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The Fourth Founding

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and the Liberal Order**

Gideon Rose

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The Fourth Founding

The United States and the Liberal Order

Gideon Rose

The United States began as a radical experiment with grandiose ambitions. Its founders believed in Locke's idea that free individuals could escape the perils of anarchy by joining together and cooperating for mutual benefit—and they created a country to show it wasn't just talk. The signers of the Declaration of Independence bound themselves in a common political project, establishing a limited government to secure their rights and advance their interests. That act, noted Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in 1821, “was the first solemn declaration by a nation of the only legitimate foundation of civil government. It was the corner stone of a new fabric, destined to cover the surface of the globe.”

From the start, the United States was understood to be both country and cause, a distinct national community and the standard-bearer of a global political revolution. Destiny would take a long time to play out. Until it did, until the surface of the globe was covered with a fabric of democratic republics, the good new country would have to survive in the bad old international system. “Probably for centuries to come,” Adams guessed.

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So how should the nation behave during the lengthy transition?

Coming at the problem a few decades into the experiment, Adams reasoned that the top priorities for the fledgling republic should be protecting the revolution and perfecting the union. And so just as President George Washington had warned about the dangers of alliances and balance-of-power politics, Adams warned about the dangers of ideological crusades. The United States stood for universal principles, but it need not always export those principles or enforce them abroad. It could be the “well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all” while being the “champion and vindicator” only of its own.

The American grand strategy that emerged in this era—continental expansion and internal development combined with self-righteous aloofness from the world beyond the seas—suited a commercial republic deep in the global periphery. It could work, however, only because the United States was protected by geography and British naval supremacy. The country's long rise during the nineteenth century was made possible by its calm external environment, a public good provided by the liberal hegemon of the day.

By the twentieth century, things had changed. British power had declined; American power had risen. The United States now dominated the Western Hemisphere, patrolled the oceans, drove the global economy, and needed a new grand strategy appropriate to its new situation. American interests had once been served by keeping apart from the world. Now those interests called for engaging with it. But what kind of engagement was possible for a country built on a fundamental rejection of the old game?

After some experimentation, over the course of the century, the answer gradually emerged, in fits and starts, by trial and error. It proved oddly familiar: apply lessons from the country's domestic founding to its foreign policy, taking the logic of the social contract to the next level. If autonomous individuals in the state of nature could find ways to cooperate for mutual benefit, why couldn't autonomous countries? They didn't have to love one another or act saintly; they just needed to have some common interests and understand the concept of a positive-sum game. The more countries played such games, the more opportunities they would have to benefit by cooperation as well as conflict. And gradually, interactions could turn into relationships and then communities—first functional, eventually institutional, maybe one day even heartfelt.

This approach promised to resolve the tension between American interests and American ideals by achieving them simultaneously, on the installment plan. The United States would protect its interests by amassing power and using it as necessary, and it would serve its ideals by nurturing an ever-growing community of independent countries that played nicely with one another. Cooperation would lead to integration and prosperity, which would lead to liberalization. Slowly but steadily, Locke's world would emerge from Hobbes'.

The new grand strategy produced the dense web of benign reciprocal interactions now known as the liberal international order. That order developed in three stages. President Woodrow Wilson first tried to found it after World War I. He failed but gave his successors a model and some cautionary lessons. Presidents

Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman tried again during and after World War II, and this time, the order took hold, at least in part of the world. Then, Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton refounded it for the post-Cold War era, extending it from the West to the rest.

As the cooperative arrangements developed in one period prove inadequate for the next, the order's forward progress stalls, and pessimism spreads. In the past, the obvious benefits of continued cooperation have ultimately led new generations to create new arrangements so the good times keep rolling. Whether that pattern will continue is unclear.

In 2016, Anglosphere voters rang down the curtain on the third phase of the order's history with Brexit and the election of U.S. President Donald Trump, and for two years, the world has drifted. Conventional wisdom says the order is finished, has failed, was always a naive fantasy or a mere epiphenomenon of temporary surplus power.

And yet still, it moves. The order's core insight about the potential for mutual gains from voluntary, rules-based international cooperation remains sound. Most of the world has bought into the project and wants to stick with it. No alternative approach offers as many benefits, and most carry grave risks—for both the United States and the world at large. So the conventional wisdom is likely wrong, and the administration after Trump's will almost certainly tack backward somewhat and try to revive the order yet again.

A fourth founding will be difficult. But it can be done and needs to be done, because the stakes are huge. The catch is that it will take a sincere commitment by the world's dominant power to lead rather than win.

FIRST FOUNDING

When the Great War broke out, in 1914, the United States instinctively dove for cover. That was the standard nineteenth-century playbook: not our problem. Yet it didn't last long in the twentieth century, because the country had grown too strong to be ignored. As the fighting in Europe settled into a grinding war of attrition, the outcome increasingly depended on the Allies' access to the U.S. economy. So in 1917, Germany tried to cut off transatlantic shipping. Unrestricted submarine warfare was designed to squeeze the Allies into submission. Instead, it pulled the United States into the war, and the world, for good.

Watching the slaughter as a neutral, Wilson had refused to normalize it. The whole enterprise of war was evil, he was sure, not just any one belligerent. The root problem was the ruthless jockeying for advantage that all European countries considered normal foreign policy behavior. That whole mindset had to change. So from the sidelines, Wilson called on the belligerents to declare the stalemated war a draw and move to a new kind of postwar order based on collective security rather than competitive self-interest.

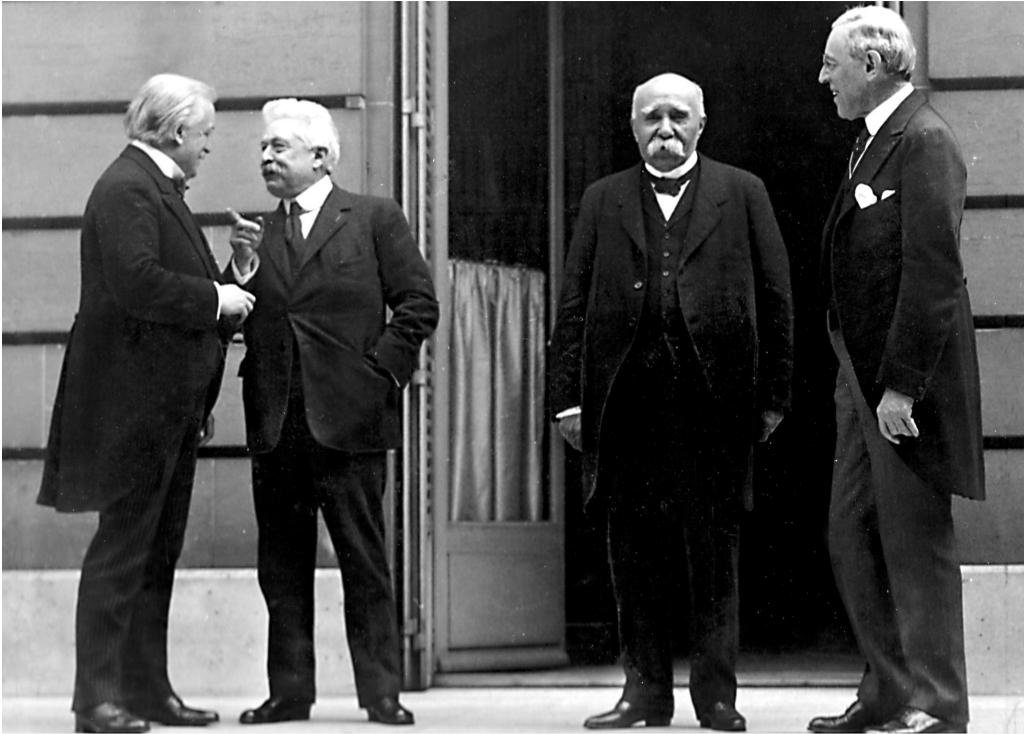
Soon afterward, Germany started torpedoing all the U.S. ships it could find. This convinced Wilson that his vision couldn't be realized unless Germany was reformed from the inside out. So when the United States entered the war, it sought not only a postwar collective security system but also the removal of "Prussian autocracy."

Wilson thought regime change was necessary because dictatorships could not be trusted to participate in his collective security system. His secretary of state, Robert Lansing, thought democ-

racies would be less warlike in general. The administration planned to reinforce its institutionalized democratic peace with an open international trading order, so benign commercial interactions would gradually bind the world together in peace and prosperity. (That free trade would benefit the dominant United States most of all went without saying.)

International security, international economics, domestic politics abroad—all would have to be transformed before the United States could be secure. But when it was, the world would be, too. This was a postwar vision grand enough to justify the war's carnage. Pulling it off would be a long shot, however. Wilson needed to get his own country behind him, keep the British and the French in check, and bring a revived, democratized Germany back into the European balance. Talleyrand or Bismarck might have had a chance; Wilson didn't.

In the event, the cynical British and French pocketed American help during the war, paid lip service to Wilson's pieties, and kept on pursuing their individual short-term interests just as before. The American people turned out to want not a negotiated truce and a postwar balance of power but complete submission and just the sort of harsh treatment of Germany that Wilson sought to avoid. And then, as the guns fell silent, the Kaiser's regime collapsed, to be followed eventually by a weak, unstable democratic successor unable to defend itself at home or abroad. The British and the French happily took advantage of the situation, imposing a more punitive settlement at Versailles than Wilson wanted or the Germans felt they had been promised, and things went south from there.



The peacemakers: at the World War I peace conference in Paris, 1919

The first attempt to found the order was in trouble by the end of 1918, was on life support by the end of 1919, and died slowly and painfully in the years after.

SECOND TRY

Wilson's failure seemed to confirm the wisdom of Adams' prudence, and so during the 1920s and 1930s, the United States turned inward again. Just as before, however, the realities of power made such a course impractical. The strongest country in the world necessarily affected, and was affected by, what happened everywhere else. Retreating into isolation now was like a toddler putting his head under a blanket: it made things look better, but the outside world didn't go away.

Sure enough, within a generation, the other great powers were back to their old tricks, pursuing short-term individual

interests, begging their neighbors, and so forth. This led to a downward spiral of mistrust, predation, depression, and war. In 1941, just as in 1917, the United States was attacked and dragged in because it was too powerful to be ignored. And once again, roused from its geopolitical slumber and driving to victory, Washington had to decide what to do next.

The Roosevelt administration was stocked with rueful Wilsonians. They continued to believe that the best way to protect American interests was to use American power to transform international politics. If anything, they believed it even more passionately than before, given what had happened since. Still, having bungled the job once, they knew they would have to up their game the second time around.

They agreed among themselves about what had gone wrong. The Wilson admin-

istration had tried to be soft on Germany and hard on Russia. It had permitted the United Kingdom, France, and Italy to make secret agreements and hold acquisitive war aims. It had waited until after the war to set up the League of Nations, designed it badly, and failed to secure congressional approval of American participation. Because of these mistakes, the victorious wartime alliance fractured, the league foundered, trade barriers deepened the Depression, and eventually a despotic Germany rose up again and dragged the world back into the maelstrom.

This remembered nightmare lay behind the entire complex of U.S. planning for the postwar order. This time, the thinking ran, Germany and the other defeated Axis powers would be occupied and democratized. The Soviet Union would be courted. A better-designed league would be set up during the war, with American participation locked in from the start. And eventually, postwar harmony and prosperity would be maintained through a combination of democratic peace, great-power concert, institutionalized multilateral cooperation, and free trade.

By early 1945, the new framework seemed largely in place. Some things, such as Germany's future status, were left undecided because Roosevelt wanted it that way. (He liked to improvise.) But the gaps did not seem crucial. Although somewhat concerned about Soviet behavior in eastern Europe and the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy, the president died in April confident his hopes would be realized.

Actually, there were lots of big problems looming, not least how to square the great juggler's own conflicting promises

to different constituencies. Because Roosevelt had allowed no succession planning, the job of implementing his ambitious agenda in the actually existing postwar world fell to his successor, Truman. And the job was tough.

The United Kingdom was weaker than expected and rapidly shedding its remaining global commitments. Europe was in ruins, revolutionary nationalism was rising, the Soviets were playing hardball, and the American public was quickly turning inward again. After two years of watching the situation deteriorate, Washington decided to shift course, putting aside the grand universal institutional framework it had just constructed and building a smaller, more practical one in its place. The Bretton Woods system was thus supplemented by the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO, a new set of arrangements designed to revive and protect an American sphere of influence run along liberal lines.

EXTENDING THE GAINS

Cooperation is difficult, especially with other people. Put together a group for a stag hunt, Rousseau noted, and somebody will run off to chase a hare, letting the stag escape and the others go hungry. Humans find it easier to bond over fear than hope. So a crucial moment for the order came when hope and fear got yoked together to pull it forward.

In 1947, the Truman administration moved forward with its plan to pump American capital into a revived and newly integrated European economy centered on Germany and France. It offered generous aid to any country in the region willing to play by the rules of the new system, and most grabbed the chance. But Moscow had no desire

to be part of any American system, so it refused and ordered its minions to do the same. A relieved Washington then began building its order in the western half of the continent, as Moscow did the same in the East. And so the second phase of the order's history came to coincide with the geopolitical conflict known as the Cold War.

American policymakers did indeed come to see the Soviet Union as a threat during the late 1940s. But that threat was not to the U.S. homeland. It was to the order they were trying to build, which extended well beyond American borders to the major industrial power centers of Europe and Asia and the global commons and required a sustained forward presence to maintain. Neither Congress nor the American public was clamoring for the launch of such a grand new postwar project. They had their own problems and were skeptical about authorizing large amounts of money to get Europe back on its feet. So the Truman administration cleverly flipped the story, presenting its new approach not as an independent project of American order building but as a response to a growing Soviet threat. This got the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and other measures approved. But it distorted what was really going on.

Containment was necessary to protect the order. But once containment was established as Washington's strategic frame, it dominated the narrative. Cooperative integration was sold as something that was done to bind the American alliance together to win the conflict rather than as something valuable in its own right. This went on so long that when the Cold War finally ended, many were surprised that the order continued.

Nobody expected the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 or the collapse of the Soviet Union two years later. It was the sudden realization of the vision that the diplomat George Kennan had put forth decades earlier: the United States had held the line, waited, and eventually watched its opponent cede the field.

What should come next for American foreign policy? At the time, this seemed like an open question, and much ink was spilled in the “Kennan sweepstakes” as people proposed replacements for containment. But the question was not really open, because there was an obvious answer: stay the course.

The George H. W. Bush administration recognized that the Cold War had really been a challenge to the order, and so when the challenger gave up, the order was free to expand and flourish. Washington’s mission now wasn’t to write a new story. It was to write another chapter in the old one, as Brent Scowcroft, Bush’s national security adviser, told the president in a memo in 1989:

In his memoirs, *Present at the Creation*, Dean Acheson remarked that, in 1945, their task “began to appear as just a bit less formidable than that described in the first chapter of Genesis. That was to create a world out of chaos; ours, to create half a world, a free half, out of the same material without blowing the whole to pieces in the process.” When those creators of the 1940s and 1950s rested, they had done much. We now have unprecedented opportunities to do more, to pick up the task where they left off, while doing what must be done to protect a handsome inheritance.

Bush’s comment: “Brent—I read this with interest!”

During the 1990s, therefore, the Bush and Clinton administrations refounded the order for the post-Cold War era. They weren’t sure how long unipolarity would last and faced a skeptical public and Congress. So the technocrats improvised and muddled through as best they could. Bush skillfully managed the Soviet collapse, made a reunified Germany a pillar of the order, led a coalition to stabilize the Persian Gulf after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, nudged Israel and the Arabs toward peace, and managed U.S. finances responsibly.

Clinton continued the same general course. He advanced North American economic integration, renewed the U.S.-Japanese alliance, expanded NATO to eastern Europe, contained regional security threats in the Middle East and Asia, promoted the Arab-Israeli peace process, and also managed U.S. finances responsibly. By the turn of the millennium, the United States and the order were stronger, richer, and more secure than ever.

THE GREAT UNRAVELING

Two decades on, it’s complicated. By providing international public goods such as global and regional security, freedom of the commons, and a liberal trading system, the United States created what was by any historical standard a stable and benign global environment, a planet-sized petri dish for human and national development. From 1989 to 2016, global product more than tripled. Standards of living skyrocketed. More than a billion people were lifted out of poverty. Infant mortality plummeted. New technologies continuously im-

proved daily life and connected people in extraordinary new ways.

We did not go back to the future or miss the Cold War. Europe was primed for peace; Asian rivalries did not ripen. Anarchy did not come; post-Cold War chaos was a myth. On the big-ticket items—great-power peace and global prosperity—the realist pessimists were wrong, and the liberal optimists were right.

But macrostability coexisted with regional disorder. The signal was hard to detect in all the noise. And the architects of the current phase of globalization forgot that the spread of capitalism is a net good, not an absolute one. Along with its gains come losses—of a sense of place, of social and psychological stability, of traditional bulwarks against life's vicissitudes. Absent some sort of state intervention, its benefits are not distributed steadily or evenly, producing anger and turbulence along with rising expectations. Washington turbocharged globalization even as it cut back the domestic safety net, shifting risk from the state back to the public just as the gales of creative destruction started to howl.

More money created more problems. Roman-level power led to Roman-level decadence. Uncontested dominance led to unnecessary, poorly planned crusades. Unregulated elites stumbled into a financial crisis. And the technocrats running things got so wrapped up in their cosmopolitan dream palaces that they missed how bad things were looking to many outside.

As a result, liberalism's project ended up getting hijacked by nationalism, just as Marxism's project had back in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Large segments of many Western populations came to think that the order

wasn't working for them, and they increasingly saw no reason to defer to dysfunctional establishments bent on lining their own pockets. As one reader of *Foreign Affairs* recently commented, "I'll simplify it for you: the average American rejects your Globalist, anti-American, anti-constitution, politically correct VOMIT."

By the 2010s, the old arrangements were clearly broken, but thanks to political gridlock, nothing changed. President Barack Obama's foreign policy focused on trying to protect the order's core by retrenching from overextension in the periphery. And then came Trump, a self-taught political genius who rode to office as an outsider denouncing all existing government policy.

Foreign policy experts scoffed at Trump's instinctive embrace of "America first" as a campaign theme, because everybody knew that was the approach that had failed disastrously just before the order succeeded brilliantly. But Trump didn't care. The order is a positive-sum game, and he lives in a zero-sum world. It is based on sustained cooperation for mutual benefit, which is not something Trump does. Ever.

Trump's election thus created an interesting situation. The person now tasked with running U.S. foreign policy wanted to take it back to the halcyon days of the 1930s. He favored competition rather than cooperation, protectionism rather than free trade, authoritarianism rather than democracy. And he felt that his election allowed him to control the entire government by fiat and whim, the same way he controlled his company. Others disagreed, and the tensions have never been resolved. At one point, Trump's entire national security apparatus gathered in the basement of the

Pentagon to explain the order to him. The president was bored and implacable. (That was the meeting his then secretary of state left calling him “a fucking moron,” according to Bob Woodward.)

Over his first two years in office, the president gradually worked out functional power-sharing arrangements with Republicans in Congress, producing an administration devoted to tax cuts, deregulation, conservative courts, military spending, and restrictions on immigration and trade. Missing from the agenda: what one undocumented alien from the last century famously referred to as “truth, justice, and the American way.”

In external affairs, torn between a volatile amateur president pulling one way and a sullen professional bureaucracy pulling the other, lacking a grand strategy or even strategists, the administration has offered little more than photo ops and irritable gestures. The routine operations of global-order maintenance continue, but to increasingly less effect, because everybody can see that the commander in chief scorns the underlying mission. Living in a constant transactional present, Trump deploys national power instinctively to grab whatever is in reach. Call it foreign policy as anti-social work.

NOW WHAT?

The next two years are likely to follow the same pattern, with Trump’s increasing control of the executive branch offset by the Democrats’ control of the House of Representatives. The order will not explode, but it will continue to corrode, heading toward what the political scientist Barry Posen has called “illiberal hegemony.” And eventually, another president will come in and have to figure out what to do next.

It might seem that the cleverest post-Trump foreign policy would be a kinder, gentler Trumpism. The new president could pocket whatever gains Trump extracted, drop the trash talk for sweet talk, offer some concessions, and nod toward the old ideals—even while continuing to bargain hard with everybody about everything. The world would be relieved to get past the crazy and would praise the new occupant of the Oval Office just for not being Trump. With some token apologies for the unpleasantness and a renewal of vows, life could go on sort of as before. (Maybe even better, now that everybody remembers that the United States has claws beneath its mittens.)

That would be a huge mistake. For by the time Trump leaves office, the dial on U.S. foreign policy will have moved from supporting the order to undermining it. During Trump’s tenure, the United States will have broken the bonds of trust needed to keep the common project moving forward, and without trust, the order will gradually start to come apart. Unless there is a major change in course, other countries will follow Washington’s lead and chase after hares, and nobody will get to eat venison for a long time.

Repairing the damage will require more than being not Trump. It will require being reverse Trump: telling the truth, thinking for others as well as oneself, playing for the long term. Trumpism is about winning, which is something you do to others. The order requires leading, which is something you do with others. If the next administration appreciates that distinction, it will get the opportunity to restart it yet again.

Inconceivable, cry skeptics. Even if one buys this fairy-tale view of what

the order once accomplished, its day is done. Americans don't want it. The world doesn't want it. U.S. power is declining; China's is rising. A return to great-power conflict is inevitable; the only question is how far things will go.

Such bold pronouncements, however, are rooted in an outdated conception of national power. Realists focus their analysis exclusively on material factors such as military forces and shares of global economic output. That might make sense in a world of billiard-ball states constantly knocking one another around. But it turns out that large parts of modern international life resemble not perfect competition but its opposite, what the political scientists Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye have called "complex interdependence." In those areas, countries are knit together in lots of relationships and networks, and life is an endless series of stag hunts. Survival is not just about winning individual immunity challenges; it requires a social game, the ability to bring groups together. And the United States turns out, ironically, to have a pretty good social game—so good that it has long since stopped conforming to realist theory and developed its own idiosyncratic approach, one academics scramble afterward to capture with theoretical griffins: empire by invitation, consensual hegemony, liberal leviathan.

The United States' hard power has indeed declined in relative terms from its postwar peak. But this fact does not have the significance realists assume, because the country's absolute hard power is greater than ever and is multiplied by its soft power. For generations, the United States has done what realist theory said was impossible, playing international

politics as a team sport, not an individual one. On balance, it has considered its role in the order to be the protector of a community, not the exploiter of hapless marks; it has participated in alliances, not run a protection racket. Thanks to that, when it comes time for crucial tasks of system maintenance, it can add its friends' power to its own.

China's situation is different. The speed and scale of its rise over the last 40 years have been astonishing. China, too, took full advantage of the calm external environment and open trading order provided by the liberal hegemon of its day. And now it, too, has grown to become a global player, requiring a new strategy appropriate to its status. Yet because China plays as an individual, its own hard power is pretty much all it has to offer. Apart from North Korea, it has few allies; the cooperation it gets from others is purchased or commanded. But love is not for sale.

Squinting only at the bilateral material balance, one might see a power transition in the offing. But in the real world, Team Washington versus Team Beijing is a lopsided contest, with the order backed by three-quarters of global defense spending, most of the largest economies, and the world's reserve currency. What theorists call "the Thucydides trap" has been pried open by the possibilities of modernity.

Dealing with the Chinese challenge will involve the familiar task of herding international cats. The United States joined with the United Kingdom, France, and Russia to beat Wilhelmine Germany. It got the band back together plus nationalist China to beat Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. Then it brought together a larger group plus

communist China to beat Soviet Russia. Now it needs to lead a still larger group in a dance with contemporary China.

But some things are different now. During the Cold War, the United States traded with its capitalist allies and glowered at its communist enemies. The modern fields of international economics and security studies emerged during this period as separate tool kits for each set of relationships. Now that China has risen to be an economic peer without liberalizing its regime, it is playing a mixed game of cooperation and competition, something that Washington has never had to deal with before at this level.

Neither engagement nor containment alone is a viable approach. The question is how to mix them without sliding into conflict. That means combining measures across issue areas into a coherent strategy, prioritizing objectives, and working closely with allies and regional partners, bringing them along not through bullying but by patiently working out a mutually acceptable compromise.

The order features an array of cooperative bilateral, regional, and functional groupings. Because it has so many aspects and points of entry, countries not ready to sign up for the whole package at once can ease into it over time, starting on the margins and progressing toward the core at their own pace. That's what the United States and its allies should try to get China to do, in hopes that one day, it may indeed play the role of responsible stakeholder in the system. If the approach succeeds, great. If not, blame for any future conflict will fall on Beijing, not Washington.

Policymakers will also need to address the other great challenge of the day, the turbulence and anxiety produced by the

rapid advance of markets in the post-Cold War era. One of the lessons from the 1930s was that for economic liberalism to be politically sustainable in a democracy, the state had to step in to help shield citizens from being whipsawed by market forces. The Europeans insisted on acknowledgment of this as the price of their participation in the postwar system, and as a result, national economies were not forced to open up rapidly or completely.

Today's policymakers should recognize the wisdom of that earlier bargain, pairing their international cooperation with a commitment to repairing their torn domestic social safety nets and giving their societies time and space to catch their breath and regain a sense of control over the pace of onrushing economic, social, and technological change.

This domestic side of the project is both valuable on its own and necessary to maintain public support for the foreign policy side. For the real challenge to a fourth founding lies not in theory or policy but in politics. The order is not a nation-building project, just a functional set of cooperative arrangements designed to reduce the downsides of anarchy. As such, it attracts minds, not hearts. Moreover, although the story told here is true, the narrative thread is clearer in retrospect, so its truth is not universally acknowledged. Many Americans never bought into the project, and many still don't. Without the Cold War, it has proved ever more difficult to generate popular support for the country's actual foreign policy. And so each president since the collapse of the Soviet Union has come into office promising to do less abroad than the previous one—only to be dragged by events into doing more.

Since it is easier to mobilize on fear than on hope, some supporters of the order find a silver lining in the growing Chinese threat, reasoning that it might be possible to re-create a neo-Cold War consensus in yet another long, twilight struggle against a new opponent. That could be where things are heading regardless. But it would be far better for Washington to listen to the better angels of its nature and try to avert, rather than hasten, such an outcome.

In 1945, at the peak of its relative power, when it could have done anything it wanted, the United States rejected isolation and realpolitik and chose to live in a world of its design. It did so, the dying Roosevelt explained, because:

We have learned that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned that we must live as men, not as ostriches, nor as dogs in the manger. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community. We have learned the simple truth, as Emerson said, that "The only way to have a friend is to be one."

When Roosevelt said it, he meant it—and because he meant it, others believed and joined him. The strategy of paying it forward worked. Three-quarters of a century later, the team of free countries he assembled now runs the world in a loose, patchy, inefficient consortium. When its members meet the next U.S. president, they will expect to hear the usual rhetoric, and will clap politely when they do. And then they'll watch to see whether there is anything left beyond words. 🌐