

Maintaining Empire in War Versus Sharing Power in Peace

Mainstream and Organic

Dr. Wordman

John Glaser, Media Relations Manager, Cato Institute, in his recent article, “The US and China can avoid a collision course – if the US gives up its empire”, published in the Guardian, stated bluntly what many political analysts didn’t dare to say. Glaser has four years experience as an editor; five years experience as a writer/news reporter; expertise in international relations; well published (CNN, Newsweek, The Guardian, The Washington Times, The National Interest, Reason, The Huffington Post, Al Jazeera, The American Conservative, The Daily Caller, Future of Freedom, Bleeding Heart Libertarians, and Young American Revolution) and appeared on TV/Radio (Voice of America, Al Jazeera, Russia Today/RT America, Free Talk Radio, The Scott Horton Show, Don Griffin Show St. Louis FM, among others). Granted Glaser has an anti-war background but antiwar is no more a sin than pro-war is heroism.

Evidently, Glaser in his professional work has well read in the field of international relations. He cites the following to support his conclusion:

Harvard Professor Graham Allison: “in 12 of 16 cases in the past 500 years when a rising power challenged a ruling power, the outcome was war.”

Chicago University scholar John Mearsheimer, a theorist on hegemony: “China cannot rise peacefully.”

Political scientists [Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell](#): “Beijing sees America as the most intrusive outside actor in China’s internal affairs.”

Foreign Policy Commentator, Robert Kagan: “US hegemony makes us safer and richer, but also that it bestows peace and prosperity on everybody else. If America doesn’t rule, goes his argument, the world becomes less free, less stable and less safe.” However, many political scientist dispute this claim, for example, in his book Pathologies of power, Christopher Fettweis: “The international system, rather than cowering in obedience to American demands for peace, is far more “self-policing.”

International relations theorist Robert Jervis: “the pursuit of primacy was what great power politics was all about in the past” but that, in a world of nuclear weapons with “low security threats and great common interests among the developed countries”, primacy does not have the strategic or economic benefits it once had.”

Another International relations theorist Daniel Drezner: “the economic benefits from military predominance alone seem, at a minimum, to have been exaggerated”; that “There is little evidence that military primacy yields appreciable geoeconomic gains”; and that, therefore, “an overreliance on military preponderance is badly misguided.”

Glaser’s conclusion is that the struggle for military and economic primacy in Asia is not really about our core national security interests; rather, it’s about preserving status, prestige and America’s neurotic image of itself. The dire predictions of a coming US-China conflict may be wrong; China’s economy may slow or even suffer crashes and the US’s economic and military advantage may remain intact for a few more decades. Both countries are armed with nuclear weapons. There’s little reason to think the mutually assured destruction paradigm that characterized the Cold War between the US and the USSR wouldn’t dominate this shift in power as well. So he concludes why take the risk, when maintaining US primacy just isn’t that important to the safety or prosperity

of Americans? Knowing that should at least make the idea of giving up empire a little easier.

I am in general agreement with Glaser's above articulation and conclusions, but I would like to extend his comments further with a more positive analysis. Maintaining a hegemony (maintaining and expanding an empire) strategy not only yields no positive interest and advantages to the U.S., but also destroys a great opportunity for the U.S. to maintain world peace and prosperity at very little cost. The hegemony strategy runs a great risk to trigger a nuclear war and divert earth resources into arms race rather than economic development. Glaser's arguments above and many other analyses are convincing enough for American citizens to realize that a hostile anti-China policy under the pretence of 'China Threat' is wrong and dangerous, but what is missing perhaps is the articulation of advantages if U.S. and China were to conduct a friendly power sharing foreign policy.

We might pursue this analysis in two directions, one from preventing and/or solving world problems point of view and the other from developing opportunities and mutual prosperity for the two nations and the world. Currently, we have a number of conflicts that are draining the U.S. resources

i. middle east, Russia, terrorists, n. korea.

ii. opportunities, one route one road vs TPP, jt development in east and South China Sea, S am, Africa etc.

iii. conclusion.

The problem isn't China's rise, but rather America's insistence on maintaining military and economic dominance right in China's backyard

To avoid a violent militaristic clash with [China](#), or another cold war rivalry, the United States should pursue a simple solution: give up its empire.

Americans fear that China's rapid economic growth will slowly translate into a more expansive and assertive foreign policy that will inevitably result in a war with the US. Harvard Professor Graham Allison [has found](#): "in 12 of 16 cases in the past 500 years when a rising power challenged a ruling power, the outcome was war." Chicago University scholar John Mearsheimer [has bluntly argued](#): "China cannot rise peacefully."

But the apparently looming conflict between the US and China is not because of China's rise per se, but rather because the US insists on maintaining military and economic dominance among China's neighbors. Although Americans like to think of their massive overseas military presence as a benign force that's inherently stabilizing, Beijing certainly doesn't see it that way.

According to political scientists [Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell](#), Beijing sees America as "the most intrusive outside actor in China's internal affairs, the guarantor of the status quo in Taiwan, the largest naval presence in the East China and South China seas, [and] the formal or informal military ally of many of China's neighbors." (All of which is true.) They think that the US "seeks to curtail China's political influence and harm China's interests" with a "militaristic, offense-minded, expansionist, and selfish" foreign policy.

China's regional ambitions are not uniquely pernicious or aggressive, but they do overlap with America's ambition to be the dominant power in its own region, and in every region of the world.

Leaving aside caricatured debates about which nation should get to wave the big "Number 1" foam finger, it's worth asking whether having 50,000 US troops permanently stationed in Japan actually serves US interests and what benefits we derive from keeping almost 30,000 US troops in South Korea and whether Americans will be any safer if the Obama administration manages to reestablish a [US military](#) presence in the Philippines to counter China's maritime territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Many commentators say yes. Robert Kagan [argues](#) not only that US hegemony makes us safer and richer, but also that it bestows peace and prosperity on everybody else. If America doesn't rule, goes his argument, the world becomes less free, less stable and less safe.

But a good chunk of the scholarly literature disputes these claims. "There are good theoretical and empirical reasons", wrote political scientist Christopher Fettweis in his book *Pathologies of Power*, "to doubt that US hegemony is the primary cause of the current stability." The international system, rather than covering in obedience to American demands for peace, is far more "self-policing", says Fettweis. A combination of economic development and the destructive power of modern militaries serves as a much more satisfying answer for why states increasingly see war as detrimental to their interests.

International relations theorist Robert Jervis has [written](#) that "the pursuit of primacy was what great power politics was all about in the past" but that, in a world of nuclear weapons with "low security threats and great common interests among the developed countries", primacy does not have the strategic or economic benefits it once had.

Nor does US dominance reap much in the way of tangible rewards for most Americans: international relations theorist Daniel Drezner [contends](#) that "the economic benefits from military predominance alone seem, at a minimum, to have been exaggerated"; that "There is little evidence that military primacy yields appreciable geoeconomic gains"; and that, therefore, "an overreliance on military preponderance is badly misguided."

The struggle for military and economic primacy in Asia is not really about our core national security interests; rather, it's about preserving status, prestige and America's neurotic image of itself. Those are pretty dumb reasons to risk war.

There are a host of reasons why the dire predictions of a coming US-China conflict may be wrong, of course. Maybe China's economy will slow or even suffer crashes. Even if it continues to grow, the US's economic and military advantage may remain intact for a few more decades, making China's rise gradual and thus less dangerous.

Moreover, both countries are armed with nuclear weapons. And there's little reason to think the mutually assured destruction paradigm that characterized the Cold War between the US and the USSR wouldn't dominate this shift in power as well.

But why take the risk, when maintaining US primacy just isn't that important to the safety or prosperity of Americans? Knowing that should at least make the idea of giving up empire a little easier.