 today (US EUCOM 2016).

In the post–Cold War period, the United States was both decreasing its overall number of troops and its military personnel in Europe, reflecting assumptions that European security was solved because the Soviet Union had collapsed in 1991. During the 1990s, under the leadership of the beleaguered Boris Yeltsin, Russia's military was poorly funded and weak. The Russian economy struggled to make Western-style reforms and integrate into international institutions, was hobbled by a currency and financial crisis, and plagued by corruption. In response, the United States and the European Union sought to establish cooperative relations with the Russian government. The United States also began deploying large numbers of U.S. military personnel in the Middle East, first during the Persian Gulf War in 1991 to end Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and then maintaining a large military garrison in Saudi Arabia to contain further aggression by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Furthermore, NATO took advantage of Russia's debilitated state by adding to its membership former Soviet allied governments in Central and Eastern

Table 3.1 U.S. Military Force Deployments in Europe

	1988	*2015*	*Change (%)*
Total U.S. Military Personnel in Europe	356,251	60,585	–83
U.S. Army (%)	28	5	–23
U.S. Air Force (%)	15	9	–6
U.S. Navy (%)	8	2	–5
U.S. Marines (%)	3	1	–2
Total U.S. Military Personnel	2,138,213	1,313,940	–39

Source: Hicks et al., 2017. "Recalibrating U.S. Strategy toward Russia: A New Time for Choosing." Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 30, 2017. https://www.csis.org/analysis/recalibrating-us-strategy-toward-russia: 103–106; United States European Command. 2016. "U.S. Military Presence in Europe (1945-2016)." May 26, 2016. www.eucom.mil/doc/35220/u-s-forces-in-europe.

Europe and former Soviet Baltic states, deploying military force right up to Russia's western border and surrounding Kaliningrad. In 1999, Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary and in 2004, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined NATO. U.S. military personnel reductions in Europe were addressed with small rotational deployments, especially after Russia intervened in Eastern Ukraine and annexed Crimea following the toppling of Ukranian president Viktor Yanychovich. By 2016, there were 37,704 U.S. military personnel in Germany, 11,697 in Italy, and 1,196 in Belgium deployed alongside multinational forces in the Baltics and Poland (DOD n.d.; U.S. Army Europe n.d.).

With the escalation of tensions between NATO and Russia, the United States has participated in more military exercises with Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, United Kingdom, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey, training and security activities with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, and cooperative training exercises with Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and United Kingdom. (Eaglen 2015: 5, 7, 9). In June 2016, NATO launched Anaconda 2016 in Poland, in which roughly 30,000 troops from 22 NATO countries and Finland and Kosovo conducted large-scale joint defense operations (Gibbons-Neff 2016a).

Obama administration promised to add $3.4 billion to fund its ERI, a program that conducts regular troops rotations and positions tanks, aircraft, and other heavy equipment in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. According to Obama (quoted in Sen 2016), the United States will quadruple defense spending in Eastern Europe in order "to continue to provide reassurance to the frontline states there, our NATO allies, to make sure they actually deployed concrete assets that let them know that Article 5 means something, and that we stand by our commitment to our allies." The buildup in NATOs eastern flank is to limit Russia's military options, instill uncertainty into Russia's military calculus in North and East Europe, and increase the costs of seizing and holding territory in the wake of its annexation of Crimea (Lyman 2016). The Obama administration's position was that the huge boost in spending for European defense "is a longer-term response to a changed security situation in Europe. This reflects a new situation, where Russia has become a more difficult actor" (quoted in Landler and Cooper 2016: A6).

Obama's focus in Europe was largely to protect reaction to protecting NATOs eastern flank in Poland as well as addressing the security dilemma in the Baltic states where there was real fear that Russia might intervene militarily to protect large ethnic Russian minorities (Fisher 2016; Kalb 2016: 73–80; 223; Mole 2016: 1–17; Posener 2016). While the number of NATO forces deployed to Poland and the Baltics is not large enough to repel

a Russian attack, NATO military exercises in Estonia just sixteen miles from the Russian border were designed to demonstrate that NATO was serious about protecting its eastern members and deterring Russia (Birnbaum 2016). In response, Russia constructed a vast network of military bases and facilities in Russia from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea (Zverev 2016).

At the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw, the alliance announced it was deploying four multinational battalions each with 1,000 troops to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, sending military hardware to eastern NATO states, and boosting NATO's response force. It also deployed multinational force in Romania to balance against Russia's enhanced military presence in the Black Sea to reassure its allies in southeastern Europe (Dahlberg 2016). Furthermore, NATO and the European Union agreed to enhance cooperation against Russian cyberattacks and propaganda campaigns. NATO will also create a new intelligence office to coordinate and manage intelligence analysis to fight terrorism and extremist activity (Dahlberg 2016). According to NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg, these forces would be "combat ready" because a "strong deterrence is the best way to prevent a war" (Browne 2016a; Gibbons-Neff 2016b).

President Obama and NATO were both caught off guard by Russia's moves in Ukraine. Moreover, the beefing up of defenses was not large enough to balance against Russia, which maintains military superiority against NATO's much smaller multinational forces. It also reflects the Obama administration's failure to fully appreciate and grasp the significance of the Russian threat in Europe. According to Heather Conley (quoted in Hennessy 2016) of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "The White House has yet to fully acknowledge the shift in Europe today and the challenges that it faces. The European project has been placed into fundamental question."

Heightened Russian military activity has also contributed to the move by non-NATO Sweden to pursue a military burden sharing and cooperation treaty with NATO member Denmark to share information and use military-related facilities. Sweden is concerned about stepped-up Russian air force patrols in Northern Europe in recent years (Braw 2016). However, Russia is worried about defending Kaliningrad, a heavily militarized area surrounded by NATO members Poland and Lithuania, that Russia uses to project power in Europe.

There have been attempts in the past to promote cooperation between NATO and Russia, but these have been largely ignored. With the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, each side agreed not to deploy large numbers of troops along the immediate borders of both Russia and NATO states. However, the NATO-Russia Council has not been convened since 2014 when NATO and the European Union protested the Russian intervention in Crimea. The Baltic states and Poland contend that Russia violated that agreement with

its intervention and buildup in eastern Ukraine and believe NATO no longer needs to abide by that measure (Landler and Cooper 2016: A6). Former NATO general secretary Anders Fogh Rasmussen focused NATO on counterterrorism operations and the war in Afghanistan as opposed to its original mission of defending its member states from Russian threats. However, Russia's seizure of Crimea and its support for Ukrainian separatists forced his successor, former Norwegian prime minister Jens Stoltenberg to restore NATO to its original mission of collective defense against Russia (Cowell 2014).

Europe's military commitments to the alliance have been declining as evidenced by the decrease in the amount European member states spend on NATO defense (Masters 2016). While NATO calls on its members to contribute roughly 2 percent of their GDP to NATO defense programs, most do not although Canada and most European NATO members slowed their cuts to defense spending beginning in 2015 following Russia's annexation of Crimea (Stoltenberg 2015: 6). In 2013, U.S. defense spending was 4.4 percent of GDP with only four other NATO members (United Kingdom, Greece, Poland, and Estonia) that year meeting the North Atlantic alliance's goal of spending at least 2 percent of GDP on defense, although Latvia and Lithuania are expected to meet the spending requirement by 2018 (Browne 2016a). The disparity prompted U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates (quoted in Shanker 2011) to issue a warning to NATO about the potential for a "two-tiered alliance" in which some NATO members engage in "hard" combat roles and others focus on "soft" missions.

The 2008 global financial crisis and recession as well as the currency and debt crisis within the Eurozone at the time widened the imbalance. In terms of their share of global defense spending, U.S. allies, namely the United Kingdom and Italy, cut their defense spending faster than the United States with NATO members the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Canada under the 2 percent minimum defense-to-GDP guideline (Cordesman 2015a: 4; SIPRI 2018; 2016: 1–3; 2017: 1–3). Although most fall below the minimum 2 percent guideline, many have increased their defense spending, namely the Baltic States, Eastern European members, and Turkey, which are most vulnerable to security threats from Russia and violence in the Middle East.

As of 2015, the United States accounted for most of NATO's GDP and, by far, contributed the most to its military defense budget, reflecting the considerable gap between the United States and wealthy and larger European member states (Stoltenberg 2015: 26, 92–94, 108–123). The United States is also the top contributor to NATO's military, civil, and security program budgets (Ek 2015: 7–9; NATO 2015). NATO (2015) itself has warned that funding disparities and lack of burden sharing risk "an over-reliance by the Alliance as a whole on the United States for the provision of essential capabilities, including for instance, in regard to intelligence, surveillance and

Table 3.2 GDP (%) and National Military Spending (%) of NATO Members

NATO Member	*Percentage of GDP*
United States	50.4
Others	12.3
Germany	9.5
United Kingdom	8.1
France	6.8
Italy	5.1
Canada	4.4
Spain	3.4
National Military Spending (%) of NATO Members	
United States	72.2
Others	6.9
United Kingdom	6.6
France	4.9
Germany	4.4
Italy	2.0
Canada	1.7
Spain	1.2

Sources: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. 2016. "Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries." Table 2, 2008-2015. January 28, 2016. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_127537.htm; Stoltenberg, Jens. 2015. Secretary General's Annual Report 2015. North Atlantic Treaty Organization. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_01/20160128_sg_annualreport_2015_en.pdf.

reconnaissance; air-to-air refueling; ballistic missile defense; and airborne electronic warfare."

However, public confidence and faith in NATO is on the decline. According to a 2017 WIN/Gallup International Poll asking NATO nations which country they prefer to defend them under threat, citizens in four alliance states preferred Russia over the United States. Those in Bulgaria, Slovenia, Turkey, and Greece preferred Russia, while citizens in most NATO nations selected the United States as their closest defense ally mainly because it is the only state that possesses the capability of projecting military power on a global scale (see Bloomberg 2017). Consensus that the United States should maintain its global leadership role has eroded largely because of its invasion of Iraq in 2003 and is likely to deteriorate further following the election of Donald Trump. This demonstrates that security preferences within Europe are, to a limited extent, moving outside the NATO alliance. European nations seem to be looking toward one another to provide peace and security. While 30 percent of Belgians prefer the United States to take the lead, 25 percent selected France and 12 percent the United Kingdom while 31 percent of Swedes preferred the United States and 29 percent the United Kingdom (Bloomberg 2017). Moreover, the American public's perception of NATO since the end of the Cold War has shown an increasing partisan divide with Republicans conveying less support for America's European allies than Democrats.

Table 3.3 NATO Budgets by Member State (2012)

NATO Member	*Percentage of GDP*
Military Budget	
United States	26
Germany	18
Others	11
France	9
Italy	9
United Kingdom	9
Canada	7
Spain	5
Turkey	3
Netherlands	3
Civil Budget	
United States	21
Germany	14
Others	13
United Kingdom	12
France	11
Italy	8
Canada	6
Spain	5
Turkey	3
Netherlands	3
Belgium	2
Poland	2
National Security Program	
United States	22
Germany	15
France	11
United Kingdom	11
Others	9
Italy	9
Canada	6
Spain	5
Turkey	4
Netherlands	3
Poland	3
Belgium	2

Source: Ek, Carl. 2015. "NATO Common Funds Burden Sharing: Background and Current Issues." Congressional Research Service, February 12, 2015. http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30150.pdf.

One poll found that from 2004 to 2014, 43 percent of Republicans and only 24 percent of Democrats favor U.S. foreign policy taking a more independent approach from transatlantic security alliance and the European Union (De Galbert 2016; GMF 2014: 4, 17; Rohac 2017).

Obama himself often complained about free-riders in NATO who reaped the benefits of U.S. hegemony and world order. This has been a common frustration

for most post–Second World War U.S. presidents and Americans resentful of European allies. Therefore, the struggle for Obama was advancing a common burden sharing approach with America's European allies, a challenge unlike many of his predecessors. As Obama once stated, "Free riders aggravate me" (quoted in Goldberg 2016a). Obama (quoted in 2016a) complained that allies call on the United States to act in the name of collective security, but the "habit over the last several decades in these circumstances is people pushing to act but then showing an unwillingness to put any skin in the game." Obama even warned that both the U.S. and U.K. would not genuinely claim to have a "special relationship" if the U.K. were to continue failing to meet the minimum 2 percent defense-to-GDP requirement among NATO members. Obama (quoted in Goldberg 2016a) warned Prime Minister David Cameron that "you have to pay your fair share."

Although the United States contributes the most resources to NATO, it has benefited from common funding, especially the security investment program, to fund its critical military operations, some which has taken place outside formal NATO decision-making. Since NATO-related expenditures absorbed by member states are derived from the use of individual member's military forces, from a U.S. perspective, burden sharing has been perceived in terms of America's percentage contributions to the three common funds and on the degree to which other members have aided NATO-sponsored and non-NATO-led missions, restructured their and modernized their defense capabilities, boosted their defense spending, and invested in niche programs.

One area with cost implications is consideration and review of membership action plans from new and prospective members. The process of vetting a membership action plan from an applicant state rests on that member's ability to settle domestic conflicts peacefully, democratic political structures, ability to financially contribute to collective defense, commitment to meeting the 2 percent defense spending-to-GDP guideline, funding of national defense programs, protection of intelligence, and alignment of national laws to NATO cooperation. Individual NATO members have been concerned that they may have to absorb too many costs and assume much of that security burden if the applicant state increases the risk of NATO having to use force to defend the state from an external threat. The costs of incorporating Georgia and Ukraine into NATO might be very costly as their entry and membership would significantly elevate the risk of Russian aggression.

In the wake of the South Ossetia War, NATO began reorienting to its original charge, which was to provide collective security within Europe and check Russia. Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 led NATO to suspend military and low-level civilian ties with Russia. Under Putin, Russia has invested $700 billion in military modernization and defense expansion. As of 2017, Russia was third in global share of military spending (4.1%),

behind China (13%), and the United States (36%) and its defense spending increased by 87 percent between 2006 and 2017 (SIPRI 2017: 2–4). Russia has invested in intercontinental missiles, air defense systems, warplanes, and submarines to expand operations in the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and the North Atlantic, conduct clandestine activities and intelligence operations, and increase patrols (Schmitt 2016: A1).

Russia has also sought to narrow the U.S. undersea advantage. As of 2016, Russia possessed nuclear-powered and twenty diesel-powered attack submarines compared to fifty-three American nuclear-power attack submarines capable of holding cruise missiles and Special Operations Forces. The Russian Navy has even contested U.S. and NATO naval forces by increasing its submarine fleet in the North Atlantic and deploying unmanned drones capable of launching tactical nuclear weapons and threatening American territory. Russian jets have tested NATO naval forces by buzzing U.S. destroyers. To counter Russia's submarine expansion and modernization, the United States has promised $8.1 billion for nine new Virginia-class submarines, each with the capability of launching forty cruise missiles. Obama also dedicated roughly $20 million, as part of its ERI, to modernizing the naval air station Keflavik in Iceland to support advanced naval patrol aircraft (Schmitt 2016: A1). However, when all NATO members are included, defense expenditures dwarf Russian military spending (IHS/Jane's 2014; NATO 2016; SIPRI 2017: 2–4).

NATO's eastward expansion has been one of the primary reasons why Russia has pushed back against the United States and its allies. During the Yeltsin years, Russia could do little to undermine or resist NATO or E.U. expansion given the deterioration of its domestic political institutions and struggles in adapting to economic change. While NATO maintains an open-door policy on membership, taking on new members from the former Soviet Union and former members of the Warsaw Pact constituted a direct threat to Russian interests. The Clinton administration supported enlarging NATOs security perimeter to include former Soviet bloc states as a way of protecting the significance of new democratic states and maintaining NATO legitimacy after the collapse of the Cold War (Asmus 1997: 19–50). Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama have supported the Partnership for Peace (PFP) program in order to link former Warsaw Pact members and Soviet republics with NATO and encourage NATO membership. Today, PFP has twenty-two members in Europe, the Caucuses, the Balkans, and Central Asia (Masters 2016). In its new National Security Strategy in 2015 (quoted in Michta 2016), Russia identified NATO as a major security threat with "growing power capabilities (and . . .) global functions [that] are a clear violation of international law, showing by the growing military activities of its member states."

The admission of former Warsaw Pact members and the Baltic States during the 1990s is not the same as NATOs admission of Greece and Turkey

as members in 1952, two states that added strategic value and continue to provide resources and capabilities to the alliance and are key U.S. allies in the eastern Mediterranean. Moving lower-income Ukraine and Georgia closer to NATO will provoke Russian aggression, a strategic risk to the alliance that for states that could have difficulty meeting the 2 percent defense-to-GDP spending requirement. NATO's decision in December 2015 to enlarge its membership by inviting Montenegro to join the alliance brought an immediate angry response from Russia and raised East-West tensions (Erlanger 2015: A1). Russian representative to NATO, Alexander Grushko (quoted in Lenoir 2015) has stated, "Any political game concerning NATO expansion into George and Ukraine is filled with the most serious, most profound geopolitical consequences for all of Europe." In fact, the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, the movement of Ukraine away from Russia and the subsequent war in eastern Ukraine, and Russia's annexation of Crimea changed Europe's post–Cold War security architecture. Russia is convinced that the reallocation of NATO forces along its northeastern flank threatens its security. According to Russia's 2015 National Security Strategy (quoted in Michta 2016), NATO's "continued expansion" is "bringing its military infrastructure up to the Russian border, which constitutes a threat to national security."

As Russia viewed it, in the wake of the collapse of the USSR, ethnic Russians were left without political representation as millions were now under the sovereignty of new governments in Eastern Europe and now independent former Soviet republics (Knott 2015; Laitin 1998: 36–82; Sakwa 2014: 148–182). Under Putin, the Russian state remerged with a more authoritarian, nationalist bent at the same time it began to exercise its economic leverage in Europe with its tremendous energy resources. Contemporary Russian foreign policy is driven by state national nationalism and Russian greatness that transcends its Communist history (Galeotti 2012; Lipman 2016). As Putin (2012) stated, "In order to revive national consciousness, we need to link historical eras and get back to understanding the simple truth that Russia did not begin in 1917, or even in 1991, but rather that we have a common, continuous history spanning over a thousand years, and we must rely on it to find inner strength and purpose in our national development."

As domestic political and economic turmoil threatened Russia in the 1990s and NATO expanded eastward, Russia returned to authoritarianism. The harsh impact of liberal reforms and privatization on living standards in Russia resulted in the fall of the ruble, the 1998 financial crisis, endemic corruption, and the rise of a powerful oligarchy. During this time, NATO and the European Union turned a blind eye and deaf ear to Russian diplomats as expansion meant that any former Soviet ally in Europe or republic could join or dialogue with NATO or the E.U. Russia was also forced to watch as NATO bombed Serbia and advanced the cause of self-determination for

Kosovo. Likewise, self-determination for Russians living in South Ossetia and Abkhazia or eastern Ukraine was ignored by the United States and European Union, which promoted the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Georgia and Ukraine (Galeotti 2012; Lipman 2016). The collapse of the Cold War was and is still celebrated in the United States and Europe as a triumph of liberal democracy over totalitarianism. Moreover, the post–Cold War European security system led by NATO was seen by current and future members as a guarantee of national and collective security. Membership in the European Union was also perceived as an assurance of political stability and economic growth.

Under Putin's leadership, the Russian economy expanded, the ruble stabilized, incomes increased, energy extraction skyrocketed, and the state cracked down on corruption. Putin (quoted in Taylor 2016b) even referred to the collapse of the Soviet Union as the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." NATO enlargement and E.U. expansion embarrassed Russia, but under Putin, it found ways to challenge and defy the new European security and economic order. Russia is convinced that the United States, NATO and the European Union did not acknowledge its interests at the same time they were enlarging and expanding (Taylor 2016a). Tensions between the transatlantic alliance and Russia over the Syrian Civil War, Ukraine, and European defense became so high that Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev (quoted in Johnston 2016) described the world as slipping into a "new cold war." But as described by Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaite (quoted in Johnston 2016) the tensions are now more serious than during the Cold War: "We are probably facing a hot war. Russia is demonstrating open military aggression in Ukraine, open military aggression in Syria. There is nothing cold about this, it is very hot."

The conflict in Ukraine forced Europe to reexamine its energy security since it is a major importer of Russian natural gas. In fact, the European Union relies on Russia for one-third of its natural gas imports and one-quarter of its total oil and gas with the percentage of Russian oil and gas expected to increase over the next several decades. Fully aware of the great degree to which the European Union has come to depend on its oil and gas, Russia uses energy as leverage with European governments prompting fears that it could unilaterally cut oil and natural gas supplies as it has with Ukraine in 2006 and 2009 (Sheppard and Foy 2017). Construction of the Nord Stream pipeline circumvents Ukraine, depriving it of transit fees, and could intensify European energy dependence on Russia (Gramer 2017). The most significant move by Russia was its decision in 2014 to cancel the South Stream Project that would have constructed a gas pipeline under the Black Sea from Russia to Bulgaria, bypassing Ukraine for energy distribution to European markets.

In response, the Obama administration challenged Gazprom, Russia's state-owned energy corporation and leading gas supplier to Europe, by

increasing U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports to Europe. Although European energy dependence on Russia and the lack of diversification in energy supply has been a security concern, Obama's boost in U.S. natural gas extraction resulted in the United States becoming a net exporter of LNG. Given its struggles to broaden energy imports from alternate suppliers in North Africa and Central Asia, the European Union sought to ensure a steady stream of imports. Poland and Lithuania have accepted U.S. gas shipments and the European Union sought to interconnect its energy grids and pipelines, construct natural gas terminals, unbundle gas extraction from distribution and develop independent transit operations, and reverse flow pipelines to mitigate supply disruptions (Kantchev 2017; Sheppard and Foy 2017).

Given Russia's concerns about NATO expansionism, the United States still believed NATO expansion brought considerable benefits to the alliance including peaceful settlement of political conflicts that, in the past, could have led to war in Europe. NATO membership requires alliance members to settle territorial disputes and border claims peacefully to maintain European stability and security. For example, Hungary abandoned such territorial claims against Romania and vice versa. In addition, NATO required its members to prioritize democratic governance within each state to guarantee civilian leadership of national militaries (Weinrod 2016).

Also, since the September 11 terrorist attacks, NATO evolved into a global security network of relationships across Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Middle East and North Africa. With the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), NATO became connected to Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative has developed partnerships with Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and the UAE. Furthermore, NATO has developed bilateral ties with Georgia and Ukraine and maintains close relations in the Pacific with Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan. The benefits of these bi- and multilateral relations include the facilitation of political and military dialogue, the raising and integration of national militaries with NATO members, raising military and diplomatic practices to NATO standards, multinational military cooperation, and the promotion of key norms such as regional security and stability across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia and the Pacific. Put simply, NATO is as much a multinational alliance promoting collective security interests and stability, as it is a united political project advancing global democratic rules and norms (Fisher 2016; Weinrod 2016).

TERRORISM AND INSTABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Furthermore, the United States and its European allies have been focused on halting the expansion of the IS with the goal of preventing it from launching

attacks. Although NATO has not deployed allied troops on the ground in Iraq or Syria, it has provided weapons, humanitarian aid, and advisers to Kurdish militias and fighters, rebel groups in Syria, and partnered with the Iraqi military to counter IS movements. Along with the United States, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Canada, and the United Kingdom have launched airstrikes against IS targets, primarily in Iraq. However, in Syria, the bulk of the airstrikes and deployment of special operations forces have been conducted by the United States, as European NATO has been reluctant to intervene. France is the one exception as it has launched airstrikes against IS targets in support of Syrian rebels and Kurdish fighters. Russian and Chinese opposition at the U.N. Security Council has made it difficult on European NATO members to more actively condemn the Assad regime in Syria. However, the European Union has been involved in brokering negotiations to end the civil war, lifted an arms embargo on arming Syria's rebel groups, and formally recognized the Syrian National Coalition as the only legitimate representative of the Syrian people.

The United Nations estimated in 2015 that roughly 30,000 people from 104 nations have traveled to Syria and Iraq, an increase of 5,000 since August 2014 and the United States estimates 1,000 people per month have traveled through Turkey to Syria to join with the IS (Soufan 2015). Most foreign fighters are driven to combat because of the ideological appeals made by IS via its social networking messages on Twitter, Facebook, Snap Chat, and YouTube. The Soufan Group estimates that approximately 20,000 foreign fighters in 2015 joined with the IS to fight in the main theaters of battle in Iraq and Syria an increase of 8,000 since June 2014. It is estimated that there are roughly 5,000 fighters from Europe with most hailing from France (1,550), Germany (700), and the United Kingdom (700) (Soufan Group 2015). Most foreign fighters are from Asia with 11,345 having traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight on behalf of the IS with Saudi Arabia (2,275) and Jordan (2,000) supplying the most. Most foreign fighters from Africa hail from Tunisia (5,000) followed by Morocco (1,200). The Syrian Civil War is "likely to be an incubator for a new generation of terrorists" that the entire world will be forced to contend with for many years (Soufan 2015; Vick 2014). Most foreigner fighters are from Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Russia, and France.

The IS has called on its followers to commit attacks in their home countries and launched a deadly wave of attacks in 2015 and 2016. In October 2015 in Ankara Turkey, IS detonated explosives near a train station that killed ninety-five people during a peaceful march and then detonated a bomb onboard a Russian commercial airliner en route to St. Petersburg over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula (Lister 2015; Malsin 2015). In November, IS suicide bombers killed over forty people in Sourj el-Barajneh near Beruit, Lebanon (Botelho, Cruickshank, and Shoichet 2015). One day later, IS terrorists shocked Paris

again by launching highly organized and coordinated terror attacks at multiple located across the city (Soufan Group 2015). Then, on March 22, 2016, IS terrorists launched another wave of attacks, this time in Belgium, at Brussels Airport in Zaventem and the Maalbeek metro station killing thirty-two (Soufan Group 2016).

These attacks, against innocent civilians in soft targets located in concentrated urban population centers, have been launched by militants who fought in Syria and Iraq and carried out IS-directed, affiliated, or inspired terror attacks against their home countries. While Europe may be at greater risk of IS terrorism than the United States simply because there are much higher numbers of European militants who traveled to Syria or Iraq and, consequently, have returned to their homes to join with or support terror networks in Europe. More militants have traveled from France (1,550) to fight in Syria and Iraq than any other country in Western Europe with the French government estimating that 185 militants returned home to France from fighting in the Syrian Civil War with 82 having been jailed and 36 under some form of domestic surveillance and control. In addition, 700 German nationals and 700 British nationals traveled to Syria with 180 and 350 having already returned home to Germany and Britain, respectively (Bergen 2015; New America n.d.; Soufan Group 2015).

Those who left their homes to fight for the IS or other jihadist terror groups in Syria and Iraq are roughly twenty-four years old with the average age of a typical female recruit twenty-one years of age. Twenty percent of recruits from outside the Middle East are teenagers and more than 33 percent of them are girls. In total, roughly 14 percent of all recruits outside the Middle East are women who serve IS and other terror groups in supportive roles or marry male fighters (Bergen 2015; New America n.d.). It is estimated that over 25 percent have some type of family connection to terrorist or militant activity with relatives already fighting for terror groups in Syria and Iraq. Overall, approximately 60 percent of militants with a family connection to terror groups have some close or distant relative who traveled to fight in the Syrian Civil War alone. The 250 Americans who traveled to Syria fit the same profile as their European militant counterparts with the average age of twenty-five years old, 20 percent teenagers, another 20 percent having a family connection to the war, and roughly 17 percent are women. Moreover, 90 percent of the American militants are extremely active in websites related to terrorism. Overall, militants fighting for the IS in Syria has proven to be a deadly enterprise with roughly 50 percent of male recruits and 6 percent of female recruits having been killed (Soufan Group 2015).

Still, it has been argued that the IS threat is overexaggerated and official U.S. government reports on the terror group's ability to launch attacks inside America are largely overhyped. The Obama administration devoted

significant resources to domestic and foreign surveillance, tracking and monitoring of suspected terrorists, improved law enforcement capabilities, and modernized intelligence gathering since the September 11 terrorist attacks. Since there are fewer foreign fighters from the United States who traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight for IS, the United States was at less risk than its European counterparts (Bergen 2015; New America n.d.). The New America Foundation reported that twenty-three Americans traveled to Syria and fourteen who provided support to fighters in Syria and a total of nine who were killed and another nine who traveled to Syria and eluded capture and five who were captured by U.S. authorities (New America n.d.). While the FBI has conducted roughly 900 active investigations of suspected IS terrorists and other U.S.-grown violent extremists not affiliated with IS, it has been tracking a decline in the amount of U.S. citizens traveling to Syria to join with IS (Johnson 2015). Although there is concern about the unintended consequences of the scattering of foreign fighters if IS is defeated in Syria and Iraq, it is extremely rare for jihadist terror groups like IS, al-Nusra front, and Al-Qaeda to target the American homeland (Beinart 2016).

Many in the United States and Europe have reacted not by focusing on the number of militants returning home from fighting in Syria or Iraq, but politically targeting refugees and Muslims. It contributed to hardline anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment within the most conservative circles in the Republican Party in the United States during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign with many right-wing candidates support or sponsoring legislation to deny admission of Syrian Muslim refugees into the United States and to implement religious tests on new asylum applicants to ensure that only Christian refugees can resettle in the United States (Callimachi 2015: A1). Intense anti-Muslim sentiment has led to rising support for right-wing political leaders and political organizations and parties in Europe, such as Marine Le Pen of the Front National in France, Nigel Farage of United Kingdom Independence Party, and Lutz Bachmann of Pegida (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) in Germany (Townsend 2015). Suppression of Islamic practices and traditions in select European nations, such as banning Muslim women from wearing the burka, niqab, and hijab, has resulted in extremist acts of violence, terror attacks, and reprisals.

Furthermore, resistance from European publics and governments to Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war in 2015 reflect the barriers to integration faced by Muslims within the broader social fabric of Europe. One poll, taken in the immediate wake of the November 13 IS attacks in Paris, showed that most Europeans favor reestablishing border controls within the Schengen area if the goal is to increase safety from terrorist attacks (Ash 2015). Hungary responded to the refugee crisis by constructing border fences with the goal, according to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, of attempting "to keep Europe Christian"

(Ash 2015). In addition to Orbán, the empowerment of the Front National in France, the election of a nationalist ultraconservative government in Poland, the rise of the anti-immigrant Swiss People's Party in Switzerland, and emerging neo-Nazi sympathizers in right-wing parties in Austria and Greece reflect state-level frustration with what many believe is the inability of the European Union to control Europe's borders (Diamond 2015; Higgins 2015: A12).

Threats posed by terrorists and chaos in the Middle East have led to more cooperative efforts and coordination by the United States and its European allies in the areas of domestic security and counterterrorism (Jaffe and Ryan 2015). At its 2016 Summit in Warsaw, NATO also agreed to expand stability operations in the Middle East against the IS and promote cooperation among national intelligence agencies. This is designed to disrupt the ability of IS to coordinate and launch terrorist attacks within territory it controls in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan since the terror group has been successful in launching or inspiring attacks in NATO states, such as in Brussels, Paris, San Bernardino, and Istanbul. NATO also approved assistance for Tunisia and the use of surveillance aircraft against IS (Dahlberg and Gera 2016).

In addition, the United States and European Union completed agreements on extradition and legal assistance on homeland security processing, conducting inspections on containers and maritime transportation, intelligence gathering and law enforcement, and sharing airline passenger data. One of the most significant agreements was the creation of the U.S.-E.U. Swift Agreement, which grants the U.S. Treasury Department access to Europe's consortium of international banking institutions. Moreover, the United States and European Union aligned their listing of terrorist organizations to help coordinate and merge counterterrorism efforts and promote a common system of terrorist designation to blunt terror fundraising in Europe. For example, the United States successfully encouraged the European Union to place the military wing of Hezbollah on to its list of terrorist organizations and the United States and Israel were able to get E.U. states to continue enforcing restrictions against Hamas and have insisted they to uphold sanctions.

Obama and E.U. leaders were also remarkably united in their efforts to conclude an agreement with Iran to ensure that the Iranian nuclear program can only be utilized for peaceful goals. The 2015 Vienna agreement among the P5+1 (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, plus Germany), the European Union, and Iran to halt Iran's nuclear program is a central component in the Obama administration's reorientation of American foreign policy toward the Middle East. The ongoing war in Iraq and the reconstitution of Al-Qaeda as the IS in the Syrian civil war have produced security ramifications testing the significance of the transatlantic alliance and a Syrian refugee crisis challenging the ability of both the United States and Europe to integrate Muslims.

While there were points of agreement, Obama did grow frustrated with America's European allies. NATO's decision to intervene in Libya failed to address the stability of the country in the wake of the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi. The intervention also frustrated Obama who grew to believe that America's European and Arab allies were free-riders who failed to step up and assume the burden of responsibility. In the wake of the NATO intervention in Libya, Obama described, "Free riders aggravate me. We don't have to always be the ones who are up front. Sometimes we're going to get what we want precisely because we are sharing in the agenda. The irony is that it was precisely in order to prevent the Europeans and the Arab states from holding our coats while we did all the fighting that we, by design, insisted" (quoted in Goldberg 2016a). As Obama viewed it, the Arab League's support for the NATO military intervention was meaningless because Arab states were not part of the intervention and did not help provide security in post-Gaddafi Libya. America's Arab allies did not assume much of the risk, so their reliability as allies confirmed to Obama that they had little incentive to take part in any military coalition or provide security on their own.

Obama maintained that the reason Libya fell into chaos in the wake of the intervention had less to do with the actions taken by the United States and more with the failure to understand tribalism inherent in Libyan politics and the inability of America's European and Arab allies to help secure and stabilize Libya after Gaddafi was toppled. Obama (quoted in Goldberg 2016a) stated: "I had more faith in the Europeans, given Libya's proximity, being invested in the follow-up. If we're going to do something, obviously we've got to be up front, and nobody else is sharing in the spotlight." Obama's frustrations in Libya contributed to his decision in 2013 not to intervene in Syria and launch airstrikes against the Assad regime in retaliation for its use of chemical weapons against civilians.

THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

The United States and Europe have the most deeply integrated markets in the world and maintain the largest and most important trade and financial exchanges. The transatlantic economy represents one-third of global GDP, $5.5 trillion in commercial sales, and half of the world's personal consumption. In addition, the United States and European Union have the world's most intense data flows (50% higher than data flows between the United States and Asia) and innovative economies with research and development spending at more than $74 billion on both sides of the Atlantic. Moreover, the transatlantic workforce is estimated between 13 and 15 million in direct and indirect employment, including 4.7 million Europeans employed by U.S.

Table 3.4 U.S. Trade and Investment with Europe (2016)

Region	*Exports (goods/ services) ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of Exports*	*Imports (goods/ services) ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of Imports*	*U.S. Investment Abroad ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of U.S. IA**	*FDI in the United States ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of FDI in the United States*
Europe	1.053tn	40	1.061tn	33	3.2tn	60	2.6tn	69
European Union	895bn	34	889bn	27	2.4tn	45	2.2tn	60
United Kingdom	230bn	8	184bn	6	682bn	15	556bn	15
Euro area	179bn	7	166bn	5	2.1tn	39	1.6tn	44
Europe excluding European Union	158bn	6	172bn	5	226bn	4	400bn	11
Netherlands	137bn	5	56bn	2	846bn	18	355bn	9
Germany	108bn	4	180bn	6	108bn	2	292bn	8
France	72bn	3	83bn	3	78bn	1	253bn	7
Luxembourg	48bn	2	55bn	2	607bn	11	417bn	11

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis. n.d. "U.S. Direct Investment Abroad," https://www.bea.gov/international/di1usdbal.htm; "Foreign Direct Investment in the United States Tables Detailed," https://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2017/09-September/0917-inward-direct-investment- tables.pdf," "Table 1.3. U.S. International Transactions," https://www.bea.gov/international/bp_web/tb_download_type_modern.cfm?list=11&Ro wID=3. Investment Abroad.

firms and 4.3 million Americans employed by European firms (Hamilton and Quinlan 2018: vi–xii). In 2016, transatlantic trade and financial investment was much larger and more valuable than U.S. trade and investment with Asia and the Pacific in general and China specifically (see Tables 2.5 and 3.4) (BEA n.d.).

For Obama, one of the most important goals for the United States was successfully completing negotiations on the proposed TTIP. This massive trade agreement was expected to help create jobs and more fully integrate economies on both sides of the Atlantic by aligning standards for market access and reducing tariffs, developing a framework for regulatory cooperation, and setting common rules on exports, imports, and intellectual property rights. Given the enormous scale of economic integration between the United States and European Union, intra-industry trade and investment and specialization of operations would intensify with the primary benefit being lower prices on consumer products resulting from lower regulatory barriers (Erixon and Bauer 2010: 2–3, 5–6; Erixon and Pehnelt 2009: 1, 5–6, 9, 14, 17; Hamilton and Quinlan 2018: 7).

In terms of market access, TTIP was designed to boost transatlantic trade by cutting the cost of importing and exporting goods between the United States and European Union, removing customs duties and barriers to trade in order to stimulate and maintain economic growth and create jobs, helping service firms on both sides of the Atlantic tap each other's markets, empowering U.S. and E.U. corporations to compete with one another for public contracts, and establishing rules of origin that determine which goods and services from Europe and the United States benefited from TTIP.

In terms of regulatory cooperation, TTP committed the United States and European Union to establish common and compatible regulations that would increase growth and jobs and offer individuals and corporations more choice and flexibility. This includes promoting international cooperation on regulatory measures and creating a regulatory cooperation entity that would enforce new regulatory rules on chemicals, cosmetics, engineering, medical devices, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, textiles, information and communication technology, and vehicles. It also included labor and environment agreements and was designed to elevate the role of nongovernmental organizations in trade, sustainable development, and corporate social responsibility. It also develops an open, rules-based approach to securing energy and raw materials, which would especially benefit the European Union as it has struggled to diversify its access to oil and natural gas and move away from its traditional dependence on Russia for fossil fuels. Furthermore, TTIP streamlines and merges rules on customs and inspections, provides aid to smaller businesses, modernizes transatlantic financial investment, and establishes new rules for protecting intellectual property rights, such as patents, trademarks and creative designs,

copyright, and geographical indications for goods and services developed in specific regions.

The goal of TTIP was to expand the global percentage of U.S.-E.U. GDP to compete with rising markets and rivals, namely China. Not only was TTIP designed to head off China as a global economic competitor, it was designed to dampen European anxiety that the United States may dramatically scale back its commitments to Europe as Obama was rebalancing to Asia and the Pacific and away from the Middle East. TTIP could help the transatlantic alliance outflank China if it pushes to rewrite international rules or recast global institutions on financial investment and world trade (E.C. 2013: 6–7, 12).

However, there were serious concerns regarding the extent to which TTIP would impact economies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Many in the European Union fear that ratification of TTIP will result in far too much industry privatization and drive down wages much in the same way the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement did in the United States following implementation in 1993. There were also concerns in Europe that health care could be privatized to compete more directly with private U.S. health corporations. In dispute resolutions, there were worries about investor-state dispute component in TTIP would give foreign investors powers of litigation against governments for regulations they see as impeding their business and financial investments. Furthermore, the lowering of tariffs under TTIP could harm domestic industries in both the United States and European Union In addition, there are fears that TTIP might erode worker protections, unions, and labor because of harmonized tariffs and employee regulations (Inman 2016).

The vote by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union on June 24, 2016, the so-called Brexit, had tremendous implications in transatlantic trade and financial exchanges. Nationalist anger at immigration, the decline of labor-intensive manufacturing, and European unity has led to a resurgence in political intolerance (Diamond 2016). Those who feel the European project and globalization have dislocated and atomized them in their immediate communities are likely to embrace their perceived historic and ideological purposes, nationalism, cultural identities even more. In the United Kingdom, the vote to exit the European Union demonstrated that powerful nationalist forces raised romanticism, cultural symbols, and historical imagery above economic interests (Walt 2016). And those who pushed for market capitalization, open trade, and greater foreign investment did not appreciate the extent to which the middle and working classes would be harmed by business-friendly multilateral agreements nor did they acknowledge public resentment directed against the wealthiest and most powerful on both side of the Atlantic (Hirsch 2016). Economic inequality, as much as authoritarianism and intolerance, is threatening to undermine liberal democracies and, by consequence, the world order.

It could take years for the United Kingdom to unravel from the European Union, which could impact the scope of U.S.-E.U. trade and financial investment. It also remains to be seen if the United Kingdom will still be able to access European markets as a non-E.U. member. The preferred trade and financial connections between the United Kingdom and Europe were thrown into serious uncertainty since the bulk of the United Kingdom's exports go to other E.U. member countries and Britain's imports from the European Union. As an E.U. member, the United Kingdom had tariff-free trade with other members. In the absence of a post–Brexit trade agreement, Brexit would likely increase costs on the United Kingdom of doing business with Europe and the United States. Moreover, most of the revenue sent from the United Kingdom to the European Union was returned to benefit British citizens in the form of subsidies in research and development, education, agriculture, and infrastructure.

WEAKENING OF THE TRANSATLANTIC ORDER

U.S. foreign policy has long sought to prevent the rise of a hegemon or challenger that could alter the balance of power in Europe. The United States entered the two world wars in the twentieth century to blunt German domination of Europe and boosted troop levels during the Cold War to prevent the USSR from threatening the postwar peace. Following the collapse of Communist governments in Eastern Europe, the United States scaled back its military forces at the same time it supported the European Union and NATO as credible institutions that would promote peace, security, and prosperity in Europe. Obama supported a strong and prosperous European Union because as a collection of wealthy nation-states, it had the ability to reduce dependence on the American security umbrella and deepen the already integrated transatlantic economic relationship. A powerful European Union could also stand up economically and militarily to Russia and help the United States complete its rebalance to Asia and the Pacific.

But like his post–Cold War predecessors, Obama failed to understand and appreciate Russian security interests. Russia's seizure and annexation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine, the most significant security crises in Europe since the end of the Second World War, had more to do with pushing back against yet another Western attempt to encroach on Russia's traditional sphere of influence and less to do with Russian attempts to dominate Europe. While there are reasons for or against the eastward expansion of both NATO and the European Union, it was naïve on the part of Obama and his predecessors to think these would not eventually provoke Russia or in the very least harm U.S.-Russia-Europe relations.

Prior to Russia's intervention, Obama and E.U. leaders sought to pull Ukraine closer to the West by openly embracing civil society groups opposed to President Viktor Yanukovych. After Yanukovych was toppled and replaced by a pro-Western government, Russia reacted by seizing Crimea and intervening on behalf of pro-Russian rebel groups in eastern Ukraine, making Ukraine too much of a liability for NATO and the European Union None of this should have surprised Obama, but his administration was blindsided nonetheless. Russia's response prompted Obama to approve additional funding for the ERI and NATO to boost its defenses for its now vulnerable eastern member states, thereby pulling the United States deeper into the security of its European allies at a time when Obama was seeking to scale back militarily from Europe and rebalance to Asia and the Pacific. Russia then engaged in a campaign to undermine public faith and confidence in democratic institutions and drive a wedge within the transatlantic security order by interfering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

These rapidly unfolding events have fractured the European Union The original mission of the European Union was overcoming nationalism and conflicting identities by merging states into supranational structures to promote peaceful cooperation and prosperity. The E.U. project was designed to manage national interests that in the past would often lead to war. The U.S. security umbrella gave Europe added protection to balance against Soviet Union in the Cold War and Russia in the post–Cold War. However, nationalism was always bubbling under the surface and exploded onto the scene following the Great Recession, Euro crisis, IS terrorist attacks, and the Syrian refugee crisis. Many Europeans preferred their own governments, not distant E.U. leaders, to address and solve economic and social concerns. The resurgence of nationalism in Greece, Poland, Hungary, and Italy and Brexit revealed fundamental flaws in the E.U. project of European integration and cooperation.

As the Obama administration viewed it, a unified and stable Europe under the auspices of the European Union was a practical way of advancing American diplomatic and economic interests with Europe. But divergence within the European Union led to further divergence between the United States and European Union during Obama's presidency. For Obama, Brexit represented a direct threat to deepening U.S.-E.U. economic relations and TTIP. He warned that the United Kingdom would go to the "back of the queue" (quoted in Asthana and Mason 2016) in trade deals with the United States if the British voted to leave the European Union. Obama (quoted in Asthana and Mason 2016) stated, "I think it is fair to say that maybe some point down the line there might be a UK-US trade agreement, but it's not going to happen any time soon because our focus is in negotiating with a big bloc, the European Union, to get a trade agreement done."

Obama began his presidency with a reaffirmation of U.S. support for a strong European Union, a desire to safeguard and expand the massive U.S.-E.U. economic relationship with TTIP, and for a reset in U.S.-Russia relations. However, Western meddling in Ukraine induced a resurgent Russia to push back in eastern Ukraine, annexed Crimea, intervened in Syria. Russia's actions in Ukraine prompted the return of security competition in Europe, forcing Obama to devote more military resources to help shore up vulnerable NATO members in Eastern Europe. Brexit then demonstrated that the European Union was incapable of putting a lid on the powerful forces of nationalism and maintaining European unity. These fissures allowed Russia to tear at the fabric of the transatlantic alliance by supporting right-wing movements throughout the West and meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Obama ended his presidency with Europe defined in terms of nationalist divisions than supranational unity. U.S.-Russia relations in Obama's second term were at their lowest point since the height of the Cold War. The fracturing of the European Union contributed to uncertainty in U.S.-E.U. economic relations as TTIP negotiations were abandoned and suspicions over trade heightened on both sides of the Atlantic. As a result, Obama's rebalance to Asia and the Pacific, a comprehensive strategy designed to respond to an emboldened peer competitor in China, was put at risk.

Chapter 4

Asia and the Pacific

A Costly Pivot

As it was bringing large-scale troop deployments in Iraq to an end and attempting to reset relations with Russia, the Obama administration sought to make a much-needed rebalance or "pivot" to Asia and the Pacific because of the region's vital economic importance and in response to the rise of China as a challenger to the United States This strategic decision was explained by Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2011) who argued in her 2011 article in *Foreign Policy*, "As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point . . . we will need to accelerate efforts to pivot to new global realities. . . . One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a substantially increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise—in the Asia-Pacific region." In November 2011, President Obama (2011) stated that "the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region [the Asia-Pacific] and its future." The Obama administration's announcement of the pivot or rebalance should be seen as an expansion and intensifying America's already significant interests and presence in Asia and the Pacific, especially in Southeast Asia. According to former Obama National Security Adviser Tom Donilon (2011), the purpose of the pivot is to guarantee that "international law and norms be respected, that commerce and freedom of navigation are not impeded, that emerging powers build trust with their neighbors, and that disagreements are resolved peacefully without threats or coercion." The objective of America's repositioning seems to be directed at shaping and influencing norms and institutions in the region in light of China's heightened and assertive role in the Asia-Pacific.

There are several components shaping the pivot. First, Obama's move to prioritize Asia and the Pacific is really a perpetuation of interests and foreign

policies set in motion by President George W. Bush. The Bush administration's move to build relations with key states in the region, namely Indonesia and Vietnam, finishing a free trade agreement with South Korea, and more flexible and sustainable troop deployments helped establish the foundation for Obama's pivot.

This was no more apparent than in Obama's humanitarian relief missions to shore up U.S. allies in the region in the Western Pacific. Obama understood that America's long-standing strength in the region was in creating and strengthening norms in defense of the collective good in the region. His administration took the lead in responding to the 2011 tsunami that struck Japan leading to the meltdown at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima and Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines in 2013. Under Bush, the United States dispatched the U.S. Navy and humanitarian aid in response to the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 that killed hundreds of thousands. These humanitarian missions not only boosted U.S. credibility and relations with many governments in Southeast Asia, they led to closer economic and security ties throughout the region and boosted goodwill and trust.

Second, Obama's rebalance was not only a continuation of Bush era policies, it was a significant expansion of American foreign policy interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Obama's support for the TPP and additional troop plans and rotational deployments in Singapore, Australia, and expanded naval patrols and freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea reflect this expanded American role in the Western Pacific. Furthermore, Obama's move to more closely align with India, the world's largest democracy with an economy growing faster than China's, meant that the U.S. pivot to Asia included the Indian Ocean.

Third, the prioritization of Asia and the Pacific in U.S. foreign policy carried tremendous risks for America's global security and economic interests as it came at the same time Obama was seeking to draw down from the Middle East, end the unpopular war in Iraq and reset relations with Russia while scaling back the U.S. military presence in Europe. The rebalance to Asia and the Pacific would be a costly endeavor as it would require the Obama administration to build and expand military presence in the region at a time when the United States was forced to cut defense spending following passage of the 2011 Budget Control Act calling for budget sequestration. The boosting of economic resources and troop deployments to Asia and the Pacific could only be effectively implemented if the United States effectively mitigated spending reductions in the Navy.

The Obama administration already promised cuts to OCO in Iraq during the 2008 presidential campaign, hoping the region would remain stable even though the Arab Spring was threatening to undermine stability throughout the Middle East. Furthermore, the ongoing economic crisis in the Eurozone

forced the European Union to defense spending in Europe, putting additional pressure on the United States to boost the NATO alliance. While there was a significant need for the United States to realign and adjust its foreign policy because of the rise of China and India, the United States was forced to reconsider security risks in the Asia-Pacific.

AMERICA'S NETWORK OF ASIA-PACIFIC ALLIANCES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The U.S.-led alliance system in the Asia-Pacific rests on a series of bilateral and multilateral networks linking the United States to Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. The U.S.-Japan alliance is at the heart of American security policy in the Asia-Pacific region and the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security commits the United States to defending Japan, which seeks to maintain the treaty as a deterrence force against China's military modernization and North Korea. The alliance facilitates the forward deployment of about 50,000 U.S. troops and other U.S. military assets based in Japan. The Japan Self-Defense Forces emphasize joint operations with U.S. military forces as a way of enhancing deterrent capabilities. U.S.-Japan defense underwent a relative transformation as Obama supported Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's efforts to relax restrictions on Japan's past prohibition on participating in collective self-defense, thereby allowing the Japanese military to play a greater role in regional security. Although there is significant support in Japan for the alliance with the United States and opposition to China and North Korea, China is Japan's largest trading partner (Cooper 2014: 1–14, 15).

Japan is also America's fourth largest trading partner and Japanese companies are the second largest source of foreign direct investment in the United States. Obama deepened economic ties in 2010 with the U.S.-Japan Economic Harmonization Initiative (EHI), a bilateral agreement designed to expand trade, improve business ties, and coordinate commercial issues. In addition, Japan's participation in the TPP talks increased the significance of the proposed trade pact, a core component of Obama administration efforts to "rebalance" U.S. foreign policy priorities toward the Asia-Pacific region and counter China's attempts to refashion or recast the regional economic order (Cooper 2014: 5, 8, 9; USTR n.d.).

The U.S. alliance with South Korea, which has the thirteenth largest economy in the world, has been in place since the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty. The primary focus of the alliance has been on shaping the security environment of Northeast Asia. The U.S. military currently maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea as a deterrent against North Korea. The cost of stationing those U.S.

troops in South Korea is roughly $808 million per year, half of which is paid for by the South Korean government (Browne 2016b; Landler 2018: A1). The Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement facilitates bilateral trade and has contributed to South Korea rising to become America's sixth largest trading partner and the United States as South Korea's second largest trading partner with strong potential for an even more enhanced relationship with TPP (Cronin 2016).

Australia has been one of the America's closest allies, since the two countries have been linked by the trilateral Australia-New Zealand-United States Treaty in 1951. Australia has become even more strategically vital and significant to the United States since the end of the Cold War given that Asia and the Pacific is now at the center of U.S. economic and security interests (Cooper and Rehman 2013: 3–12; Medcalf 2012). In 2011, as part of the its strategic rebalance to Asia, the United States and Australia agreed to stationing 2,500 U.S. Marines in Darwin and to the possibility of porting U.S. Navy vessels and aircraft in Western Australia under the Force Posture Agreement (Obama 2011b; 2014b; Poling 2014). The United States has also worked with Australia to expand trade in goods and services, reduces duties and fees, and further develop foreign direct investment with the 2005 U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement (Cronin 2016).

The Philippines has been vital to America's interests in Asia and the Pacific since the colonial period. Security interests between the two have been bound by the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 as well as common strategic and economic interests. In January 2016, the Philippines approved the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement that paves the way for the United States to deploy Marines to the Philippines and increase the number of U.S. warplanes and naval ships to Philippine military stations. The security of the Philippines is dependent on a renewed U.S. military presence at Clark Air Base and Subic Bay near the South China Sea (Lum and Dolven 2014: 1, 12, 15). The bilateral security alliance is designed to balance against China's enhanced military presence at newly constructed airstrips in the disputed Spratly Islands, which China believes fall within its sovereignty but are also claimed by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam (Moss 2016).

The presidential election of Rodrigo Duterte, America's oldest ally in the Asia-Pacific, complicated Obama's rebalance to the region. Duterte's was a thorn in Obama's side as he has signaled his intention to move the Philippines closer to China and Russia and with his announcements that he is seeking "separation from the United States" and that "America has lost." Duterte also waged a blood anti-drug war that killed thousands (Vallimore 2016: A4). But there are deep economic connections between the United States and the Philippines, which exports 42.7 percent of its goods to the United States, Japan, and Singapore compared with just 11.9 percent to Hong Kong and 10.5 percent to China (Boot 2016).

Obama's rebalance to the region could only be successful if he was able to expand America's traditional network of alliances. Key to this strategy was moving the United States closer to both India and Vietnam. As the world's third largest economy, India has developed an important trade and economic partnership with the United States. According to the World Economic Forum, India surpassed China to become the world's fastest growing economies in 2016. The United States completed a nuclear deal with India providing Nuclear Power Corporation of India and the U.S. firm Westinghouse exclusive rights to construct six nuclear plants in India (Lee and Mauldin 2016). Also, each agreed to a multibillion-dollar series of trade initiatives, announced climate and energy goals, and the United States promised to include India's concerns about the H-1B visa in United States comprehensive immigration reform efforts. These and other energy, renewable energy, high technology, defense, education, agriculture, trade, and investment deals reflect a deepening set of relationships and a convergence of American and Indian strategic interests.

Extending and diversifying relations with the United States have been essential to Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy interests. Modi has made several visits to meet with Obama, the most by him to any head of state, and Obama visited India twice during his presidency. Obama and Modi also pursued agreements for the co-production of low-end weapons programs in India as part of a bilateral Defense Framework Agreement that enhances the bilateral defense partnership and transfers technology through the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative. The Obama administration event boosted defense supplies and equipment from roughly $300 million in 2008 to $140 billion 2016. Foundational defense measures have also been established in logistics, communication interoperability, and basic exchange, with Obama even designating India a "major defense partner" in 2016 (Oanda 2016; Sajjanhar 2016).

To help balance against China and expand its economic interests in the region, Obama pursued a much closer economic relationship with Vietnam since the 2001 U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement and normalization of relations in 1995. Obama convened bilateral discussions under the Trade and Investment Agreement to help implement Vietnam's commitments within the WTO and expand trade and foreign direct investment opportunities. Vietnam's embrace of the TPP reflected its effort to attract U.S. foreign investment and corporations and its desire to counterbalance China's dominance (Luong 2016).

On security issues, the United States completed the Civil Nuclear Cooperation measure in 2013 regarding the transfer of nuclear technology to Vietnam and initiated U.S. investment in the country. The United States and Vietnam also signed a defense agreement that would develop military relations and

share defense equipment. Then in May 2016, Obama repealed the long-standing arms embargo against Vietnam, which would allow the country to purchase and finance U.S. weapons systems and expand its maritime defenses against Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea (Fontaine 2016; Nakamura 2016). It would also enable the United States to pull Vietnam away from Russia, since the repeal of the arms embargo will provide Vietnam with some leverage in arms purchases (Spetalnick 2016). During Obama's presidency, the United States and Vietnam moved closer to one another economically and strategically to check China's expanding interests in Southeast Asia (Cronin 2016; Manyin 2014: 4–14). Vietnam is vital to the U.S. balancing strategy against China and its economic, diplomatic, and relations with the United States provide Vietnam with cover to press its case against China in the South China Sea (Tong 2016).

THE PACIFIC CENTURY AND THE RISE OF CHINA

While economic growth and development in Asia and the Pacific is forecast to be steady but slower in the coming years in comparison to previous periods of robust growth and development, it will likely continue to outpace the rest of the world. Asia's share of global GDP is forecast to be greater than that of the United States and Europe. Goldman Sachs (2010: 8, 21–23) estimated that China would become the world's largest economy by 2050 and other states in Asia would comprise the largest share of global GDP, overtaking the United States. Approximate assessments suggest that the Asia-Pacific region will benefit, at least in the short run, from favorable financial conditions as well as cheaper global oil prices that will stimulate product demands from both within and outside the region. Stable economic growth, lower unemployment rate, and reduced gasoline prices in the United States may drive some of the foreign demand.

The overall volume of trade in goods between the United States and Asia has increased from $190.6 billion in 1985 to $1.4 trillion in 2016, making it the largest and most significant trade region for the United States (Census n.d.). Specifically, total U.S. trade in goods with China expanded from $7.7 billion in 1985 to $578.2 billion in 2016 (Census n.d.). By 2016, China became the top country in overall trade in goods with the United States ahead of Canada and Mexico and is third behind Canada and Mexico in U.S. exports, and the leading market for U.S. imports (Census n.d.). Moreover, as of July 2016, China held roughly $1.218 trillion of the $6.248 trillion of U.S. treasury securities (DOT n.d).

China's economic power has enabled it to compete with the United States on a global scale. The elevation of China's voting shares on top of the earlier

decision by the IMF board to elevate the yuan to an elite reserve currency is evidence of its increased economic power and status. China's massive wealth, huge economy, vast holdings of foreign currency, and the IMF's designation of the renminbi as an elite global currency means that China is now a major economic rival to the United States. The leading state banks in China, the China Development Bank and the China Export-Import Bank have exceeded the World Bank in terms of lending volume by issuing more than $110 billion in loans to governments and businesses around the world (Dyer et al. 2011; Hogg 2011). In particular, the "One Belt, One Road" initiative and China-led Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank reflect its interest in challenging the trade and investment structures of the global economic order by fund multilateral, multibillion-dollar investments in infrastructure projects designed to expand China's economic influence in the Pacific, central Asia, and Europe. The Obama rebalance to Asia and the Pacific means that the region occupies as great a strategic priority as Europe in U.S. foreign policy, with China being viewed as a major rival seeking to challenge or reshape the prevailing economic order.

The increase in wealth and the size of its economy allowed China the opportunity to modernize its military force, expand its capabilities to project power, and deter America's allies throughout East Asia and the Pacific Rim (Shambaugh 2008: 2, 5, 11, 103, 220, 269). Its emergent strategy, which includes rising energy demands, burgeoning global trade and financial relationships, the building of artificial islands, and the assertion of air defense zones and the deployment of ballistic and cruise missiles, means that it intends to expand its freedom of action. Although economically interconnected, the United States and China are geopolitical competitors locked in a struggle for influence and leverage that will define the future of the Asia-Pacific region.

One of the most critical flash points involves territorial disputes and competing claims between China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam over disputed islands in the South China Sea, namely the Scarborough Shoal, Paracel Islands, and the Spratly Islands. Also, China has constructed and militarized artificial islands in disputed waters it claims fall under its territorial sovereignty (Perlez 2016a: A8). In fact, China claims virtually the entire South China Sea falls within its self-asserted nine-dash line. In response, the United States has launched freedom of navigation operations near disputed territory to challenge China and show solidarity with other claimants.

To demonstrate its commitment to a sustained, long-term military buildup in the region, the Obama administration boosted spending on top weapons systems, namely advanced warplanes, attack helicopters, aircraft carriers, destroyers, submarines, and combat ships at the same time it was making cuts to OCO in Iraq and Afghanistan (Davidson and Booking 2015; DOD 2014).

This reflects a U.S. defense strategy designed for deterring and containing major powers, not small states and terrorists. U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter (2016) stated, "These challenges reflect a return to great power competition" focusing U.S. attention "in the Asia-Pacific, where China is rising and where we're continuing and will continue our rebalance, so-called, to maintain the stability in the region that we have underwritten for 70 years and that's allowed so many nations to rise and prosper and win. That's been our presence."

Obama also deepened military ties throughout the Asia-Pacific region to counter China's anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) defense strategy of using cost-effective military ways, namely missile systems, to deter or deny the U.S. freedom of action in the Western Pacific (Cordesman 2015b; Freier 2012; Kuo 2016b; Sayler 2016). South Korea and Japan maintain host-nation programs supporting U.S. forward basing and troops in their countries (Browne 2016b). The centrally located U.S. basing arrangement in Okinawa allows the United States to conduct deterrence operations near disputed islands, maritime missions in the East and South China seas, and patrols near Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, the Obama administration lifted its arms embargo against Vietnam, agreed to station U.S. Marines in Darwin Australia, signed a nuclear agreement with India, expanded bases in the Philippines, hosted Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) states in the United States, and President Obama made several high-profile visits to Vietnam, Myanmar, India, and Indonesia to move the United States closer to states that compete with China. The current makeup of the region and geographic realities reflect a balance of power currently favoring the United States and its allies (Heginbotham et al. 2015: 45–68).

The Obama administration's so-called pivot or rebalance was a long-awaited response to the decision by China in the 1970s and 1980s to engage with and accommodate the norms, rules, and institutions that govern the international order. China's economic rise was seen by its leadership as a way of developing and expanding its economy as well as to build its power in Asia. The Chinese leadership embraced foreign direct investment and cultural exchange with the United States and Europe, created and modernized global supply chains, and accelerated trade liberalization.

To protect its national interests, China has avoided directly intervening in international conflict, opting to cede this responsibility to the United States at the same time it reaped the benefits of deepening economic ties with America. Although China has been relatively restrained in its approach to its neighbors, it did realize, especially after the 1996 crisis in the Taiwan Strait, that it was unable to challenge the United States and its allies in the South and East China seas (Heginbotham et al. 2015: 23–41). Therefore, it had to use its newly found wealth to modernize its military and project power in the region

even though it was still dependent on its adversaries, namely trade with the United States, Japan, and Taiwan, and on accessing oil, natural gas, and mineral resources to continue to prosper. To expand its freedom of action and increase its energy security, China invested in capabilities that would enable it to assert an air defense identification zone off its coast and make highly expansive maritime territorial claims that exacerbated tensions with other developing states and emerging markets in the Asia-Pacific region.

Obama sought to encourage its economic growth and development while preventing a Chinese military buildup. Even though China is much stronger than its neighbors, Obama established a foreign policy that both the United States and China could peacefully coexist in the Asia-Pacific region. But China's military modernization program indicates that it is not fully satisfied with the prevailing international order. But its "One Belt, One Road" initiative and the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank indicate that China continues to embrace liberal economic principles and practices.

The rebalance to Asia and the Pacific was the Obama administration's strategic approach and understanding of how best to manage the economic and security elements in U.S.-China relations short of open military conflict. The Obama administration maintained that the stability of the rules-based international order was contingent on whether the United States and China can effectively manage their bilateral relationship in Asia and fully integrate China within the international system. But at the same time, Obama was also forced to contend with the return of chaos in the Middle East with the rise of the IS and tensions with Russia in Europe. Obama's prioritization of Asia in U.S. foreign policy was an attempt to think and act strategically about China at the same time it was forced to respond to crises and shifts in the balance of power in Europe and the Middle East.

With the rebalance, Obama signaled that the Asia-Pacific was the most important and consequential region in U.S. foreign policy. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton argued that no other region has as much economic, political, and diplomatic significance as Asia and the Pacific: "The Asia-Pacific has become a key driver of global politics" and "Just as Asia is critical to America's future, an engaged America is vital to Asia's future. The region is eager for our leadership and our business—perhaps more so than at any time in modern history" (Clinton 2011). China has the potential to complicate and frustrate U.S. foreign policy interests and challenge the United States on a global scale especially within the current multipolar international system.

Moreover, its military modernization program, territorial interests, and expansive sovereignty claims in the South China Sea mean that China has ambitions to extend its freedom of action in the region. As Clinton stated, "Like so many other countries before it, China has prospered as part of the open and rules-based system that the United States helped to build and works

to sustain. And today, China represents one of the most challenging and consequential bilateral relationships the United States has ever had to manage" (Clinton 2011). Henry Kissinger (quoted in Goldberg 2016b) adds that if the United States was going to successfully manage its relationship with China, it must proceed with a realistic sense: "Never has the United States had to contend with a geopolitical equal. Never in China's centuries-long history has it conceived of a foreign nation as more than a tributary to it, the central kingdom."

Given the expansion in trade and investment in Asia and China's military growth and modernization, the Obama administration prioritized strengthening relations with U.S. allies in Asia and the Pacific and highlighting the reemergence of China as part of its rebalance to the region. It started by initiating troop rotation programs in Australia and Singapore, completed the U.S.-South Korea free trade agreement, entered negotiations into the TPP, and pursued new economic and military agreements with Vietnam and India (Cronin 2016). The overall volume of trade in goods between the United States and Asia far exceeds other regions, making it the largest and most significant trading region for the United States.

Overall, 30 percent of U.S. exports go to the Asia-Pacific and the United States imports 40 percent of goods and services from the region. China is now one of America's largest trading partners, its biggest source of imported goods, and one of the largest markets for U.S. corporations (BEA n.d.; Census n.d.). For example, in 2010–2014, U.S. auto-manufacturer General Motors sold more automobiles in China than in the United States (Morrison 2015: 7). At the same time, America's annual trade deficit in goods and services with China has widened to over $330 billion and to over $488 billion with Asia and the Pacific (BEA n.d.; Census n.d.). However, financial exchange remains limited. U.S. investment in the Asia-Pacific is behind its investment position in Europe and the Western Hemisphere and is less than 2 percent of total U.S. investment abroad. Moreover, China's investment in the United States is less than 1 percent of total FDI in the United States (see Tables 2.5 and 4.1).

The U.S. government and corporations have complained about China's inability to enforce intellectual property protections, prevent industrial sabotage, distorted claims about overall economic performance, state-owned enterprises, currency manipulation, and cyberattacks against U.S. companies. Also, U.S. investors and firms operating in China believe the country is becoming more unfavorable to American businesses because of ambiguous rules and regulations, intellectual property disputes, inadequate means to remedy disputes and new government limitations on U.S. direct investment. This has prompted calls for the development of an American policy to engage in "investment reciprocity" (Gordon 2016).

Table 4.1 Top U.S. Trade and Investment with Asia and the Pacific (2016)

Region	*Exports (goods/ services) ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of Exports*	*Imports (goods/ services) ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of Imports*	*U.S. Investment Abroad ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of U.S. IA*	*FDI in the United States ($)*	*As a % of Total Volume of FDI in the United States*
Asia and the Pacific	789bn	30	1.277tn	40	846bn	16	599bn	16
China	187bn	7	519bn	16	92bn	1.5	27bn	0.7
Japan	152bn	6	229bn	7	114bn	2	421bn	11
South Korea	74bn	3	93bn	3	39bn	0.7	40bn	1
India	50bn	2	86bn	3	32bn	0.6	9bn	0.2
Taiwan	43bn	1.8	64bn	2	16bn	0.4	7bn	0.1
Australia	63bn	2.2	27bn	0.6	165bn	3	46bn	1.2
Singapore	71bn	3	34bn	1.1	258bn	5	23bn	0.6
Hong Kong	55bn	2	22bn	0.4	65bn	1	11bn	0.3

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis. n.d.. "U.S. Direct Investment Abroad," https://www.bea.gov/international/di1usdbal.htm; "Foreign Direct Investment in the United States Tables Detailed," https://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2017/09-September/0917-inward-direct-investment- tables.pdf," "Table 1.3. U.S. International Transactions," https://www.bea.gov/international/bp_web/tb_download_type_modern.cfm?list=11&Ro wID=3.

China's demand for agricultural and petroleum products, which according to an analysis by the *Wall Street Journal* consumes "roughly an eighth of the world's oil, a quarter of its gold, almost a third of its cotton and up to half of all the major base metals" (Erheriene and Mukherj 2015). If these trends should continue until the end of the decade, China will account for most of the world's demand for oil.

However, the extent of America's economic and financial relationships with China should not be overstated as data show these relationships are, in fact, somewhat limited. In 2014, America's U.S. exports to China were less than 1 percent of U.S. GDP and only 7 percent of all U.S. exports. Also, while U.S. banking operations in China increased from $5 billion in 2005 to $100 billion in 2015, earnings from U.S. banking operations in China were less than 1 percent of the $15 trillion in assets held by U.S. banks. Furthermore, although U.S. foreign direct investment has increased from roughly $20 billion in 2005 to approximately $65 billion in 2014, just 2 percent of the earnings of U.S.-based multinational corporations are derived from China making these profits relatively small in the $6 trillion of U.S. investments in international markets (Bryson and Nelson 2015: 3, 4).

The Obama administration sought to use the Strategic and Economic Dialogues meeting in June 2016 to boost U.S. investment opportunities in China. In those meetings, China agreed to provide the United States with roughly $52 billion in Renminbi Qualified Foreign Institutional Investment credits so American firms can purchase stocks, bonds, and money market investments in Chinese markets. The United States and China also agreed to resist competitive currency devaluation and targeting foreign exchange rates (Bitner 2016). While China already extended RQFII to the United Kingdom, France, and Singapore, the decision to expand it to the United States makes it more likely that China's currency will become widely used as a world currency in international markets. The result could extend economic cooperation and interdependence and deepen financial relations between the world's two biggest economies (Yao and Lawder 2016).

For many wealthy Chinese investors, families, and individuals, the United States become a safe and lucrative financial investment. The number of EB-5 visas for immigrant investors in the United States issued to Chinese citizens, a program which makes foreign nationals, their spouses and dependents eligible for permanent legal resident status, increased from less than 1,000 in 2010 to roughly 9,000 in 2014. Foreign nationals can qualify for this visa if they invest $500,000 to $1 million in a U.S. project that creates at least ten jobs (USCIS n.d.). In addition, Chinese citizens are representing and are helping drive up the value of international purchases of the U.S. residential property market. Whereas purchases of American homes from foreign nationals in Canada, India, Mexico, and the United Kingdom have remained flat or

increased a billion dollars from 2009 to 2015, purchases of U.S. residential property from China surged during this same period from under $5 billion to almost $30 billion in value (Searcey and Bradsher 2015: BU1). In 2015, the average purchase price of an American home by a foreign national from China was $831,800, followed by India at $460,200, the United Kingdom at 455,600, Canada at $380,300, and Mexico at $274,800 (Searcey and Bradsher 2015: BU1; USCIS n.d.).

China's huge foreign investments and spending (2005 to 2013) in some developing states the United States considers risky have helped it displace the United States and Europe as the leading financial power in large parts of the developing world and enabled it to increase trade and secure access to oil and other natural resources (Aisch, Keller, and Lai 2015). It also exercises influence by forcing developing states to adhere to its own financial terms, not according to rules set by the IMF or World Bank. In doing so, China can levy steep interest rates and demand that borrowers hand over their natural resources and raw materials as collateral. For example, as of 2013, China controlled roughly 90 percent of oil exports from Ecuador in exchange for credit (Krauss and Bradsher 2015).

In addition to China's direct money-lending practices to developing states, it is also leading the development of the multilateral Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, an institution that attracted roughly fifty-seven member states (including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Israel, and South Korea) despite opposition from the United States and Japan (Page 2015). Even though America's ally the Philippines won its legal case at the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the International Court of Justice opposing China's reclamation projects and claims in the South China Sea and abstained from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)'s signing ceremony, the Philippine government decided to formally join the Bank in December 2015 (Moss 2015; Perlez 2015b: A8; Tiezzi 2015). The mission of the bank is to fund multilateral, multibillion-dollar investments to fund roads, bridges, railways, seaports, airports, and power grids across Asia and the Pacific. The Chinese leadership believes it can lead the acceleration of economic development in poorer countries, which it maintains is constraining overall growth and expansion throughout the region (Perlez 2015a: A1). China contended the Bank was designed to build goodwill and elevate its image by funding projects in strategic sectors like infrastructure and utilities projects. However, according to former IMF official Eswar Prasad (quoted in Perlez 2015a: A1), the "bank is an instrument for China to lend legitimacy to its international forays and to extend its sphere of economic and political influence even while changing the rules of the game. And it gives the existing institutions a kick in the pants."

The bank provides China with two opportunities. First, it gives China a global leadership role in shaping economic development in Asia and the

Pacific, the only region forecast by the IMF for steady economic growth that will likely outpace the rest of the world at least soon. China maintains that the bank will not get bogged down in the same type of administrative oversight and bureaucracy that impedes the World Bank and IMF. China believes new infrastructure projects under AIIB auspices will be faster and implemented with greater efficiency given that a board of technical experts will be approving projects rather senior officials from each individual country.

China has been especially frustrated by the inability of the IMF to modernize and reform its governance structure to reflect its own economic rise and the financial power of Asia-Pacific economies. In 2010, the Obama administration proposed increasing contributions to the IMF from China and other developing states along with an elevation in their voting power on the IMF board, a downgrading of the voting powers of European members, and a preservation of U.S. veto powers. The proposal would also boost U.S. financial commitments to the IMF, funds that would be used to help stabilize economies under financial pressure. These additional monies would not increase the burden on U.S. taxpayers; rather, they would be derived from shifting its existing American commitments to a crisis fund started in 2007–2008. The new Republican U.S. Congress never acted on the 2010 proposal because the legislative leadership opposed using IMF funds for rescuing the Greek economy. More important, America's inability to act frustrated China which then moved with several European countries to create the Asia Infrastructure Bank.

As part of an appropriations measure signed by Obama in December 2015, the United States finally approved board modernization and boosted its financial commitments to the IMF. Modernization included boosting the percentage of voting shares for China and some other emerging states is designed to bring them more in line with increases in national economic output (Mayeda 2015a).

The elevation of China's voting shares on top of the earlier decision by the IMF board to elevate the yuan to an elite reserve currency is evidence of the increased global economic power and status of China. The measure also included a U.S. commitment to restore limitations on emergency loans and now requires U.S. approval prior to the IMF granting access, an effort designed to protect America's dominant position on the IMF. America's long delay in approving IMF modernization incentivized China and other leading European countries to move forward with the creation of the Asia Infrastructure Bank, which will likely compete with the U.S.-dominated IMF and World Bank and the Japan-dominated Asian Development Bank over funding infrastructure projects throughout the region (Bershidsky 2015a; Page 2015).

Second, the Bank provides China a global institutional vehicle for promoting its "One Road, One Belt" initiative (Page 2015). The scale of the

"One Belt, One Road" initiative is quite massive and ambitious as it promises over $1 trillion in infrastructure spending in more than sixty nation-states (Perlez and Huang 2017: A1). The initiative is China's attempt to diversify, integrate, and expand its economy with central, south, and Southeast Asia and Europe through land (silk road economic belt) and sea-based (maritime silk road) communications and infrastructure as essential to its economic future when its growth has slowed (Gady 2015; Patrick 2016; Tiezzi 2014). Chinese infrastructure projects in Asia, Africa, and Europe are at the heart of its economic and geopolitical agenda, forging economic connections and developing new market opportunities for its construction and export companies as well as geopolitical and diplomatic connections.

"One Belt, One Road," includes a global network of planned ports and infrastructure projects spanning South and Southeast Asia, East Africa, the northern Mediterranean Sea, and the advanced port in Rotterdam, Netherlands. The scope and range of the effort goes beyond infrastructure to include financial integration, information technology and communications, lower trade barriers, and encouraging others, especially in Europe, to use China's currency, the reminibi. One of China's goals is to effectively manage its transition to more moderate economic growth, balance its development, and provide financial and trade incentives to poor and struggling areas along its periphery.

Over the last several decades, China has accumulated a considerable amount of domestic surplus capital and has already invested heavily in its domestic roads, ports, bridges, airports, and rail lines. China also has significant consumer and business demand for commodities, especially oil and natural gas to keep its economy churning. "One Belt, One Road" is an attempt by China to develop infrastructure in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East for it to more effectively export its products, expand trade with Europe, and access energy to promote economic stability. Therefore, one primary goal of "One Belt, One Road" is to build a massive network of roads, ports, and rail lines that bind Asia, Africa, and the Middle East that would bind these regions to China. Moreover, China is prepared to subsidize many developing countries in these regions to meet its economic interests and meet its insatiable demand for raw materials.

China hopes that the initiative will help ease its industrial overproduction and encourage market-reforms for bloated state-owned companies. China hopes "One Belt, One Road" will encourage its heavily subsidized state-owned industrial and energy (e.g., CRRC Corporation, China National Petroleum Corporation, and ChemChina) and shipping (COSCO) companies to diversify their outdated business practices with entry into new markets (Bremmer 2010). China hopes to extend beyond underdeveloped Asian economies and establish direct, regular economic ties with European markets

(Johnson 2016a). "One Belt, One Road" and AIIB serve China's economic goals and interests. Given its slowing economic growth in 2015 and tightening domestic economy, China needs markets in Asia and Europe to export its heavy machinery, steel, and concrete and ensure economic stability.

China's construction of artificial islands within its self-asserted nine-dash line in the South China Sea, over competing claims by Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines, means that the $5 trillion in trade which flows through the strategy waterway could be at risk (Blanchard 2016; Glaser 2015). Furthermore, roughly half of the world's maritime trade moves through the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok with the majority passing through the South China Sea. This includes roughly 33 percent of the world's crude oil and more than 50 percent of LNG, making the South China Sea one of the most consequential international trading areas (EIA 2013).

In addition, the South China Sea is estimated to contain considerable reserves of natural gas and to a limited extent crude oil. The Energy Information Administration reports that approximately 11 billion barrels of crude oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas with most reserves found in shallow water basins. The Spratly Islands, an area contested by Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam, have little to no proven crude oil reserves and less than 100 billion cubic feet in natural gas reserves. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimates there could be 2.5 billion barrels of crude oil and 25.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in Reed Bank near the Spratlys (EIA 2013). The Paracel Islands, another area contested territory, do not contain significant reserves of oil and natural gas. While China's immediate neighbors will not become its close allies anytime soon, they could become more interdependent and grow more skeptical of the United States (Paal 2015).

As its economy grew over the last three decades, China used the flood of capital into the country for its money supply as its foreign exchange reserves (foreign assets held or controlled by the People's Bank of China) increased from 1980 to 2014. During this thirty-four-year period, China's holdings of foreign exchange reserves averaged roughly $820 billion per year, from its low of $2.262 billion in December 1980 to an all-time high of almost $4 trillion in June 2014. However, this amount fell to $3.43 trillion in November 2015 (Trading Economics n.d.). However, amid rising capital outflows since 2014, China's central bank has engaged in direct lending to its banks and government bond–buying initiatives to sustain the value of the renminbi and maintain the flow of liquidity in the economy.

Although China's reserves fell from June 2014 to November 2015, its massive holdings of foreign capital enable it to influence global markets and foreign investments, maintain diplomatic alliances, strengthen its own currency, and gain access to natural resources and minerals. Specifically, the

IMF will officially designate the Chinese currency, the yuan or renminbi, as a global reserve currency placing it in an elite basket of currencies along with the dollar, euro, yen, and pound (Mayeda 2015b). Furthermore, the leading state banks in China, the China Development Bank and the China Export-Import Bank, have exceeded the World Bank in terms of lending volume by issuing more than $110 billion in loans to governments and businesses around the world (Hedinsson 2011). As of 2015, the value of China's foreign investments and overseas construction projects is roughly $1.1 trillion (CGIT n.d.). China's wealth enables it to import vast amounts of foreign oil and stabilize its foreign supplies of petroleum with extraction in Cameroon, Canada, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Iraq, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, the United States, and Venezuela.

Although China's unprecedented growth over the last several decades has shaped international markets and corporate practices and redefined the parameters of the global commerce and trade, there are deepening fears that China is not resting on a stable economic foundation. China's economy experienced market declines in 2014–2015 when the Shanghai Composite shed 43 percent of its value, forcing the Chinese central bank to flood markets with cash by cutting interest rates to stimulate more lending and allowing residential homeowners to use their homes as collateral when borrowing to buy stocks (Bradsher 2015: A1). While the index did recover some of the summer losses by October 2015 and international markets viewed them as market corrections, it caused anxiety around the world. Moreover, a *New York Times* analysis revealed that state enterprises and some industrial sectors that have the most impact on global trade are pulling down China's GDP, although restaurant, health, and other service sectors are outperforming heavy industry. If China's service sectors were to decline, then its overall economy could be undermined (Bradsher 2015: A1).

China's market declines directly contributed to the fall in global commodity prices in 2014–2016. Crude oil prices fell to roughly $40 per barrel in mid-December 2015 and mining companies were forced to lay off tens of thousands of workers. Also, the S&P 500 energy sector lost 23 percent of its value in 2015 forcing many stocks to be traded at extremely low valuations (Egan 2015).

The collapse of commodity prices hit developing countries that rely on selling those resources to China. Cheap costs, soft demand, and the difficulty of gauging China's actual rate of economic growth led many commodities producers to flood the market with far too much supply, especially oil, copper, aluminum, and steel. The slowdown of the Chinese and Brazilian economies as well as the struggling economies of Japan and the Eurozone has weakened demand for oil, steel, and iron ore. While too much supply and poor consumer demand have hurt commodity prices, the slower growth in

China, Brazil, and other emerging economies lowered demand for steel, iron ore, and oil (Bradsher 2015: A1).

High Chinese demand for raw materials for use in infrastructure projects (especially iron ore, copper, and steel) sent commodity prices to high levels over the last two decades. However, China has moved toward an economic model in which manufactured goods are being produced domestically as opposed to importing goods and parts for assembly, which may explain economic slowdowns in East Asia and the loss of mining jobs in the United States. Regardless, falling iron ore and oil prices have impacted China's primary commodity suppliers. For example, total imports of iron ore from Australia, Brazil, and South Africa, which account for almost 80 percent of China's iron ore imports, fell by double digits in 2015. In fact, more than a third of Australia's exports are sent to China and South Africa and Brazil rely on China for almost 20 percent of their exports. Oil imports from Saudi Arabia, China's main supplier of petroleum, have fallen throughout 2015 (Romei 2015).

The decline in imports has significant consequences in other markets. For example, Chinese import growth weakened in most of its top supplying countries with the percentage change from 2014 to 2015 having fallen between 15 percent and 20 percent in Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Australia (oil and iron ore), between 5 percent and 10 percent in South Africa, Russia, and Malaysia (oil), and between 1 percent and 5 percent in Japan, the United States, and South Korea (automobiles, steel, and plastics). The only country to post supply annual growth to China was Germany (machinery, helicopters, and aircraft) (Romei 2015). Growth in Chinese imports of top 10 goods has fallen by roughly 0.4 percent in crude oil and iron ore, 0.2 percent in automobiles, 0.1 percent in steel, plastics, transformers and voltage, auto parts, machine tools, and automatic data processing machines. The only area to post any Chinese import growth was in electronic integrated circuits (Romei 2015). However, Chinese consumers and businesses were forced to cut back on commodities given massive losses in wealth that took place during and after the collapse of market indices (Romei 2015).

Beyond China, Obama sought to move the United States closer to India. Although political and economic connections between India and China have deepened, their relationship is shaped by the United States, which has sought to pull India away from China in Asia. As part of its rebalance to Asia, the United States has sought to establish an informal alliance with India and its ally Japan by conducting the joint Malabar exercises as a move against China's more aggressive moves in Asia (Mandhana 2014). India has moved closer to the United States in response to the establishment of closer relations between China and Pakistan (Reidel 2015).

As a leader in the non-aligned movement, India likely prefers an independent approach in foreign policy and, in the short term, is more worried about its disputes with Pakistan. India would like to have good relations with both China and the United States. India's bilateral trade relationship with China is projected to hit $100 billion and its trade and investment with the United States was $96.7 billion in 2013, an increase of 400 percent since 2003 (Meltzer 2014: 39–40; Saxena 2012). In cultural exchange, for example, while U.S. higher education institutions remain the top destination for Chinese students (304,040 students), the increase by Indian students (132,888 students) attending U.S. colleges and universities has been greater in recent years (Open Doors n.d).

Higher Educational Exchanges

In addition, higher educational exchanges between China and the United States are intensifying, especially the number of Chinese students studying and matriculating in American colleges and universities. In 2014–2015, 974,926 international students studied in the United States with Chinese students constituting 31 percent of all international students followed by India (14%), South Korea (7%), Saudi Arabia (6%), and Canada (3%) (Open Doors n.d.). By comparison, in the 2013–2014 academic year, 304,467 American students studied abroad, a one-year increase of 5 percent. In 2013–2014, roughly 274,000 Chinese students studied in U.S. colleges and universities and in 2012–2013, approximately 14,000 American students studied in China (Project Atlas n.d.). However, the fastest annual increase from 2014 to 2015 in international students attending U.S. colleges and universities came from India.

The percentage and number of U.S. students studying in China increased by 18 percent each year from 2000 (3,291 students) to 2010–2011 (15,647 students). Outside Western Europe, China is now the most popular study destination for U.S. students. There were also over 11,000 additional students engaged in education-related activities in China, beyond those normally counted in the *Open Doors* study abroad survey. For-credit academic study represents roughly 59 percent of all U.S. students with 41 percent U.S. students participating in over 26,000 educational activities in China, Hong Kong, and Macau. In the last several years, roughly twelve times more Chinese students study in the United States than U.S. students who study, intern, and conduct service projects in China. Moreover, 33 percent of Chinese students studied English while only 60,000 U.S. study Mandarin Chinese. From 2012 to 2013, there was a 23 percent increase in the number of Chinese students studying in U.S. colleges and universities compared to just a 5 percent increase in U.S. students in China. While there was a 5 percent decrease in

U.S. students studying in China, the percentages increased for those studying in Japan (4%), India (5%), and South Korea (6%) (Open Doors n.d.).

Obama responded with the 100,000 Strong Initiative a public-private program with Chinese government support to encourage more American students to study abroad in China and learn Mandarin. The program was highly successful in promoting cultural exchange and strengthening ties as the number of Americans studying in China and Mandarin met its goals by 2014 (Allen-Ebrahimian 2015). In 2015, Obama followed this with the announcement of the 1 Million Strong initiative to elevate the number of Americans studying Mandarin to one million.

U.S. Military Force

The U.S. force presence in Asia and the Pacific has been mainly concentrated in the U.S. Seventh Fleet stationed in Japan, which is comprised of an aircraft carrier strike group, 80 ships, 140 aircraft and warplanes, and 49,000 soldiers, airmen, and Marines (Ali and Brunnstron; DOD n.d.; Eaglen 2015: 6–8; Hackett et al. 2018: 19–64). The United States also deploys roughly 19,000 soldiers and 9,000 air force personnel in South Korea (Eaglen 2015: 6–7). In addition, the U.S. Navy has ships deployed in Singapore, Marine Air-Ground Task Forces to Japan, Australia, Guam, and Hawaii, special operations force in the Philippines, over 200 troops in Thailand, and a small air squadron in Malaysia (Eaglen 2015: 6–8).

The Obama administration's emphasis on Asia and the Pacific meant that U.S. foreign policy would place greater priority to the U.S. Navy and less dependence on ground forces. This has meant that the United States would put less emphasis on nation-building and large-scale counterinsurgency and stability operations. In 2014, the U.S. Navy released a plan designed to boost the number of surface ships, submarines, and warplanes in Asia and the Pacific by 2020 (Eaglen 2015: 6). Much of the force increase came in June 2016 when the U.S. Navy announced the Third Fleet, which is comprised of more than 100 ships and 4 aircraft carriers, will dispatch more ships to East Asia to operate with the Seventh Fleet based in Japan. This was part of Obama's plan to transfer roughly 60 percent of U.S. naval forces already stationed in Asia and the Pacific to support Obama's rebalance in the region to balance against China (Ali and Brunnstron 2016).

The Obama administration shored up the deployment of U.S. military resources in Australia and Singapore from automatic cuts to defense and budget sequestration by the 2011 Budget Control Act. Obama mitigating reductions to the U.S. Navy by concentrating the bulk of defense cuts on OCO in Iraq and the U.S. Army and Marines (Dale and Towell 2012: 1–2; 5–6). In Australia, Obama ordered a rotation of 200 to 250 marines at a

military facility in Darwin with plans to increase the overall size of the force to 2,500 (Whitlock 2012). In Singapore, he kept several combat ships at its naval facility, strategically located at the southern tip of the Thai-Malay Peninsula, to conduct patrols in the Strait of Malacca where energy and trade passes between the Indian Ocean and the South China. In Guam, the U.S. Air Force dispatched B-1B Lancer bombers with combat-ready personnel to Andersen air base on Guam to reinforce and augment its military presence in the Pacific (Lendon 2016).

Also, the United States and the Philippines enhanced military cooperation and agreed to conduct regular joint military operations. Given that Asia and the Pacific is primarily a zone of naval operations, the United States approved the continued and regular deployment of its eleven aircraft carriers and other naval and air resources as leverage against China's A2/AD capabilities (Manyin et al. 2012: 4, 12). In addition to a heightened military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, the United States instituted an integrated approach to these additional deployments and operations.

Geopolitical Competition

Not only are the United States and China the world's two largest economies and possess extensive cultural linkages, they are geopolitical competitors. In fact, there are some major flash points that will define Obama's strategy toward Asia and the Pacific. Some of the pressing areas of concern include tensions in the South China Sea, strained relations between China and Japan, instability on the Korean Peninsula and the political status of Taiwan.

One of the most critical flash points deals with competing claims over China's island reclamation projects in the South China Sea through which roughly $5 trillion in international trade passes (Blanchard 2016; Glaser 2015). More than one-third of the global crude oil and half of the world's LNG transits the South China (EIA 2013). The Philippines won the arbitration case against China in the International Court of Justice for its construction of artificial islands in the South China, which it says are impeding its exploration of oil and natural gas in the 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone. China claims that since the artificial islands fall under its territorial sovereignty, there is no dispute (Moss 2015; Perlez 2015b: A8; Tiezzi 2015). Regardless, China's reclamation projects in the South China Sea have resulted in demonstrations of military forces from all the competing states in the immediate region.

Another flash point is North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons. While China seems like it wants to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction on the Korean Peninsula, it does not want the North Korean regime to collapse as it could trigger a humanitarian disaster resulting in millions of

refugees flooding into China. Therefore, it is in China's interest to maintain the current regime of Kim Jon-Un in North Korea while at the same time preventing a nuclear arms race on the peninsula. North Korea's threats against the United States and South Korea attract a lot of international media attention and enable the regime to keep the North Korean people in a persistent state of fear by portraying the United States as an antagonist. North Korea's underground nuclear and missile tests threaten American forces and allies in the region.

Obama responded with a deterrence strategy of deploying the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile system (THAAD) to South Korea, which has upset China because it includes sophisticated radar that can defeat China's A2/AD weapons and knock out North Korean missiles (Fifield 2016; Yoon 2016). Obama also allocated funds to what were described as "disruption/defeat" programs designed to interrupt North Korea's ballistic missile testing system with more sophisticated attacks. Before a missile launch, "disruption/defeat" attacks would be directed at infrastructure, namely industrial sabotage to cripple missiles, cyber, and electronic strikes to interfere with launch and guidance, and missile strikes on the launching pad. During the boost and midcourse phases, attacks on rising and incoming warheads could be carried out by U.S. warplanes and drones firing air-to-air missiles and deploying more interceptor rockets and equipping them with kill vehicles. In a 2014 operation, the Obama administration used various cyber and electronic measures against North Korea's intermediate-range missiles to interfere with its testing program (Sanger and Broad 2017: A1, A12).

As it does with every American president, North Korea wanted respect from Obama and acceptance of its status as a nuclear weapons power. Obama was unwilling to respond in kind as he believed any bilateral negotiations would give the regime exactly that. North Korea needs an antagonist and the United States fits that role perfectly for the Kim family. Fear of the United States was used by the regime as reasons to explain why the Korean peninsula remains divided as well as to justify its nuclear deterrent. North Korea was testing Obama's approach to America's own nuclear weapons policy and commitment to defending U.S. allies in Asia. North Korea's repeated underground nuclear tests and missile launches indicate that it had no intention of giving up its nuclear arsenal because the costs to its own security and deterrent capabilities are far too high. The harsh reality is that U.N. sanctions and multilateral negotiations have failed to stop North Korea's nuclear weapons arsenal, which has upset the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific because the North Korean nuclear capability blunts American military intervention.

The challenge for Obama was building a balancing coalition against North Korea while protecting its territories in the Pacific. The worry among South Korea and Japan is U.S. hesitation in defending them, especially if it meant

that a U.S. military response could lead the north to launch an ICBM against a U.S. territory or at the U.S. mainland. This historical narrative led to nuclear proliferation during the Cold War (Sanger, Sang-Hun, and Rich: 2017: A1).

In the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump proposed that South Korea and Japan should assume more responsibility for their security by developing their own nuclear weapons to balance against the North Korean nuclear weapons program, even though long-standing U.S. foreign policy has been non-proliferation (Panda 2016a; Sevastopulo 2016). However, in South Korea, support for acquiring nuclear weapons program is now at 60 percent with 68 percent of South Koreans favoring U.S. redeployment of tactical battlefield nuclear weapons, which were withdrawn by President George H. W. Bush in 1991 (cited in Kim 2017; Yee He Lee 2017). Henry Kissinger (quoted in Sanger, Sang-Hun, and Rich 2017: A11) stated, "If they [North Korea] continue to have nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons must spread in the rest of Asia."

While Japan possesses enough nuclear material and advanced technology to produce thousands of nuclear arms and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe supports a conventional military buildup, there is scant support for nuclear weapons in the only country to ever suffer an atomic attack (Sanger, Sang-Hun, and Rich 2017: A1). This has led China to fear that Japan may develop its own nuclear arsenal. In some ways, Japan has already altered its post–Second World War pacifist stance. Japanese military forces partake in "collective self-defense" and regularly join the U.S. regional security exercises. Prime Minister Abe has promoted revisions to Japan's constitution to pursue a new and aggressive defense policy against North Korea and China (Zhu 2016).

The Obama administration believed China held significant influence over North Korea given that its economic support and trade sustains the North Korean regime. The United States worked with China in early 2016 to boost sanctions against North Korea amid disputes over China's militarization of artificial islands in the South China Sea. The United States would like China to support so-called secondary sanctions against companies that do business directly with the North Korean elite including the Chinese bank ICBC to curtail financial and business connections with North Korea. These new sanctions also required inspections of cargo entering or leaving North Korea and bans sales of aviation and rocket fuel, small arms and conventional weapons to the regime (Bloch 2016; Rauhala et al. 2016).

To address these concerns without risking its economic relationship with China, the United States has taken the lead among its regional allies, namely Australia, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines and strategic partners like Vietnam, in challenging China's assertion of an expanded security perimeter by strengthening and expanding U.S. forces throughout the region. South Korea and Japan maintain host-nation programs that

support U.S. forward basing and force structure in their countries (Cronk 2015; DOD 2015). In Japan, which has the world's third largest economy, the centrally located U.S. basing arrangement in Okinawa allows it to conduct deterrence operations near the disputed Ryuku Islands of Japan against China, maritime missions in the East and South China seas, conduct patrols near Taiwan, and engage Northeast Asia.

China's military modernization and territorial expansion in the South China Sea has been the most direct challenge to the United States in the Asia-Pacific (Blanchard 2016; EIA 2013; Glaser 2015). Consequently, the rapid increase in wealth and the size of China's economy has provided it with the opportunity to modernize its military force, expand its capabilities to project power, and deter America's allies throughout East Asia and the Pacific Rim. In the mid- to late 1990s, China's military spending was roughly 1 percent of its GDP. After China fired ballistic missiles near Taiwan to influence the election of a pro-independence government in 1996, the United States dispatched two carrier battlegroups to the area and China backed down after its military failed to locate them.

The crisis in the Taiwan Straits and the 1999 U.S. attack on its embassy led China, which was flush with cash by the end of the 1990s, to fully appreciate U.S. interests in the Western Pacific and spend more on defense programs and modernize its military. Between 1996 and 2015, Chinese defense spending increased 620 percent of GDP and rose by an average annual rate of 11 percent of GDP, investing in air and naval forces, capabilities in cyber and outer space, and ballistic missiles (Heginbotham et al. 2015: 1, 26). From 1998 to 2007, Chinese defense spending increased by almost 16 percent every year and, in 2015, boosted its defense budget by roughly 10 percent to approximately $145 billion at the same time the United States was becoming more deeply involved and entrenched in the Middle East (Blackbill and Tellis 2015: 9–12, 21; Heginbotham et al. 2015: chapter 1; Wong and Buckley 2015: A5). China's goal is to maintain internal security, then dominate countries on its periphery, break up the U.S.-led alliance network, and challenge and replace the United States as the primary power in Asia (Blackbill and Tellis 2015: 7–22). Among the major powers, China has been one of the few investing heavily in defense at roughly 8 percent of GDP in 2014 and almost 10 percent of GDP (purchasing power parity), putting China second to the United States in national shares of global military spending (12%) (Cordesman 2015a: 4; 2015b: 104; SIPRI 2018; 2017: 1–3).

The political status of Taiwan is one of the most long-standing factors that has defined U.S.-China relations since the two governments normalized relations over four decades ago and subsequently when the United States switched official diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the government in mainland China in 1979. Under the so-called One-China policy, the United

States considers Taiwan as an official territory of China and recognizes reunification with the mainland government in Beijing. The One-China policy allowed the United States to develop and expand bilateral relations with China and facilitate an informal, unofficial association with Taiwan on the condition that it does not endorse Taiwanese independence and sovereignty. Taiwan and China developed close economic relations as China has become the top destination for Taiwanese exports and Taiwan is now China's seventh largest trading partner. Taiwanese businesses are heavily invested in the mainland, financial services have intensified, and flights between the two have increased. But, over the years, many residents on Taiwan now identify themselves as manifestly Taiwanese and view themselves as autonomous from the mainland. President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan has not officially endorsed the One-China policy and was elected president following the island's frustration with what many residents believe has been mainland interference in its domestic affairs by Chinese President Xi Jinping. Since the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, the Beijing government has issued repeated warnings and threats to Taiwan that independence movements on the island would not be tolerated (Albert 2016).

Although it has recognized the significance of the One-China policy, the Obama administration has continued the long-standing tradition of providing military assistance to the island. As part of its response to China's military buildup in the South China Sea, Obama approved a $1.83 billion arms transaction to Taiwan in 2015 (Brunnstrom and Zengerle 2015; Paal 2015). He authorized the sale under the Taiwan Relations Act, which also legally commits the United States to the defense of Taiwan. China responded angrily by summoning the U.S. charge d'affaires in China to protest the arms sale and announced its decision to slap sanctions on Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, the U.S. defense corporations supplying weapons to Taiwan (Brunnstrom and Zengerle 2015).

Although still far behind the United States, the rapid uptick in defense spending ensures China's ranking as the world's second largest military spender. China's increase in defense spending reflects its attempt to supplant America's role as a regional actor, disrupt the U.S. system of alliances with Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, undermine the American economic model, and prevent against regime change within the country. China has been able to transform the People's Liberation Army from a large and unwieldy body into a modern force, reduced America's edge in air and naval capabilities, and is building the military means to counterbalance U.S. military strengths and advantages along its coast (Blackbill and Tellis 2015: 10; Heginbotham et al. 2015: 13–14; Wong and Buckley 2015: A5).

The stationing of U.S. military forces in friendly and allied states in the region has helped mitigate geographic limitations. While the United States

has developed new military capabilities that are mitigating the speed with which China is modernizing its military, its repeated military interventions in the Middle East have constrained its resources and allowed China to improve its power projection capabilities. RAND projects that if current patterns continue, it is inevitable that U.S. dominance in Asia and the Pacific will recede because China will be more capable of challenging and disrupting U.S. air and naval superiority thereby undermining America's strategic calculus of containing China (Blackbill and Tellis 2015: 7–18; Heginbotham et al. 2015: 321–342). However, competition between the United States and China over the long run will be shaped by technological advances and economic strength.

The military and diplomatic components of the U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region indicates that Obama intended to maintain and expand the U.S. presence throughout the region even though the 2011 Budget Control Act called for cuts to U.S. defense. In a speech to the Australian Parliament, Obama (2011b) stated "As we end today's wars, I have directed my national security team to make our presence and mission in the Asia-Pacific a top priority. As a result, reductions in U.S. defense spending will not—I repeat, will not—come at the expense of the Asia Pacific."

Aside from additional military deployments and heightened focus on the Asia-Pacific, the Obama administration more broadly distributed U.S. forces in and around the southern Western Pacific. This includes flexible, rotating deployments, new training exercises, joint missions with foreign defenses, naval access agreements, and general distribution of military forces at foreign bases and facilities in Australia, the Philippines, and Singapore (DOD 2012; Kan 2014: 3, 8). In addition to the military components of the pivot, Obama sought to strengthen diplomatic relations in the region with countries worried about the rise of China and seeking closer ties with the United States. For example, from 2009 to 2012, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited more countries in Asia and the Pacific than the previous secretaries of state.

Furthermore, there has been an intense focus on developing and extending American ties and multilateral diplomacy with regional organizations, especially the ten-member ASEAN while engaging China on an economic front but delicately balancing its territorial ambitions and checking its military assertiveness. ASEAN members include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. ASEAN has publicly remained independent from the major power rivalry between the United States and China. ASEAN has been successful in balancing the security order implemented and maintained by the United States and its regional allies and economic growth increasingly shaped by China. Most ASEAN members welcomed the Obama administration's economic and security rebalance as a way of hedging China's domination of the region following years of war in

Table 4.2 Secretaries of State Trips by Region (Albright to Kerry)

	Kerry		*Clinton*		*Rice*		*Powell*		*Albright*	
Region	*%*	*#*	*%*	*#*	*%*	*#*	*%*	*#*	*%*	*#*
Africa	5	13	7	13	2	4	9	14	7	14
East Asia and the Pacific	8	24	20	36	10	18	14	21	13	26
Europe/Eurasia	52	155	30	54	35	64	30	48	51	100
Near East	22	67	16	30	34	63	27	41	20	39
South & Central Asia	7	21	9	17	8	13	7	11	1	2
Western Hemisphere	6	18	18	33	11	21	13	20	8	16
Total	100	298	100	183	100	183	100	155	100	197

Table annotated and adapted (Clinton, Rice, Powell, and Albright) from Table 2 in Manyin et al. 2012. Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administrations 'Rebalancing'' Toward Asia. Congressional Research Service. March 28, 2012. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf; Original sources cited in Table 2: Secretary of State travel websites: https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/secretary/kerry-john-forbes https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/secretary/clinton-hillary-rodham; https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/secretary/rice-condoleezza; https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/secretary/powell-colin-luther; https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/secretary/albright-madeleine-korbel.

the Middle East (Patrick 2016). In other words, ASEAN prefers to maintain its economic connections to both China and the United States while repeating the benefits of U.S.-led security. ASEAN has become a powerful and influential force shaping and defining the contours of major power competition between the United States and China. Southeast Asia is the third largest trading partner with China with total trade between the region and China worth $443.6 billion (China Daily 2014). As of 2014, ASEAN members have a combined GDP of $2.6 trillion and ASEAN has the third largest labor force and the seventh largest economy in the world and is projected to become the fourth largest by 2050 (ASEAN 2015; Breene 2017). Moreover, China's military modernization program and expansive sovereignty claims have led ASEAN to welcome and embrace the Obama rebalance to Asia. China's territorial claims within the self-asserted nine-dash line in the South China Sea threatened to undermine ASEAN given the competing claims with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam.

A key component within Obama's rebalance was support for U.S. membership in the TPP, lift of an arms embargo against Vietnam, voice support for the Philippines in its territorial dispute with China at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and with its freedom of navigation operations. Most important, the United States opposes China's assertion of an air defense identification zone over what it considers its exclusive economic zone, forcing foreign vessels and aircraft to obtain permission to enter much of the South China Sea. In effect, these are strategic moves and gestures on the part of the United States to ASEAN that its rebalance to Asia and the Pacific is serious. The Obama administration reaffirmed these commitments with its hosting in February 2016 of the Sunnylands meeting with Southeast Asian leaders and the ASEAN secretary general, which produced a declaration promoting the U.S.-ASEAN strategic partnership and agreed-upon principles to advance cooperation for a rule-based system in Asia and the Pacific regarding maritime navigation, open and competitive trade, and effective governance (Parameswaran 2016; 2015).

However, territorial disputes and competing claims over disputed islands in the South China Sea, namely the Scarborough Shoal, Paracel Islands, and the Spratly Islands, could split or undermine ASEAN. The ruling by ICJ found that China violated international law by harming the underwater environment, impeding Philippine shipping, and interfering with Philippine oil and natural gas exploration and fishing rights (Perlez 2016b: A1). The ruling found China's maritime territorial claims and expansive definition of sovereignty in violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which both the Philippines and China have ratified. Considering China's aggressive territorial ambitions and claims in the South China Sea, the U.S. effort to focus on multilateral diplomacy, especially in Southeast Asia, has improved the United States throughout the region.

China's maritime claims and its highly expansive assertion of sovereignty within its self-asserted nine-dash line in the South China Sea have provided the United States with the opportunity to extend its reach in Southeast Asia. China's territorial ambitions have discredited its own "peaceful rise" and is undermining regional support for "One Belt, One Road," effectively incentivizing its neighbors to move closer to United States. Given China's use of credit as a way of controlling economies, such as in Ecuador where China dominates the oil export market, the fear is that China intends to use the "One Belt, One Road" initiative to assert a hegemonic agenda and treat its immediate neighbors as client states. Moreover, the initiative may be viewed by India with suspicion because it is moving China closer with Pakistan (Kuo and Tang 2015). The Obama administration's pursuit of bilateral defense agreements with India reflected a desire on the part of his Asia strategy to move the United States closer to India as a way of balancing against China's ever-expanding economic interests in Central Asia.

In addition, Brunei, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Malaysia have challenged China's claims to more than 80 percent of the South China Sea. However, Cambodia and Laos have sought more accommodation with China. While the Obama administration did not take official positions on territorial disputes, it has conducted freedom of navigation operations in support of its regional allies in what it considers international waters. The United States has overseen the Western Pacific's informal network of security arrangements for years at the same time China's has evolved into the world's second largest economy and modernized its military (Tweed and Roman 2016).

Obama also sought to strengthen its economic position with U.S. membership in the TPP, a massive twelve-nation trade agreement, representing 40 percent of global GDP and 20 percent of global trade (Jozuka 2017). TPP members included Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Vietnam, Chile, Brunei, Singapore, and New Zealand. Other potential members have indicated their interest in the agreement, namely Colombia, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. One report estimated that the United States would gain $77 billion in annual revenue with TPP membership (Bader and Dollar 2015). By the end of Obama's presidency, TPP was not ratified by the U.S. Congress and the incoming Trump administration opted to abandon the measure.

TPP was an important vehicle to not only keep the United States involved as a leader in the Asia-Pacific, it was designed to serve as a counterbalance to China, which was not a member. After Trump decided the withdraw the United States from TPP on January 24, 2017, China would go on to fill the void left by the United States with its pursuit of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). RCEP is comprised of the ten-member ASEAN and other states ASEAN has free trade agreements with, namely

China, India, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, accounting for 46 percent of the world's population and 24 percent of global GDP (Jozuka 2017). Unlike TPP, RCEP does not have environmental, labor, or human rights standards.

TPP was also designed to enable the United States to help shape and determine the architecture of international trade in Asia and the Pacific in relation to China. China has not been included as potential TPP member state, which might be evidence to suggest that while the U.S. rebalance to Asia is welcomed by most states in the region, China might view the measure as a sign that the United States was limiting its power and influence throughout the region. There is widespread support for TTP among the publics in many of the proposed member states (Wike et al. 2015).

While TPP would not be able to contain China's economic growth, as Obama saw it, it would enable the United States to more effectively compete in Asia and the Pacific. TPP is not designed to counter the Asia Infrastructure Bank or the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, although it would help partnership states expand and diversify trade opportunities (Kuo and Tang 2015; Page 2015). Although the Obama administration maintained that TPP was a significant improvement in international trade that could allow the United States and other partner states to compete with China in the region, incoming President Trump (quoted in Campbell 2016) abandoned negotiations, calling it a "horrible deal" and "a potential disaster for our country" during the presidential campaign.

China and the United States are competitors. The United States is the established status quo power in the region and fears China's economic rise and military potential. China is looked upon by the United States as a rising power that hopes to upset the regional balance of power that could result in a replay of the struggle for power between the United States and USSR during the Cold War. Consequently, the United States has pursued a security strategy of containing China's military expansion in the Western Pacific. The real question is whether China's military goals and intentions are truly benign? If so, then China intends to use its economic wealth to further develop its economy, engage in cultural exchanges with other nations, build its educational system, modernize its infrastructure and control its borders, and safeguard its trading routes for economic prosperity. If not and China's pursue regional hegemony and expands, it will likely seize territory and push the United States out of the region. The most important element in China's strategy will be securing access to energy, which will be explored in the next section.

CHINA IN THE MIDDLE EAST

China consumes an average 11.2 million barrels of oil per day compared to the United States at 19.4 million barrels per day (EIA 2016c; 2015). China's

petroleum consumption is projected to increase to over 13 million barrels of oil p/d and is, at the same time, expected to increase its consumption of hydrocarbon gas liquids and bring more propane dehydrogenation plants online (EIA 2016c; 2015). Sixty percent of China's oil demand is met by imports, making it the world's leading importer of oil (Daniels and Brown 2015; EIA 2015a). To meet rising energy demand, China has become increasingly more dependent on importing oil from the Middle East, in addition to Angola, Congo, and South Sudan. In 2014, China imported 52 percent of its oil from the Middle East, 17 percent from Africa, 9 percent from the Americas, 13 percent (i.e., 778,000) from Russia and Soviet republics, and the rest from the Asia-Pacific region (EIA 2015a).

Since 2008, China's national oil companies and private energy firms have purchased an estimated $73 billion in oil and natural gas assets around the world with roughly 50 percent of its overseas oil extraction the Middle East and Africa. China's National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec), and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) have boosted overseas oil extraction from 1.7 million barrels p/d in 2010 to 2.1 million barrels p/d in 2013. CNPC, Sinopec, and CNOOC are each invested in oil development deals in Iraq with approximately 26 percent of China's overseas extraction in the country (IEA 2014, 13–15).

Given its growing energy needs, China has been developing a much closer relationships with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is the world's leading exporter of oil and China is the world's importer. Even though some of its allies remain highly dependent on Middle Eastern oil, the United States was less dependent given its expanded access to domestic oil and natural gas and lower energy prices. Consequently, Saudi Arabia is now seeking to diversify its economy while at the same time looking to emerging markets in general and China to sell its oil. China sees Saudi Arabia as a pivotal force in the Middle East to help facilitate the development of its "One Belt, One Road" framework. While primarily concentrated on crude oil and other commodities, bilateral trade has grown from $1.28 billion in 1990 to roughly $73 billion in 2013 (al-Tamimi 2013: 37–58, 181–205; 2014; Kechichian 2016).

However, the extent of China-Saudi cooperation will be limited by geopolitical realities. First, China has also sought closer ties with Saudi Arabia's regional rival Iran. Although China has supplied some weapons to Saudi Arabia, the top supplier of arms remains the United States (Jin 2016; SIPRI 2018; 2017: 1–3). In addition, Saudi Arabia ranked fourth in international students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities with 59,945 Saudi students in the 2014–2015 year, representing a 11.2 percent increase from 2013 to 2014 (Open Doors n.d.). Although China moved closer to Saudi Arabia during Obama's presidency, it is unlikely to drive a wedge between it and the United States. And while China is increasing its presence in the Middle East, it does

not currently possess the resources and capabilities of replacing the United States as the principle military force in the region. As of 2016, U.S. Central Command oversees roughly 44,800 American civilian and military personnel deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE, reflecting its unrivaled dominance in the region (Fisher and Pecanha 2017).

China does view its role in the Middle East in terms of promoting its global commercial and financial interests. Given that the goal of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative is to connect Asia and Europe via the historic Silk Road route, it seeks to building ties with both Sunni Arab states and Iran in accessing energy, advancing trade and financial investment, and developing aerospace technology (Lintao 2014; Tiezzi 2014). This reflects China's so-called geoeconomic soft balancing strategy of combining a very small number of military forces with developing support sites and modern infrastructure to attain its commercial and financial interests (Sun 2015). Sun points to China's deployment of naval escort fleets in the Gulf of Aden near the Somali coast, naval support facilities in Djibouti, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, a naval repair station in Pakistan, and an air support facility in the Seychelles. Sun suggests that China will likely use its military forces to protect its economic interests in the Persian Gulf, especially state-owned companies and expatriates in the Persian Gulf (al-Tamimi 2014; Thafer 2013).

America's military presence and influence in the Persian Gulf region are unparalleled and unrivaled. The United States deploys approximately 11,000 military personnel in Kuwait at Ali al Salem Air Base (Chipman et al. 2017: chapters 3 and 6; Hackett et al. 2018: chapters 3 and 6; Whitlock 2014). The United States also maintains roughly military personnel in Jordan to aid Jordanian forces and support training missions with Iraqi security forces (Ryan 2014). Ground attack aircraft, such as AC-130 gunships, B-1B bombers, and F-16s, F-15Es, and F-22 fighter jets have also been deployed to various bases in the region (Capaccio 2014; Simoes 2014). In addition, the large U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet, based out of Bahrain, patrols the Persian Gulf, conducts naval and air exercises, and launches combat operations against IS and other groups in the Middle East.

The United States has a diversified network of countries from which it imports petroleum to meet it heavy consumption needs. In 2014, the United States imported roughly 9 million barrels of petroleum (mostly crude oil) per day from eighty countries with about 44 percent of imported crude oil refined within the United States. Given that it exports 4 million barrels of petroleum per day, its net imports currently stand at 5 million barrels per day. Imports account for only 27 percent of petroleum consumed in the United States, the lowest level since 1985 and American dependence on foreign oil declined from 60 percent in 2005 to 49 percent in 2010. In 2014, the United States

imported 20 percent of its petroleum from Persian Gulf states and 35 percent from OPEC with 13 percent from Saudi Arabia (13%). Fifty-five percent of all U.S. petroleum imports originate from Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela (EIA n.d.).

Other major powers, namely China, Japan, and the European Union have much less diversified sources of imported petroleum products and are to varying degrees more dependent on Middle Eastern oil. With the United States growing more energy self-sufficient under Obama, China remains very dependent on importing petroleum from the Middle East (IEA n.d.). In 2013, China (3.7 million barrels per day) overtook the United States (3.5 million barrels per day) in imports of crude oil from producers in the OPEC although the United States still tops China in overall oil imports (Flynn 2013). It is estimated that China will become the world's leading consumer of energy by 2030 with most of its petroleum imports coming from the Persian Gulf. Consequently, China has significant interests in improving and expanding energy and infrastructure in the Middle East and incorporating the region within its "One Belt, One Road" initiative (BP 2013; Singh 2016).

Competition for energy in the Middle East puts pressure on China to contend with several challenges. Daniels and Brown (2015) argue that China is currently dependent on the United States for security in the region and stability in global energy markets. However, this may be unsustainable for China because of the heightened level of competition for resources between the world's two largest economies. Since China is boosting its defense spending, modernizing its military, and is projecting economic power beyond its immediate region with the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, China could direct the necessary resources to engage in a massive effort as large and significant as the United States to help protect its energy interests and secure and stabilize the Persian Gulf (Daniels and Brown 2015; Schenker 2013).

Also, given China's relationship with Iran, GCC states may be unwilling to move closer to China. The reality is that China will likely remain dependent on the American security umbrella in the region if the United States continues serving as the principle guarantor of securing key energy chokepoints (Andersen and Jiang 2014: 29). Moreover, as the United States has become less reliant on crude oil and natural gas from leading producers in the Persian Gulf because of America's boost in domestic extraction of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, Middle Eastern oil producers will look to the Asia-Pacific as a top export destination.

Beyond oil and natural gas, the Middle East is essential to China's trade and financial interests in the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. China's proposed land-route or modern Silk Road traverses Central Asia through Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and terminating in northern Europe with the sea-route going through the Strait of Malacca to India, Kenya, the Horn of Africa,

the Mediterranean Sea, and end in Venice. Between 2004 and 2014, trade between China and Arab states in the Middle East rose by 600 percent from roughly $25.5 billion to $230 billion with Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, and Saudi Arabia the top destinations for Chinese exports and Iran, Oman, and Saudi Arabia the leading exporters to China. Exports from Persian Gulf states are driven mainly by China's demand for oil. Trade between China and the Middle East has been facilitated by China's establishment of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum in 2004 (Andersen and Jiang 2014: 26). Also, the UAE agreed to a $5.5 billion currency swap with China that would enable both markets to trade in their own currencies as opposed to the U.S. dollar. China is now a top trading market with the Middle East and, by 2014, there were 74,000 Chinese employees working in Persian Gulf states in state and private companies and multinational corporations with 35,000 in Saudi, 14,000 in UAE, 10,000 in Iraq, 6,000 in Qatar, 5,000 in Kuwait, and 2,000 in Iran (Andersen and Jiang 2014: 28–29).

Driven primarily by its insatiable demand for energy and China's trade and financial elements in the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, the Middle East is now vital and critical to China's development and the attainment of its interests. China's strategic rebalance to the Persian Gulf is coming at the same time as the United States was rebalancing to Asia and the Pacific. While we should expect the United States to scale back from the Persian Gulf as it ramps up in the Asia-Pacific region, this is will not be the case. America's Pacific allies, namely Japan and South Korea, are highly dependent on importing Middle Eastern oil and rely on the United States to ensure the safe and secure transportation of energy from the Persian Gulf to protect against supply disruption and stabilize global energy markets. On a more geopolitical level, the United States will remain deeply involved in the Persian Gulf to protect its Arab allies' balance against Iran and prevent the Islamic Republic from dominating the region even as China is becoming more economically dependent on Gulf states for energy.

THE STRATEGIC CALCULUS: IT'S COMPLICATED

China's economic growth today is highly dependent on energy imports and goods produced in other markets and traded through key chokepoints (Kaplan 2014). These chokepoints include the Malacca, Karamata, Sunda, and Lombok Straits near Indonesia, Luzan Strait near the Philippines and Taiwan, the Mindora Strait near the Philippines, and the Miyako Strait near U.S. forward bases on Okinawa Japan, and the Soya Strait in northern Japan. In 2013, 15.2 million barrels of oil from the Middle East to Indonesia, Japan, and China passed through the Strait of Malacca to the South China Sea and

the Pacific Ocean (EIA 2014). These chokepoints are patrolled by the U.S. Navy, which means the United States can interdict trading routes and pressure China. Therefore, China's military modernization was part of its attempt to assert more of a role within strategic waterways and to rely less on U.S. military power to secure this commercial trade.

China's emergent strategy, driven primarily by its rising energy demands, burgeoning global trade and financial relationships, the building of artificial islands, assertion of air defense zones and the deployment of ballistic and cruise missiles, means that it intends to preserve its trading routes and defend its commercial interests. China is a sea power that can only protect its narrow, more regional economic interests although its goal may be to push further out into the Western Pacific (Shambaugh 2008: chapter 1). China had several strategic goals to challenge the United States. These include China threatening military intervention in Taiwan, defending its reclamation projects and expansive sovereignty claims over islands in the South and East China seas, extending its military interests and commercial activities beyond its immediate sea areas, asserting and enforcing its self-proclaimed exclusive economic zone, denying the U.S. freedom of action in the Western Pacific, and promoting its status as a regional and global power (O'Rourke 2018: 5, 96, 110).

China is developing the capabilities to deter or push the United States out of the Western Pacific so it can control the airways and seaways in the region. China gets some benefits from its island building campaign because there's little the United States and its allies can do aside from the U.S. Navy conducting freedom of navigation operations. While these islands have been illegally constructed and the claimants opposing them have credible cases against them in international court, the strategic costs for China far outweigh the benefits. The islands themselves are stationary military targets that are extremely difficult to defend, rendering them extremely vulnerable to U.S. military strikes. Moreover, China's island reclamation projects threaten other nation-states in the region, pushing some closer to the United States. At the same time China is promoting its "One Belt, One Road" initiative, it is threatening its immediate neighbors. This helps America's case to build and expand the number of states and markets in the Asia-Pacific region friendly to American businesses and the U.S. military (Farley 2016; Sun 2016).

To challenge Obama's increase in military force in the region, China is pursuing a military strategy of anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) designed to disrupt U.S. power projection in the Western Pacific (McCarthy 2015: 10; Tri 2017). The goal was to prevent the United States from intervening in the waters and airspace near its coastline and between the first and second island chain during a potential crisis and drive the United States out of the region. Anti-access capabilities include land-based short-range and medium-range carrier-killing ballistic and cruise missiles threatening U.S. military forces in

Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Guam as well as U.S. air and naval forces. China's DF-21 and DF-26 intermediate ballistic missiles ("carrier-killers") have become an increasing threat to U.S. fleet carriers and the U.S. naval base on Guam to deny the United States access to areas in the South China Sea. The mobile launchers are part of a highly advanced and integrated Chinese defense system that includes S-300 and S-400 surface-to-missile batteries, stealth aircraft, anti-ship ballistic and cruise missiles, and J-15 and J-16 fighters (Johnson 2016a; Osborn 2014).

China has also been developing sophisticated defense systems designed to counter U.S. aircraft carriers, semiautonomous weapons, and advanced targeting systems in the Pacific. Area-denial capabilities include counter-naval and anti-air systems that threaten warplanes and surface attack ships (DOD 1996; 1997; Erickson 2010; Gompert and Long 2007; Krepinevich 2002; 2010; Krepinevich and Watts 2003; Vego 2009). Moreover, Chinese corporations and government labs have been investing in artificial intelligence, robotics, surveillance, and other next-generation technologies that will improve its defense capabilities (Markoff and Rosenberg 2017: BU1). Furthermore, China has made investments in cyberwar operations and anti-satellite technologies to disrupt the U.S. military's dependence on advanced technologies and space-based communications (Fallows 2010; Horta 2013).

At least in the short term, China's deployment and use of asymmetric weaponry—low-cost missiles, arms, and cyber operations—allow it to take on more advanced and expensive U.S. carrier groups, warplanes, submarines, and bases throughout the region to narrow the U.S. military advantage in the Pacific. The goal is not an outright military defeat of the U.S. Navy, but to deter the United States by nudging it out of the first island chain and preventing it from coming to the defense of its allies; that is, to pull states in the first and second island chain away from the U.S. defense perimeter and place them within China's orbits. To do so, China must increase the economic, political, and military costs on the United States to come to the defense of its allies. If these costs are too high for the United States to absorb, China will likely increase its freedom of action and independently control the waterways for its own economic benefit. Horta (2013) states, "China has no illusions about its military inferiority via-à-vis the United States and knows that the status is likely to endure for at least two decades. As such the PLA has been developing a full range of asymmetric strategies to deter the United States until its military reaches maturity."

Although America's allies in Asia and the Pacific might prefer balancing against China, they do not have the economic and military capabilities to keep pace, which means any abandonment of its commitments to its allies by the United States would empower China throughout the region. Given the economic significance of the region and the security considerations, Obama

was not going to allow China to alter the regional balance of power or drive a wedge between the United States and its allies and partners (Kazianis 2016).

For Obama, the opportunity costs of maintaining a heightened military presence were quite high. Given the vast yet limited resources in its arsenal, the incredible significance of the Asia-Pacific region in U.S. foreign policy might weaken American influence in other critical regions, namely the Middle East after the United States withdrawal from Iraq. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and global recession, which led to the passage of the 2011 Budget Control Act and defense cuts, the boost in U.S. military forces and economic focus on Asia and the Pacific led the United States to deemphasize its commitments in the Middle East. However, Obama (2011b) stated, "reductions in U.S. defense spending will not—I repeat, will not—come at the expense of the Asia Pacific." The tremendous boost in U.S. domestic oil and petroleum extraction makes it even more enticing to scale back from the Middle East, a region where Obama himself believes is incapable of providing for its own security and stability (Goldberg 2016a).

In addition, North Korea has dedicated itself to building nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles as a deterrent to America's deployment of military force in Northeast Asia. On January 5, 2016, North Korea conducted an underground test of an atomic weapon although it claimed it was a hydrogen bomb with far greater explosive power (Fifield 2016). In response to the test, the United States flew a long-range B-52 that can carry nuclear weapons flanked by South Korean F-15 and U.S. F-16 warplanes near the demilitarized zone as a symbol of America's commitment to South Korea and Japan. Beyond its nuclear program, North Korea also poses substantial threats to region with its capacity to launch artillery strikes on South Korea, possession of a stockpile of chemical weapons, special operations forces, cyber-capabilities, and the ability to launch rockets and multiple satellites into space (Majumdar 2016; NTI 2015).

North Korea's goal is obtaining the capability of launching an intercontinental missile at the U.S. mainland or territory, which it would later demonstrate in a series of successful missile tests in 2017. While the United States has publicly committed itself to working with China to reduce the risk of North Korea's nuclear program, there are huge gaps between the United States and China on how to approach the issue. While China controls food and fuel shipments to the north and does favor denuclearization, it believes the United States, South Korea, and Japan need to abandon their policy of regime change as this would destabilize the peninsula and remove an important security buffer with the United States and its allies (Snyder 2016).

At the center of America's response to these challenges in Asia and the Pacific is strengthening its naval power and presence in the region and maintaining its edge in advanced technologies and information communications.

The United States has embraced freedom of navigation of the seas regarding the heavily used maritime traffic to sustain mutual economic dependence, interconnections, trade, cultural exchange, and commerce in the contemporary global economy. It is also committed to maintaining the complex global information system comprised of servers, wireless networks, next-generation telecommunications and cellular networks, undersea cables, and satellites. Furthermore, the United States will continue to invest in research and development programs that promote efficiencies and innovation in such technologies as robotics, 3D printing, sensors, and artificial intelligence. However, budget sequestration between 2011 and 2015 forced the United States to cut defense and nondefense discretionary programs and at the same time China and Russia were making significant investments, narrowing the U.S. edge in advanced weaponry.

Public opinion polls show that most of the countries in the region welcomed Obama's heightened military presence in Asia and the Pacific, especially in relation to China. Many in this region have security concerns regarding the emergence of China as influential force throughout East Asia. Some even welcome the United States to commit more military force and capability to the region as part of its rebalance or pivot to Asia. At least 50 percent of the people in Vietnam, India, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, and Australia believe that U.S. military and economic assistance or additional U.S. military forces in Asia and the Pacific would help keep the peace (Wike et al. 2015: 6). China's island reclamation activity, coupled with the expansion and modernization of its naval and missile forces, use of cyber warfare and anti-satellite technology, has sustained this high level of support for more American warplanes and ships, robotic underwater vessels, and other advanced weaponry to the region. In turn, Australia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, and the Philippines are moving to bolster their own defense forces in the Western Pacific (Cronk 2015; Johnson and De Luce 2015).

Obama also began freedom of navigation operations in October 2015 when it dispatched the guided missile destroyer USS Lassen to within a twelve-mile territorial limit near Subi Reef in the Spratly Island archipelago where the Philippines has a competing territorial claim (Panda 2016b). In January 2016, Obama conducted Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONO) by sending the USS *Curtis Wilbur* to within twelve miles of Triton Island in the Paracels. As an additional show of force, the U.S. Navy then sailed a strike group including the carrier *John C. Stennis*, two cruisers and two destroyers, and the Seventh Fleet flagship through disputed waters in the Spratlys (Larter 2016).

U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter (quoted in Bodeen 2015) issued a stern warning to China that based on freedom of navigation on the high seas, "Make no mistake, the United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows, as we do around the world, and the South China

Sea is not and will not be an exception." The United States believes the naval operations are consistent with its broader right of innocent passage in Article 17 of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) even though the United States has not ratified UNCLOS. Moreover, China interprets this same statute as requiring prior permission for other vessels and warships entering its sovereign territorial waters. In addition, it maintains that its FONOPs can be extended into different areas and cover other participants. As Carter (see McKirdy 2016) states, the U.S. naval buildup in the South China Sea is designed to "support the rebalance to the most consequential region for America's future—the Asia Pacific."

MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

The Obama rebalance to Asia and the Pacific updated American foreign policy to the twenty-first century. Most of the world's population and the global middle class live in the Asia-Pacific. Obama's rebalance was designed to project America's intentions in the region, which was to secure its allies, protect trade and financial investment, improve communications and expand cultural connections and relationships. China and other states in the region exercise tremendous trade and investment power and are deeply connected with the U.S. economy.

U.S-China relations during the Obama administration can be characterized in terms of mutual distrust. At first, Obama promised that he would acknowledge China's "core interests" in the Asia-Pacific, causing concern within America's network of Pacific alliances. With China believing it had more freedom of action, then Obama decided to announce the American rebalance to the region, which included expanding economic opportunities as well as new military deployments. The president's use of freedom of navigation operations was an attempt to veto China's territorial ambitions, build goodwill with its allies, and a signal to the Chinese leadership that the United States intends to remain in the Western Pacific. On the whole Obama's strategy was peaceful coexistence with China in the Asia-Pacific, but China believed Obama was trying to contain and manage its rise. Under Obama, the Asia-Pacific became as great, if not more of, a strategic priority as Europe with China being viewed as a major rival.

While Obama's rebalance elevated and prioritized the Asia-Pacific in U.S. foreign policy, the confluence of complex and overlapping economic and security issues made it difficult for him to build and maintain an architecture that encourages China to remain within the rules-based international order. His foreign policy strategy included moving the United States closer to India and Vietnam while solidifying long-standing alliances in the region.

This made Obama's outreach to India and Vietnam an essential component in his rebalance. Given there is no formal collective security arrangement like NATO in the Asia-Pacific, the rebalance had to rely on developing and expanding informal networks (Cha 2011: 27–50; 2016: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 185–220). In other words, India and Vietnam in Asia will not be like the United Kingdom in Europe; that is, a reliable bandwagoning state serving U.S. foreign policy interests. Just as the United States and United Kingdom need one another to maintain collective defense in Europe and the Middle East, so do the United States and India in Asia (Cronk 2015).

The U.S.-China relationship is defined by tension, suspicion, and competition. As Kroeber (Hu 2016) describes it, "You might want to think of the US China relationship as kind of like an arranged marriage. They're not in it because they fell in love with each other, they're in it because forces beyond them made it happen and now they're stuck with each other and now they have to deal with it." There are far too many political, economic, and cultural factors at stake for the United States in the region. The economies of China, Japan, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines are large, dynamic, and important for the United States to ignore. The matriculation of thousands of Chinese, Indian, and South Korean students into U.S. colleges and universities and rising numbers of American students studying in China are important cultural forces that make it difficult for the United States to scale down from the region.

The security issues between China and America's regional allies, namely Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea and emerging partners like India and Vietnam shaped Obama's decision to balance against China's military modernization efforts and assertiveness. Under Obama, the United States was presenting itself as the leader of an informal patchwork of bilateral and multilateral alliances and partnerships that now comprise an informal architecture (Cha 2011: 27–50; 2016: 185–220; Heisbourg 2016). However, nationalism remains a powerful political force in the Asia-Pacific, making it difficult to establish genuine trust, achieve peaceful coexistence, and overcome centuries-old fear brought on by war and conflict. This was apparent in Obama's support for TPP, which did not include China because Vietnam and U.S. allies Japan and the Philippines favored shutting China out of the multilateral framework.

But the most immediate security challenge for Obama was North Korea. Given the development and expansion of its nuclear weapons program over the last decade, Obama was left with few options on how best to contend with the North Korean nuclear threat. Obama's strategy seemed to combine deterrence and diplomacy by continuing with joint military exercises with South

Korea and Japan while at the same time building up its military presence in the region and implementing flexible, rotational troop deployments.

Obama did not make much progress with North Korea as the reclusive regime made significant advancements with its nuclear program. As with Iran, North Korea sought nuclear weapons as a deterrent against regime change policies that were put in place in Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2003, and Libya in 2011. While these cases demonstrate that regime change hardly ever works, North Korea viewed Obama as simply another president seeking to overthrow it with military force.

While Obama interpreted the rise of China as one of the greatest events of the post–Cold War era and beyond, his administration, like his predecessors, also viewed China's emergence as a threat to the international order. But the world was already transitioning to a multipolar system in which China as a great power was now capable of challenging U.S. global leadership. Complicating Obama's ability to lead U.S. foreign policy through this transition with the rebalance to Asia and the Pacific was contending the Middle East, which is examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

The Middle East

A Risky Strategy

The Obama administration's rebalance to Asia and the Pacific was made in response to the movement of global power and wealth to that region as well as Chinese military modernization and territorial ambitions. But, the rebalance to Asia-Pacific would come at the same time Obama drew down U.S. security commitments in the Middle East. According to the former secretary of state Clinton (2011), "In the last decade, our foreign policy has transitioned from dealing with the post–Cold War peace dividend to demanding commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan. As those wars wind down, we will need to accelerate efforts to pivot to new global realities." The move was criticized by Saudi Arabia and other Sunni allies because they feared a scaled-back U.S. military role could encourage Shia Iran to spread its influence throughout the region.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama promised that, if elected, he would end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and shift American military resources to Afghanistan where Al-Qaeda was concentrated. His position was that the invasion and large-scale deployment of U.S. ground forces in Iraq elevated the risk of terrorism and instability in the region. U.S. foreign policy often failed to understand and appreciate the divisions among Sunnis and Shia that shape the region, leading the United States to overemphasize geopolitics and institutional power arrangements. In 2002, as an Illinois state senator, Obama (2002) stated, "I know that invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support will only fan the flames of the Middle East and encourage the worst rather than best impulses in the Arab world and strengthen the recruitment arm of Al-Qaeda. I am not opposed to all wars, I am opposed to dumb wars."

One of President Obama's first action in the Middle East was his speech in 2009 at Cairo University where he conveyed his administration's good intentions toward the region and broke with his predecessor. Obama sought a "new

beginning" in American relations with the Middle East and with Muslims around the world. His speech was optimistic and directed at Arabs and Muslims, especially as it was being delivered in the world's most populous Arab country. While shying away from democracy promotion and regime change, Obama (2009a) expressed solidarity with democratic politics in the Middle East justified on universal principles: "America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election. But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. Those are not just American ideas, they are human rights, and that is why we will support them everywhere." However, this soaring rhetoric was put to test when the Arab Spring took place in 2011 and democratic movements toppled governments in Tunisia and Egypt.

The Bush administration's attempt at regional transformation with the invasion and occupation of Iraq directly contributed to the destabilization of the region and kept the United States embroiled in the region throughout Obama's presidency. Moreover, de-Baathification in Iraq empowered Iran and facilitated the rise of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the IS. The United States became even more vulnerable to geopolitical backlash against its foreign policy of regime change from Russia and China, watched its global image rapidly erode, led Iran and North Korea to accelerate their nuclear programs, and drove a wedge between America and Europe. Moreover, the continued deployment of the U.S. military in Iraq was strongly opposed by the U.S. public in polls (CNN/ORC 2015: 2, 9; McCarthy 2015: Oliphant 2018).

At the outset of his presidency, Obama wanted to chart a very different foreign policy toward the Middle East than his predecessor by shifting American foreign policy toward offshore balancing. Obama believed America's foreign policy interests were better served by accommodating and adapting to the return of multipolarity. This meant increasing America's onshore commitments in Asia and the Pacific and moving much of its military resources offshore and away from the Middle East. Obama's strategic goal was to lessen terrorism and insurgencies that resulted from large-scale deployments of American ground forces to the Middle East and mitigate the costs in lives and treasure that come with nation-building efforts.

Although the Obama administration believed it could embrace offshore balancing and retrenchment, in many ways, it has continued to pursue the same type of interventionist practices as the Bush administration. Obama approved the highly secretive and risky mission to kill Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, a popular move at home but one that angered the Pakistani

government. Even though Obama did not deploy significant numbers of troops to the region after the military withdrawal from Iraq, he expanded the use of Special Operations Forces throughout the Middle East and armed drone strikes in Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia. While Obama's goal was to complete the withdrawal of American ground troops from Iraq he would later find himself as deeply embroiled in the region as its predecessor.

But much of the Middle East descended into chaos and violence. After the United States withdrawal from Iraq the Shia regime repressed Sunnis, which drove many toward the IS. IS then used the Syrian Civil War to rampage across eastern Syria and Western Iraq. The Syrian Civil War killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions, leading Russia to intervene on behalf of Bashar al-Assad. The civil war in Yemen and rising Iranian influence in the country led Saudi Arabia to intervene and launch airstrikes killing thousands of Yemeni civilians. Terrorist attacks threatened Egypt following the toppling of the post-revolutionary government and Libya was sent deeper into chaos after the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in the absence of a Western or Arab coalition to stabilize the country (Cohen 2011).

While Obama launched airstrikes against the IS and reversed its military gains, successfully concluded the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran and expanded the use of Special Operations Forces and drone strikes, he resisted the redeployment of thousands of American ground troops to incentivize Sunni Arab states themselves to provide security and establish a balance of power with Shia Iran. But for Obama's critics, the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces in Iraq, the decision in 2013 not to launch airstrikes against the Assad regime in Syria, and the partnership role in the NATO intervention in Libya reflected an administration that was largely incapable of exerting strong U.S. global leadership. Moreover, Obama's reluctance to topple the Assad regime in Syria was seen by U.S. allies in region, namely Israel, Turkey, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, as America's failure to hold up its end of the security bargain.

Armed conflict conditions throughout the Middle East as evidenced by the staggering number of people internally displaced. As of 2015, there were 4.4 million IDPs in Iraq with 264,100 Iraqis refugees and 1.2 million IDPs in Afghanistan with 2.7 million Afghan refugees abroad (UNHCR 2016; 2015; Watson n.d.). In addition, roughly 10.1 million from Syria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan were displaced with 4.9 million Syrians alone being displaced by the civil war (MPI n.d.; UNHCR 2016; Zong and Batalova 2017). The impact has been significant as the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon skyrocketed to 9 percent and 25 percent of the populations of those countries, putting pressure on social services, health care, transportation, housing, and education (MPI n.d.; UNHCR 2016; Zong and Batalova 2017).

OFFSHORING THE MIDDLE EAST

The Obama administration wanted to chart a very different foreign policy toward the Middle East than George W. Bush by shifting America's foreign policy away from U.S. preponderance in the region. At first, it appeared Obama was attempting an offshore balancing strategy that would allow the United States to maintain its influence and power without the cost of a full-scale ground force deployment in the region, a move that would provide the United States the necessary room to rebalance to Asia and limit its costs in the Middle East (Beinart 2015). As Obama's National Security Adviser Susan Rice (quoted in Parsons and Hennigan 2017) stated, "If we put all of our energy into the Middle East, or just into reacting, we won't get things done." Before his election, Obama (2007) stated, "The only troops I will keep in Iraq will perform the limited missions of protecting our diplomats and carrying out targeted strikes on Al Qaeda." He sought greater diplomatic engagement with America's Middle East allies and even Iran to help stabilize Iraq. Although U.S. combat troops from Iraq would be withdrawn under Obama, his administration would leave limited forces in the country to combat terrorists and protect U.S. diplomatic personnel and installations (Walt 2002a: 121–154).

The hope was that the U.S. combat withdrawal would prompt Iraq and other states in the region to secure themselves and stabilize the region (Keck 2014; Layne 2009: 5–25). According to Obama (2008), "It is not clear that an ongoing, open-ended presence has prompted political change in Iraq either. . . . So it strikes me that for us to deliver a message of clarity to the Iraqis and to the surrounding countries that we are not looking at a permanent occupation, but we want to partner with you to structure a stable and secure Iraq—that actually will force the Iraqis to make some decisions that they otherwise would not make. . . . We have got to be able to say to the Iraqis: we are going to make a set of decisions and you've got to react to them." Key to Obama's approach was completing U.S. efforts to train the Iraqi national military and participate in the P5+1 negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear weapons program.

But Obama's military withdrawal from Iraq and multilateral negotiations with Iran raised significant concerns among U.S. allies in the region. Israel shares deep military, economic, and socio-cultural ties with the United States and receives bilateral assistance and protection from the United States at the U.N. Security Council. The Obama administration was critical of Israeli policies toward Palestinians in occupied territories, especially on the issue of expanded Jewish settlements in those areas. Israel also opposed U.S. participation in nuclear negotiations with Iran. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia and states

in the Gulf Cooperation Council resisted any U.S. move toward Iran out of fear that it might feel empowered to dominate the Persian Gulf region.

The long-term Obama foreign policy goal was to establish a multipolar balance between Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel while that would allow the United States to scale back its presence in the region (Cohen 2011). According to Obama (quoted in Remnick 2014), the intention was "to get Iran to operate in a responsible fashion—not funding terrorist organizations, not trying to stir up sectarian discontent in other countries, and not developing a nuclear weapon—you could see an equilibrium developing between Sunni, or predominantly Sunni, Gulf states and Iran in which there's competition, perhaps suspicion, but not an active or proxy warfare." As Walt (2013) argued, the "United States should have *normal* relations with Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia instead of 'special relationships.' This would be better for the United States and probably better for those countries too."

Tensions between the United States and Saudi Arabia grew during Obama's presidency. The kingdom feared Obama was not fully committed to its security given his support for the Iranian nuclear deal and has objected to accusations in the U.S. Congress of official Saudi involvement in the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the president's description of the Saudis as "so-called allies" (quoted in Goldberg 2016a). The Saudis have also been critical of the president's "pivot to Asia," his resistance to launching air strikes against the Assad regime, and what they believed was a passive U.S. approach to the civil war in Yemen as examples of retrenchment from the Middle East. Moreover, the Saudis believe the NATO intervention in Libya to remove Gadhafi from power and its lack of an immediate presence in the country contributed to the destabilization of the region (Gaouette, Liptak, and Robertson 2016).

But there are deep connections between the United States and Saudi Arabia that could not be overlooked. From 2009 to 2015, the kingdom purchased $65 billion in arms from the United States and since 2009 purchased $136 billion in defense articles and services (Blanchard 2016: 41–42). Not only has this created and sustained jobs in the United States, it has led to logistical and practical linkages between the United States and Saudi militaries in ways that prevent the kingdom from purchasing much of its military equipment and technical hardware competing defense suppliers in Europe, Russia, or China. In addition, there are significant cultural interconnections between the United States and Saudi Arabia in the form of higher educational exchanges between students and faculty in both countries. According to the Institute of International Education, in 2014–2015, more than 6 percent of all international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities were from Saudi Arabia (Hubbard, Barnard and Sengupta 2016: A1; Open Doors n.d.; Project Atlas n.d.).

Put simply, it was incredibly difficult and challenging for Obama to alter deep and long-standing U.S. ties with Sunni governments in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia and its Sunni allies favor containing Iranian influence in the region and rely on U.S. assistance to do so and the Obama administration needed to cooperate with the kingdom and the GCC in conducting counter-terror operations. However, given that the U.S. invasion of Iraq empowered the Shia and allowed Iran to expand its influence in the country, the United States had to strike a delicate balance between competing sectarian cleavages.

But the consequence of U.S. extrication was living with other powers filling the void. In 2015, Russia intervened in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime and China has increased its presence in the region with its deployment of naval escort fleets in the Gulf of Aden near the Somali coast, and development of naval support facilities in Djibouti, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, a naval repair station in Pakistan, and an air support facility in the Seychelles (Gady 2015). According to David Rothkopf (quoted in Horsley 2016), "I think the president viewed his mandate as getting us out of Iraq and getting us out of Afghanistan and not getting us into any more wars. What we have seen is if you get out too fast, that creates a void which contributed to the rise of IS. If you don't get in, we have seen some others who have opportunistically gotten involved and made the situation worse." According to former U.S. ambassador Ryan Crocker (quoted in Trofimov 2015), "If you look at the heart of the Middle East, where the U.S. once was, we are now gone—and in our place, we have Iran, Iran's Shiite proxies, Islamic State and the Russians." America's Sunni allies feel especially abandoned by Obama after he failed to topple Assad's regime following its sarin gas attack on Syrian civilians in 2013.

U.S. foreign policy priorities were shifting away from the Middle East and the Obama administration believed the United States had other more significant interests as the center of gravity was moving to Asia and the Pacific in general and China. Obama believed that the United States needed to prioritize the Asia-Pacific. To implement his retrenchment strategy from the Middle East, Obama sought to boost U.S. domestic extraction American crude oil and natural gas, withdraw U.S. ground troops from Iraq, and pursue multilateral nuclear negotiations with Iran (Goldberg 2016a). But the driving force behind Obama's Middle East strategy was his promise to a war-weary American electorate in the 2008 election to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq. He campaigned on pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq and promised to focus on rebuilding the U.S. economy and nation-building at home (Trofimov 2015).

The test of Obama's strategy toward the region came in Libya in 2011. Obama's reluctance to use ground troops in securing post-Gadhafi Libya in 2011 was motivated by what he saw as previous destructive decisions made by U.S. presidents in the region. Obama did not want to be stung by taking ownership of yet another military foray into a Middle Eastern

country. He believed that backing up the United Kingdom and France through NATO was the more pragmatic decision as it limited the U.S. role to destroying Libyan air defenses, conducting surveillance and intelligence gathering and operating refueling missions. Obama opposed deploying ground forces in Libya to settle the chaos following the death of Muammar Gaddafi and limited the U.S. role in the NATO intervention leading many to conclude he was "leading from behind" (Cohen 2011).

The chaos left in the wake of the 2011 NATO intervention not only led the IS to use Libya as a terrorist haven, it proved to Obama that military intervention and regime change were just as ineffective as in Iraq. Obama (quoted in Goldberg 2016a) describes it in the following light: "So we actually executed this plan as well as I could have expected: We got a U.N. mandate, we built a coalition, it cost us $1 billion—which, when it comes to military operations, is very cheap. We averted large-scale civilian casualties, we prevent what almost surely would have been a prolonged and bloody civil conflict. And despite all that, Libya is a mess."

Obama's reluctance to target the Assad regime in Syria led Russia to launch airstrikes against all of Assad's enemies. As Obama (quoted in Parsons and Memoli 2015) stated, "We're not going to make Syria into a proxy war between the United States and Russia. . . . This is not some superpower chessboard contest." Given the chaos that has taken place and in light of U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, it appeared as if Obama preferred to offload responsibility for stabilizing Syria to Russia. As Obama (quoted in Parsons and Memoli 2015) stated, "Iran and Assad make up Mr. Putin's coalition at the moment. The rest of the world makes up ours."

U.S. DOMESTIC ENERGY EXTRACTION

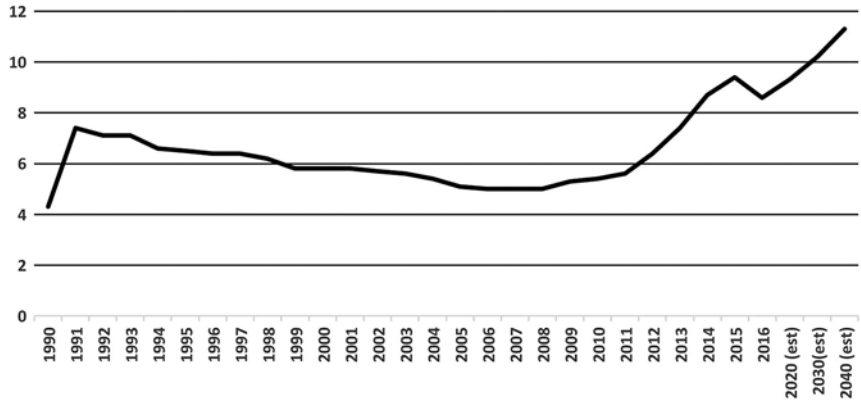
Since the Second World War, America's thirst for oil, natural gas, and other resources has driven American foreign policy toward the Middle East. To expand its consumer-driven economy, the United States needed access to natural resources and raw materials in the Middle East. This would help the United States ensure the stable flow of these resources to both itself and its allies, thereby sustaining the prevailing international order and securing global energy markets. The United States, essentially, could not retrench after the end of the Second World War. For the international order to thrive, the United States had to pursue a preponderance model of foreign policy that placed the Middle East at the center of its global ambitions and provide secure access to its allies in doing so. According to Hudson (1996: 332), foreign oil was "a cheap supplement to declining U.S. reserves, and the West's oil-driven postwar economic development."

Following the Second World War, securing access to petroleum became a U.S. security priority as it was a "stupendous source of strategic power and one of the greatest material prizes in world history" (DOS 1945). In 1945, 10 percent of the world's oil was produced in the Middle East, a rate that increased to 25 percent in 1960 (Odell 1968). By the 1970s, the United States was importing roughly 50 percent of its oil from the Middle East. U.S. petroleum imports rose sharply in the 1970s, especially from nations that comprise OPEC (EIA n.d.).

However, as the United States emerged from Great Recession, the Obama administration sought to mitigate the impact of its own dependence on Middle Eastern oil by ramping up domestic petroleum extraction. Although extraction dropped every year between 1985 and 2008, it increased substantially from 2009 to 2015 with extraction increasing by 16.2 percent in 2014 (1.2 million barrels per day), the largest annual jump in more than sixty years. Crude oil extraction is estimated to rise from 8.7 million barrels per day in 2014 to 9.4 million barrels per day in 2015 and then decline to 9 million barrels per day in 2016. But during the Obama presidency, U.S. domestic extraction of oil expanded from roughly 2 million barrels per day in 2009 to 3.4 in 2015 resulting in significant decreases in the price per barrel of oil. Also, extraction increases allowed the United States to scale back imports of crude oil and petroleum from the Persian Gulf from 68,757 thousand barrels per day in January 2009 to 47,129 thousand in January 2016 (EIA 2016b). The boost in U.S. oil extraction, along with relaxation of sanctions on Iranian oil after 2015, contributed to an overabundance in global oil supplies (Krauss 2017).

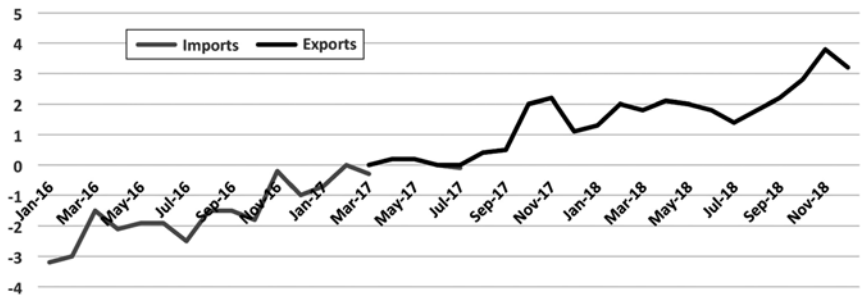
Under Obama, the United States became a net exporter of petroleum products and began exporting crude oil for the first time in decades. In 2016, the United States consumed 19.6 million barrels of oil per day and extracted roughly 14.6 million barrels of oil per day (EIA 2016e). Under Obama, the United States grew less dependent on petroleum imports, which peaked in 2005 and fell until 2015 (EIA 2016; 2016e). In 2016, the United States imported roughly 9.4 million barrels of petroleum per day from eighty-eight countries with Canada (38%), Saudi Arabia (11%), Venezuela (8%), Mexico (7%), and Colombia (5%) as America's top suppliers of petroleum (EIA 2016d; 2016e). In 2016, the percentage of U.S. imports from OPEC and Persian Gulf countries decreased and the share of imports from Canada increased.

Obama's boost in energy extraction was driven primarily by two developments. During Obama's time in office, the United States expanded America's number of offshore oil rigs. Among the world's 1,470 offshore oil rigs, 247 are now located in the United States with 175 in the Gulf of Mexico (second most in the world), 28 off the coasts of the United States, and 5 off Alaska alone (Brixey-Williams 2015; Statistica n.d.). Second, new drilling techniques in shale formations, such as hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and horizontal drilling in the United States as well as in the Gulf of Mexico, had



Graph 5.1 U.S. Domestic Oil Extraction 1990–2040 (million barrels/day). *Sources*: Energy Information Administration. 2016b. "Annual Energy Outlook 2016 with Projections to 2040." August 2016. https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/pdf/0383(2016).pdf; 2016d. "Top *Sources* and Amounts of U.S. Petroleum Imports (percent share of total), Respective Exports, and Net Imports, 2015." October 4, 2014. http://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=727&t=6.

accelerated energy extraction. The expanded use of fracking during Obama's presidency enabled U.S. energy corporations to tap into hard to reach reservoirs of oil and natural gas long ensnared in shale formations using horizontal drilling practices (McBride and Sergie 2015). Obama's energy regulations resulted in roughly nine of ten natural gas wells having been drilled using fracking methods. The most rapidly expanding area of U.S. crude oil extraction has been tight oil obtained from shale, increasing by roughly 4.5 million barrels of oil per day in 2014 compared to 0 in 1999 (Brown and Yucel 2013). More offshore drilling, horizontal drilling, and hydraulic fracturing led to a corresponding drop in petroleum imports between 2006 and 2014 (EIA 2017a; 2017c; 2016d; Lawrence 2014: 1–4).



Graph 5.2 U.S. Natural Gas Trade (billion cubic feet/day). *Source*: Energy Information Administration. 2017a. "United States Expected to Become Net Exporter of Natural Gas This Year." August 9, 2017. https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=32412.

The extraction of natural gas also increased under Obama. More than 25 percent of U.S. natural gas has been extracted from shale and is expected to reach 50 percent by 2035 (Levi 2013: 24). U.S. extraction of natural gas rose from 55 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d) in 2008 to 72.5 Bcf/d in 2016 (EIA 2017a). In 2013 alone, U.S. proven reserves of natural gas increased by 10 percent with recoverable reserves increasing by an additional 10 percent of global supply (McBride and Sergie 2015). The massive increase in natural gas extraction and distribution under Obama led to a corresponding drop in prices from a high of $13.42 in October 2005 to $3.30/million British thermal units (Btu) in January 2017 (EIA 2015b; n.d.). The United States surpassed Russia in 2009 as the world's leading producer of natural gas and is now a net exporter of natural gas (EIA 2016c; 2017a).

The sharp drop in oil and natural gas prices resulting from the Obama administration's boost in domestic energy extraction impacted energy-producing states. With the collapse in the price per barrel of oil from the high of $100 in 2014 to less than roughly $40 in 2016, energy-producing states began struggling, due mainly to mismanagement of funds, corruption, and lack of economic diversification. For example, Venezuela suffered food shortages and political instability, Nigeria experienced a financial crisis, and Angola endured a collapse in GDP and health and social services (Holodny 2016; Partlow and Zuñiga 2016; Sieff 2016). The flood of U.S. oil and gas into global energy markets that took place under Obama threatened the stability of these states, which have traditionally relied on prices remaining at inflated levels to ensure a steady stream of revenue (Hutt 2016; OPEC n.d.).

The bulk of U.S. trade with the Middle East is focused on oil and some limited manufactured products. Middle Eastern countries are not well integrated with the global economy and much of the region maintains high tariffs and barriers to foreign investment. Only 4 percent of U.S. exports go to Middle Eastern countries and just 3 percent of U.S. imports come from the Middle East (BEA n.d. Census n.d.). The U.S. imports mainly crude oil from the Middle East, but does import a very limited amount of precious stones, pharmaceuticals, clothing, and machine products. U.S. corporations frequently cite corruption, weak institutions, cultural differences, corruption, and lack of transparency as reasons for not investing in the Middle East.

While trade and investment between the United States and Middle East have traditionally been limited, focusing primarily on crude oil and refined petroleum, the Obama administration attempted to bring the Middle East into the rules-based system of trade and investment with its "Trade and Investment Partnership" initiative (BEA n.d; Census n.d.). The goal of the program was to promote trade and investment within the broader Middle East and North Africa, develop greater opportunities in the region for U.S. businesses and firms, and reform and elevate practices and standards for trade

liberalization and investment (Obama 2011a; Sapiro 2011; USTR 2012). However, compared with other regions of the world, Middle Eastern economies are not as deeply integrated with the global economy (Singh 2014).

INTERVENTION BY OTHER MILITARY MEANS

Although the Obama administration has been constrained by global crises and resisted the deployment of significant numbers of U.S. troops around the world and wars of occupation, it has ramped up the use of Special Operations Forces, clandestine missions, and armed drone strikes to combat threats and enemies such as the IS in Syria, Iraq, Africa, and South Asia, and militants in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Obama significantly increased the use of elite forces and commandos, drones, and cyber weapons. The size of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has increased from 33,000 in 2001 to over 70,000 in 2018 with the most significant increases taking place under Obama (Feickert 2018; SOCOM 2015; 2012; 2009). As Jon Alterman (quoted in Parsons and Hennigan 2017) argues, "The whole concept of war has changed under Obama" and although he "got the country out of 'war,' at least as we used to see it, we're now wrapped up in all these different conflicts, at a low level and with no end in sight." This was, in part, a reaction to regime change and preventive war embraced by George W. Bush.

At the peak of the U.S. military presence in both Iraq and Afghanistan, roughly 13,000 Special Operations Forces were deployed around the world with the bulk in those two countries. However, Obama relied heavily on special operators. During the Obama administration, 50 percent of U.S. Special Operations Forces were deployed in eighty-five countries (Gallagher 2015: SR6; Mazzetti and Schmitt 2015: A1; Zenko 2015). This included plans for increasing the number of special operations forces from 50 to roughly 300 in Syria to advise and assist groups taking on the IS (Jaffe, Ryan, and De Young 2016).

It also includes Obama's deployments of special operations forces to Cameroon and Nigeria to combat Boko Haram. The threat from the IS in the wake of major terrorist attacks across the Middle East, France and Belgium, and San Bernardino led Obama to depend more on Special Operations Forces. While the president has resisted deployments of larger numbers of ground forces, the increased use of the Special Forces against terrorists and insurgents has led some to question whether Obama (quoted in Williamson 2015) has gone back on his "no boots on the ground" pledge. According to Obama (quoted in Zenko 2015), "You know, when I said, 'No boots on the ground,' I think the American people understood generally that we're not going to do an Iraq-style invasion of Iraq or Syria with battalions that are moving across the desert." Although the U.S. military footprint is lighter under Obama

than Bush, it has become more dispersed and involves greater use of Special Operations Forces (Delman 2016c).

In addition to the more expanded use of Special Operations Forces, Obama operated a covert armed drone program targeting terrorists, and militants in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. The United States has also imported drone technology from Israel, exported armed drones to the United Kingdom, sent ScanEagle drones to Iraq, and participated in the NATO Airborne Ground Surveillance. *New America* reported that as of 2016, the U.S. deployed roughly 7,000 drones, 200 of which are armed and used in targeting killing operations. There are eighty-six states that possess armed and unarmed drones with the United States, Israel, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Iraq, Nigeria, and Iran conducting armed drone strikes against enemy targets and nineteen states have acquired armed drone technology. Moreover, roughly 680 drone programs were operated by governments, corporations, and institutes 2011 compared to 195 in 2005. According to the Teal Group, global demand for drone technology is expected to double from $5.2 billion to $11.6 billion to roughly $89 billion each year between 2013 and 2023 (see: Gertler 2012: 3–10; New America n.d.; Teal Group).

The CIA-led armed drone campaign was initiated under President George W. Bush first in Yemen in 2002 and then expanded to Somalia in 2003 and Pakistan in 2004 and dramatically expanded under President Obama. From 2002 to 2016, there have been a total of 579 strikes resulting in between 3,548 and 5,222 militants, civilians, and unknown individuals having been killed in covert drone strikes in Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia. This includes between 2,969 and 4,428 militants, 370 and 445 civilians, and between 209 and 349 unknown individuals (Entous and Barnes 2011; MacAskill 2015; Mazzetti, Schmitt, and Worth 2011: A6; McLeary and Robinson 2015; NATO 2018; New America n.d.; Nissenbaum 2013; Ratnam 2010).

In June 2016, the Obama administration released a long-awaited report claiming that it launched 473 drone and other airstrikes, killing an estimated 2,372 and 2,581 "combatants" and 64 to 116 civilians outside conventional war zones like Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, and Libya between 2009 and 2015 (Ackerman 2016; Obama 2016). However, the official assessment using an estimated range of civilian deaths indicates that the United States does not really know how many and exactly who were killed (Savage and Shane 2016: A1).

In Yemen, from 2002 to 2016, 131 drone strikes and 16 airstrikes (cruise missile attacks) killed between 974 and 1,242 militants, civilians, and unknown individuals with nearly all of these strikes having been launched by the Obama administration. As of 2016, drone strikes have killed between 854 and 1,097 militants, mostly targeting suspected terrorists with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and between 73 and 114 with the Ansar al-Sharia terror

group. Two of the highest profile targets included Yemeni-American Al-Qaeda extremist Anwar al-Awlaki in 2011 and Fahd al-Quso who the United States charged with carrying out the 2000 terrorist attack on the USS Cole. However, as of 2016, a significant number of civilians and unknown individuals (estimated between 87 and 93) have been killed in Yemen with the casualty rate averaging roughly 14 to 15 percent. For example, in one drone strike on December 12, 2013, up to fifteen civilians were killed as they were traveling to a wedding (New America n.d.).

Drone strikes in Pakistan have mainly targeted militants and extremists fighting with the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and the Haqqani network. Between 2004 and 2016, there have been a total of 402 drone strikes that killed between 2,282 and 3,623 militants, civilians, and unknown individuals. Under Obama, there have been 353 reported drone strikes that killed between 1,905 and 3,065 in comparison to 48 drone strikes under Bush that killed between 377 and 558. Data indicate that drone strikes expanded dramatically during the Obama administration, reaching a peak of 122 strikes in Pakistan in 2010. However, just 2 percent of all reported deaths in drone strikes in Pakistan were militant and extremist leaders (New America n.d.).

In Somalia, since U.S. military operations began early in the G. W. Bush administration, the United States has launched a total of thirty strikes in the country. Since 2013, between 295 and 360 have been killed with 267 to 304 militants, 28 to 37 civilians, and up to 19 unknown individuals killed in Somalia. Seventeen of these were ground raids and cruise missile strikes and thirteen were drone strikes against suspected militant targets. Under Obama, the number of armed drone strikes increased in Somalia (New America n.d.).

Overall, the Obama administration rapidly increased the number of covert drone strikes in Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia. The likely reason for the expansion of the CIA-armed drone campaign is because of sustained public opposition to the deployment of U.S. ground operations against militants, terrorists, and insurgents in the Middle East. Although the United States has increased its air campaign against the IS and deployed roughly fifty Special Operations Forces in Syria, the American public in 2014 and 2015 was strongly inclined to oppose deploying U.S. ground troops in Syria and Iraq, although it grew more conflicted at the end of 2015 following a series of IS-inspired or directed terror attacks. Most in the U.S. public supported armed drone strikes against militants in Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia, although most publics around the world oppose them (CNN/ORC 2015: 9; Mazzetti and Schmitt 2015: A1; McCarthy 2015; Pew 2015; 2014; 2013).

However, instability and threats made to upset the balance of power in the Middle East have kept a considerable number of American military forces in the region even though U.S. OCO have, for the most part, ended in Iraq. Now, there are roughly 23,000 U.S. military personnel stationed in Kuwait at

Ali Al Salem Air Base which has supported most of the American air strikes against the IS in Syria and Iraq, and provides airlift for U.S. Central Command. The Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force is also based in Kuwait, serving as a non-combat force that provides humanitarian aid and embassy security. Another 1,500 U.S. service personnel are deployed to Jordan as part of the U.S. Central Command to assist the Jordanian military, 300 to Saudi Arabia to promote military cooperation and regional stability, and several hundred deployed to Egypt as part of a multinational effort to provide stability in the Sinai Peninsula (Eaglen 2015: 9–12; Whitlock 2014).

The U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet is headquartered in Bahrain where it patrols the Persian Gulf and conducts stabilization missions across the region. There are 8,000 U.S. military personnel and U.S. warplanes deployed to Al Udeid Air Base near Doha, Qatar, where the United States has launched air strikes against the ISs as well as to Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates (Capaccio 2014; Eaglen 2015: 12; Whitlock 2014). In addition, the United States conducts regular missions with Turkey air patrols and has launched attacks against the IS from the Incirlik Air Base (Sly and Cunningham 2015).

For all its demonstrated commitments to scale down America's military forces in the region, the Obama administration continued the practice of military intervention even in the absence of deploying significant numbers of American ground troops. The NATO-led mission that toppled Gadhafi in Libya led to further instability in the country, which contributed to Obama's refusal to intervene in Syria and get involved in another civil war in the Middle East. At the same time, the United States cut back its OCO and it boosted the use of Special Operations Forces and armed drones (Goldberg 2016a). Moreover, the rise of the IS and the Syrian Civil War made it difficult for Obama to carry out its pivot to Asia and the Pacific as it forced the United States to continue to devote American resources to the Middle East. Obama was not able to achieve a peace dividend after he withdrew military from Iraq.

ARAB SPRING

Perhaps the most significant challenge was the Arab Spring. While slow in his response, Obama voiced general support for popular anti-regime uprisings and democratic movements in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya while at the same time he promoted the comprehensive U.S. strategic interest of stability in the Persian Gulf. But he was highly selective in his response to violence directed at protesters. While Obama would abandon Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Tunisian president Zine el-Abidine Ben-Ali, he failed to push for reforms in Bahrain and did not protest Saudi military intervention that

backed up the Bahraini monarchy's crushing of peaceful protests. Obama's lack of a response to the Saudi intervention was an extension of America's long-term policy of counterbalancing Iranian interests in the Persian Gulf. Seeing an opportunity to remove long time American nemesis Muammar Gaddafi from power, he backed U.S. participation in NATO-led airstrikes in Libya and actively supported the rebel National Transition Council. And although Obama called on President Bashar al-Assad in Syria to step down, he put U.S. foreign policy in a contradictory trajectory as he seemed unwilling to use force to topple Assad.

While Obama embraced democratic principles in his 2009 Cairo University speech, his unwillingness to immediately side with demonstrators reflected an inability to think beyond the long-term strategy of U.S. support for autocratic governments. According to the former U.S. ambassador Israel Martin Indyk, "Obama did his best, in a very difficult situation, to get the United States on the right side of history. But we had a good 40 years of U.S. policy backing regimes that the people in the street overthrew" (quoted in Baker and Landler 2012: A1).

Obama's struggle to respond to the Arab Spring should be framed within the broader context of American foreign policy's fundamental inability to understand the extent of the Sunni-Shia divide across the region. U.S. foreign policy has never fully grasped or appreciated the importance of history, ideology, nationalism and sectarianism, opting instead to view the region strictly through the lens of geopolitical concerns and energy. As demonstrated in the Syrian Civil War, terrorists, tribal leaders, autocratic regimes, and the major powers tapped into ethnic and religious tensions in Iraq and Syria to exploit them to their advantage.

The 2011 Arab Spring presented an opportunity for publics to instill the same democratic values Obama emphasized in his 2009 speech at Cairo University into building post-autocratic governing systems. Popular movements and NATO airstrikes in Libya led to the death of Muammar Gaddafi and overthrew police states in Egypt and Tunisia. In both Egypt and Tunisia, successful Islamist parties demonstrated a willingness to work within established systems to build new social and political orders. Egypt's Justice and Freedom party, which had ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, dominated parliamentary elections in the immediate wake of the overthrow of the regime of Hosni Mubarak and elected Islamist Mohammed Morsi as president. Morsi's government distanced itself from the ultraconservative Salafists who often viewed the Brotherhood with suspicion because it sought to reform Egypt from within and promised to uphold Egypt's treaty commitments. In Tunisia, the Islamist Ennahda party reached out to form a new government with moderates and secular leftists. Under Islamists, Tunisians were free to make their own choices about religion, Salafis became more visible, the headscarf and

abaya could now be worn in public, and mosques were now seen as centers for social reform.

The Obama administration was aware of the political risks of supporting newly elected Islamist governments. While democracy was preferred, to varying degrees, many believed Islam should play a major role in political life (Pew 2012). The early successes of Islamist parties in local and national elections in Turkey and Malaysia demonstrated that Islamism enjoyed broad public support as millions were reconciling Islamic values with contemporary global trends. A consistent trend in public opinion polls was that the United States does not support democracy in the Middle East given its history of backing autocratic rulers in the region (Pew 2012).

However, Islamist rule imploded in Egypt and lost credibility in Tunisia. In Egypt, Morsi and the Justice and Freedom Party failed to effectively govern the country and their hold on power was challenged when the courts invalidated the results of the parliamentary elections, which led millions of Egyptians to protest the Islamist government and the military removed Morsi and replaced him with General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. In Tunisia, after failing to improve the economy and adequately deal with internal security threats from militants, the Islamist Ennahda fell out of public favor resulting in the newly formed secularist Nidaa Tounes party (Call of Tunisia) capturing the Tunisian parliament and presidency with the victory of Beji Caid (Markey and Amara 2014).

Although Obama participated in the NATO mission that helped topple Gaddafi from power, the subsequent chaos in the country appeared to stem from the provisional government's opposition to the creation of a U.N.-brokered post-war security plan. This seemed consistent with Obama's preference for security in the Middle East being provided by states in the Middle East. His 2008 election commitment to withdrawing troops from Iraq and avoidance of additional deployments of American troops elsewhere in the region explains why he sought to leave post-Gaddafi Libya to the Libyans and, in doing so, in turmoil and instability (Cohen 2011). When the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi was attacked, killing four Americans and U.S. ambassador Christopher Stevens, Obama seemed uninterested in preventing Libya from further splintering (Gattas 2016). Since the embassy attacks, the Islamist Libya Dawn controlling Tripoli and Operation Dignity (former Gaddafi fighters) in Zintan have vied for control of Libya as the IS moved to take advantage of the void (Kirkpatrick 2015: A9).

In many ways, the NATO intervention in Libya was a key feature in Obama's foreign policy strategy. It was a signal that the United States would defer to long-standing alliances and build support multilateral cooperation as opposed to rushing in under the umbrella of regime change. NATOs actions against Gadhafi under the auspices of U.N. Security Council resolution 1973

signaled a measure of international legitimacy to avoid the appearance of unilateralism. However, Obama based U.S. participation in NATO airstrikes in Libya on a multilateral approach and humanitarian grounds designed to be on the side of popular uprisings against autocrats (Stromberg 2011). But the specter of regime change and another military intervention in the Middle East hung over his administration.

The Arab Spring threatened to lead to extended period of turmoil and upheaval throughout the broader Middle East. Obama's immediate concern was protecting U.S. diplomatic missions in the wake of the violence that resulted in the death of U.S. ambassador Christopher Stevens and other U.S. officials in Libya and attacks on U.S. embassies and consulates in Yemen, Egypt, and Tunisia. It also represented a serious political challenge to the central elements in Obama's Mideast policy and raised the question of whether the United States did enough in the wake of the Arab Spring to help the region in its transition toward democracy.

The eruption of violence and war in Libya, Yemen, and Syria reflected a broader challenge for Obama in resetting American foreign policy toward the Middle East following years of U.S. support for repressive regimes and U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Obama administration struggled with balancing support for popular movements and securing American interests as political Islam and Islamist parties rose to power. The transition to popular rule will continue to haunt Obama's successors, especially since the United States has a long history of backing police states that kept Islamist movements in check and carried out America's strategic goal of stabilizing the region.

SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

From the beginning, Obama and U.S. allies were divided over how best to address Syria and the future of the Assad regime. At the same time NATO intervened in Libya, it failed to act in Syria against Assad's regime. Obama accused Assad of being the primary facilitator of the chaos in Syria because of his initial actions against demonstrators and civilians in 2011 during the Arab Spring uprising. Obama responded with a regime change strategy by calling on Assad to step down, which threatened Russia since it maintained a naval facility in Tartus and Assad was one of its most important clients in the region (Eilperin and De Young 2015). Obama also argued that Assad's regime must be pushed aside if there is to be any negotiated settlement to the civil war (Cooper and Gordon 2015: A14).

Obama's preconditions were highly problematic. When in 2011 the United States demanded impulsively that "Assad must go," the Obama administration

placed itself in a straightjacket by eliminating diplomatic options that might have saved thousands of lives and ended the civil war earlier (Wilson and Warrick 2011). Moreover, the president's own statement that the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons would cross a "red line" made matters worse by setting himself up for failure when Obama himself decided not to launch airstrikes when Assad eventually did use weapons of mass destruction against civilians in 2013 (Kessler 2013). While U.S. participation in the NATO intervention put Obama on the side of a popular insurgency in Libya, the inability to attack Assad's forces in Syria showed just how tepid, cautious, and selective Obama's Middle East really was during the Arab Spring.

Whereas Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah supported Assad and intervened in Syria on his behalf, America's Sunni allies preferred that the United States overthrow him. While Obama called on Assad to step aside, he failed to target the regime even after it used chemical weapons in 2013. Since roughly two-thirds of Syrian rebels share roughly the same extremist ideology as IS, Obama was hesitant to provide anti-Assad forces military assistance (Peralta 2015). The lack of a unified and comprehensive strategy for ending the Syrian civil war not only worsened the Syrian civil war, it made it impossible for Obama to negotiate an end to the war and promote a post-Assad governing structure.

Moreover, the Russian intervention in Syria in 2015 and the involvement of elite Iranian troops and Lebanese Hezbollah fighters limited Obama's ability to bring the Syrian civil war to an end. For Obama, the deployment of massive numbers of U.S. troops in a Russian client state would have made it more challenging to negotiate with Iran over limiting its nuclear program and initiate peace talks in Vienna to help bring the civil war to an end (Lynch and Hudson 2015). Moreover, more direct American intervention, especially the use of ground troops, would likely be met with strong U.S. public opposition and international condemnation. Russia and China would certainly veto any United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force in Syria and NATO might be cool to the action in the wake of its 2011 intervention in Libya (Callimachi 2015: A1).

The lack of a coherent American policy or unified strategy toward Assad and the singular focus on degrading IS meant that the United States and its allies ceded much of the ground to other powers with vested interests in supporting the Syrian regime. Russian military force in Syria and Iranian assistance to Assad demonstrated that Assad's allies would not hesitate to act against U.S.-backed Syrian rebels. America's program of training and arming the rebels was a failure, with many U.S. weapons and equipment having been captured by competing rebel groups and the Al-Qaeda linked al-Nusra front since most Syrian rebels were sympathetic to Islamic extremism (Graham-Harrison and Luhn 2015; Peralta 2015).

Its intervention and escalation in Syria means that Russia is presenting Assad as the only real alternative for ending the war and repelling the IS and other terror groups. Even though it was placed under American and European sanctions for its annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in eastern Ukraine, Russia sent a message to the United States and its allies in the region, especially Saudi Arabia and Turkey, that it will not be denied a role in the region.

Obama did seem to be willing, at times, to work with Russia and Iran in bringing the violence and bloodshed to an end. In his statement at the United Nations in September 2015, the Obama (2015b) stated, "Lasting stability can only take hold when the people of Syria forge an agreement to live together peacefully. The US is prepared to work with any nation, including Russia and Iran, to resolve the conflict. But we must recognize that there cannot be, after so much bloodshed, so much carnage, a return to the pre-war status quo." It was thought that if the United States and Russia could put aside their differences, there may new momentum in the regional fight against the IS, both Russia and the United States have much to gain. Russia could benefit by protecting its influence inside Syria and the eastern Mediterranean, build its image as a reliable partner in the international fight against terrorism, and possibly ease some of the sanctions imposed in the wake of its annexation of Crimea. In exchange, the United States and Europe might gain by edging Russia away from eastern Ukraine or encouraging it to lessen its support for the rebels (MacFarquhar 2016: A1).

The Russian intervention and escalation was not merely about driving back the IS; rather, it was about Russia supporting a strategic ally in Assad and protecting its regional interests and balancing against the United States at the same time. Russia was interested in maintaining the Assad regime given that, in the past, it had forgiven Syria billions in debt, sold weapons to the regime, and sought to maintain its naval facility at Tartus. Unlike the Obama administration, which encouraged the spread of democracy across the Middle East in his 2009 Cairo University speech, Russia viewed democratic movements in the Arab Spring as destabilizing forces and an attempt to limit its spheres of influence.

Russia also highlighted the consequences of U.S. regime change policy in the region, especially the chaos left in the wake of the toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. Both interventions led to a cycle of instability of terrorism and political instability. As President Putin stated, "We have been actively opposing everything that took place . . . in Iraq, Libya, and some other countries. Therefore, regime change in Syria would not only deprive Russia a base of influence in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, it meant losing an important client state (Hicks et al. 2017: 54–59).

Russia's moves in Syria would likely not result in Assad reestablishing full control over the country and its borders, but it could help Assad remain in power at least in the short term by posing as a leader against IS. It also gave Russia enough room to repair some ties with the European Union and United States over its meddling in eastern Ukraine. Moreover, Obama's reluctance to intervene meant that U.S. foreign policy seemed to be bending toward Russia's strategy of shoring up the Assad regime at least in the short run.

Obama had to come to terms with the reality that the Assad regime, while losing control over much of the country to rebels and terrorists, would remain intact given Russia's military presence in Syria. As Secretary of State John Kerry (2015) stated, it is not necessary for the Syrian regime to transition away from Assad "on day one, or month one, or whatever." Kerry's words reveal a sizable shift in tone away from Obama's position, which is that Assad's removal is key to diffusing the civil war, vital in stemming the tide of foreign fighters entering the country, and a precondition for peace with the opposition. Russian would therefore shape the peace process and safeguard its military presence in the eastern Mediterranean. Russia perceived the Assad family as the best, most secure institutional vehicle for prolonging those interests and would prefer Assad himself remain in power at least in the short term. This would guarantee Russia's strategic foothold in Syria, which would force any post-Assad government to remain tied to its presence.

An International Syria Support Group consisting of the Arab League, China, Egypt, European Union, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, and the United Nations was convened on October 30 to bring the Syrian civil war to an end (DeYoung 2015). The Assad government was excluded from the talks. The multilateral group agreed to maintain Syria's secular and territorial sovereignty and consented to a U.N.-sponsored plan, overseen by special envoy for Syria Steffan de Mistura, to hold talks between the Syrian government and opposition to participate in an inclusive governing process (Jahn and Lee 2015). Russia proposed creating a new constitution with eighteen months of the Vienna talks that would be voted on by the Syrian people in a national referendum followed up by a national presidential election. However, the specific role that would be played by Assad during this transition process was left in doubt, which meant that Iran holds significant influence over any peace deal (Lynch and Hudson 2015). Russia's military intervention increased its leverage in the peace talks, giving it a much stronger negotiating position on helping end the civil war. These peace terms, including finding common ground on which rebel groups can participate in the talks, were unanimously endorsed by the U.N. Security Council and the Assad regime could send representatives to the talks (DeYoung 2015).

As the civil war in Syria dragged on throughout 2016, the Obama administration resigned itself to prioritizing the retaking of territory from the IS by the Iraqi government and limiting its airstrikes to IS targets in Syria, effectively conceding to Russia that Assad would remain in power at least in the short term. While American and Russian interests align in the fight against the IS, the Syrian Civil War is a much broader conflict that will reshape regional politics. The Obama administration's position in Syria has been hampered by its inability to not acknowledge Russian security interests in the eastern Mediterranean, especially its desire to secure naval and military installations within Syria and protect its sphere of influence in the region. Russia believes NATO's military action in Libya and the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and American support for the Gulf States upset Middle Eastern stability. Foreign meddling and the removal of sovereign yet autocratic regimes have contributed to the type of chaos Russia fears most. But Russian intervention in Syria and its leadership in securing a peace deal helped boost its role in the Middle East at a time when the United States was growing increasingly detached from the region (Hudson and McLeary 2016). Most important, the incoming Trump administration was willing to support Russia's leadership in the peace settlement (Dewan 2016).

The civil war in Syria highlighted the weakening connections between the United States and its allies in the region, namely the Gulf Arab states. These states have backed Sunni extremist groups and other jihadists fighting to topple Assad and have sought to hinder his supporters in Iran by supporting them. Gulf state support for jihadists will complicate the peace process and hamper the transition to a post-Assad Syria. In other words, America's traditional Gulf state allies and clients are growing less dependent on the United States as Obama grew less inclined to protect their interests and provide security to the region. American and Arab interests in the Middle East have were diverging during the Obama years.

THE ISLAMIC STATE

As one of the most aggressive and ambitious extremist groups, the IS evolved from AQI and built its support network from Sunnis in Iraq's Anbar province, former Baathists, and Saddam Hussein loyalists. The conventional view is that Al-Qaeda split from the IS over disagreements with the level of violence carried out by IS under the leadership of Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. After Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike in 2006, AQI made the creation of an actual, functioning Sunni IS with defined borders—the centerpiece of its political and military efforts (McCants 2015; Sly 2015b). The IS operated under the command of professionally trained and experienced ex-Baathist military and intelligence officers once loyal to Saddam Hussein.

The entry of ex-Baathists into the IS added significant logistical capability to military command and control operations and moved to establish a vast criminal network, selling oil on the black market, and possessing the necessary military skills that Al-Qaeda lacked. The uprising against Assad in Syria presented these Sunni militants with the opportunity to regroup, expand, and rebrand themselves as the IS under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (McCants 2015; Sly 2015b). With Syrian government forces allied with Hezbollah locked in battle against rebel groups and given Iraqi Sunni distrust of the Shiite government in Baghdad and Iran, IS was able to seize large chunks of territory in both Syria and Iraq in 2014, including Mosul, Tikrit, and Raqqa, all of which were retaken by U.S.-back Iraqi or Kurdish forces by 2017.

The rise of the IS raises the question of whether the withdrawal of U.S. military force from Iraq in 2011 created the actual conditions for the subsequent battlefield successes of the terror group. The decision by Bush in 2003 to launch the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and the subsequent dismantling of Saddam Hussein's security services and de-Baathification of the military and state enraged the Sunni population, which would fuel the insurgency, AQI, and the rise of IS. Although Obama is not completely responsible for IS, he did not push Nouri al-Maliki, the prime minister of the Shia-dominated Iraqi government, to keep more U.S. troops in the country. However, Obama remained committed to the promise he made during the 2008 presidential campaign to withdraw U.S. troops from the country. Besides, it was President George W. Bush who signed the Status of Forces agreement in 2008, which stated that the United States would fully withdraw all U.S. troops by the end of 2011.

Also, thousands of U.S. troops were killed in Iraq and most Americans supported the withdrawal. Al-Qaeda and other insurgents waited for Obama to complete the withdrawal before launching offensives and securing control over Sunni areas that were targeted by the Shia-led regime. Put simply, Obama wanted to leave and did not attempt to convince Maliki that U.S. forces should remain. Moreover, the Maliki government was very corrupt and the Shia military and security forces were largely untrained, incapable, or not interested in taking on the mostly Sunni Islamic State. Furthermore, eastern Syria had already become a haven for jihadists with during the Syrian civil war. After U.S. troops left Iraq, Shia repression went largely unchecked, driving Sunnis to IS.

Given that the Sunni-Shia divide in Iraq was not going to be solved by Obama, he maintained that the only realistic approach would be to target IS in both Iraq and Syria. He also did not want to be tempted or goaded into intervening in with large numbers of ground troops, which could drive up Sunni sympathy for IS (Callimachi 2015: A1). Obama's anti-IS strategy focused mainly on peeling former Baathists away from the extreme Islamists within

the IS, thereby disrupting its infrastructure and logistical capability. As the Obama administration saw it, IS was not an Iraqi or Syrian entity; rather it was a military, political, and ideological threat.

The problem with the strategy was that it focused almost exclusively in the initial stage of the military campaign in Iraq because it had an ally in the new Iraqi government of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. Obama rushed U.S. advisers to Iraq in 2014 after the Iraqi military suffered humiliating defeats to the IS and was forced to relinquish large areas of territory. Although the United States conducted regular airstrikes against IS positions, al-Abadi promised to move against IS with limited assistance by U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Sunni stronghold of Anbar Province, although there were concerns that Iran was playing a greater in assisting Iraqi forces.

Iraq was forced to turn to Iran because the Iraqi army was largely undisciplined and unprepared to take on battle hardened by the IS fighters. Iraqi forces lacked sufficient support, are hampered by poor leadership from weak commanders, have failed to adequately manage their supply lines, and function as a mostly sectarian force of Shia fighters. Reliance on Shia militias and the heightened leadership role played by Iranian commanders on the battlefield is risky as it could spark a wider war with Sunni states. Former general and CIA director David Patraeus (quoted in Friedersdorf 2015) states, "In the region, the Shia militias, the proxies for Iran, are very dangerous. You sense, in fact, this possibility of an all-out Sunni-Shia civil war." Even though Obama supplied the Iraqi Army with over $1.6 billion in military aid, the Iraqi security forces suffered tremendous losses to the much smaller IS forces in 2014 and 2015 (Morris and Ryan 2016). Obama also sought to prevent Iran from stepping in to fill the void and to prevent Shia militia from gaining too much strength, which could lead to reprisals against Sunnis (al-Dagher 2015; Arango and Barnard 2015: A1).

Obama's military strategy was designed to build and train anti-IS forces by replicating the same counterinsurgency campaign that defeated AQI in 2006–2007, but this time led by Iraqi forces, not U.S. ground troops. The problem was that it failed to embrace a long-term political strategy, namely establishing autonomous areas within federal political systems (Naylor 2015; Sly 2016) or integrating Sunnis under the broader framework of national political reconciliation (Pollack 2016). In the end, Obama could not implement an effective strategy because of cuts to OCO, poor funding of the nondefense international affairs budget, and the reorientation and rebalancing of U.S. military forces to Asia and the Pacific. Any real strategy had to ensure that Sunnis could govern, secure, and police their own communities, building economic institutions, and freely worship without state interference (Cumming-Bruce 2016: A12; UNHCR 2015).

The Obama administration believed its military strategy of combining air strikes against IS, working with Kurdish militias, using limited special

operations forces, training Iraqi security forces, and keeping U.S. ground forces on the sidelines would be a successful strategy in the short term. But over the long run, Obama and the American public were unwilling to implement the same type of long-term investments in Iraq that were made by the United States in Western Europe and South Korea during the Cold War and post-Cold War (Delman 2016b). Most important, the ideological significance and power of political Islam is something the United States will not be able to combat over the long term (Ghattas 2015).

IRAN

The chaos in Iraq, which was caused by the 2003 U.S. invasion, left an opening for Iran, which viewed itself as a rising power with aspirations for regional hegemony. The Obama administration maintained that the P5+1 nuclear agreement would help check Iran's ambitions, reduce the potential for a wider regional war, mitigate the real possibility of a nuclear arms race among Middle Eastern states, and encourage the formation of a stable regional balance of power. With nuclear weapons, Iran could radically alter the balance of power in the region and spark a wider war in the Middle East.

The Obama administration's engagement with Iran was part of a long process of American presidents reaching out to moderates within the country. The Reagan administration supported an illegal program of selling arms to Iran to facilitate negotiations with moderate elements and secure the release of hostages (Butterfield 1988: 7). After the United States toppled the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Bush administration worked with Iran to form a new government and would later join the European Union in multilateral talks to encourage Iran to suspend enrichment activities (Kessler 2006; Sciolino and Lewis 2001). According to Lake (2016), "Every president since Ronald Reagan has reached out to Iran in search of moderates. Even George W. Bush reluctantly authorized emissaries to explore negotiations with the Teheran regime, before and during the Iraq War." By this point, the hardline president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad responded by accelerating the development of the country's nuclear program and reversing many of the moderate political reforms made by his predecessors. The 2013 election of moderate president Hassan Rouhani provided the opportunity for concluding the nuclear agreement.

A nuclear-armed Iran could destabilize the Middle East and encourage Saudi Arabia to pursue a nuclear weapons program. In the absence of an agreement, nothing would stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, creating a dangerous scenario that could spark a nuclear arms race in the already unstable and chaotic Middle East. If Iran were to possess nuclear weapons,

its major rivals in the region, namely Saudi Arabia and Egypt, might feel the need to develop their own nuclear programs.

The conclusion of the P5+1 nuclear talks with Iran required it to decrease uranium extraction, enrichment, and research and development. It also obligated Iran to transform underground plants into scientific research centers, scale back uranium plants, reconstitute nuclear reactors so it could not develop weapons-grade plutonium, and allow for International Atomic Energy Agency inspections. In exchange, the agreement lifted oil and financial sanctions and removed sanctions on armaments in roughly five years and on ballistic missiles in eight years. However, withdrawing of the United States from the P5+1 nuclear agreement by President Trump erased Obama's effort to mitigate the spread of nuclear weapons in the region.

OBAMA'S RETRENCHMENT

The Obama administration believed that in the past, the United States used military force to topple regimes, such as Saddam Hussein in Iraq, with little regard for ideological complexities and sectarian divisions between Sunnis led by Saudi Arabia and the Shia by Iran. Since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Saudi Arabia has feared the rise of Shia states and opposition groups throughout the region, goals shared by IS and Al-Qaeda. Over the years, Sunni states have severed or downgraded diplomatic relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia by even launching airstrikes against Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen (al-Mujahed and Naylor 2016).

For decades, the goal of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East was promoting regional stability with a strong U.S. military presence to ensure access to petroleum and secure global energy markets. However, U.S. domestic extraction expanded from 5 million in 2008 to 9.4 million barrels per day in 2015, allowing the United States to scale back imports from Persian Gulf states (EIA 2016a). The boost in domestic extraction was driven by the Obama administration's decision to expand offshore drilling, approve new oil rigs and enlarge hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and horizontal drilling (McBride and Sergie 2015). U.S domestic extraction will grow to 11.3 million barrels per day by 2040 as crude oil prices increase from roughly $50 per barrel in 2017 to $130 per barrel in 2040 (EIA 2016a).

The decision by Obama to launch airstrikes against IS targets in Syria and Iraq and not to attack the Assad regime reflected the president's desire not to get embroiled in another war in the Middle East in the face of significant U.S. public opposition. He understood that the United States could not get further enmeshed in the contradictions, confusion and ideological complexities that define the region and frustrate U.S. foreign policy (Goldberg 2016a).

Although the Obama administration resisted deploying significant numbers of U.S. troops, it intervened in other ways by increasing the size of U.S. Special Operations Command (Feickert 2018: 8–10; SOCOM 2015; 2012; 2009) and relying on special operators to advise and assist groups taking on the IS and Boko Haram terrorists in Nigeria and Cameroon (Cooper 2015: A14). In addition, driven largely by public opposition to the deployment of U.S. ground forces during Obama's presidency, the United States operated a covert drone program targeting terrorists, and militants in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia even though terrorism has decreased and given the fact that terrorist attacks in the United States are very rare.

Obama's long-term goal seemed to be establishing a stable regional balance between Sunni and Shia states that would obviate the need for the United States to provide security or intervene and respond to flare-ups driven largely by ideological complexities. Obama stated that the intention was to establish a "geopolitical equilibrium" among "Gulf states and Iran in which there's competition, perhaps suspicion, but not an active or proxy warfare" (quoted in Harris 2015: A8). Key to this strategy was supporting the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran, a decision the Obama administration believed would empower Iranian moderates as the country integrated with the global economy following the end of sanctions in exchange for weapons inspections (Cambanis 2015). However, the civil wars in Syria and Yemen demonstrate that in the absence of American diplomatic leadership in the region, proxy wars between Saudi Arabia and Iran have and will continue to take place.

The withdrawal of American troops from Iraq reflected something deeper about the Obama administration's foreign policy toward the region: overconfidence in the ability of allied governments to provide for their own regional security. Obama believed that the United States had meddled far too long in the Middle East especially in securing access to natural resources for itself and its allies. His solution was to offshore more responsibility to its Middle Eastern allies and work with the European Union to move closer to Iran, which angered Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the GCC. Moreover, the offshore balancing approach to the Middle East came at the same time Obama completing his rebalance to Asia and the Pacific, which could have signaled to Arab allies that Obama was not fully committed to their security.

There was little to nothing Obama could do to directly influence events in the Middle East. The chaos left in the wake of the United States overthrowing the Taliban in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, NATOs intervention and toppling of Gaddafi in Libya, and Obama's demand that Assad "must go" contributed to fears in both Syria and Iran that they were next on the regime change hit list. The Syrian and Iranian regimes had every reason to support anti-American forces in Iraq, further bogging down the United States and eroding domestic support for the war. And Obama had little interest in

providing more American resources at a time when he wanted to disentangle the United States from the region.

The Russian intervention in Syria presented Obama with the opportunity to help the United States disengage from the region and weaken Saudi Arabia's historic dependence on the United States. It was also an acknowledgment of Russia's rising influence in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia's relative acceptance of the continuation of Assad's regime. As Abbas (quoted in Nechepurenko and Hubbard 2017: A8) states, "We cannot ignore that Russia has become a key player in the Middle East, particularly due to the Obama doctrine that saw the U.S. role in the region shrink. Russia, with its financial and military might, stepped in to that equation." Besides, Obama's support for the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran signaled to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council that while his goal was to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, he was consenting to the relaxation of sanctions that would allow Iran to sell its oil. Obama's approach to the Middle East was part of his strategy of retrenching from the region and shifting the locus of U.S. foreign policy to Asia and the Pacific where believed the U.S. had more significant economic and security interests.

Chapter 6

Nation-Building at Home and America First

As part of his campaign for "nation-building at home," Barack Obama was elected to enact considerable changes in response to the Great Recession, reform the U.S. health-care system, end the war in Iraq and extricate the United States from the Middle East, and address rising unemployment. However, over the course of his presidency, Obama's political support at home eroded and the United States lost influence around the world. The Great Recession, U.S. intervention in Iraq, emerging economies and the rise of China, Russian resurgence in Europe and the Middle East, and other international and domestic events poked holes in the rules-based international order. This ultimately led to a less predictable and more precarious U.S. foreign policy under Obama, an implication of the emergence of a multipolar international system.

When Obama did engage, as he did by "leading from behind" with the NATO intervention in Libya, he was convinced the United States was dragged into another conflict in the Middle East. This led directly to his decision not to intervene in Syria after Assad used chemical weapons against civilians, propelling Russia to enter the war on behalf of the regime. This led to a refugee crisis that sparked right-wing movements throughout much of the West, bringing nationalists to power. This came at roughly the same time the United States was recovering slowly and painfully from the Great Recession, which reduced incomes and brought xenophobia out of the shadows. Trump and America First were the result.

Key to Obama's foreign policy strategy was inducing allies and partners in the Middle East and Europe to do more for their own security as opposed to relying on the United States to assume the lead. Offshoring the Middle East would allow him to pursue his rebalance to Asia and the Pacific and contain China in the world's most economically vital region. Obama emphasized a

burden-sharing strategy with NATO and even greater economic integration with the European Union with TTIP at the same time he sought to reset U.S. relations with Russia. His initial retrenchment and offshore balancing strategy toward the Middle East was centered on the U.S. military withdrawal from Iraq, a war he viewed as an unnecessary distraction from the war against Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. At the same time, Obama ramped up domestic extraction of energy to help insulate the United States from fluctuations in international energy caused by instability in the Middle East. Obama followed up with the successful conclusion of the P5+1 nuclear negotiations with Iran to prevent it from dominating the region.

But Obama could not enact significant change to U.S. foreign policy because the post-American, multipolar international system had already arrived and limited his ability to promote real change. This was most apparent in the Middle East and Europe. Obama's military withdrawal from Iraq contributed to a power vacuum that fueled the rise and rampage of the IS throughout Iraq and Syria. He was forced to reintroduce U.S. military force in Iraq, Syria, and Libya in the wake of the Arab Spring and to wage war against IS. He also deployed Special Operations Forces and expanded drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Obama's strategy toward the Middle East became highly inconsistent following the Arab Spring when he participated in the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, but then failed to target the Assad regime in Syria in 2013 following its use of chemical weapons against civilians. Moreover, Obama's rebalance to Asia and the Pacific was hampered by his reintroduction of military resources to the Middle East.

In the end, Obama initiated a slow unwinding from the region; however, this was more of a consequence of the unfolding of events in the wake of the Bush administration's disastrous invasion of Iraq. Obama's support for the P5+1 nuclear talks with Iran and his inability to intervene against the Iranian- and Russian-backed government in Syria were, in effect, major foreign policy shifts signaling to long-standing allies, namely Saudi Arabia, other Sunni governments, and Israel that they could no longer rely on the United States to carry out their interests and provide security. Moreover, the lack of significant support for Syrian rebels by Obama meant that his administration preferred to take a back seat to Russia and others in the region in the peace process. Furthermore, it was a nod to Russia's expanding influence in the region and desire to regain influence lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War.

Obama's retreat from the Middle East would be continued by his successor, Donald Trump, who seemed more willing to consent to rising Russian influence in the region and even unwilling to resist Russia making inroads with U.S. allies Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and NATO member Turkey. It was also a clear indication that U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East was

moving beyond energy security as evidenced by the massive increase in U.S. oil and natural gas extraction during the Obama presidency. However, Obama's offshoring of the Middle East created a void that would, in part, be filled by Russia.

In Europe, Obama was largely ineffective in responding to Russian resurgence with its annexation of Crimea and interventions in Eastern Ukraine and Syria. While Obama embraced a burden-sharing strategy with NATO and sought to intensify economic relations with the European Union, he was unable to reset relations with Russia as it already evolved into a disruptive power with the capability of interfering in Western political systems. Years of NATO and E.U. encroachment into Russia's traditional sphere of influence and Western meddling in Ukraine provoked Russia into seizing Crimea and intervening in eastern Ukraine. While Obama shored up NATOs eastern flank with the ERI, Russia responded by interfering in the 2016 presidential election with a concerted effort to tip the results to the nationalist Donald Trump. Moreover, the crisis in the Eurozone, the lingering effects of the Great Recession, Brexit, and the influx of Syrian refugees threatened to undermine European unity as nationalism returned with a vengeance. The fracturing of the European Union contributed to the weakening of transatlantic relations as the United States was moving in one direction and Europe in many other directions.

At the same time these security threats and international crises endangered the post–Second World War world order and helped usher in a multipolar international system, some of the most significant challenges to U.S. foreign policy were primarily domestic. Uneven economic growth in the wake of the Great Recession combined with the decades-long transformation of the American workforce away from labor-intensive manufacturing led the American public to question long-standing U.S. global commitments and alliances. Rising economic inequality and shrinking middle-class income in addition to hyper-partisanship and an increasingly gridlocked Congress prevented Obama from transforming U.S. foreign policy at home.

This book concludes that the interaction of both domestic political factors and international crises ushered in a multipolar world system that fundamentally alter seventy years of American foreign policy during Obama's tenure in office. The war in Iraq drained U.S. resources and forced Obama to embrace a more limited role for the United States in a world characterized by the return of great power competition. Moreover, the failure to promote inclusive economic growth in the wake of the Great Recession undermined his ability to build domestic political support for his foreign policy goals. It is impossible to capture the complexity and dynamism of presidential leadership of foreign policy without an understanding of both the international system and domestic political forces shaping the foreign policymaking process. The interaction

of both systemic- and domestic-level variables and external and internal pressures and opportunities determined the range of foreign policy choices available to Obama.

To contend with multipolarity, Obama rebalanced U.S. foreign policy priorities to Asia and the Pacific in response to rapid economic growth and development in the region and the rise of China. Obama sought to reinforce and expand the consensus in U.S. foreign policy that U.S. leadership in the Asia-Pacific is essential for achieving American economic interests and securing the U.S. system of alliances throughout the region. He established rotational military deployments to the region to support for its allies in the region concerned with China's military buildup. Obama's embrace of the TPP reflected the economic significance of the region in U.S. foreign policy and his opening to Myanmar represented one the president's most important accomplishments as it led to political reforms and lessened China's role in the country. In addition, Obama's outreach to Vietnam and India sought to pull these fast-growing economies concerned with China's ambitions closer to the U.S. Obama prioritized the importance of soft power as cultural connections through higher education intensified and expanded. However, China viewed Obama's rebalance as an attempt to contain its rise, fueling its territorial ambitions and desire to modernize its military that resulted in the heightening of tensions in the South China Sea. The Obama administration also struggled to determine if China was seeking to refashion or even circumvent U.S.-led institutions with its "One Belt, One Road" initiative and creation and leadership of the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank.

EMERGING ECONOMIES

The most important phenomenon of the post–Cold War era has been the emergence of multipolarity that burst onto the world in the wake of the Great Recession. Prior to 2008, emerging economies were already defining global affairs given that their rise has been facilitated by the acceleration of technology and contemporary globalization. The rules-based international order was under threat from these rising powers amid a global movement of power from West to East and from developed to developing markets. For years, academics predicted that emerging markets and rising powers would chip away at the world order and challenge the economic might of the West. As Zakaria (2008: 2) stated, "We are now living through the third great power shift of the modern era. It could be called "the rise of the rest. Over the past few decades, countries all over the world have been experiencing rates of economic growth that were once unthinkable. While they have had booms and busts, the overall trend has been unambiguously upward." One study (Singh and Dube 2014:

18) even claimed, "The BRICS countries will become an increasingly significant group in the coming years. Their emergence might require the establishment of a new world economic and political order." BRICS have suggested their intention is to reshape the international order by addressing their dissatisfactions with prevailing global institutions on multilateral cooperation, international law, and collective decision-making (UNAC 2010). However, emerging economies are the primary beneficiaries of the systemic status quo (Bradbery 2017).

India and China are in a different category. India's economic rise helps explain why the Obama administration moved the United States closer to India and develop bilateral trade and investment and security ties between the world's two largest democracies. The challenge for China will be to effectively coordinate its transition to a more consumer-oriented economy, contend with the expected aging of its population, reform its state-run firms, and diversify production as it seeks to deepen its global economic relations with "One Belt, One Road" and the Asia Investment and Infrastructure Bank.

GEOPOLITICAL UNCERTAINTY AND TENSION

Since the Great Recession and in the wake of wars in the Middle East, the world has witnessed the rise of geopolitical uncertainty and tension among great power rivals as the international system has transitioned away from American global hegemony toward multipolarity. An important driver of the shift toward a multipolar world under Obama has been the rise of assertive regional powers seeking to expand their military influence in their designated strategic spheres of influence. China's territorial ambitions in the South China Sea and military modernization and Russia's annexation of Crimea and intervention in Eastern Ukraine and Syria show that these major powers are becoming much more assertive and disruptive. Chinese military assertiveness coupled with its global "One Belt, One Road" initiative and Russian unruliness and intervention in democratic political systems demonstrated that both countries became the greatest geopolitical threats to the United States during the Obama years and will continue to challenge Trump and his successors for the foreseeable future. Moreover, global governance has not been updated to reflect rising states in existing international organizations, namely the leadership structures of the United Nations Security Council, the IMF, the WTO, and World Bank.

Obama continued to embrace containment of China, failing to see that the world's second largest economy and military spender could effectively participate in the building of norms and institutions. His rebalance to Asia and the Pacific did not convince China that he was genuinely committed to

its integration in the rules-based international order and ensure contemporary globalization is flexible enough to accommodate, not resist, rising economies. Obama resisted this more broadly acceptable approach, something the United States and its allies did in the past with their support for the integration of former Communist states in Eastern into the European Union and NATO following the collapse of the Cold War.

The reality is that China and Russia are largely incapable or unwilling to exercise global leadership of the international system and have not offered the world any real and practical alternative architecture. Russia is a disruptive power seeking to undermine democratic governments and recapture its status as a major world power. Its demographic challenges and economic troubles make it difficult to function as a global power. In addition, Russia's annexation of Crimea, intervention in Eastern Ukraine and actions in support of the Syrian regime have undermined Russian credibility.

While China will not be able to replace the United States in the near term or lead an open, rules-based world order because it is not an open political system itself, it is no longer a weak country incapable of challenging the United States. China today is a rising power that has grown dissatisfied with the global status quo. China has amassed incredible wealth, grew its middle class, and developed its economy by integrating within established international institutions, attracting foreign investment, and trading with the West. China's economic resources are being invested in new technologies, infrastructure, and now advanced weaponry allowing it to carry out territorial ambitions, threaten its neighbors, and challenge the United States and its allies in the Asia-Pacific.

Obama's rebalance to Asia and the Pacific was a strategy based on the view that China was not rising peacefully. China, under President Xi Jinping, has become more globally assertive at the same time the United States reduces its global footprint. As President Xi stated in his nineteenth Party Congress speech, "Trends of global multipolarity" work in China's favor as the country "is moving closer to center stage." China's goal is to become a "fully developed nation" by 2049 through domestic modernization, becoming a "global leader in innovation" as well as a "global leader in terms of a comprehensive national power and international influence" (see Buckley and Bradsher 2017: A6; Glaser and Funaiole 2017).

China is now offering the world alternative structures, namely the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank and the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. The Obama pivot was designed to keep China within the prevailing international architecture and box it in with the TPP and a military buildup across the Pacific. Even though Asia's economic growth is essential to contemporary globalization, U.S. security interests are more important. Under Obama, the United States and China engaged in an intense security competition that

tested each other's capabilities in at the beginning of a century that will be defined by the United States and China.

China's view is that the United States began its decline with the Great Recession, which undermined American economic credibility and undercut Obama's ability to maintain U.S. global leadership. As Trump has withdrawn the United States from TPP and the Paris Climate Accords and sought cuts in foreign aid and U.S. contributions to the United Nations, China is filling the void by stepping onto the global stage by expanding its own aid programs, leadership of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation. Chin is no longer the "sick man of Asia" mired in its "century of humiliation" (Scott 2008: 9).

China now believes the multipolar international system will provide it with opportunities to challenge the United States, evolve into a global leader, and provide the world with a credible alternative to liberal internationalism (Glaser and Funaiole 2017). In fact, China is now making the types of investments in global projects and implanting Chinese values on an international scale in ways that the United States under Trump now seems unwilling to do. Whereas Obama's foreign policy sought to both contain China's rise and promote U.S. leadership in the Asia-Pacific, China believes Trump can be manipulated because he is unaware of complicated international issues.

In response to what it viewed as Obama seeking to contain its rise, China felt empowered to build artificial islands and improve its military capabilities in ways that sought to frustrate American economic and security commitments to its allies in the region, namely South Korea, the Philippines, and Japan. China's massive military buildup in the South China Sea frustrated and complicated the U.S. position in the region. Moreover, the United States did not elevate China's position within the IMF until 2015, providing it with an incentive to circumvent international institutions and pursue its "One Belt, One Road" initiative and establish the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank. In addition, China was kept out of the TPP, mainly because of nationalist tensions with U.S. allies and partners. China interpreted these moves as attempts to contain its emergence.

Consequently, the annual defense budget remained high under Obama as spending on conventional weapons systems, naval and aircraft procurement, and research and development in military technologies and cyber security increased at the same time OCO in the Middle East decreased. Moreover, Obama increased political pressure on European NATO members and America's Sunni allies in the Persian Gulf to increase military spending and provide more for their own security. In Europe, Obama supported the NATO guideline for military spending of a minimum of 2 percent of national GDP and pushed the U.S. further away from its traditional allies in both Europe and

the Middle East by prioritizing flexible alliance systems and relationships in Asia and the Pacific.

DECLINE OF MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICA

During the Obama presidency, the combination of budget sequestration and fiscal austerity with loose monetary policy until late 2016 hit middle-class Americans very hard. Contemporary globalization and innovative technologies have disrupted the American middle class, resulting in the decline of labor-intensive manufacturing, expansion of business and corporate investments in capital goods, stagnant middle-class income growth, and widened economic inequality. Middle-class Americans have been left worse off after the Great Recession than in the years prior to the bursting of the U.S. housing bubble and financial crisis. This is in contrast with the boosting of corporate profits and stock market indices and the rise in incomes of the wealthiest Americans at the expense of everyone else since 2009.

As described in Chapter 1, partisan division in the American public has been reinforced by vast and widening economic inequality in the United States as the distribution of American household income has become more concentrated in the top 20 percent over the last several decades. Although economic inequality dropped in the wake of the Great Recession in 2008/2009, incomes of the top 1 percent and top 20 percent have been rising much faster while incomes of the middle class remained stagnant. Even more problematic is that incomes for those Americans without a college degree or credentials have dropped in the last three decades. Overall, the trend over the last ten years has been those in the top 1 percent reaping the most economic benefits than middle- and lower-middle-income Americans who directed their anger and frustration at elites in the 2016 presidential election. The increasing difficulty of Americans to access and pay for higher education and job training programs has made it even more difficult for those in the bottom 80 percent of income levels to boost their incomes. In turn, this has undermined public support for America's role in the world.

The middle class has especially been frustrated with elites in both political parties to address the concentration of wealth in the hands of the most powerful. This has undermined Americans' support for globalization, free trade, and foreign investment and has made them more concerned about protecting their job security, increasing wages, and to eliminate regulations or taxes that limit job creation. It also led the American middle class to embrace Donald Trump as a political neophyte and outsider who is committed to break from the conventional political wisdom, attack elites, and encourage America's traditional yet wealthy allies to provide more for their own security. According

to Trump National Security Adviser Lt. General H. R. McMaster (quoted in Landler 2017: A1), "The consensus view has been that engagement overseas is an unmitigated good, regardless of the circumstances. But there are problems that are maybe both intractable and of marginal interest to the American people, that do not justify investments of blood and treasure."

In post–Obama American politics, middle- and working-class Americans will likely demand that elites in both political parties enact policies to boot their incomes, narrow the partisan and ideological gap, and safeguard social programs. At the same time, given the emergence of multipolarity, we should expect continued U.S. public investments in national security and defense programs not only to boost America's sense of security against China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, but to accelerate domestic consumption. With the upsurge in domestic populism, skepticism of globalization in 2016–2017, and fear of multipolarity, the role of government in this uncertain era could likely expand with spending increases in defense, health care, and other social services. Under Trump, rising defense spending is designed to ensure that the international system does not move outside American control, even though this is a futile attempt to manage multipolarity and control for the shift in power to other states, namely China.

THE OBAMA-TRUMP DOCTRINE

The forces of nationalism and calls to pull back from the world were unleashed well before Donald Trump succeeded Barack Obama. The U.S. invasion of Iraq, war and chaos in the Middle East, the refugee crisis, and the Great Recession contributed to rising economic inequality, nationalist sentiment, and hyper-partisanship at home. Moreover, each led to alterations in the distribution of power contributing to the emergence of a multipolar international system and the fraying of the rules-based international order. These and other external forces and domestic implications shaped the direction of Obama's foreign policy and limited his choices and preferences. While Obama and Trump rode the same waves of change into the White House, Obama harnessed them with hope and change and Trump with xenophobia and a defense of white identity.

Obama and Trump tapped into powerful anti-establishment forces that promised to end regime change in foreign policy, criticized elites and the political status quo, and to restore focus on the domestic economy. Both Trump and Obama were highly critical of post–Cold War U.S. hegemony and shrugged off Pax-Americana by acknowledging the end of the unipolar moment. Each embraced an offshore balancing strategy in the Middle East, limiting U.S. engagement to drone strikes and special operations forces while

eschewing broader wars and military deployments. Both seemed to relish in criticizing long-standing U.S. allies. As president, Obama criticized European and Arab allies as free-riders and realigned U.S. foreign policy away from Middle East and toward the Asia-Pacific. During the 2016 campaign, Trump unleashed a barrage of criticism at NATO and threatened to raise tariffs on America's traditional allies on national security grounds. In both of their first terms, Obama and Trump sought a new beginning with Russia, albeit for very different reasons. Each rejected George W. Bush's so-called axis of evil, even eventually obliging some its members. Obama accommodated Iran by entering the P5+1 nuclear negotiations, much to consternation of U.S. allies Saudi Arabia and Israel. Trump promised to ease tensions with North Korea by holding direct talks with the regime, much to the chagrin of Japan and South Korea. Both pursued high-profile meetings with long-standing U.S. adversaries. Obama normalized relations with Cuba and Trump pursued summits with North Korea and Russia. It should be no surprise that 10 percent of Americans who voted for President Obama in 2008 and 2012 would vote for President Trump in 2016 (Cohn 2017: A18). Although Obama's embrace of "nation-building here at home" and Trump's promotion of "America First" may sound different, they both tapped into the same urges and movements calling for dramatic change away from hegemony and interventionism.

The post–Cold War world is over. The American public is now embracing a more scaled-back role set into motion by Barack Obama and continued by Donald Trump. Presidents Obama and Trump were chosen as alternatives to Hillary Clinton and John McCain, two stalwart defenders of the U.S.-led liberal world order and regime change. U.S. foreign policy has moved away from Bill Clinton's (1996) strategy of democratic "enlargement and engagement," and George W. Bush's (2002) Wilsonian goal to "bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world." War and economic crises brought democracy promotion strategies to an end.

However, there are downsides to offshore balancing and retrenchment. Under Obama, the Middle East witnessed the rise of the IS in Syria and Iraq, a global refugee crisis, Russian intervention in Syria, and the expansion of Iranian influence in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Trump's promise to negotiate with North Korea could empower China in the region and lead to nuclear proliferation in Northeast Asia. Moreover, his promise to win a trade war with U.S. allies and his attacks on the Western alliance have empowered Russia and China as authoritarian alternatives to liberal democracy. The burdens of hegemony are quite high but the consequences of offshore balancing and retrenchment are ugly.

While some aspect of the rules-based international order may endure, the Great Recession, U.S. invasion of Iraq, turmoil in the Middle East, Russian

resurgence, and a rising China were external pressures that drove the international system toward multipolarity. Domestic political and economic pressures, namely hyper-partisanship, economic inequality and the decline of the American middle class, rising costs of war, and other factors depleted American resources. The impulse in American politics, especially on the political left, is to suggest that President Trump's America First rhetoric facilitated abandonment of the world order. This is simply not true. It was a process that began with the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the especially the Great Recession. These crises led to a crisis of confidence that shook over seventy years of liberal internationalism in U.S. foreign policy that took place during the Obama presidency.

There is remarkable continuity in foreign policy from Obama to Trump. There were of course some stark differences between the two presidencies, ranging from the Iranian nuclear deal to the TPP and the Paris Climate Accords. But the war in Iraq and the Great Recession did lasting damage to America's standing in the world, making it difficult for Obama to maintain the rules-based international order and shoulder the burden of securing an international system was becoming increasingly multipolar (Buruma 2016: 39). The reality is that the postwar international system had been undergoing significant change long before the 2016 presidential election of Donald Trump.

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