

# November/December (Nocember) Topic Analysis - 2022

Resolved: The United States' strategy of Great Power Competition produces more benefits than harms.



# Background/History

- **Great Power Competition: the US**
  - The pursuit by various global superpowers of “distinct strategies... to carve out their own spheres of influence and vision for the international order” (CSIS).
  - Involves forward deployment of forces, strengthening of alliances, and nuclear/conventional force modernization.
- **Great Power Competition applies primarily to:**
  - **China**
    - In the past, China has been aggressive in the South China Sea, and has threatened Taiwan’s sovereignty
  - **Russia**
    - Typically thought of as wanting to re-capture the Soviet “sphere of influence”
    - Currently fighting a disastrous war in Ukraine
  - **China-Russia Alliance**
- **Current US Strategy:**
  - **Containment**
  - **Decoupling**
  - **Strengthening of the Quad (Australia, Japan, India, the US)**
  - **NATO Expansion**

# Background/History Continued

- [GRS '22](#) → “The emergence of great power competition with China and Russia over the past several years, and the underscoring of that development for some observers by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine beginning in late February 2022, have profoundly changed the conversation about U.S. defense issues from what it was during the post-Cold War era: Counterterrorist operations and U.S. military operations in the Middle East—which had been more at the center of discussions of U.S. defense issues following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001—are now a less-prominent element in the conversation, and the conversation now features a new or renewed emphasis on the following, all of which relate to China and/or Russia: **grand strategy and the geopolitics of great power competition as a starting point for discussing U.S. defense issues”**
- **Three Domains:**
  - **Military** → physical warfare, proxy wars, arms deals, etc.
  - **Economic** → trade war, sanctions, etc.
  - **Diplomacy** → how well does diplomacy actually work; US/China/Russia fight to obtain allies in various parts of the world (Latin America, Africa, Pacific Islands, etc.)
- **Other Potential Domains:**
  - **Cyber** (offensive cyber operations, propaganda), **Space**, **Arctic** (fight for oil reserves and shipping routes), **Sea** (South China Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean, etc)
- **Three International Relations Theories/Approaches**
  - **Realism** → offensive realist (active deterrence) vs. defensive realist (counterbalance and react)
  - **Idealism/Liberalism** → liberal values will triumph, GPC may undermine international cooperation
  - **Constructivism** → the world is how we describe it; perceptions create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

**PRO**

# General Strategy

- Great Power Competition is simply the best strategy.
  - What are the alternatives? Even if GPC isn't perfect, any other strategy would be comparatively worse.
- GPC motivates progress.
- [Ludwig and Keiderling '21](#) → “It is important to emphasize here that great power competition does not necessarily mean great power confrontation or conflict. That, too, is a political choice, not a historical inevitability. Moreover, competition itself is a great engine of human motivation, effort and accomplishment. The United States has enthusiastically embraced competition as a core value and ideal across nearly all spheres of human activity. Competition compels us to work harder and smarter, with a keener focus and a clearer objective in mind, enabling us to achieve greater things than we might have done in the absence of worthy competitors.”
- GPC is the only option, since other nations have historically been unwilling to pursue diplomacy.
- [McMaster and Scheinmann '22](#) → “Contrary to the narrative of U.S. belligerence and imperialism that has been impressed on countless university students, the United States has, since the end of World War II, largely pursued a policy of restraint despite its considerable military power. Unlike other superpowers, it has not sought territories or treasure—on the contrary, it incurred considerable expense to foster a peaceful international order where other nations could thrive. Under the belief that a market economy, normal trading relations, and a democratic wave would foster liberal democracy everywhere, Washington even sought to elevate, embrace, and enrich its former Cold War enemies. From the World Bank to the International Space Station, the World Trade Organization to the Paris Agreement, Washington welcomed Moscow and Beijing into Western institutions—in other words, into the order Washington had previously tried to keep them from tearing down... However, restraint was not reciprocated. As the United States reduced its defense spending to the lowest share of GDP since 1940, Russia and China embarked on the largest military modernization and expansion programs their countries had seen in generations. They bullied their neighbors (or in Russia's case, attacked and occupied them), corroded the institutions they joined, and sought to eliminate their citizens' liberties. U.S. restraint was interpreted as weakness. Ignoring these menaces has now led the West to the most dangerous precipice since the depths of the Cold War.”

# General Strategy (Continued)

- [Wormuth '19](#) → “In this new era of competition, the United States needs at least four key assets. First, we need to have a vibrant and productive economy, one in which we are leading in frontier technologies like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and biotechnology. Second, we need to remain a leader in the international order, so that we have a strong say in its institutions, rules, and norms, while also working to adapt this order to a changing world. Third, the United States needs to invest in its network of allies and partners, working in concert with them to maximize our strength and address common challenges. Fourth, we need to preserve our military strength to underwrite the other dimensions of our power.”
  - This evidence links great power competition to technology/innovation, international engagement, alliances, and military strength.

# Liberal Values

- Promoting democracy and human rights (such as free speech, political participation, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, equality for women, freedom of religion, etc.) is an inherent part of great power competition.
- Not only does this improve democracy abroad, but it is also crucial to U.S. interests.
  - [Berg '22](#) → “There are many reasons to believe democracy and democracy promotion are imperative in the great power competition with China, which is occurring with ever-greater intensity in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). LAC has played host to great power competition in previous eras, but in grand strategic terms, competition with China in the twenty-first century is fundamentally different than the rivalry of the Cold War against Soviet Russia. Whereas during the Cold War the United States supported friendly, anti-communist military regimes in LAC, success against China in the twenty-first century will necessitate robust support for democracy, liberal institutions, and democracy promotion. The Kirkpatrick Doctrine—which advocated for supporting “friendly authoritarian” regimes that went along with Washington’s aims—applied so deliberately to LAC during the Cold War, is outmoded and likely to be highly counterproductive today. On the contrary, there are many reasons to believe that successfully countering China in great power competition will be intimately linked to the democratic health of LAC as a region. This is the democracy imperative.”
    - Note: this evidence might be able to be used as a warrant as to why GCP is the unique incentive to promote democracy.
- Free/open internet is the most crucial aspect of such democracy/value promotion (this could be a more nuanced way to run this argument).
  - [Twining and Quirk '22](#) → “The existential threat to democracy from Russia and China is perhaps most severe in the digital domain. The CCP has invested heavily in exporting surveillance technology and backdoor access to networks via the state-owned tech giant Huawei; and both Beijing and Moscow have invested in offensive cyberwarfare capabilities with which to blackmail or assault free societies.”
- Out of China, the United States, and Russia, the U.S. is by far the most democratic.

# Benefitting Foreign Nations

- US has network of allies – Russia, China, and the U.S. compete for alliances
  - As they compete (access to markets, military access, resource rights), the nations they attempt to ally with end up gaining
    - For instance, China uses the Belt and Road Initiative to incentive alliances (though be careful, since there are obvious disadvantages to the BRI)
- [French '22 of Foreign Policy](#) → “In this era of greater plurality in world affairs, the United States and the rest of the West will be obliged to compete on a much more virtuous basis...”
  - Comparison Shop
- [Isacson '22 of War on the Rocks](#) → China is increasing its economic investments, trade, and grants for big-ticket items like infrastructure projects, as well as competing on 5G network hardware and on access to lithium and other strategic raw materials”
  - Note: history of US involvement has often been exploitative and has led these nations to be dependent on US exports (potential to be turned). However, there is a fairly high chance that China/Russia would have been MORE exploitative.
- [Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs](#) → “The Albanese Government is boosting Pacific security and defence, supporting critical infrastructure across our region, expanding the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme, and increasing Australia's Official Development Assistance to the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The comprehensive suite of measures deliver and build on what Australians voted for, and will significantly bolster the nation's competitiveness, security and relationships at a time of global uncertainty... Our assistance will help our regional partners become more economically resilient, develop critical infrastructure and provide their own security so there is less need to call on others.”
  - This card is about Australia taking part in competition, but can probably be used to stress the benefits of a GPC world order.



# Benefitting Alliance Formation

- In order to compete with Russia and China, the U.S. is forced to establish alliances and provide foreign aid.
  - Thus, one can make the argument that twenty-first century alliance systems exist as a result of the GCP strategy.
  - [Savoy and Staghun '22](#) → “The [People’s Republic of China] has reinforced these moves by seeking greater influence in multilateral organizations, including creating their own institutions—the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank.. The United States deployed aid to support friends and allies throughout the Cold War, solidify gains in the post–Cold War environment, and reinforce peace agreements in the Middle East. More recently, successive administrations have looked to foreign aid as critical to the Global War on Terror through reconstruction programs in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as support for frontline allies such as Pakistan and Jordan. The past three presidential administrations have identified the PRC as a rising strategic competitor, each taking a different approach to countering this threat. The Obama administration launched “Pivot to Asia,” which saw a significant reshuffling of U.S. military assets toward the Pacific. It also sought to negotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade pact with 12 Asian and Pacific countries.”
- Alliances and partnerships—including NATO, Trans-Pacific Partnership, NAFTA, etc—are critical in preserving relative global peace.

# Benefitting the U.S.

- [Brookings '22](#) → “The U.S. economy relies heavily on the global flow of goods — consumer, commercial, energy — across the ocean. That fact has been brought vividly to life by supply chain interruptions — in the Suez Canal and the Port of Long Beach — and their inflationary effects. True there are vital industries like finance and software that rely on the flow of data, not goods. However, over 90% of all data in the world flows through undersea cables that line the ocean floor. There’s no part of our prosperity that would not be adversely affected if ocean-based trade were impeded or slowed.”
  - Naval power and other alliances (which exist because of GPC) are critical to maintaining such trade networks, thus preserving U.S. prosperity
    - China’s ability to restrict key trade routes would wreck the economy
- Domestic Affairs → to compete with China, US needs a better democratic system with tangible results (not just fluffy language about “civil rights” and “equality”)
  - [Berg '22 of CSIS](#) → “There are many reasons to believe democracy and democracy promotion are imperative in the great power competition with China, which is occurring with ever-greater intensity in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). LAC has played host to great power competition in previous eras, but in grand strategic terms, competition with China in the twenty-first century is fundamentally different than the rivalry of the Cold War against Soviet Russia. Whereas during the Cold War the United States supported friendly, anti-communist military regimes in LAC, success against China in the twenty-first century will necessitate robust support for democracy, liberal institutions, and democracy promotion.”
- To compete with global powers, the U.S. needs superior technology: AI, ITO, Robotics, Chips
  - [Glosserman '21](#) → “The key to economic success will be mastery of new and emerging technologies. Those innovations have the potential, reports the McKinsey Global Institute, “to affect billions of consumers, hundreds of millions of workers, and trillions of dollars of economic activity across industries.” Companies that lead in those fields will secure the revenues that facilitate a virtuous cycle of investment, research and development that can prop up their dominance in technologies. They will also promote international standards that lock in their leading position.”

# Preventing War – China

- [Garamone '21](#) → “Army Gen. Mark Milley told the Wall Street Journal's CEO Council Summit that China wants to change the international rules-based architecture that has prevented a great power war since the end of World War II... It's incumbent upon the United States to develop these capabilities rapidly, because that will provide a new type of deterrence.”
  - There is a lot of literature that explains how China's military/economic advances present a very credible threat
- If other nations also begin to gain hegemony, a decline in China's individual hegemony/international power may cause it lash-out to preserve international image/integrity
- PRIMARY ARGUMENT – China wants to invade Taiwan
  - [Deutsche Welle](#) → “Beijing has long claimed sovereignty over the democratic island and has vowed to seize it one day, with force, if necessary”
  - [Maizland '21 of CFR](#) → “In response to China's increased assertiveness, recent U.S. administrations have shifted strategic focus to the Indo-Pacific, beginning with Obama's 2011 “pivot to Asia,” which sought to strengthen military and economic ties with partners in the region, including Japan. The Trump administration revived the Quad, a security arrangement among the United States, Australia, India, and Japan, over concerns about China's behavior. Biden further committed to the Quad[.]”
- China's aggression can also materialize as reducing internet freedoms, propaganda, hybrid warfare, economic trade wars, cyber wars, belligerence in the South China Sea, etc.
  - In other words, there is quite a lot that can be done with this argument (it is a BIG affirmative argument).

# Preventing War – Russia

- Russia threatens the Liberal International Order; great power competition solves by deterring Russia (or at least preventing Russia from being successful)
  - [Cooper '21](#) → “We are back in the world of defense scholar Thomas Schelling, who wrote 55 years ago that ‘the power to hurt is bargaining power. To exploit it is diplomacy, vicious diplomacy, but diplomacy.’ America and her allies should embrace Schelling’s sage wisdom and recognize that military deterrence is a more important tool than it has been since the Cold War.”
    - This card does not use the phrase “great power competition,” but highlights the importance of staying competitive with Russia/China
- Russia has not been victorious in Ukraine due to great power competition
  - [Turkish Policy](#) → “The pronounced unity on sanctions against Russia... speak volumes for the reinvigorated strength of the transatlantic bond.”
    - GPC is why such economic leverage and international military alliances exist in the first place
- US doing nothing about the war in Ukraine would demonstrate that the U.S. does not care about protecting sovereignty of democratic nations
  - Other actors would use Russia/Ukraine as a scapegoat, and more invasions would likely occur (a lot of good hypothetical scope weighing).
- Russia, if successful in Ukraine, may threaten other areas/nations (Baltic States, Belarus, etc.)
- GPC deters and deters/protects against hybrid warfare, grey-zone conflict, cyber attacks, etc.
- NOTE: in this resolution, aff. will tend to argue that Russia is aggressive and wants to assert dominance (offensive realist) so GPC is needed to counter that; the Neg. will argue that Russia is defensive, and is simply retaliating for NATO expansion, etc. which GPC causes. Make sure you keep this distinction clear in your mind!

# Middle East Stabilization (and Potentially Other Areas)

- US is in the Middle East (and other regions) primarily to counter Russian/China hegemony in those areas.
  - [Crane of the RAND Corporation](#) → “Although U.S. strategic competition with China and Russia is largely focused on efforts in Asia and Europe, this competition will play out in other regions, including in the Middle East.”
- Without US there, power vacuums materialize, which would have disastrous consequences:
  - Rise in terrorism (non-state actors fill the power void without U.S. presence)
    - Afghanistan exist is a fairly good example of withdrawal utterly failing
  - Worsening democracy and worsening civil rights/liberties when China/Russia fill the power gap.
    - Possibilities for ethnic cleansing, genocide, crimes against women/LGBTQ+/religious minorities, etc.
  - Potential threats to trade routes or oil transportation/production
  - May result in Middle East proliferation (can argue that this is really bad and could lead to conflict, miscalculation, etc.)

Note: prepare for the neg. to argue that the U.S. is also in the Middle East to counter terrorism and prevent Iranian proliferation, which are mostly defensive goals and has nothing to do with great power competition.

**CON**

# Terrible Strategy

- [Latham '22](#) → “Second, as prescription, the GPC frame is not only misleading but dangerous. Building a grand strategy based on flawed analogies with the interwar years and the Cold War is destined to produce pathological policy outcomes, not the least of which is the prospect of limitless rivalry — open-ended, full-spectrum and overly reactive competition with Russia and China for power and influence, irrespective of the actual U.S. interests at stake.”
- [Tharoor '22](#) → “First, it risks advancing a reactive approach to China and Russia — one that, beyond being unlikely to find enduring support from U.S. allies and partners, is likely to lead to ubiquitous struggle over selective contestation. Second, it risks overstating the competitive challenges that those two countries present, heightening U.S. anxiety and facilitating the Sino-Russian entente’s progression”
  - Security Dilemma – the problem of other minds (one nation cannot know what another’s intentions are, which promotes troop buildup and creates a cycle of escalation)
  - GPC rhetoric leads to securitization and self-fulfilling prophecy (this gets into K territory)
  - Risks miscalculation and accidental war
- GPC collapses international cooperation and reduces multilateralism
- Overstretched resources; trades-off with domestic programs
- Pulling out of other nations makes them more self-sufficient (potentially causing proliferation)
  - You could argue that this is good, though there is strong evidence/analysis both ways (aka be careful, as this is easily turnable)

# Harming Values / Democracy

- The U.S. is forced to work with authoritarian regimes and governments that abuse human rights.
  - U.S. loses “soft power” and international credibility when we supposedly support human rights, and then continue partnerships that don’t reflect our values.
    - Signals to the world that it is fine to be undemocratic.
- [Brenes and Jackson](#) → “There is little evidence that great-power competition strengthens civic bonds, equal rights, or economic security”



# Cooperation

- Great Power Competition reduces multilateral cooperation (especially with Russia and China) by promoting tension.
- [World Economic Forum '20](#) → “Within this context, Brende calls for a cooperative order: ‘The more powers compete and pursue strategic advantage at the expense of addressing shared technological, environmental and economic challenges, the more likely it will be that a broader sense of friction will develop across the global system. A rivalrous global system will in turn make it more unlikely that shared priorities are fulfilled.’ he writes.”
- After Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan, China cut off key diplomatic dialogues with the US, such as that on combating climate change.
  - [Lau '22](#) → “China and the U.S., for instance, agreed a deal to cut methane emission on the sidelines of the COP26 U.N. climate change talks late last year. It’s now unclear whether Beijing will continue to honor its side of the agreement.”
- [Yang '22](#) → “As the United States and China both try to consolidate their relationships with countries that share similar values, fears abound about the emerging competition posing challenges to the existing international system. “Now we have entered into a phase where various geographies have woken up to their strategic and critical dependencies and have started to, more or less, protect their own open markets from Chinese state-subsidized companies and force reciprocity in their own terms.” Havren said. “These emerging two blocs and their rivalry will radiate into all areas, including defense, trade, investments and technology”

# Harming the U.S.

- Allocating resources toward rivalries and competition abroad trades-off with allocating those resources towards domestic issues/projects.
  - [Cooper and Evans '22](#) → “Today’s military planners must contend with two potentially conflicting demands: growing requirements for the US military to respond to disasters and the effort to restructure the force for great-power competition. In the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, President Joe Biden made clear that he would continue shifting the focus of US forces to potential conflict with China and Russia, writing ‘In the face of strategic challenges from an increasingly assertive China and destabilizing Russia, we will assess the appropriate structure, capabilities, and sizing of the force. . .’ The military challenges posed by China and Russia are immense in their own right, but they cannot be accurately evaluated without considering the omnipresent and growing needs at home for US military capabilities.”
- One can also argue that the implications of great power competition on spending and resource allocation are inherently un-democratic
- [Semler '22](#) → “The budget request Joe Biden submitted to Congress in late March calls for more than \$813 billion in military spending for fiscal year 2023. This would nearly be a record high, even after adjusting for inflation. Save for the stretch of Pentagon spending from 2007 to 2011 that funded U.S. troop surges in Iraq and Afghanistan, Biden’s proposed military budget is larger than any enacted military budget since World War II.”
  - [Weissman '22](#) → “Military spending concerns a majority of Americans, with 55 percent of voters reporting they are ‘somewhat concerned’ or ‘very concerned’ about current proposals for \$813 billion in defense spending next year.”
    - This goes against the will of the people.

# Causing Conflict – Russia

- U.S. great power competition poses a threat to Putin’s perceived legitimacy, thereby causing Russia to lash out and act aggressively.
  - For instance, troop deployment near Russia’s borders and NATO expansionism caused the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- [Mearsheimer ‘14](#) → “But this account is wrong: the United States and its European allies share most of the responsibility for the crisis. The taproot of the trouble is nato enlargement, the central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West. At the same time, the eu's expansion eastward and the West's backing of the pro-democracy movement in Ukraine-beginning with the Orange Revolution in 2004-were critical elements, too. Since the mid-1990s, Russian leaders have adamantly opposed nato enlargement, and in recent years, they have made it clear that they would not stand by while their strategically important neighbor turned into a Western bastion. For Putin, the illegal overthrow of Ukraine's democratically elected and pro-Russian president-which he rightly labeled a "coup"-was the final straw. He responded by taking Crimea, a peninsula he feared would host a nato naval base, and working to destabilize Ukraine until it abandoned its efforts to join the West.”
  - India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, UAE, etc.
- The Russia-China alliance, Russia-Iran alliance, and Russia-Korea alliance all stem from NATO expansion and threats.
- In other words, Russia’s belligerence is its way of counterbalancing NATO or U.S. expanded influence

# Causing Conflict – China

- Arms trade and troop/military buildup near China's borders threatens China; any Chinese aggression is responsive/defensive in nature.
- [Jahil '19](#) → “Instead of being a threat and a source of instability, China can be a source of stability in the region. China's foreign policy seems to be driven by defensive realism rather than principles of offensive realism as Mearsheimer argues. The conflict between China as a rising power and the US as a status quo power is not inevitable. It is possible to avoid the Thucydides's Trap. China's rise is not as much of a threat as the Western debates make it out to be. In many ways, it may provide opportunities rather than challenges. However, theories and analyses presented by scholars such as Mearsheimer would certainly lead to conflict if followed by the US policymakers. If Washington continues to believe and act on the assumption that increase in the Chinese power poses a threat to the US military and diplomatic presence and economic interests in the region and opts for a containment and encirclement policy towards China — it would amount to a self-fulfilling prophesy where the conflict would materialise between the two powers.”
  - In response to perceived U.S. threats caused by GPC, China will lash-out and invade Taiwan (doing so helps China display strength and maintain international legitimacy)
    - To win this argument, a team must prove that China is going to invade Taiwan in the status-quo... aka under GPC
  - Leads to War in East Asia, such as in South China Sea or near the Senkaku Islands
- Taiwanese independence is good (without a U.S. sphere of influence in Asia, Taiwan—and other nations—would strengthen their own military/proliferate)
  - Taiwan proliferation/independence is good, since it counterbalances China in the region and prevents massive conflict
    - Be careful, since this can be turned and may lead to a messy round.

# Causing Conflict – Proxy Wars

- Conflict between major world powers (China, Russia, and the U.S.) have historically led to devastating proxy conflicts.
  - [Brands '22](#) → “Proxy wars are longstanding tools of great-power rivalry because they allow one side to bleed the other without a direct clash of arms. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union bled the U.S. by supporting communist proxies in Korea and Vietnam. The U.S. got revenge in Afghanistan and Nicaragua during the 1980s, supporting anticommunist insurgents who killed Soviet troops or destabilized Moscow’s clients. America would “do to the Soviets what they have been doing to us.” said National Security Council official Richard Pipes. “At a very low cost ... we can make it very hard for them.”
    - This article, as well as others, argues that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is its own proxy conflict.
  - In addition to Korea and Vietnam, smaller proxy conflicts have manifested across the globe.
    - I.e. Angolan Civil War, Ogaden War, Congo Crisis
- Proxy conflicts will likely continue to occur in the future under GPC
  - [Hoffman and Orner '21](#) → “Throughout history, great powers have often competed by supporting proxy forces. The Cold War, for example, was hardly a “long peace” when one considers the numerous externally abetted, intrastate conflicts and shadow wars that took place. There is no reason to think that U.S. competition with China and Russia will be any different than earlier periods of history. Both China and Russia have a history of adopting indirect approaches and good reason to avoid competing with the United States in overt and direct military clashes. China has a history of supporting proxies in North Korea and Vietnam, and some analysts argue that it continues to wage sophisticated influence operations and use salami-slicing activities short of direct combat, including through aggressive use of its merchant and fishing fleets as surrogate assets. Likewise, Russia has an extensive background with indirect strategies and deep operational experience with promoting separatists and mercenary forces in unconventional campaigns. One need only look at Russia’s recent and continuing conduct in Ukraine and Syria for proof of its reliance on indirect ways of war.”
- In terms of empirical evidence and probability, this argument is fairly strong.

# Middle East Destabilization

- The U.S. exerts influence and power in the Middle East as a part of great power competition with Russia, China and Iran.
  - [Crane of the RAND Corporation](#) → “Although U.S. strategic competition with China and Russia is largely focused on efforts in Asia and Europe, this competition will play out in other regions, including in the Middle East.”
    - I.e. the Yemen War—one of the worst humanitarian crises of the modern world—is often thought of as a proxy war between the U.S. and Iran.
- Unfortunately, U.S. actions in the Middle East have been incredibly destabilizing.
  - [The Guardian '21](#) → “Middle East problems stem from western and US interference... The editorial says: ‘Tunisia’s presidential power grab is a test for Joe Biden’s democracy and human rights agenda.’ Throughout history, US global aggression has always been justified by the mantra of ‘bringing democracy’ to the rest of the world. From the occupation of the Philippines to Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam and the Middle East, US intervention has been nothing more than establishing and maintaining its economic and military hegemony.”
- [Ahsan '19](#) → “Sixteen years after the United States invaded Iraq and left a trail of destruction and chaos in the country and the region, one aspect of the war remains criminally underexamined: why was it fought in the first place? What did the Bush administration hope to get out of the war?[...] [It] had little to do with fear of WMDs – or other purported goals, such as a desire to ‘spread democracy’ or satisfy the oil or Israel lobbies. Rather, the Bush administration invaded Iraq for its demonstration effect. A quick and decisive victory in the heart of the Arab world would send a message to all countries, especially to recalcitrant regimes such as Syria, Libya, Iran, or North Korea, that American hegemony was here to stay. Put simply, the Iraq war was motivated by a desire to (re)establish American standing as the world’s leading power.

Note: according to much literature, one of the main reasons that the U.S. is active in the Middle East is to fight terrorism. If either team wins that Middle East intervention is not about competing with Russia/China (and truly is a war on terror), it logically follows that the U.S. would likely be in the Middle East regardless of GPC.