

Summaries

WHITHER THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER?

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Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order

John J. Mearsheimer, University of Chicago

The liberal international order, erected after the Cold War, was crumbling by 2019. It was flawed from the start and thus destined to fail. The spread of liberal democracy around the globe—essential for building that order—faced strong resistance because of nationalism, which emphasizes self-determination. Some targeted states also resisted U.S. efforts to promote liberal democracy for security-related reasons. Additionally, problems arose because a liberal order calls for states to delegate substantial decisionmaking authority to international institutions and to allow refugees and immigrants to move easily across borders. Modern nation-states privilege sovereignty and national identity, however, which guarantees trouble when institutions become powerful and borders porous. Furthermore, the hyperglobalization that is integral to the liberal order creates economic problems among the lower and middle classes within the liberal democracies, fueling a backlash against that order. Finally, the liberal order accelerated China's rise, which helped transform the system from unipolar to multipolar. A liberal international order is possible only in unipolarity. The new multipolar world will feature three realist orders: a thin international order that facilitates cooperation, and two bounded orders—one dominated by China, the other by the United States—poised for waging security competition between them.

51–87

A Flawed Framework: Why the Liberal International Order Concept Is Misguided

Charles L. Glaser, George Washington University

Well before President Donald Trump began rhetorically attacking U.S. allies and the open international trading system, policy analysts worried about challenges to the liberal international order (LIO). A more fundamental issue, however, has received little attention: the analytic value of framing U.S. security in terms of the LIO. Systematic examination shows that this framing creates far more confusion than insight. Even worse, the LIO framing could lead the United States to adopt overly competitive policies and unnecessarily resist

change in the face of China's growing power. The "LIO concept"—the logics that proponents identify as underpinning the LIO—is focused inward, leaving it ill equipped to address interactions between members of the LIO and states that lie outside the LIO. In addition, the LIO concept suffers theoretical flaws that further undermine its explanatory value. The behavior that the LIO concept claims to explain—including cooperation under anarchy, effective Western balancing against the Soviet Union, the Cold War peace, and the lack of balancing against the United States following the Cold War—is better explained by other theories, most importantly, defensive realism. Analysis of U.S. international policy would be improved by dropping the LIO terminology entirely and reframing analysis in terms of grand strategy.

88–127

Proliferation and the Logic of the Nuclear Market

Eliza Gheorghe, Bilkent University

The evolution of the nuclear market explains why there are only nine members of the nuclear club, not twenty-five or more, as some analysts predicted. In the absence of a supplier cartel that can regulate nuclear transfers, the more suppliers there are, the more intense their competition will be, as they vie for market share. This commercial rivalry makes it easier for nuclear technology to spread, because buyers can play suppliers off against each other. The ensuing transfers help countries either acquire nuclear weapons or become hedgers. The great powers (China, Russia, and the United States) seek to thwart proliferation by limiting transfers and putting safeguards on potentially dangerous nuclear technologies. Their success depends on two structural factors: the global distribution of power and the intensity of the security rivalry among them. Thwarters are most likely to stem proliferation when the system is unipolar and least likely when it is multipolar. In bipolarity, their prospects fall somewhere in between. In addition, the more intense the rivalry among the great powers in bipolarity and multipolarity, the less effective they will be at curbing proliferation. Given the potential for intense security rivalry among today's great powers, the shift from unipolarity to multipolarity does not portend well for checking proliferation.

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Buying Allies: Payment Practices in Multilateral Military Coalition-Building

Marina E. Henke, Northwestern University

Many countries serving in multilateral military coalitions are “paid” to do so, either in cash or in concessions relating to other international issues. An examination of hundreds of declassified archival sources as well as elite interviews relating to the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Iraq War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization operation in Afghanistan, the United Nations–African Union operation in Darfur, and the African Union operation in Somalia reveals that these payment practices follow a systematic pattern: pivotal states provide the means to cover such payments. These states reason that rewarding third parties to serve in multilateral coalitions holds important political benefits. Moreover, two distinct types of payment schemes exist: deployment subsidies and political side deals. Three types of states are most likely to receive such payments: (1) states that are inadequately resourced to deploy; (2) states that are perceived by the pivotal states as critical contributors to the coalition endeavor; and (3) opportunistic states that perceive a coalition deployment as an opportunity to negotiate a *quid pro quo*. These findings provide a novel perspective on what international burden sharing looks like in practice. Moreover, they raise important questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of such payment practices in multilateral military deployments.

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Power and Profit at Sea: The Rise of the West in the Making of the International System

J.C. Sharman, University of Cambridge

The making of the international system from c. 1500 reflected distinctively maritime dynamics, especially “gunboat diplomacy,” or the use of naval force for commercial gain. Comparisons between civilizations and across time show, first, that gunboat diplomacy was peculiarly European and, second, that it evolved through stages. For the majority of the modern era, violence was central to the commercial strategies of European state, private, and hybrid actors alike in the wider world. In contrast, large and small non-Western polities almost never sought to advance mercantile aims through naval coercion. European exceptionalism reflected a structural trade deficit, regional systemic dynamics favoring armed trade, and mercantilist beliefs. Changes in interna-

tional norms later restricted the practice of gunboat diplomacy to states, as private navies became illegitimate. More generally, a maritime perspective suggests the need for a reappraisal of fundamental conceptual divisions and shows how the capital- and technology-intensive nature of naval war allowed relatively small European powers to be global players. It also explains how European expansion and the creation of the first global international system was built on dominance at sea centuries before Europeans' general military superiority on land.

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