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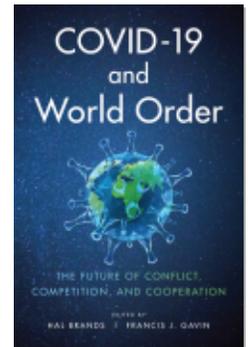
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COVID-19's Impact on Great-Power Competition

Thomas Wright

After the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the United States reoriented itself to focus on terrorist networks and rogue states. Congress created a new institution, the Department of Homeland Security. President George W. Bush made terrorism and counterproliferation the organizing principle of US national security policy. The administration adopted the 1% rule—if there was a 1% chance of something happening, it would be treated as an imminent danger. This doctrine would lead to the invasion of Iraq. Almost two decades later, the United States still wages a low-intensity, high-technology war against terrorist networks all over the world.

The coronavirus has surpassed 9/11 and the global financial crisis as the defining international event for the majority of Americans. Over 130,000 Americans have died to date, and over forty million have lost their jobs. More people are dying from COVID-19 globally than almost anything else.¹ The virus placed immense strain on globalization, brought travel to a virtual halt, exposed strains within the European Union, and poses the greatest challenge to the Chinese Communist Party since 1989. And that is as of this writing in June 2020. The crisis may be a long one that extends well into 2021.

Some experts believe that the COVID-19 crisis must lead to a radical transformation of US strategy. Alexandra Stark, a scholar at New America, wrote that

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“COVID-19 is likely to become another 9/11 moment, one that again reshapes Americans’ conceptions of what security means. . . . Rather than taking a securitized approach to COVID-19, a new grand strategy must be fundamentally oriented around human well-being.”² Joseph Cirincione, formerly head of Ploughshares, wrote in *The National Interest* that America “does not need all the weapons the majority once considered vital, nor are needed as many soldiers, airmen, or Marines at a time when America’s best defense is global cooperation, not military confrontation.”³ Writing in *The Atlantic*, Peter Beinart called for Joe Biden to pursue a “radically different foreign policy” that recognized “the desperate need to improve international cooperation before the next pandemic hits.”⁴

This approach would be in keeping with the 9/11 precedent and, indeed, with earlier examples of the United States’ responses to strategic shocks. In addition, it would reorganize US foreign policy around the new danger and mobilize the resources of the nation to tackle it. In practical terms, this would mean elevating pandemics and the climate as the top national priorities, while seeking cooperation from other nations on these matters even at the expense of other interests.

However, this approach also runs the risk of making similar mistakes to the post-9/11 moment by misdiagnosing the nature of the challenge and focusing on one dimension of a strategy to the neglect of other important elements. Before the terrorist attacks, the Bush administration expected to focus on China. A year later, the administration called great-power competition obsolete because primacy made balancing irrational. The Bush administration would continue to play an important role in providing regional order, but it did not do as much as it should have to build new alliances and partnerships, particularly in Southeast Asia, where relationships were defined through the prism of counterterrorism. But the China challenge did not go away. Indeed, a few months after the attacks, a Goldman Sachs economist named Jim O’Neill coined the term “BRIC” (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) and predicted that their rise, in particular China’s rise, would be the defining event of the decade.

Pandemic disease and climate change will remain significant dangers to societies around the world for some time to come. COVID-19 badly exposed America’s lack of preparedness. The United States must genuinely expand its definition of national security to include pandemics, and it must invest much more in preventing a recurrence in the future. The United States is even further behind in tackling climate change and must do much more to prepare for the climate crises of the future.

But these are not the only challenges or crises. China has become more totalitarian, aggressive, and assertive; this arguably exacerbated the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is unfinished business from the financial crisis, and the broader crisis of globalization has been simmering for some time. Political interference by authoritarian states has worsened since the Russian attack on the 2016 election that went largely unanswered. US strategy needs to change, but it must respond to all of these challenges, not just the most recent.

The common thread of most of these challenges is that societies are interdependent and therefore vulnerable to one another at a time of increasing geopolitical and ideological competition between democracies and authoritarian regimes. Concentrating on one side of this equation while ignoring the other side is a strategic mistake. Focusing on transnational challenges and making international cooperation the primary goal of US grand strategy will not actually produce cooperation at the desired levels. Focusing only on great-power competition while ignoring the need for cooperation actually will not give the United States an enduring strategic advantage over China.

We have to move beyond the false dichotomy of transnational challenges versus hard security and better understand the strategic moment we are in, with all of its nuances. This essay looks at the implications of COVID-19 for great-power competition. What lessons can we learn? First, I look at the evolution of US grand strategy between 2016 and COVID-19. Second, I examine the impact of COVID-19 on the strategic debate and identify the strategic lessons we should learn from the crisis. Finally, I outline a “free world strategy” that deals with both transnational challenges and great-power competition by deepening cooperation with free societies on three areas—resilience, solidarity, and shaping the international environment.

The US Grand Strategy Debate from 2016 to COVID-19

The past four years in grand strategy have been dominated by a debate on the merits and demerits of the concept of great-power competition, which was the focal point of the Trump administration’s 2017 National Security Strategy.⁵ Upon taking office, the Trump team was able to take advantage of a broader bipartisan shift in the foreign policy community away from the notion that the major powers would converge on one model of liberal international order and toward a more geopolitically competitive concept of the world.⁶ If Hillary Clinton had been elected, she was likely to have moved in this direction too. But the Trump administration put its own sheen on the concept. It was heavy on sovereignty and national interest, light on values and transnational challenges, and silent on the origins of the competition or America’s end goal. Nevertheless, it was a significant

shift and was backed up by the National Defense Strategy, which set the priorities for the Pentagon. It put the shift in even starker terms that the National Security Strategy stated that “inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.”⁷

President Donald J. Trump was not fully on board. There is no record of him ever having spoken about the core tenet of the strategy—that of great-power competition. Even in his speech introducing the strategy, there was one line about Russia and China being great-power rivals, which he ad-libbed to convert it into a plea for cooperation with Russia on counterterrorism.⁸ Trump had his own set of national security priorities, and geopolitical competition was not on it. In his speeches and remarks, he consistently highlighted four threats: (1) immigrants, (2) trade deals, (3) nuclear weapons (particularly in North Korea and Iran), and (4) allies taking advantage of the United States. His ferocious rhetoric on China, mainly motivated by trade, gave top cover for his administration’s great-power rivalry.

The arrangement between Trump and his national security teams was an open marriage of sorts. They publicly committed to one another but did their own thing. For the officials, great-power competition was the substantive reason that justified staying and working for the president. It gave them a sense of purpose, and they made progress, beginning the process of reorienting the Department of Defense around a new mission. But substantive problems remained. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and then National Security Advisor John Bolton were much more focused on Iran than on China. Bolton also had his own pet projects, such as Venezuela. Secretary of the Treasury Steve Mnuchin was skeptical of decoupling and tended to be more dovish on China. It was unclear what would happen if Trump actually struck a trade deal with Beijing. The Trump administration repeatedly rebuffed efforts by European leaders to work together on China. Although there was a dialogue with Asian allies, the president was unhappy with most of America’s trade and basing agreements and sought to renegotiate on much more favorable terms.

The Trump administration was also never quite able to nail the values dimension of the competition with China, which most observers believed was a crucial distinction between the two sides. Trump was deeply suspicious of the notion that US strategy should be guided by a set of values, such as democracy, liberty, human rights, and a belief in the sovereign equality of nations. He was naturally drawn to strongmen, had a record of admiring the use of force against domestic opposition, felt that foreign policy should be purely transactional, and maintained that

alliances were a mechanism through which smaller countries manipulated and took advantage of the United States. According to Bolton, Trump even told Xi Jinping that building concentration camps in Xinjiang was the right thing to do.⁹ He also seemed to give Xi a green light for repression in Hong Kong. The rest of the administration would push the values dimension when they could, but they were heavily constrained by Trump.

Meanwhile, Americans began to change their strategic view, moving toward the great-power competition concept. Russia's interference in the 2016 election raised the specter of authoritarian interference in American elections and turned many Democrats into cold warriors. Xi's abolition of term limits signaled that he intended to remain in power for the rest of his life, turning China into a personality-centered dictatorship. Meanwhile, China's rapid advances in technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, facial recognition, and social credit scores, provided it with the means for a high-tech totalitarian society. China's behavior helped smooth the way for a tougher, more competitive approach in both parties, causing some to speak of a new consensus. The US-China competition is increasingly seen as a contest of systems—free societies and authoritarianism—that will directly shape the choices we make on technology, individual rights, the economy, and foreign policy.

It was not just the United States. European countries began to shift their approach toward China, away from one of economic engagement and toward one of limiting Chinese influence in Europe. This was summed up in the EU's 2019 document *EU-China: A Strategy Outlook*, which stated: "China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance."¹⁰ On the eve of COVID-19, Europe remained committed to a policy of engagement with China, but it was also taking steps to protect itself against China's economic practices and to speak with one voice.

By the end of 2019, the Trump administration was communicating two dramatically different strategic messages to the world. For the senior officials, it was all about competition with China, including strengthening America's alliances and partnerships. For the president and a handful of his loyalist aides, it was America First, meaning a skepticism of alliances, a mercantilist foreign policy, and a dismissal of values that underpinned the post-World War II order.

Democrats embraced elements of the great-power competition concept, but they worried that the administration's version left no room for a substantive strategic dialogue with Beijing, making any cooperation on shared challenges all but impossible. It also effectively ruled out a strategic effort to forge a common front with America's allies in Europe. Nevertheless, there was some bipartisan support for a competitive approach toward China. Many Europeans who attended the 2020 Munich Security Conference in mid-February, weeks before COVID-19 ravaged Europe and the United States, commented that they were particularly struck by the tough line both parties took on China and the question of whether Huawei should be allowed to build Europe's 5G infrastructure.

Understanding the COVID-19 Moment

The COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of the dangers that transnational threats pose to our societies and way of life. More people died in the United States than in all of the post-World War II conflicts combined. Over ten million people have been infected globally, which may be a considerable underestimate. The International Monetary Fund biannual report, *World Economic Outlook*, labeled the crisis "The Great Lockdown" and now estimates a reduction in global growth of 4.9% in 2020, making it the most severe recession since the Great Depression and far worse than the 2007–9 global financial crisis.¹¹ Even the countries that managed well—South Korea and Germany—paid a heavy economic price. Each nation's impulses were to respond nationally; there was little coordination with their neighbors. In the European Union, the most sophisticated and developed experiment in shared sovereignty short of formal nationhood, borders closed, and it was every country for itself, at least in the first month.

In the early days of the COVID-19 crisis, it appeared as though the deterioration in the West's relations with China might be slowed down or even reversed. Trump signed a trade deal with China, paving the way for a reelection campaign that emphasized his ability as a negotiator. He praised China's response to COVID-19 and expressed confidence in Xi. China, for its part, was consumed by the crisis and inwardly focused. The EU sent over fifty tons of protective equipment to China to assist their efforts. European officials said little about it, largely out of respect to Chinese authorities. French president Emmanuel Macron reportedly told a colleague that Chinese officials would remember Europe's support in the future.¹² Theoretically, COVID-19 opened a pathway for greater cooperation among the major powers on transnational challenges. Between the outbreak

of SARS in southern China in 2002 and 2016, US personnel worked closely with China on pandemics. This fell apart during the Trump administration. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health both reduced their presence inside China. Some observers suggested that, perhaps if the United States prioritized cooperation over competition, it may be possible to nurture a US-China partnership on this and other issues such as climate change.¹³

However, there are reasons to be skeptical. China has become much more repressive and secretive since Xi came to power, and this accelerated over the past four years. It is quite possible that cooperation on pandemics would have ended even without Trump, although he surely contributed to it. Xi's China sees transparency as a threat. It covered up the virus early on, failed to share crucial information with the World Health Organization and neighboring countries in a timely fashion, silenced the doctors who dissented, and refused to grant the international community access to China to investigate the origins of the virus.¹⁴

Moreover, if one sets aside the United States, China's relations with the rest of the world reveal some worrying patterns. It has become more aggressive, assertive, and bullying. In February 2020, it put considerable pressure on countries not to restrict travel with China, even as it prohibited domestic travel to and from Wuhan domestically. It asked donor countries to keep a low profile to save face. Later, it would freely impose its own travel restrictions on other countries, and it would demand that all those that received aid from China issue public declarations of support. China would threaten trade tariffs on Australia for daring to suggest an international investigation into the origins of the virus, and it would also launch a massive cyberattack on that country in June. Chinese forces engaged in a deadly clash with Indian troops along the border—the first time lives were lost in such a clash in forty-five years. It introduced a harsh new security law in Hong Kong, effectively ending one country, two systems.

Perhaps most instructive is China's diplomacy in Europe. The EU is eager to pursue a constructive and cooperative agenda with China. This year was supposed to see the first ever summit in Leipzig between Xi and all twenty-seven EU leaders, with a focus on an investment treaty, climate change, and Africa. Although the EU had turned more wary of China since 2015—largely for economic reasons—it is also wary of being drawn into the US competition with Beijing. COVID-19 presented China with the perfect opportunity to work with the EU and to attempt to drive a wedge into the heart of the transatlantic alliance. It did not turn out that way.

China behaved very assertively in Europe, seeking praise for foreign assistance, pressuring countries that criticized China's record, and trying to take advantage

of the economic downturn to snap up crucial assets at knockdown prices and to push its 5G agenda. Its ambassadors were quickly labeled “wolf warriors” after the jingoistic Chinese action movie. The EU recoiled at its assertiveness and pushed back, tightening investment regulations and directly criticizing China for spreading disinformation.

We may need cooperation with China to tackle pandemic disease properly, but China’s national and global response to COVID-19 should remind us that we should be realistic about how much cooperation we can get from China’s Communist Party regime. It will be limited, imperfect, and hard to trust. As the rest of the world’s experience shows, even if the United States were to approach China in a less hostile way, Xi’s China is likely to remain secretive and assertive. It may also become increasingly aggressive in its actions.

What we learned from COVID-19 was that we are simultaneously facing near worst-case scenarios for transnational threats and great-power competition, with each exacerbating the other. And then there is a third problem—COVID-19 reveals an enormous governance gap between the United States and other democracies, such as South Korea, Germany, and Taiwan. The United States had shortages of key medical supplies. There was extremely weak leadership from the federal government. Some states performed well, but others did not. The result was an uneven patchwork of efforts that served, ultimately, to undermine rather than to strengthen one another. The results were clear. By midsummer, the United States had over three million cases, vastly more than any other nation, and over 130,000 fatalities. It was arguably the biggest failure of government since the Great Depression. Not all democracies performed well (Britain and Sweden, for instance, also did poorly), but those that did were able to take mass coordinated actions to limit social interaction early, kept to it in a disciplined way, and employed technology as part of a contact and tracing system. Experts have long argued that to be strong overseas, the United States must be strong at home and that it has a lot of work to do to prepare for 21st-century challenges. COVID-19 proves the point, if it were ever in dispute.

Toward a Free World Strategy

If a post-9/11-style revolution in American strategy—to focus on transnational threats at the expense of other problems—is undesirable, then how should we think about change? Should the United States simply try to do better at what it was already doing before Trump—invest more into tackling transnational challenges, seek reform and improvements to multilateralism and international institutions,

narrow the counterterrorism fight, and gradually pivot to the Asia-Pacific? Should it try to do less internationally, passing the baton on to others and concentrating on the monumental task of domestic renovation and reform to recover not just from the COVID-19 crisis but also from decades of government dysfunction and underinvestment. Or, should the United States undertake more radical reforms and seek an organizing principle to guide its strategy?

A technocratic approach may sound attractive, but it offers little guidance on how to determine priorities or update US strategy for a changed world. What should our expectations be of a bilateral dialogue with China? What should the balance be between seeking cooperation on shared problems and competing with China? Should the United States aim for an inclusive form of multilateralism or work with like-minded democracies? Without a theory of the case, the United States is prone to strategic drift and will be forced to make decisions by the course of events rather than of its own volition.

Doing less internationally to focus on nation building at home misunderstands the nature of the domestic challenges we face. Pandemics, climate change, external interference in democratic processes, illiberal elements in domestic politics, and questions about the balance between technological advancement and individual rights are not unique to America. They are shared by free societies to some extent. And they must be dealt with collectively. The real challenges from other great powers will not go away or slow down just because Americans want to focus on the home front. In fact, they may accelerate—the pandemic, the recession, and doubts about America’s commitment to its alliances sap the capacity of other democracies and makes the world more crisis prone.

So what should the United States actually do? As in any discussion of grand strategy, the answer in part depends on one’s definition of the national interest. For all of its flaws as a strategic document, this may have been most clearly articulated in NSC-68, the highly classified assessment of the Soviet Union just before the outbreak of the Korean War. It stated that the fundamental purpose of the United States is to “assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded on the dignity and worth of the individual.” To achieve this, NSC-68 called on the United States “to build a healthy international community” and a “world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish.” This, the document said, “we would probably do even if there were no international threat.”¹⁵

NSC-68 advocated for a highly active and ambitious US foreign policy. We can debate its relevance, but its definition of the national purpose captured the link-

age between domestic welfare and the international in a way that many alternatives did not. Today, the United States finds its democracy and status as a free society challenged. The pandemic is an important piece of this. It revealed real shortcomings in the capacity of government to deal with an existential challenge to Americans' way of life. But it is far from the only piece.

Free societies are in trouble. As Freedom House has documented, the world has become less free over the past four years, due in large part to illiberal forces within democracies.¹⁶ Many democracies also struggle to cope with fundamental challenges, including inequality, climate change, and the automation of work. Externally, free societies have the real threat of political interference from authoritarian states and networks of corruption. Other challenges, such as those arising out of artificial intelligence, loom large.

Placing the health, security, integrity, and prosperity of the free world as the centerpiece of US strategy is a way of integrating domestic, transnational, and great-power challenges in a way that actually sets priorities and helps to guide policy. The concept of the free world is one with a lineage dating back to just before World War II. According to the Swarthmore political scientist Dominic Tierney, internationalist Americans began to use the term "free world" in 1941 to press for entry into the war against the Nazis.¹⁷ It took off in the early Cold War period but fell into disuse during the Vietnam War and was discarded after the fall of the Soviet Union. Its weakness was always that the world was more of a shaded gray than black and white.

Presidents would continue to pay it rhetorical homage. They would mention "leader of the free world," but no one took it seriously as a strategic concept. Recent developments give the term new meaning. The nature of freedom has been cast in doubt by new technologies, demagogues inside democracies, dictators in China and Russia, income inequality, climate change, and COVID-19. There is a question about what the United States stands for and why it competes with others. The free world is ripe for revival and redefinition.

In this new context, a free world strategy would have three core elements to it: (1) resilience, (2) solidarity, and (3) shaping the international system.

RESILIENCE

Resilience means ensuring that free societies are strong enough to withstand threats from within and from without. At a most basic level, it means investing in critical infrastructure, including public health, education, and research and development. However, it also means tackling corruption and oligarchy, protecting

democratic institutions and the rule of law against erosion at the hands of populist nationalists, and reforming international tax and financial regulations. It means doing this with like-minded free societies and putting pressure on backward-sliding democracies, including Poland, or those that are on the verge of full-blown authoritarianism, such as Hungary.

Resilience also includes a strategic review about the extent and nature of our engagement with authoritarian countries—economically, culturally, politically, and technologically—to ensure that we are inoculated from any negative externalities of the authoritarian system. Vanderbilt professor Ganesh Sitaraman, who has written extensively about resilience, has outlined three strategic steps that should be taken: (1) selective disentanglement to uncouple “the American economy from Chinese corporations, investments, and the Chinese economy in sectors that are of critical importance to national security”; (2) diversification of economic partners; and (3) “a coherent development policy—an internal policy to support and strengthen innovation and industry.”¹⁸

SOLIDARITY

Authoritarian countries have become bolder in seeking to intimidate democratic countries, particularly small and middle powers. China uses its asymmetric economic power to make political demands on smaller countries and the private sector. It is not just China. Saudi Arabia cut off economic ties to Canada and reduced its investment in Germany after their foreign ministers criticized Riyadh for arresting women’s rights activists and for Saudi policy in Yemen, respectively.

Authoritarian states can do this because the free world does not stand as one. Each nation must fend for itself. In a free world framework, the United States would begin to put together a political equivalent of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty—when an authoritarian power seeks to illegitimately coerce a free society, there will be a collective response. Free societies would also work proactively to counter disinformation, corruption, and intelligence operations and to protect our technological infrastructure.

SHAPING THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

China and other authoritarian states have made great inroads into the international order, shaping organizations like the World Health Organization and diluting international norms. Under the Trump administration, the United States has largely disengaged from these institutions. In a free world strategy, the United States would work with other free societies to strengthen liberal norms and to set

up new structures where existing ones fall short. This coalition should also cooperate to reform and shape the global economic order—reducing corporate tax loopholes, tackling inequality, and regulating international finance. This is a form of competitive multilateralism whereby democracies actively contest illiberal values rather than cede the field to countries such as China.

There are challenges with a free world framework. It would be hard to institutionalize. After all, where would the line be drawn? Hungary certainly could not join but what about India, Brazil, or Poland? Some, including many Europeans, might see it as an anti-China alliance and would be reluctant to take part? This is why it should be informal—a goal of US strategy that should be practically pursued but not institutionalized. An expanded G7 with Australia, South Korea, and India could serve as a proxy of sorts, but its power would be as an organizing principle of US strategy.

The line-drawing issue has been problematic in the past. During the Cold War, countries could be part of the free world even if they were not free as long as they were committed to a balance of power that favored the democracies. One problem with that approach is that some countries may try to play both sides—leading to competitive outbidding by the superpowers to get autocracies in their column—and that authoritarianism at home can have negative spillover effects (e.g., on corruption). It is more important that the core of the free world maintain high standards rather than be as broad as possible. The free world could still ally with non-democracies on a transactional basis where there is a pressing strategic reason to do so, but they could not be part of that inner core unless they are making real progress on improving their domestic system of government. It would be acknowledged that there is something special and enduring about cooperation between democracies.

The pandemic shows why rivals must cooperate on shared challenges even as they compete ferociously in other spheres. The United States and the Soviet Union worked together on the nonproliferation treaty, arms control, and public health. Working with like-minded free societies must not preclude a dialogue and cooperation with China on shared challenges. In fact, it could facilitate it. If the United States and its allies and partners work together to agree on a common position, they can negotiate collectively from a position of strength with China and help to shape its choices. Cooperation between democracies and authoritarian powers will be difficult and limited in scope, but it is achievable if it is transactional and based on mutual interest. Democracies will have to think anew, though, about what cooperation with China would entail.

During the Cold War, arms control was only possible because strategists developed the counterintuitive concept of second-strike survivability whereby each superpower would be more secure if the other could absorb a first strike and retaliate, thus laying the foundation for mutually assured destruction. We need similar concepts to generate cooperation on transnational challenges. Perhaps such cooperation should be compartmentalized and sealed off from other parts of the relationship. Maybe the United States and China should try to cooperate on a partial decoupling to make each less vulnerable to the other. These are questions that US and Chinese officials must discuss in a renewed strategic dialogue.

The Post-COVID Moment

The COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath may be a rare reordering moment in the international order. US grand strategy is prone to massive oscillations after major crises. Americans would do well to avoid that this time. The strategy needs to change, but it must accommodate all of the developments underway, not just one. A focus on transnational challenges to the exclusion of great-power competition and hard security would only mean that a health and economic crisis would be accompanied by major geopolitical crises, compounding America's already mounting problems. The United States' top foreign policy priority for the next year must be defeating the virus and shaping the post-virus world. The strategic question is what follows that? What should guide US strategy for the next decade or two?

Deepening cooperation with other free and democratic societies, not just on geopolitical issues but also on shared domestic challenges, offers the most promising path forward. Americans want a strategy that is directly connected to their daily lives and the challenges they face. A free world strategy includes geopolitical interests in faraway places, but the core of it is about protecting liberty, prosperity, and democracy at home. It is less about the past—the liberal international order, alliances, and institutions—and more about providing solutions to modern problems, threats, and challenges, whether they are from new technologies, a virus, the environment, or a hostile foreign power. Great-power competition will continue in a free world strategy, but it will be shaped and limited by this doctrine in positive ways. It will reduce the risk that great-power competition will undermine American democracy and liberty at home by keeping to the forefront of our minds what the United States is competing for. If policy makers are serious about refining and improving the free society as a goal for a core group of like-minded states, it also allows them to avoid the excesses of the Cold War, including how the competition with the Soviet Union turned into a global contest spanning every region. A free

world strategy also offers a framework to connect the foreign and domestic in a way that helps Americans realize the purpose set out in the Declaration of Independence. It is the right strategy for a nation and a world troubled on all fronts.

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