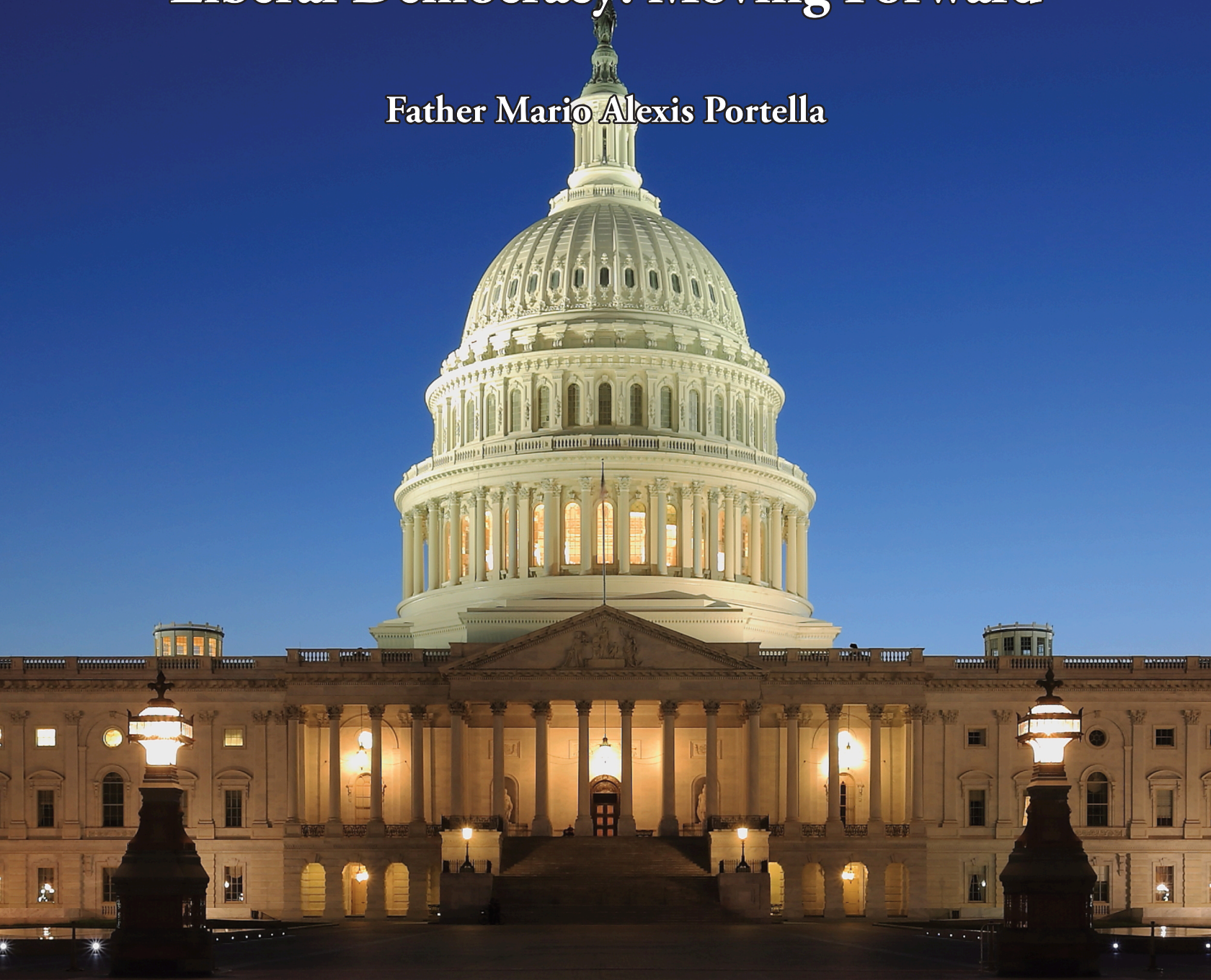


America's Failed Mission to Proselytize for Liberal Democracy: Moving Forward

Father Mario Alexis Portella



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About the Danube Institute

The Danube Institute, established in 2013 by the Batthyány Lajos Foundation in Budapest, serves as a hub for the exchange of ideas and individuals within Central Europe and between Central Europe, other parts of Europe, and the English-speaking world. Rooted in a commitment to respectful conservatism in cultural, religious, and social life, the Institute also upholds the broad classical liberal tradition in economics and a realistic Atlanticism in national security policy. These guiding principles are complemented by a dedication to exploring the interplay between democracy and patriotism, emphasizing the nation-state as the cornerstone of democratic governance and international cooperation.

Through research, analysis, publication, debate, and scholarly exchanges, the Danube Institute engages with center-right intellectuals, political leaders, and public-spirited citizens, while also fostering dialogue with counterparts on the democratic center-left. Its activities include establishing and supporting research groups, facilitating international conferences and fellowships, and encouraging youth participation in scholarly and political discourse. By drawing upon the expertise of leading minds across national boundaries, the Institute aims to contribute to the development of democratic societies grounded in national identity and civic engagement.

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Father Mario Alexis Portella

Abstract

When President Woodrow Wilson said in 1917 that “the world must be made safe for democracy,” America entered the global arena of geopolitics for the first time, becoming the hegemon of the Western hemisphere until after it won World War II. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US began to act on Francis Fukuyama’s quintessential vision to export American liberal democracy to nation-states. Yet, given their multi-ethnic and diverse cultural backgrounds, integration into the American liberal systems was impossible. This has made the world unsafe, and not just for democracy. It sparked terrorism in the Islamic world, provoked the war in Ukraine and empowered Communist China to become a fierce competitor, threatening not just US interests, but the stability of the Pacific.

The challenge for the US has been, or perhaps may be still, overcoming its hubris of roaming around the world and proselytizing for its liberal democracy. How, then, can the world be made safe, and not just for democracy?

Introduction

The United States of America entered the global arena of geopolitics for the first time on 2 April 1917, when President Woodrow Wilson (in office 1913-1921) asked Congress for a declaration of war against Imperial Germany. At that moment, World War I (or the Great War) was in its third year. Germany, which allied itself with Austria-Hungary, had been violating its pledge to suspend unrestricted submarine warfare in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean on US ships. The Germans also attempted to entice Mexico into an alliance against the US.

President Wilson, who maintained a neutral position, felt compelled to bring America into the Great War for the purpose of salvaging democracy.

“The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. ...A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. It must be a league of honour, a partnership of opinion. ...Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honour steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interest of their own.”

Woodrow Wilson, 2 April 1917,

Speech to Congress asking for a declaration of war

Wilson made a perspicuous link between the nature of liberalism and his foreign policy vision, which entailed the presence of American military prowess on the world stage. In doing so, he extended the horizons of the Monroe Doctrine—the principle that the US would not permit intervention or domination in the Western Hemisphere by any non-American nation. The end was to establish a transnational institution—the League of Nations—which would have the authority to enforce collective security. It was not, however, until after the Second World War in 1945 that the Wilson Doctrine began to be materialized, through the Marshall Plan, to help Europe financially and socially rebuild itself, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the collective security to contain Soviet Union aggression.

This held until the dissolution of the USSR on 25 December 1991, when America, uncontested in the world, rescinded from the Wilsonian principle in lieu of the archetypal outlook for global society proposed by Francis Fukuyama, who envisioned American liberalism as the last ideological stage in the long march of history. Thereupon, “there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all of the really big questions [would have] been settled through liberal democracy.”¹

The US, proclaiming its political system as the vanguard for universal harmony, empowered itself to proselytize for its liberal democracy on non-democratic sovereign countries. Therefore, American democracy had to demonstrate its political power by excluding, if not banishing, or keeping at bay, anything that was both foreign and unequal, that threatened its homogeneity.² Simply put, the principle of collective decision-making by the populace that characterizes a democracy was inverted by the American body politic towards the world.

Besides doing nothing other than breeding both contempt for and mistrust of American liberal democracy, this impudent approach, has made the world *unsafe*—and not just for democracy. The failure was not liberalism, but rather America's imposing it on nations without taking into consideration that their respective anthropology formed distinct groups of people who think and live altogether differently from our Western perspective. The incompatibility of trying to integrate, for example those in the Islamic world, specifically in Afghanistan and Iraq, or extend liberal democracy into the terrain of the former Soviet Union, vis-à-vis Ukraine, was met with bitter opposition that resulted in unnecessary bloodshed.

This hubris was also extended to the People's Republic of China (PRC). America's attempt to democratize China ran into a brick wall of nationalism. The result, thus far, has been an empowerment of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP), enabling it to further challenge its security and interests in the Pacific, especially with Taiwan.

Does this not mean that the liberal international order as envisioned by the Wilson Doctrine is dead in the water? If not, how can the world be made safe, and not just for the sake of democracy?



Oval Office during President Carter's Administration. (White House Staff Photographers via Wikimedia Commons)

Liberalism and the Moral Duty to Export it

Liberalism is the political philosophy that calls for government to be limited in its powers and its modes of acting under the rule of law to guarantee civil and political liberties. Thus, a liberal society is characterized by tolerance “of different religious, philosophical, and ethical views and wherein individuals are free to entertain different doctrines, express their conflicting beliefs and opinions, and live their lives according to their chosen projects and life paths.”³

The English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), to whom the American Founding Fathers primarily reverted to establish their democratic nation-state, expounded on liberalism as the ideal structure for government, sustaining three fundamental institutional categories “that typify a liberal society: religious toleration and freedom of religion, the rule of law within a constitutional government with limited functions, and robust private property rights.”⁴ This is because, as he argued, “all men are naturally in...a state of perfect freedom.” And because in this “state of equality, no man has a natural claim to rule over another,” for “all men possess natural rights: ‘life, health, liberty, or possessions,’”⁵ a body politic that embraces this Lockean liberalism must ensure that the rights are owed to the individual under its jurisdiction.

Locke was also a realist. He understood that individuals had no other choice but to establish a commonwealth, i.e. representative government empowered to arbitrate disputes and redress injustice. He thus contended the duty of the individual to obey civil government under a social contract, although not in the manner Thomas Hobbes proposed, in which the sovereign was an absolute. Instead, it is one administered by the governed and conditional upon the defence of the natural rights of each person, most significantly the right to private property.

The freedom to private property became reciprocal, i.e. the liberty we possess cannot be protected without private property. In other words, as the Austrian-British economist and philosopher Friedrich August von Hayek (1899-1992) said: “There can be no freedom of press if the instruments of printing are under government control, no freedom of assembly if the needed rooms are so controlled, no freedom of movement if the means of transport are a government monopoly.”

If the State violated these terms, i.e. no longer observed the rule of law, then it became

“the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

(Preamble, U.S. Declaration of Independence)

Advocates of liberalism hold that if these rights are “inalienable,” since they are “endowed by [our] Creator” as proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence, then everyone on the globe must be guaranteed that they too enjoy them. Hence, the breeding of American exceptionalism and the US’s obligation to propagate such rights to every part of the world.

This principle, Israeli-American philosopher Yoram Hazony argued, would always tempt or induce such proponents to unite themselves in order to endorse “a single imperialist vision...a world in which liberal principles are codified as universal law and imposed on the nations, if necessary by force [in order to realize] universal peace and prosperity.”⁷ America, as the prototype and custodian of liberal democracy, would then have no choice but to be “interwoven with events beyond our borders and that our safety, liberty, and well-being require us to act as a part of the world about us.”⁸

Perhaps this is why in 1990 President George H.W. Bush (in office 1989-1993), knowing that the days of the Soviet Union were numbered, stated: “*There is no substitute for American leadership.*”⁹ In essence, he and his successors in the White House were bent on forging a new international structure that was fundamentally different from the one that had existed during the Cold War. They committed themselves to remoulding a bounded realist order into an international liberal one, so much so that when Bill Clinton ran for president in 1992, he criticized his would-be challengers for not being ambitious enough to create this new world order.¹⁰

The US liberal internationalism of Woodrow Wilson, as a result of Fukuyama’s quintessential global vision, would be restructured into, as Henry Kissinger would later explain in his book *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? – Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (2001), a policing of international crises in order not to lose its effectiveness as a superpower. The US equated, as it saw fit, the affairs of the international community with its national interests, taking upon itself the mission to *re-fashioning* other countries’ right to self-determination, whether they liked it or not.

Great Mosque of Herat, Afghanistan. (Todd Huffman via Wikimedia Commons)



Trespassing upon the Islamic Domain

The first wide-scale attempt of the US to restructure a non-liberal nation into its *own image* occurred in 2001 with the invasion of Afghanistan launched by President George W. Bush (in office 2001-2009) as part of his 'war on terrorism' after the 9/11 tragedies. The same policy was also extended to Iraq when the US invaded the country in 2003 and deposed its dictator Saddam Hussein, under the false belief that he had weapons of mass destruction.

Bush rationalized that "[b]y helping Iraqis [and the Afghans] build a strong democracy, we're adding to our own security, and, like a generation before us, we're laying the foundation of peace for generations to come."¹¹ The US, in opposition to the Marshall Plan, engaged in nation-building in Afghanistan, and in Iraq, it went so far as to create a Constitution for the Iraqis to follow. Both undertakings were ineffective in producing a liberal democracy.

There were two immediate red flags indicating that this policy was doomed to fail from the very start. It was not necessarily the narrative that the US was unable to contain the widespread corruption or incapable to unify the multi-ethnic and contemptuous groups in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Instead, it was more of the fundamental principle that American liberal democracy is incompatible with the sharia—the guiding norm for all Muslims.

Sharia law has as its foundation the *fitrah*—the primordial nature of humans within the divine order, living according to our human instinct/capacity in which all were created. According to Islamic belief, "no babe is born but upon *fitrah*," meaning everyone is born a Muslim. If anyone professes a different religion from childhood, he does so as a result of a parental mistake. This intellectually handicaps them,¹² thus depriving them of being considered equal under the law.

Women, too, are divested of legal or anthropological recognition in that they cannot publicly contribute to the common good of society. There have been exceptions, notwithstanding the primordial rule in Islamic tradition that "[m]en are in charge of women...,"¹³ like Sheikh Hasina Waze, who was Prime Minister of Bangladesh (1996-2001 and from 2009-2024), and Benazir Bhutto, who became the eleventh Prime Minister of Pakistan (1993-1996).

Since Islam, as per its verbal noun *masdar*—the fourth form of the Arabic root *s-l-mk*: *al-Silm*—signifies "to submit" or

"to surrender," all Muslims must render an unconditional submission to Allah's will as legislated by his representatives, [*the umma* = *elders in the community*] the custodians of the sharia.¹⁴ While some Islamic nation-states may have a democratic type of government and even hold elections, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ultimate decision-maker is the Supreme leader in the person of the Ayatollah, not the governed.

The primacy of sharia law was collectively and legally enshrined as the Constitution of the Islamic world in August 1990 when the original fifty-six Islamic member-states (now fifty-seven) of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)—the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the UN—unanimously adopted the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI); it was previously drafted in Tehran in December 1989. Its purpose was to serve as a guide for the member-states in the field of human rights.

"Reaffirming the civilizing and historical role of the Islamic Umma [community] which Allah made as the best community and which gave humanity a universal and well-balanced civilization, ... to fulfil the expectations from this community to guide all humanity which is confused because of different and conflicting beliefs and ideologies and to provide solutions for all chronic problems of this materialistic civilization... In contribution to the efforts of mankind to assert human rights, to protect man from exploitation and persecution, and to affirm his freedom and right to a dignified life in accordance with the Islamic Sharia."

(Preamble, CDHRI)

Taking into account the preamble of the CDHRI, the sharia is designed to overrule any Western notion of human rights, such as those prescribed in the US Bill of Rights or those of the UN Universal Declaration of Rights of 1948.

"All the rights and freedoms stipulated in this Declaration are subject to the Islamic Sharia. The Islamic Sharia is the only source of reference for the explanation or clarification to any of the articles of this Declaration."

(CDHRI, Articles 24 and 25)

The second red flag was that American liberal intervention trespassed into the Muslims' *dar al-Islam* (abode or place of peace, where the sharia is enforced)—a battle cry that led to the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the rise of ISIS

in the Levant. What made matters worse was that US transgression did not focus on reformulating or eliminating the physical lines of demarcation of the *dar al-Islam*. Instead, it tried to reshape or eliminate those boundaries that exist within the nature of the individual Muslim,¹⁵ his or her daily activity, with a reformulated liberalism that incorporates the left-wing feminist or the LGBTQ+ agendas. The former obligates women to consider 'careerism' in lieu of 'motherhood,' while the latter demands a recognition of marriage to those of the same sex, among other things. These schools of thought undermine, if not threaten, the institution of the family, and subsequently, Islamic governance under sharia law.¹⁶ It is no surprise that to defend their *dar al-Islam*, many Muslims turned to terrorism.



St. Basil's Cathedral, Moscow. (Telluride 749 via Wikimedia Commons)

Underestimating the Russian Bear

The invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces on 24 February 2022 cannot be justified for the simple reason that Ukraine posed no existential threat to the Russian Federation, even though it was eminent to those who understood the Russian mindset. With the understanding that the Russians are keener on security than human rights, Russian President Vladimir Putin was provoked by the US-led West to invade Ukraine for the simple reason of fighting against American liberal imperialism.

The Russian Federation is not a nation-state as envisioned in the West. It is, rather, “and has always been an empire, whether in the tsarist, Soviet, or oligarchic varieties” with a multi-national populace “governed by a centrally-run repressive state, with top-down pressure as the historic mode of governance and expansionism as the state’s *raison d’être*.”¹⁷ Given the Russian legacy of overcoming adversity, shaped by wars and political upheaval, it is a taboo if any foreign power contemplates encroaching on the Russian frontier, let alone attempts to do it. Doing so would be as perilous as waking up a bear from hibernation.

This is what the US-led NATO had been doing for over a generation, beginning when it made inroads into the former Warsaw Pact countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic when they joined the Alliance; Romania and the Baltic States joined five years later, in 2004. Then in April 2008, during the NATO-Bucharest Summit, in front of President Putin, who was an invited guest, it was announced that Georgia, a small former Soviet Republic in the Caucasus and Ukraine, would become part of NATO.

The Russians made it categorically clear at the time that this expansion would be considered as an existential threat to their country. In fact, then-US Ambassador to Russia William Burns, in a memo to then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, warned that such a move would touch “a raw nerve” with Russia that would engender “serious concerns about the consequences for stability in the region.”¹⁸

“Ukrainian entry into NATO,” Burns wrote, “is the brightest of all red lines for the Russian elite (not just Putin). In more than two and a half years of conversations with key Russian players, from knuckle-draggers in the dark recesses of the Kremlin to Putin’s sharpest liberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests.” NATO, he said, “would be seen ... as throwing down the strategic gauntlet.

Today’s Russia will respond. Russian-Ukrainian relations will go into a deep freeze ... It will create fertile soil for Russian meddling in Crimea and eastern Ukraine.”¹⁹

Thus, on 8 August 2008, Putin responded by sending troops to invade Georgia. In a matter of days, the Russians annexed two small parts, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Russia’s response can be equated to the manner the US reacted during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, when the Soviets put nuclear missiles in Cuba aimed at the American continent—a clear violation of the Monroe Doctrine. President Kennedy responded with a blockade of the island to prevent further Soviet shipments of missiles, which nearly led to a nuclear confrontation with the Soviets. Fortunately, Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev had the good sense to withdraw his missiles—the US simultaneously removed theirs from Turkey.

Instead of trying to come to terms with its old Soviet adversary, in 2008 the US actively sought to undermine the Russian Federation by seeking to turn its former bloc countries, especially neighbouring Ukraine, into a Western bulwark of liberal democracy. In fact, the US had already gone to great lengths to achieve this during the Orange Revolution (late November 2004 to January 2005) by clandestinely helping remove the pro-Russian leader, President Viktor Yanukovich, in favour of the pro-American Oleksandr Valentynovych Turchynov.

In 2012, Kyiv adopted a National Security Strategy with the goal of further developing its NATO partnership, arguing that it had to protect the Russian-populated Donetsk and Luhansk—now under Russian control—as independent republics. Thus, on 22 February 2014, during what is known as the Maidan Revolution, Putin annexed Crimea.

Perhaps the straw that broke Russia’s back was the Obama administration’s decision in 2016 to set up CIA covert operations in Ukraine to undermine Moscow, which continued under the first Trump and Biden administrations. In the process, the CIA began training an elite Ukrainian special force unit known as Unit 2245. It captured Russian drones and communications equipment so that CIA technicians could reverse-engineer them and crack Moscow’s encryption systems.²⁰

The argument that Ukraine should be able to choose its own destiny and become a part of NATO is in itself legitimate.

The problem is that the Russians do not want that any more than the Americans wanted a Soviet presence in Cuba. After all, how would we Americans react if Communist China placed military bases on our Canadian border, or if the Russians placed theirs at the Mexican border? Mayhem would break loose.

A Brazen Misreading of the CCP

Ever since President Nixon's famous trip to the PRC in 1972, American policy towards the Chinese had been one of engagement, even to the point of selling them advanced military weaponry,²¹ thinking they would eventually be culturally, politically and economically integrated into a liberal democracy. This crusade was propelled by President Clinton when he signed an agreement with the PRC in March 2000 to bring it into the World Trade Organisation (WTO), by which means he believed that China would "import one of democracy's most cherished values: economic freedom," and consequently, "...liberate the potential of its people."²²

In like manner, President George W. Bush was also convinced that "WTO membership will require China to strengthen the rule of law and introduce certain civil reforms, such as the publication of rules[, and introduce] democratic reforms."²³ Instead of the PRC becoming part of the "free nations of the earth" by 2025, as Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs (1989-1991) Harry Rowen predicted in 2007²⁴ that America's approach "helped usher in a new, more powerful China that did not conform to Western expectations."²⁵

Ever since joining the WTO, the PRC has catapulted itself to becoming the world's largest exporter, with a reported GDP increased 1,400 per cent under a one-party state, socialist system, while systematically violating the WTO's foundational principles. The ruling CCP steals intellectual property through cyber-operations and human-intelligence recruitment. It also constrains foreign companies operating in China to share their technologies with local ones, spending ten times what the US does to subsidize domestic firms.²⁶

There were three reasons why the US's attempt to democratize China failed.

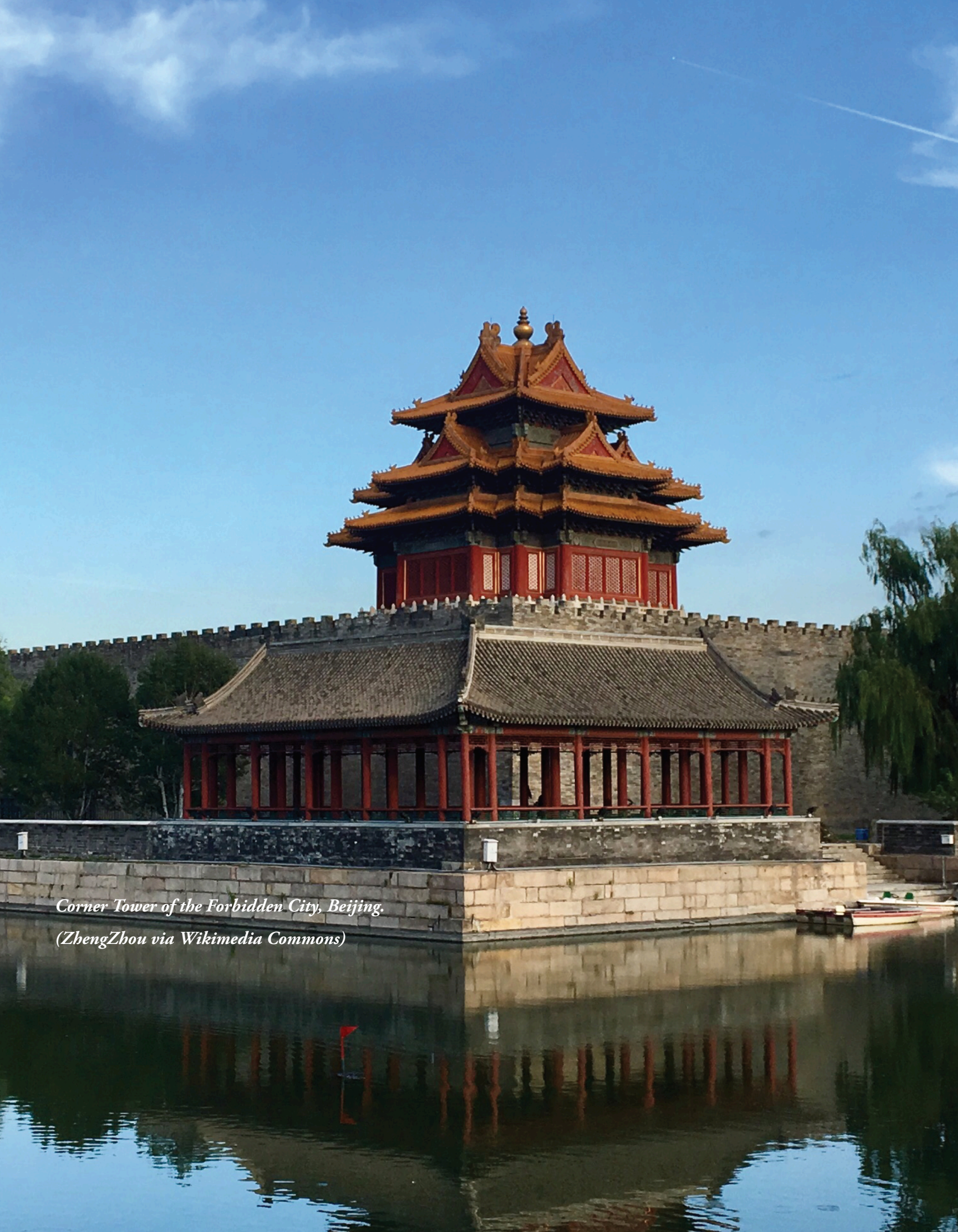
The first was based on the belief that the Chinese have a "predisposed ... mindset toward solving their problems through searching for a systemic balance and harmony, rather than the Western tendency to isolate problematic elements and eliminate them."²⁷ This may be part of the Chinese DNA, but it was never that of the ruling CCP.

Second, China is determined that it will never allow itself to be entrapped by Western and non-Western foreigners alike as they were during the 'Century of Humiliation' (1839-1949)—the era when China's government lost control over large portions of its territory to foreigners. This was clearly proclaimed to the world on 21 September 1949 by Chairman Mao Zedong during his speech at the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, announcing the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and proclaiming: "*Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up.*"²⁸

In fact, General Secretary Xi Jinping is determined more than ever to have China emerge as the greatest power on earth, thus seeing the US not as a partner but as an adversary, and is equally determined to do everything he can to ensure it fails.

The third, and perhaps the more prevalent reason, is that China professes communism—it is the antithesis to liberal democracy. Thus, it micromanages every aspect of its subjects' public and private lives. Freedom of speech and religion are suppressed, dissent is punished with loss of employment, if not incarceration, while those who subscribe to the communist atheistic doctrine are rewarded.

The tell-all of Communist China is that its leaders often speak soothingly of their country's 'peaceful rise,' as Xi Jinping indicated when he met President Trump during the APEC Summit in South Korea this past October. The CCP's history, however, recounts a different picture, which some of the Washington elites are finally beginning to realize. Its economic security and political stability, like any autocratic state, stem from control and suppression—this does not, of course, take away the CCP's astute business enterprises, such as its Belt and Road Initiative or being the key member of BRICS, both of which continue to contribute to it becoming the second largest economy after the US. In the end, the CPP can dress up its communist governmental system, but communism is still communism.



*Corner Tower of the Forbidden City, Beijing.
(ZhengZhou via Wikimedia Commons)*

Conclusion

The Wilson Doctrine was never intended for nation-building, but rather to assist in the growth of self-determination of just governments through the rule of law, as reflected with this Pan-Americanism—a conception of regional integration under US leadership that appealed for more political cooperation and greater trade and investment, as well as cultural exchange and mutual understanding among nations. Like the League of Nations, which would have required US intervention if one of its allies was attacked, Pan-Americanism was never ratified by the Senate. Yet the former laid the groundwork for the establishment of NATO, the latter for the US to foster diplomatic relations and resolve foreign conflicts peacefully. All of this, as we have seen, was subverted into a failed mission to proselytize for liberal democracy.

It was not until Donald Trump took over the White House in 2017, with his nationalist policy of America First, that the US made a full halt of proselytization, and consequently, of its nation-building endeavours. During the Arab Islamic American Summit in 2017, Trump told the participants that he wanted “to build new partnerships in pursuit of peace [and ...] promised that America will not seek to impose our way of life on others, but to outstretch our hands in the spirit of cooperation and trust.” Yet, seeing how China developed into a disruptive competitor bent on moulding the global order in its favour, and subsequently threatening economic and political stability in the Pacific, Trump initiated a coherent strategy of containment with the PRC.

President Joe Biden went so far as to double-down on what Trump began. The Biden administration understood that the only way to formidably contain the CCP’s influence was to reintegrate the Wilsonian principle of dealing with an adversary with a united front—strength in numbers. Thus, he established the Indo-Pacific Alliance, which included countries, like Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Japan with the aim to deter China from becoming a regional hegemon.

Ironically, the second Trump administration has not only forsaken its containment policy towards the PRC but has taken a unilateral or transactional approach with it and other foreign powers, sustaining that business deals are the key to ensuring American prosperity, and consequently, global peace.

This was evident when Trump met Xi Jinping in South Korea during the APEC meeting on 30 October 2025 and

when he met with the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, a few weeks later on 18 November.

Trump struck a deal with the Chinese to settle the economic calamity he himself prompted by raising tariffs on them, to which they responded aggressively by cutting off rare earths, magnets and other critical material that China dominates. What was not addressed were the hot topics of the increasing tension regarding Taiwan, the PRC’s incursions into territory around the Philippines, or its nuclear programme, arguably the fastest growing in the world.

With the Saudis, Trump was able to agree to a \$1 trillion investment in the US, though the details have not been made public. In exchange, Riyadh will have access to F-35 stealth jets and the world’s fastest computer chips, critical for artificial intelligence.

Then there is Trump’s ambitious policy towards Venezuela—he sent an aircraft carrier strike group and some 15,000 service personnel deployed off the Venezuelan coast. While the country is a source of illegal exporting of cocaine to the US and illegal immigration, it is not sending fentanyl. Perhaps Trump has his eyes fixed on the fact that Venezuela sits on the world’s largest oil reserves.

It would be not only beneficial but vital for the US to reassert itself in the international community as President Wilson envisioned, especially given the Chinese threat in the Pacific. We must bear in mind that the Wilson Doctrine laid the foundation for the US to assist in defeating Imperial Germany during the First World War, and Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan during the Second by aligning itself with the USSR, and finally, turning the table and winning the Cold War against the impregnable Soviet Union. Regarding the PRC, the game is afoot!

The US must recognize, and here I refer to Professor John Mearsheimer’s ‘offensive realism,’ that the Russian Federation, while it is unassailable, is not a threat to liberal democracy as the Soviet Union was under Josef Stalin—this is evident by the unexpectedly poor performance by the Russian troops on the battlefield. Along the same lines, while Ukraine may be instrumental to US interests, it is not existential to them. Trump can perhaps end the war almost instantaneously by ceasing to supply the Ukrainians with weapons, since they would be unable to continue this war of attrition without American assistance. This will certainly not

result in a return to Wilson's policy to make the world safe for democracy, but it would allow the US to exit the conflict and concentrate on preventing Communist China from becoming a regional hegemon.

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