Negative Brief: WHINSEC / School of the Americas

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

Plan eliminates “WHINSEC” – the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. WHINSEC is the rebranding/replacement (started around 2002) for the “School of the Americas” (SOA), which was a federally funded military training program that brought in members of Latin American countries’ armed forces for training. Some SOA trainees then went back to their home countries (like El Salvador) and started killing people and abusing human rights, which gave SOA a bad reputation. But WHINSEC did massive reform. Activists write articles complaining that WHINSEC should be shut down because it’s the same thing as SOA, but they’re really just mad that WHINSEC reformed instead of closing down like they wanted. Today, out of 238 military training programs the US government has that train Latin American soldiers, WHINSEC is the only one that upholds human rights. How odd that AFF picks that 1 to shut down and leaves the other 237 that are all worse alternatives. WHINSEC isn’t even the biggest US training school for Lat. American soldiers – that would be the William J. Perry Center, which doesn’t have the safeguards and transparency WHINSEC has.

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Negative: WHINSEC / School of the Americas

TOPICALITY

1. No commitment

Definition of "COMMITMENT"

Merriam Webster online Dictionary copyright 2021. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commitment

an agreement or pledge to do something in the future

Violation: Affirmative is debating a different resolution

Affirmative thought the resolution said “Resolved, that the United States should considerably reduce anything the US military is doing.” But listen carefully: It says we have to reduce a “commitment,” not just find something the military is doing and stop it. The Affirmative hasn’t read even 1 piece of evidence where the U.S. gave any other country any commitment that we would provide them with military training at WHINSEC.

WHINSEC’s annual report admits there’s no commitment – its program is declining

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

During fiscal year 2019, WHINSEC educated and trained 1,190 students from 24 Partner Nations, with 25 iterations of its 17 resident courses. Funding for WHINSEC came from a combination of Operational Funds (OMA) and Security Assistance Funds (SA). The combination of those is projected at $10.1 million for fiscal year 2020. This continues a downward trend over the last decade from $13.4 million in fiscal year 2010. Some of the reduction has come from efficiencies that allowed for budget reductions. However, the overall driver of the downward trend is a reduced student population.

**END QUOTE. Judge, a long trend line showing declining student population and a shrinking budget are not a commitment, they’re just the opposite. Other countries are not committed to WHINSEC and neither is the US government.**

Example of no commitment: US Air Force and Marine Corps dropped out of WHINSEC in 2018

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

Note: The US Airforce and US Marine Corps billets at WHINSEC were removed from the Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL) last year. This makes it difficult to fill these positions. WHINSEC is re-competing these billets for Joint credit, which will increase the interest of sister-services in filling the positions.

2. No considerable reduction

Link: WHINSEC budget is $10 million

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

During fiscal year 2019, WHINSEC educated and trained 1,190 students from 24 Partner Nations, with 25 iterations of its 17 resident courses. Funding for WHINSEC came from a combination of Operational Funds (OMA) and Security Assistance Funds (SA). The combination of those is projected at $10.1 million for fiscal year 2020.

Link: The Defense Department budget was $738 billion in 2020

Lawrence J. Korb 2020 (senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. Former assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration; served four years on active duty as a naval flight officer; and retired from the U.S. Navy Reserve with the rank of captain ) 6 May 2020 " The Pentagon’s Fiscal Year 2021 Budget More Than Meets U.S. National Security Needs" https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2020/05/06/484620/pentagons-fiscal-year-2021-budget-meets-u-s-national-security-needs/#:~:text=The%20FY%202021%20defense%20budget%20is%20composed%20of%20two%20parts,%2473%20billion%20in%20FY%202020.

When the Trump administration unveiled its FY 2021 federal budget, many defense hawks in and out of government expressed concerns that the increase in the size of the proposed $740 billion defense budget was too modest, particularly when compared with the $738 billion that the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) received for FY 2020.

Violation: Do the math. Cutting $10 million out of $738 billion = 0.0014%

There’s no planet where cutting 0.0014% of something is a considerable reduction.

Impact: No Affirmative team means Negative ballot

No one in this debate round is advocating a position that involves doing what the resolution says. So no matter who wins, you should write “Negative” on the ballot.

3. Extra-topicality #1: Plan goes beyond “military”

Link: WHINSEC’s mission is military + law enforcement + civilians

Rep. Phil Gingrey 2010 (R-Georgia) 30 June 2010 WHINSEC vital to era of engagement https://thehill.com/special-reports/defense-a-aerospace-july-2010/106563-whinsec-vital-to-era-of-engagement

The mission of WHINSEC is to develop training partnerships for military personnel, law enforcement officials and civilians in support of the democratic principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS).

Link: AFF’s experts argue for shutdown because of I.C.E. and Border Patrol

[DÉVORA GONZÁLEZ](https://www.jacobinmag.com/author/devora-gonzalez)and [AZADEH SHAHSHAHANI](https://www.jacobinmag.com/author/azadeh-n-shahshahani) 2019. (González is a field organizer with the School of the Americas Watch. Shahshahani is legal and advocacy director for Project South and a past president of the National Lawyers Guild ) 15 Nov 2019 “Shut Down the School of the Americas/ WHINSEC” https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/11/shut-down-school-of-the-americas-whinsec-ice-border-patrol

In addition to US Border Patrol agents now being trained at the location notorious for instructing Latin American security forces in civilian-targeted warfare, on September 9 of this year, an unredacted Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [report](https://www.ledger-enquirer.com/news/local/article235009152.html) revealed that ICE agents will also begin training there.

**Violation: ICE and BP are part of the Dept of Homeland Security, not the military**

Sarah E. Murphy copyright 2021. (immigration attorney) Federal Immigration Agencies Overview http://www.borderimmigrationlawyer.com/overview-of-federal-immigratio/

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 abolished the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (“INS”) and the former U.S. Customs Service and combined the functions of these agencies within one department: the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”). The DHS now performs the duties of these former agencies. These duties have been delegated to a number of agencies within the DHS. The agencies within the DHS that have the most contact with and impact on non-citizens are:
(1) U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”); (2) U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”); and (3) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (“CIS”)

Impact: No solvency. AFF can only change things within the resolution

Any advantages or benefits of their plan that come from changing things in the Dept of Homeland Security must be dropped from the round. The Affirmative team has no power whatsoever to tell immigration law enforcement or other civilians that they can’t conduct some type of training.

4. Extra-topicality #2: Plan goes beyond US military

WHINSEC’s instructors come from 17 countries, not just the USA

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

WHINSEC’s instructor positions remained filled at a sustainable rate and are augmented by the only Partner National Instructor Program in the Department of Defense. The Institute’s instructors come from 17 countries and represent Army, Navy, Airforce, Marine, and Police security forces.

1/3 of WHINSEC’s instructors are from outside the USA

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

Partner Nation Instructors (PNI) offer subject matter expertise, extensive professional experience and provide for a multicultural learning environment. The Institute is authorized to fund a portion of the living and moving expenses of most PNIs and is also authorized to accept, at no cost to the U.S. Government, the services of additional PNIs from Partner Nations. The PNIs form more than one-third of the faculty, allowing for tremendous sharing of information across borders while ensuring the Institute remains relevant and effective in the context of regional security cooperation.as shown below:

Impact: Negative ballot because AFF can’t stay within the resolution

A policy that strays outside the resolution for both its trainees and its trainers should not be given an Affirmative ballot. There are dozens, maybe hundreds of topical cases any Affirmative team could run. Letting them win with a plan that goes outside the resolution is abusive to Negative teams that already had enough research to do just on this resolution. We shouldn’t have to research foreign military trainers and law enforcement and immigration policy too.

INHERENCY

1. Human rights oversight program – the BOV

The WHINCSEC Board Of Visitors (BoV) conducts outside independent review to ensure compliance with human rights – including non-military, non-government auditors like religious and academic community members

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

3. General: WHINSEC BoV is a non-discretionary Federal Advisory Committee established under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. Section 343 (previously 10 U.S.C. 2166 from the FY 2001 NDAA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (5 U.S.C., appendix, as amended). The law requires the BoV to provide the Secretary of Defense or designated Executive Agent (EA), Secretary of the Army, independent advice and recommendations on matters pertaining to the Institute’s curricula, instruction, physical equipment, fiscal affairs, academic methods, and other matters as directed by the BoV, and items that the Secretary of Defense or designated EA determines appropriate. The 14-member BoV includes members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, representatives from the DOS, USSOUTHCOM, USNORTHCOM, TRADOC, and six members designated by the Secretary of Defense. The six-designated-members include representatives from human rights, religious, and academic communities. The BoV reviews the adherence of Institute’s curricula to current U.S. doctrine and policies and its emphasis on human rights, rule of law and due process, civilian control of the military, and the role of the armed forces in a democratic society.

2. New safeguards currently underway

BoV is in process of establishing even more safeguards and reviews of WHINSEC human rights compliance

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

b. The Board of Visitors will convene a Sub-Committee on Education focused on Human Rights Education and Training.
- Mr. Cooke/Dr. Rand will convene a sub-committee to focus on: (1) Metrics to determine the effectiveness of Human Rights Training and (2) The possibility of surveying alumni (years out) for additional data. WHINSEC will provide administrative support to the BoV, as necessary, and be prepared to incorporate recommended metrics into assessment tools going forward.
c. The Board of Visitors will seek Department of Defense (DoD) and DOS support for 333 Certification for WHINSEC Human Rights Courses to further COCOM Lines of Efforts requiring Human Rights Training.
- The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Western Hemisphere Affairs will coordinate with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency with the support of USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM help WHINSEC achieve this certification.

3. Reforms have been successful

Since transitioning from “School of the Americas” to WHINSEC, successful reforms have overcome the human rights problems that used to exist with SOA

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf

As a result, the school received tremendous scrutiny due to the efforts of School of the Americas Watch (SOAW), a non-governmental organizations (NGO) created in 1990 in response to the 1989 murder of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador. The murder was planned and executed by Salvadoran soldiers who had attended the school. The intense scrutiny brought by SOAW eventually forced the United States Army to implement significant reforms to the school. The School of the Americas had moved from Panama to Fort Benning (in Columbus, Georgia) in 1984, thus placing the school more easily in reach of protesters in the United States. The purpose of this article is not to rehash the long-standing debate over the school’s legacy, but rather to examine the structural and institutional changes that have occurred since the SOA closed and its successor, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) opened in 2001. Placing these changes within a constructivist framework, the article will argue that human rights norm diffusion has both increased the amount of human rights in the curriculum and put the school in a much stronger institutional position than it previously enjoyed. The purpose of the protests was to close the school, but ultimately served to strengthen it because it became far better off organizationally than the SOA. Nonetheless, they have also made human rights instruction a central part of the school’s identity, which is not the case in any other military school.

4. Trainees are screened

Since 2001, federal law requires screening out trainees if they have committed human rights abuses

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” <https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf> (brackets in original)

The 2001 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act included a provision authored by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) requiring that any foreign military personnel receiving training from the United States not have committed human rights abuses.7 Section 593 stipulates that “[n]one of the funds made available by this Act may be provided to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible evidence that such unit has committed gross violations of human rights.” As a result, Latin American soldiers who attend WHINSEC must undergo a process of evaluation that did not exist prior.

And the screening works: Latin American countries comply with the rules and bad guys are blocked from attending WHINSEC

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf

Cables declassified by Wikileaks demonstrate the effect of the Leahy Amendment on WHINSEC. U.S. embassies in Latin American countries provide names and other identifying information of prospective students to the Department of State—even labeling them as a “Leahy vetting request”--which must vet them for any human rights violations. The State Department uses the Abuse Case Evaluation System, a searchable database of human rights abuse data. Names are entered into the International Vetting and Security Tracking (INVEST) system, which leaves a permanent record of what the embassies and/or the State Department‟s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor discover. If vetters agree that a problematic report is credible, then that individual will not be allowed to participate.

5. A/T “Reforms are superficial / phony. SOA problems are still happening at WHINSEC”

Human rights reforms at WHINSEC, under pressure from anti-SOA activists, are real and effective. The activists today are just mad that they didn’t get it closed like they wanted – that’s why they’re still complaining

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf

WHINSEC evolved in the years since it opened and the School of the Americas closed in 2001. That evolution occurred in large part because of the sustained effort of a non-governmental organization, the School of the Americas Watch. The resulting political mobilization was remarkably successful, sparking national debate and institutional reform. Its call for the school to close, however, never came to fruition. Instead, WHINSEC adopted and adapted, bringing human rights into every course, and in the process became more firmly embedded in the U.S. Army. That represented the successful diffusion of human rights norms into an organization in a way that has not occurred elsewhere in the U.S. Army, but with a result that ultimately provided the school with a stronger institutional foundation, which was the opposite of what the SOAW desired.[**END QUOTE**] This article contributes to the literature on the effect of ideas on U.S. foreign policy by exploring an angle that has not received adequate attention. Future constructivist research should examine international case studies to determine the degree to which unforeseen consequences are evident. States may well decide to enact changes based on international pressure, but that may not correspond to the original goals of the NGO pushing for that change. Future research could formulate a theory of unintended consequences. For example, under what conditions are outcomes unexpected and how does that affect achieving the original reformist policy goal? Why do those outcomes occur at all? Even if the outcome was not desired (or foreseen) it may still have an impact in line with the values of the NGO. Additionally it is worth examining why, given SOAW’s successes, a similar strategy has not aimed at any other military school that trains Latin American soldiers. It may be many do not have the same level of Cold-War era ideological baggage as the School of the Americas, or that the very high level of public attention on the School of the Americas precluded expansion (and/or spreading of resources) of the activist mission. Clearly, though, the success—even if partial—has not been copied elsewhere. [**HE GOES ON TO CONCLUDE LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT QUOTE:]** Critics of WHINSEC argue that the school changed only cosmetically and superficially, offering courses too similar to the School of the Americas and having no positive impact with regard to human rights instruction. The jury is still out on the latter, but for the former it is clear that substantive changes have taken place. Either way, however, in the case of WHINSEC real changes did take place, even if they did not result in the outcome desired by human rights activists.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. No classes on torture

Here’s a list of the curriculum taught at WHINSEC. Classes on ethics and human rights, but not torture

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

The WHINSEC curricula is derived from the Congressional mandate codified in 10 U.S.C. 343. The Institute’s curricula includes instruction on leadership development, counterdrug operations, peace support operations, and disaster relief. The design and subject matter of courses originate from existing U.S. doctrine surrounding U.S. foreign policy objectives, the theater security cooperation strategies of USSOUTHCOM and USNORTHCOM, and needs articulated by partner nations. With an enduring dedication to the pursuit of excellence, WHINSEC offers unparalleled student experiences across a broad spectrum of academic environments. WHINSEC is devoted to excellence in teaching and learning to develop ethical leaders, from across the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational organizations, who, through education and training, make a positive difference in the world.

**END QUOTE. THEY GO ON TO SAY LATER IN THE SAME ARTICLE QUOTE:**Since 2001, WHINSEC has championed human rights and democracy by developing a new generation of ethical leaders to confront the uncertain and complex security challenges of the Western Hemisphere. Its education and training promotes innovative critical thinking built on basic respect for human rights.

2. Classes on Human Rights

WHINSEC has classes on upholding human rights and democracy required for “all students”

WHINSEC Fiscal Year 2019 Report. https://defenseassistance.org/primarydocs/200129\_whinsec\_rept.pdf

All students receive training on human rights, specifically due process, the rule of law, civilian control of the military, and the role of the military in a democratic society. CENTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY (CHRD) 1) International Operational Law (IOL): This four-week course concentrates on aspects of international human rights law, rule of law, due process, and international humanitarian law to enhance their ability to analyze, apply, and resolve common legal issues encountered at the tactical level during successful multiagency security force operations free of violations and abuses. 2) Human Rights Train the Trainer (HR-T3): The purpose of this course it to teach instructors how to deliver an eight (8) hour block of instruction. Topics covered include human rights rule of law, due process, civilian control of the military, and the role of the military in a democratic society.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Wrong Plan target makes human rights worse

Link: Of all the training programs AFF could have chosen, they cancel the only 1 out of 238 that promotes human rights

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf

There are some 238 institutions in the United States that train Latin American soldiers, though many with only a tiny handful of participants. None of the other schools, however, have undergone the changes evident in WHINSEC. Over thousands of courses and tens of thousands of students, there is no overarching requirement for human rights training (Sikkink 2004, 205). One criticism of constructivism is that it fails to explain timing (Cardenas 2004). Given that no other school in the military system has been targeted by an NGO, the changes effected in SOA are clearly explained by the efforts of SOAW. From a normative perspective, this actually raises the question of why, if human rights activists believe military-to-military relations are detrimental, no other military school has become the focus of an NGO.

Link: AFF plan fails to meet their goal of human rights

If the goal of the plan is to uphold human rights, the plan should be to do the exact opposite of their mandates. The Plan should be to cancel the other 237 military training programs that don’t have training in human rights and double funding for WHINSEC, since it’s the only program that does.

Impact: Human rights get worse post-plan

When you cancel the only program that is teaching human rights and send the foreign trainees to the other 237 programs that don’t teach it, support for human rights gets worse after the plan is enacted.

Example: The William J. Perry Center is the biggest one training Latin American soldiers, and it doesn’t have anywhere near the transparency as WHINSEC

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf

Simultaneously, the school undertook a concerted effort to establish dialogue with NGOs such as SOA Watch, but also Human Rights Watch and the Center for International Policy. No matter the substance of the encounters, which included sending cadets to Washington, DC for direct engagement, the overall image was one of moderation unmatched by other schools. WHINSEC officials also provided a permanent invitation, repeated copiously in statements and informational handouts, that the public was welcome to visit the school. Both scholars and activists have done so, in particular meeting with Lee Rials, the Public Affairs Officer. Not even the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, which is the largest military school in the United States for Latin American soldiers, has any staff member dedicated to public relations.

2. Crime & violence

WHINSEC is key to reducing drug related crime and violence in the US by the cooperation it builds with other nations

Rep. Phil Gingrey 2010 (R-Georgia) 30 June 2010 WHINSEC vital to era of engagement https://thehill.com/special-reports/defense-a-aerospace-july-2010/106563-whinsec-vital-to-era-of-engagement

However, I would maintain the less obvious ways our cooperative partnerships benefit the United States are equally as important in regard to the safety and security of our citizens.  Border security and cracking down on drugs and gang violence have been some of the most significant impacts of WHINSEC. Simply put, in order to curb the increase in violence and drugs crossing into the United States, we must take all steps necessary to ensure our borders are secure. Increasing resources and personnel at the border is important, but engaging with nations in the Western Hemisphere to eliminate the problem in their own countries before it spreads is imperative.

3. US hegemony decline

Link: The goal of WHINSEC opposition is reducing US regional influence

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf

The case study here is unique because the struggle against the SOA/WHINSEC is taking place entirely within the United States, and does not seek to change policies in Latin America or to influence Latin American governments. If anything, the goal is to reduce the independent influence of U.S. institutions in the region.

Link: WHINSEC has significant link to US hegemony – yields “big strategic dividends”

Prof. Gregory Weeks 2015 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Univ of North Carolina at Charlotte) October 2015 “Fighting to Close the School of the Americas: Unintended Consequences of Successful Activism” <https://pages.uncc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2012/04/JHR-article.pdf> (brackets in original)

The United States government still believes that military-to-military ties are valuable, and schools like WHINSEC facilitate that interaction. The school plays that role more now than in the past. As two of its staff members note: [W]hile it operates on tactical and operational levels, it has a strategic impact on U.S. foreign policy, and not only in the Western Hemisphere. Simply put, this is an “economy of force” organization, one that costs very little but yields big strategic dividends (Marrero and Rials 2012: 55).

US should be increasing, not decreasing, its commitment to allies right now. It's essential to maintaining US hegemony

Ashley Tellis 2020 (Tata Chair for Strategic Affairs and a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is also a counselor at the National Bureau of Asian Research and the research director of the Strategic Asia Program) 4 May 2020 "COVID-19 Knocks on American Hegemony" https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/05/04/covid-19-knocks-on-american-hegemony-pub-81719

But even as it attends to the business of internal regeneration, Washington must double down on its alliances and partnerships. Only this U.S.-led confederation contains the preponderance of the global product that will durably immunize the “strategic West” against any future challenges emanating from China or other rivals. Preserving American hegemony over the long term thus must begin with consolidating Washington’s leadership within the largest single bloc of material power in order that it may be effective beyond. Ensuring this outcome requires the United States to take seriously—and deepen meaningfully—the special geopolitical ties it has nurtured throughout the postwar period, which would among other things enable it to better shape the world’s engagement with China to advance its own interests.

Brink: Global order is in crisis, multiple trends make the international system fragile, and US leadership is in danger of retreat

Prof. [Alexander Cooley and Prof. Daniel H. Nexon](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/author) 2020. (COOLEY is Claire Tow Professor of Political Science at Barnard College.  NEXON is an Associate Professor in the Department of Government and at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University) July/Aug 2020 “How Hegemony Ends” https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-09/how-hegemony-ends

Multiple signs point to a crisis in global order. The uncoordinated international response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting economic downturns, the resurgence of nationalist politics, and the hardening of state borders all seem to herald the emergence of a less cooperative and more fragile international system. According to many observers, these developments underscore the dangers of U.S. President Donald Trump’s “America first” policies and his retreat from global leadership.

Impact: Decline into anarchy with decline of US dominance and rise of Russia and China. Massive loss of life, money and freedom

Dr. Robert Kagan 2017. (PhD in American history; Stephen & Barbara Friedman Senior Fellow - [Foreign Policy](https://www.brookings.edu/program/foreign-policy/), [Project on International Order and Strategy](https://www.brookings.edu/project/project-on-international-order-and-strategy/) at Brookings Institution) 6 Feb 2017 ‘Backing into World War III” <https://www.brookings.edu/research/backing-into-world-war-iii/>

Think of two significant trend lines in the world today. One is the increasing ambition and activism of the two great revisionist powers, Russia and China. The other is the declining confidence, capacity, and will of the democratic world, and especially of the United States, to maintain the dominant position it has held in the international system since 1945. As those two lines move closer, as the declining will and capacity of the United States and its allies to maintain the present world order meet the increasing desire and capacity of the revisionist powers to change it, we will reach the moment at which the existing order collapses and the world descends into a phase of brutal anarchy, as it has three times in the past two centuries. The cost of that descent, in lives and treasure, in lost freedoms and lost hope, will be staggering.