

# America, You Are a Leader—Lead

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**T**he question of whether or not the world is in transition is an inadequate one. Transition is an ongoing process in international relations; the international system is perpetually in motion, evolving according to interstate relations. Qualifying today's world appears to be highly debatable, and scholars differ in their views and the qualifications that apply. Still, the real question that underlies this debate is what tomorrow's international system will look like. Also, and perhaps more importantly, what kinds of strategies should countries adopt to influence its structuring in a way that is most favorable to them?

It is clear that the main powers behind today's international system are the United States and China; therefore, the two countries' relationship is the subject of much study. A literature review highlights the fact that most of the studies that attempt to predict the future United States–China relationship have proposed various potential change scenarios, including both hegemonic war and global governance. Tacitly, all of these scenarios assume a redistribution of power in the system. However, few analyses have considered the potential for continuing American leadership. Nonetheless, this scenario is worthy of study, particularly in light of the Chinese “capacity-expectation gap” and the paradox of unrealized power. Moreover, the debate about American decline is far from original. In fact, the first of these debates dates back to the 1950s. The United States has had to face repeated competition throughout its history (i.e., from the Soviet Union or Japan), but each of these attempts to overtake American dominance has failed. This is not to say that Beijing cannot compete with Washington in some domains—for example, the economy—but America continues to dominate the international system. Such domination enables the United States to adapt its lead-

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ership so as to integrate China into the hierarchical global order, which has been structured by Washington since 1945. Adapting its role on the international scene and managing interrole conflicts with China are key to continuing America's success and, ultimately, avoiding Thucydides' scenario of hegemonic war.

In essence, what the United States must do if it wishes to stay number one is to reform today's international system in order to strengthen it. In other words, the leader should develop a strategy leading to an organizational change in the international system while it is in transition. Although leader-follower-challenger relations have not been studied much in international relations, management theories do deal with this subject extensively. Therefore, both role theory and leadership management theory can provide insights into the best way to develop such a strategy. Two aspects are important if Washington is to adapt its strategies: the identification of a step-by-step process and the evolution of its leadership style. This article seeks to understand the implications of roles and perceptions in the evolution of the international order and the types of leadership that the United States should put into practice to remain the global leader.

### American Leadership in the International System

As the world's superpower, the United States has been leading the international system at least since 1945—some individuals even argue that this dominance has existed since 1914. In structuring the world according to its values, norms and interests, Washington has managed to construct a large network of alliances and partnerships on which its leadership lies. Built upon its self-perception as the world's democratizer and enforcer of "international" norms, the United States considers itself a leader whose national interests usually correspond to global interests. This national role conception, as defined by Kal Holsti in 1970, is correlated with a pragmatic vision of internationalism—as opposed to supranationalism.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the United States is thus an egocentric maximizer because it takes its interests into account first and foremost. Of course, one would argue that all countries act to defend their own interests, navigating international relations to advance the goals of their foreign policies. The fact remains, however, that few countries' foreign policy goals affect the international system as much as those of the United States. In this regard, role theory focuses on the coconstitutive nature of agency and structure: while the system shapes a country's foreign policy, the behavior of the country will also, to a certain extent, affect the system. Washington's fluctuating mix of pragmatic internationalism and selective engagement over the last 60 or so years, with fluctuations, has largely shaped construction of the system as we know it today. Countries are defined according to their percep-

tion, behavior, and support vis-à-vis the United States. Most importantly, China has been emerging over the last decade as the global leader's peer competitor, raising the debate about the United States' relative decline and about whether Beijing will indeed replace Washington as the world's superpower. Consequently, in trying to predict how the international system will evolve, we can perhaps contextualize and focus on how the United States–China relationship and confrontation will evolve and the effect on the international system. Further, given China's rise, what kind of strategy should Washington put in place in its attempt to remain the world leader?

Broadly speaking, three groups of countries exist in today's world: followers of the United States; its challengers—usually China's potential followers; and the swing states. The first group, the followers, can be subdivided into (1) allies, who align their foreign policy to the leader's and the system; (2) partners, whose political orientation aligns to and supports the system; and (3) the cohabitants, whose support for the system is utilitarian and limited and does not involve supporting the leader *per se*. On the opposite side of the spectrum are the challengers, whose opposition to the United States leads to an alignment with the peer competitor (i.e., China) since they cannot oppose the United States by themselves. The challengers can be subdivided into (1) opponents, whose alignment to the peer competitor is utilitarian and limited; and (2) adversaries, who fully reject Washington's leadership and align completely with China.<sup>2</sup> Thus, we currently see the development, within the international system led by Washington, of a reformist system centered around and led by Beijing, the aim of which is to counterbalance American power and ultimately replace it with Chinese global leadership. The resulting balance between China and the United States may well be decided by the orientation taken by the swing states. This category of countries, those that sit on the fence in terms of foreign policy alignment, has uncertain foreign policies, the orientation of which will weigh in favor of or against the leader, shifting the balance *pro* or *contra* the United States. These swing states are either (1) neutral, their foreign policy goal being explicitly neutral between China and the United States; or (2) indecisive, with foreign policy goals that are uncertain, sometimes even to themselves. Swing states use the doubt about their political orientation as a power multiplier to gain greater global impact. Because of their position, these countries have a wider range of exit options (i.e., the possibility to carry out their foreign policy as they see fit) without having to align with one great power or the other. Today's most important swing states are India, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, Mexico, and Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

Aligning countries to this set of classifications means that we can analyze the system according to countries' reactions to hegemony. As Robert Lieber points

out, the limits to American leadership are more ideational than material.<sup>4</sup> Unquestionably, the United States is the first military power and can mobilize a broad range of alliances and partnerships. Its economy remains strong, and the international economic system finds its roots in American principles and norms, thus strengthening US structural and normative power.<sup>5</sup> It is also a social, an ideational, and a networking power.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, the United States can be qualified as a transformational leader, mainly when one considers its relationship with its followers.<sup>7</sup> By integrating the ideas and motivations of these followers, the leader can inspire change in their reflection, leading them to reorient their behavior and even their role conception. However, Washington's leadership is also transactional, particularly towards challengers. Transactional leaders tend to have a coercive type of leadership, emphasizing rewards and punishment and influencing by might rather than right.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the leader's position is considered rightful and legitimate by its followers, but challengers perceive it as illegitimate, based on coercion and force. Accordingly, these reactions are determined by the perception that countries have of their own role in international politics, influenced by their national role conceptions. When such conceptions are either compatible with or complementary to those of the United States, these countries tend to be followers. In return for their support, they gain extra opportunities to reach their goals. However, when a country's national role conception is incompatible with Washington's, it will tend to oppose American leadership.

Here lies the root of the problem that American leadership faces: China's national role conception is inherently incompatible with that of the United States, leading to interrole conflict—that is, “a conflict between non-compatible, competing, or clashing role expectations about self and others,” in that case “with systemic relevance.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, two competing sides emerge. On the one hand is the United States with its conception of itself as the world leader, whose foreign policy is guided by Manifest Destiny. On the other is China's foreign policy goal of erasing the “Century of Humiliations,” a historical narrative that determines its international perception—anchored in competition and the pernicious dominance of the West, in particular in Asia. As Richard Haass explains, “China is not yet ready to become a partner in building and operating regional and global institutions, in part because its leaders remain focused on their perceived internal need, and in part because this rising power is busy in asserting itself throughout the region.”<sup>10</sup> Recent declarations by the Chinese president illustrate this point. Whether it be the will to develop a Chinese dream, the idea of rejuvenation, or the May 2014 “Asia for Asians” declaration, China's objective is to control the region at the very least and to act as a leader. Neither is this ambition new (see for reference the Tributary System from 1368 to 1841). These elements come to rein-

force an already-exacerbated nationalism that is becoming increasingly bottom-up (i.e., originating from the people). As a consequence, China's goal is to reform the international system—either to transform it into a more equitable system (view number one) or to become the new leader (view number two).<sup>11</sup> The inherent incompatibility between America's and China's role conceptions seems clear: each conceives of itself as the only possible leader, making it impossible to reach an international system based on coleadership or global governance or to have a pacific transition of power.<sup>12</sup>

Washington thus faces a peer competitor whose power of attraction, mainly rooted in the very fact that it is opposing the leader, is gaining more and more weight and credibility among other countries. We have established that the followers will support the system because they benefit from it (keeping in mind that in international politics, there are no permanent allies or foes—only permanent interests). But challengers are already supporting China, and it is not possible in the short term to integrate them into the American web of alliance and influence by engaging them directly. The key to Washington's remaining the global leader lies in bringing the major swing states—America's "significant others" in role theory—into the US sphere of influence. This shift towards the United States would isolate China, both by avoiding a reinforced partnership between China and these swing states and by preventing a chain reaction that would drive minor swing states into China's sphere of influence. However, if the major swing states follow China, the United States should support and ally with minor swing states, in particular the regional number twos, to balance against the major swing states.<sup>13</sup>

### Preliminary Phases

To realize its goals, the United States must adapt its current foreign policy, in particular US role behavior. As Harald Müller points out, actors need to adapt their role script to their new environment. Without taking this step, the probability of their failure in this new environment increases.<sup>14</sup> Kurt Lewin's "Change Management" model identifies change as a three-step process: defreeze, change, and refreeze. This model, according to its author, makes it possible to plan the transition ahead and not merely to step blindly into it.<sup>15</sup> Complementary to this model is John Kotter's "Leading Change" model, an eight-step process that helps one better understand "the anatomy of organizational change."<sup>16</sup> Kotter's model can be integrated as substeps into Lewin's theory. Both are adapted to establish a step-by-step process of systemic change in international relations.

***First Step: Defreeze—Understand the System and Strengthen Alliances***

The United States' relative power is in decline. Notwithstanding the wide agreement with this statement, it is not incontrovertible. As explained above, a carefully planned strategy and a smart use of its power may be central to ensuring long-lasting American leadership. Nonetheless, one can change a situation only if one is fully aware of what the situation is. Washington needs to cease merely watching China's rise and to start understanding what kind of change this emergence necessitates. China is not a threat per se, but it becomes so mainly because it has the capacity and power to mobilize a number of unsatisfied countries to confront and oppose American leadership by offering them a different "system of narration."<sup>17</sup> In this regard, the first step for Washington is to become fully aware of the phenomenon through which a system is developing inside the international system—one that opposes its leadership. Illustrative of this opposition system are institutions such as the Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Asian Infrastructure Bank, or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.<sup>18</sup> As challenging as it might be for a leader to change its vision, it is important that American leaders not only realize this fact but also accept the existence of a subsystem within the international system, the goal of which is to reform the system by reorganizing the hierarchy of powers.

Once these first two subphases have been explored, "motivation for change [is] generated," thus enabling American leadership to prepare for change. The preparatory phase will involve dealing with intrarole conflicts inherent to foreign policy. Such conflicts result from the multiplicity and complexity of role conceptions, which "inevitably incorporate several important core precepts and principles, norms and values as well as an extensive set of individual role elements."<sup>19</sup> This type of role conflict thus emerges from a conception-performance gap within the role set (the aggregation of roles fulfilled by the actor) or from the multiplicity of actors involved in the foreign policy decision-making process.<sup>20</sup> Intrarole conflicts are the cause of internal incoherence that leads to external weakness. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that American leaders in Washington be cohesive around a foreign policy project and the United States' national role conception in order to establish their grand strategy in accordance with a solid role set.

Evolving from acceptance of change to adaptation of the organization enables full entry into the defreeze phase. Allies, partners, and cohabitants should at this point know about the process, backing the reform of the system and understanding the new direction that American foreign policy will take. Therefore, once the leadership in Washington is ready for change, the closest web of alliances and

partners needs to be fully integrated into the evolution strategy if the United States is to gain their full support. Doing so will mean listening to their thoughts and visions and taking into account their opinions and interests. Indeed, as the leadership-followership literature shows, followers are an integral part of the system, providing the leader with the necessary legitimation for his position.<sup>21</sup>

The defreeze phase is a time of reflection, self-analysis, and consultation when American leaders should be attentive to what other countries have to say about the system. Arguably, the objective of American strategy is to integrate the swing states into the international system to a greater degree, thus focusing on more extensive functional integration. For instance, for several years now, emerging voices have opposed the current structure and require it to change the makeup of the United Nations, the world's most internationalized organization. It is widely recognized that the UN Security Council is reflective of the post-World War II order and is in need of amendment, as are other institutions such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. Such change will require an optimal policy window (i.e., the period that would be best to suggest and implement that change). If the strategy includes giving greater voice to a series of countries, then the most appropriate way to do so is to gradually involve them in dealing with issues by devolving leadership to them.<sup>22</sup>

### *Second Step: Change—Role Adaptation and Delegation of Leadership*

As explained above, the most important aspect of developing a vision of change for the international system involves the United States building a strong and cohesive coalition of followers that will support such reform. Thus, Washington must adapt its current role behavior to gradually implement a new form of leadership. Again, role theory can bring interesting insights to this process with the strategy of role change (i.e., “a change in the shared conception and execution of typical role performance and role boundaries”).<sup>23</sup> Role adaptation, the first degree of role change, is the alteration required by the United States: foreign policy goals remain stable, but the instruments and strategies to implement said goals will change. This process, however, does not imply an inherent change in the American role conception, which is anchored in the United States' historical narrative and is part of the American national identity. Rather, Washington should implement a strategy of “altercasting,” defined as “the conscious manipulation of one's own role-taking behaviour to (re)shape the role of another actor, presumably a counter or commensurate role.”<sup>24</sup> Cameron Thies defines “altercasting” as referring to “situations in which the relevant others cast a social actor into a role and provide cues to elicit the corresponding appropriate behaviour” when adopting the point of view of the target entity.<sup>25</sup> Stephen Walker and Sheldon Simon iden-

tify altercasting as one of the five strategies for dealing with role conflict, one through which an entity (i.e., the United States) will respond to “cues and expectations with behaviour that creates reorientations of the target’s role expectations.”<sup>26</sup> The resulting process of socialization leads to the internalization of behaviors and rules by an outsider of the community. As Sebastian Harnisch explains, “to counter . . . indeterminacy, [a country] acts as if [it] were performing a new role, thereby allowing for a new shared meaning to emerge.”<sup>27</sup> This action needs to occur through a mechanism of complex learning, leading to “changes in the actor’s own preference rankings or a transformation of the underlying understanding about the nature of the political system within which the actor functions.”<sup>28</sup> Hanns Maull thus argues that, to face the changes of the international environment, Washington should adopt an interactionist perspective through this process of complex learning, through which it will adapt its behavior by observing the behavior and position of others—in particular, the “significant others” that will determine how Washington must adapt its role.<sup>29</sup>

In essence, this approach suggests that the United States have a more self-assertive role behavior, allowing for fewer restraints on the boundaries, instruments, and scope of responsibilities that American leadership has defined for itself.<sup>30</sup> This suggestion does not mean being a stronger and more visible presence in international politics. Rather, it means asserting and putting into effect the new type of leadership required to influence the desired behaviors of others—in this case, those of swing states. Given the relative power of these countries, an authoritative allocation of roles most likely would produce a countereffect and antagonize the target countries. Instead, Washington should focus on an exchange process and, in a second phase, an institution-building process.<sup>31</sup> The exchange process addresses the “actual allocations of values in political processes,” in which international-exchange relationships are viewed as a way to solve national problems; through an institution-building process, the terms of allocation and a set shared of expectations are formalized in a long-term perspective.<sup>32</sup> The relative distribution of power has evolved, and the swing states require more space in international politics. Since the United States has neither the power nor any interest in coercively imposing its leadership, delegation of leadership ought to become a cornerstone of its new role behavior. If we consider the period of American hegemony from its outset, we can see that the evolution of countries’ interests and foreign policy goals broadly follows Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.<sup>33</sup> First, countries are concerned with fulfilling their fundamental needs (survival, internal and external security). Once the first tier of needs is satisfied, social and psychological needs become the objective. This second tier corresponds to international recognition and consideration, as well as fulfilment of national role con-



ceptions and objectives. By increasing the swing states' management of issues, Washington will acknowledge their position and role in international politics, thus taking their needs into consideration. President Barack Obama's "leading from behind" doctrine in fact represents a tangible application of such an approach—the problem being that allies must be fully aware of and in agreement with the strategy—hence, the importance of the "defreeze" step.

Several tactics could be used to fulfil swing states' hierarchy of needs. These tactics can be exemplified by strategies developed in the management literature concerning organizational change and transition. Increasing regional and domain leadership are two examples of such tactics. Regional leadership would enable the responsibility for managing regional issues to be transferred to major swing states, who are usually regional leaders. This approach is not new and can be illustrated by Thomas Barnett's article "The Pentagon's New Map."<sup>34</sup> In his study, Barnett identifies three broad regions: the functioning core, the nonintegrated gap, and the seam states. According to the author, the functioning core should delegate responsibility and leadership to the seam states to reintegrate the disconnected gap into globalization. Not only would this process contribute to increasing swing states' national sense of achievement and satisfaction but also would enable the management of issues by actors who are an integral part of the region, with Washington "leading from behind." Additionally, implementing this strategy of diversification with a strategy of specialization could increase the efficiency of American leadership. A strategy of specialization corresponds to domain leadership. As David Ricardo explained in his economy theory of comparative advantages, greater efficiency is usually achieved when the actors who know a specific issue the best are the ones who manage it.<sup>35</sup> Literature about the middle powers largely deals with the question of niche diplomacy—suffice it to mention Canada and peacekeeping or Singapore and water diplomacy.<sup>36</sup> It is widely recognized in international politics that some countries have particular areas of expertise in international relations. These domains are becoming ever more visible, and the United States should pay careful attention to them, finding the best way to bring them to the forefront. Some individuals would consider this practice a modern example of "divide and conquer." If somewhat true, such a strategy of specialization would first and foremost enable greater efficiency in dealing with specific issues.

A third tactic to increase participative and delegated leadership would involve implementing institutionalism as a strategy of vertical and functional integration. As the theories of European strategic institutionalism show, the higher the degree of institutionalization, the higher the cost of noncompliance or nonimplementation of institutional norms and rules.<sup>37</sup> Since the United States is a normative power, this strategy would in essence mean reinforcing this aspect of its

power by binding countries through institutions, implicitly extracting more ideational support from followers and swing states. Institutionalism would go hand-in-hand with the evolution and reform of international (and regional) organizations. Besides, “the larger the number of actors and the number and ‘intricacy’ of issues, the more likely it is that some actors will emerge as leaders and others as followers.”<sup>38</sup> Consequently, while delegating to swing states through strategies of diversification and specialization, a strategy of institutionalism conducted in parallel would allow the United States to emerge as the ultimate leader in times of crises or when other countries cannot manage an issue.

In this international system, Washington would emerge as *primus inter pares*, “first among equals.” This structure corresponds to the Bismarck system, in which significant others have interstate relations, but the relationship that each one has on a bilateral basis with the leader is stronger than any other relation in the system.<sup>39</sup> The nature and degree of that prominent relationship will vary according to the country in question and will be formative for America’s role adjustment.<sup>40</sup> Washington, therefore, needs to acknowledge that each of its bilateral relationships with swing states needs careful planning and cultivation to eliminate the potential exit options for these countries. Doing so calls for affecting the role that these countries perceive for themselves by influencing their definition of their own role scenarios (i.e., how they perceive the behavior they need to enact to reach their foreign policy goals). As Bruce Jones argues in his discussion of the importance of multinational coalitions in American foreign policy, this “does not mean committing the bulk of U.S. power to formal international institutions.”<sup>41</sup> Institutionalism is one more element in increasing and deepening bilateral relations in the Bismarck model of the international system. We agree with Jones’s modelling of the international system as concentric circles, differing in the nature of the circles: we schematize the international system as concentric circles around the United States (the core). These concentric circles are composed of groups of countries depending on their support for and alignment with American leadership. The further the circle from the United States, the less supportive the country is of American leadership and the international system. This pattern of circles is itself embedded into a large circle that represents the international system. Schematically, what we see today is the development of a second pattern of circles, with China as its core and China’s immediate followers (the United States’ challengers) in the immediate circle around China. The further we depart from both cores, the closer we are to swing states. They represent a moving circle, unfixed at any time, and uncertain about whether they will firmly circle around the United States or China.

To implement these changes in the international system, whether through bilateral relations or multinational settings, Washington should concentrate on the use of normative persuasion derived from communicative action. This process, first theorized by Jürgen Habermas, finds its roots in linguistics and supposes the rationality of human nature.<sup>42</sup> According to this theory, “the coordinating achievements in the process of interaction are tied to an insight which is tendentially based in linguistic communication.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, it establishes that a common ground for cooperative action can be found through the use of language tools such as persuasion, argumentation, negotiations, and so forth, rather than through strategic action alone. As Müller points out, communicative action entails three aspects: first, one must understand the issue being discussed; second, actors should agree on distinguishing right from wrong in said issue; and third, there should be an “understanding about the authenticity of what is being said” that is about the credibility and legitimacy of the speaker.<sup>44</sup> The moral and legitimacy aspects must be highlighted. They require a minimum of shared norms and expectations so as to enable a reference system for all actors. The advantage of using communicative action, coupled with strategic action, is that it enables the consensual inclusion of all target countries in the process. Consequently, by emphasizing cooperation rather than unilateral action, Washington would acknowledge the role of swing states and include them in the process of systemic reform. In this regard, the United States is in a favorable position to bring about change in the international system: as the normative power that built the system, one could argue that it is also the ultimate depository of the norms, values, and interrelations that structure the system. Normative persuasion thus enables assessment of “the appropriateness of roles in a situation of uncertainty.” Basically, it is about finding a common ground suitable for all parties involved in order to reach “a reasoned consensus.”<sup>45</sup> However, this process would not work in a moment of extreme crisis because crises usually call for more fundamental changes—in which situation other countries might be tempted to overlook the American role in building the international system in order to implement their own norms and values. In this regard, a policy window should not be an international crisis but the aftermath of a crisis, when change can easily be understood as bringing a long-term solution to avoid another crisis. The use of communicative action makes it possible to build a strong coalition and at the same time to communicate the American vision of systemic transition. The process will also lead to short-term results, which have proved a great asset in encouraging entities to carry on with the transition.<sup>46</sup> Arguably, the same could be said about the international system: if the delegation of leadership brings swing states a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction about the system, then their role behavior will become more and more compatible with that of the United

States. Consequently, these countries will tend to tip the scales in Washington's favor.

***Third Step: Refreeze—Fix Changes in the Long Term***

Clearly, the process of delegating leadership entails a risk of empowering these countries, possibly to the extent that their foreign policy goals would become global. Additionally, one should note that obtaining short-term results and support from swing states does not represent a structural shift in these countries' foreign policy. For that reason, the process of establishing delegated and participative leadership must be implemented through strategies of both diversification and specialization, supplemented by a strategy of institutionalism. The last phase is thus to fix the changes in the long term. This is the refreeze phase, during which the United States should build upon and stabilize the accomplishments made during the change phase and learn from the negative results to identify the causes of failure and improve the implementation process.

Leadership is a combination of transactional and transformational styles of leadership, but the "refreeze" phase should address transformational leadership, with the occasional use of transactional leadership, more as a tool. As a transformational leader, the United States will begin to alter other nations' perceptions. The other powers—particularly the swing states—will begin to consider America's role conception legitimate and its ultimate foreign policy objective, Manifest Destiny, as both legitimate and beneficial to the international system. Long-term implementation of diversification and specialization strategies will lead to a multiplicity of issue/task-oriented and regional leaderships, with the United States supervising the general functioning of the system and intervening as a force of last resort. Given the structural objectives of the transition discussed in this article, the most appropriate tool at the United States' disposal to fix the changes works through institutionalization, both formal and informal. Formal institutionalization establishes rules, norms, and values, as well as sanctions in case of noncompliance. It binds other countries into a pattern of behavior and relations regulated by an organization considered almost a higher (moral) authority. Informal institutionalization "refers to the development of rules 'created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels.'"<sup>47</sup> The process of socialization thus creates patterns of interaction, leading to path dependency, eventually strengthening the structure of the system—in this case, with American leadership. Ideally, followers and swing states that at that point have fully joined the American system will perceive American interests as complementary to their own, thus pursuing both through their foreign policy.

Many scenarios seek to predict the future of the US-China relationship, ranging from hegemonic war to global governance. Nonetheless, this article has taken a different approach in analyzing the little-studied scenario of continuing US dominance by explaining the process to reach this objective through role and management theories. Hence, role theory emphasizes the conflicting roles between Beijing and Washington, emphasizing their national role conceptions as leaders of the international system. In light of this opposition, the risk of a hegemonic war is real. Adapting American strategy thus appears fundamental; such adaptation should take the form of giving greater voice to emerging countries, mainly swing states, while isolating China and locking it up into the international structure. One can do so only by transforming Washington's leadership style while maintaining its core national-role conception.

## Notes

1. Kal Holsti defines a national role conception as "includ[ing] the policymaker's own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to their states, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems." Kal Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 14, issue 3 (1970): 246.

2. This classification is adapted from Gerald Egan's management theory on the shadow side of organizations. This theory identifies and classifies the different actors in a company according to their support or lack of support of a company's project of change. James McGrath and Bob Bates, *Le petit livre des grandes théories du management: Et comment les mettre en pratique* (Paris: ESF éditeur, 2014), 142–43.

3. This list is not exhaustive and identifies only what we qualify as the *major* swing states—thus excluding the *minor* ones, such as Pakistan, Ukraine, Egypt, Algeria, Argentina, Nigeria, and Vietnam. For further references, see Tim Sweijts et al., *Why Are Pivot States So Pivotal? The Role of Pivot States in Regional and Global Security* (The Hague: Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2014), 1–57.

4. Robert Lieber, *Power and Willpower in the American Future: Why the United States Is Not Destined to Decline* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

5. Susan Strange, *States and Markets* (London: Pinter, 1994); and Dario Battistella, *Un monde unidimensionnel* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2011).

6. Daniel Flesmes and Thorsten Wojczewski, "Contested Leadership in International Relations: Power Politics in South America, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa," German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Working Papers, issue 121 (2010), 1–35; and Min K. Hyung, "Comparing Measures of National Power," *International Political Science Review* 31, issue 4 (2010): 405–27.

7. James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978); and George R. Goethals, Georgia J. Sorenson, and James MacGregor Burns, *Encyclopedia of Leadership*, vol. 4 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004).

8. Edwin Hollander, "The Essential Interdependence of Leadership and Followership," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 1, issue 2 (1992): 71–75; and Fred Lunenburg, "Leader-Member Exchange Theory: Another Perspective on the Leadership Process," *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration* 13, issue 1 (2010): 1–5.

9. Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, "Conclusion: Role Theory, Role Change, and the International Social Order," in *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analyses*, ed. Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull (New York: Routledge, 2011), 256.

10. Richard N. Haass, *Foreign Policy Begins at Home: The Case for Putting America's House in Order* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 102.

11. There is a debate about China's ultimate foreign policy goal. The authors, adopting an offensive realist view, analyze China's goal as replacing the United States as the world leader.

12. Not to mention the direct clash of their respective interests in the Pacific, where their lines of defense and projection overlap. For further reference, see Tanguy Struye de Swielande, "The Reassertion of the United States in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Parameters*, Spring 2012, 75–89.

13. Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and US Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, issue 1 (1996): 33–50.

14. Harald Müller, "Habermas Meets Role Theory: Communicative Action as Role Playing?," in Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations*, 55–73.

15. Kurt Lewin, cited in McGrath and Bates, *Grandes théories du management*, 132.

16. John Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review* 73, issue 2 (1995): 59–67.

17. Dirk Nabers, "Identity and Role Change in International Politics," in Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations*, 87.

18. Thus, President Xi declared at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia summit in May 2014 in Shanghai that "Asia countries should all cooperate to resolve security issues in the region. . . . A third party aimed at enhancing military alliances in the region does not serve our interests." Additionally, China defends the new concept of *Asia for Asians*: "It is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia."

19. Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, "Conclusion," 258.

20. The conception-expectation gap arises from a divergence between role conception and role behavior. Ole Elgström and Michael Smith, eds., *The European Union's Roles in International Politics: Concepts and Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2006).

21. Ira Chaleff, *The Courageous Follower: Standing Up to and for Our Leaders* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1995); and Barbara Kellerman, *Followership: How Followers Are Creating Change and Changing Leaders* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2008).

22. Interestingly, the American Congress has not ratified the bill designed to give greater voice to these countries in the International Monetary Fund, which is illustrative of the disconnect between the United States' current positioning and the expectations of other countries. This failure can only weaken American leadership.

23. Ralph H. Turner, "Role Change," *Annual Review of Sociology* 16 (1990): 88.

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25. Cameron G. Thies, *The United States, Israel, and the Search for International Order: Socializing States* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 32.

26. Stephen G. Walker and Sheldon W. Simon, "Role Sets and Foreign Policy Analysis in Southeast Asia," in *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*, ed. Stephen G. Walker (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 142.

27. Sebastian Harnisch, "'Dialogue and Emergence': George Herbert Mead's Contribution to Role Theory and His Reconstruction of International Politics," in Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations*, 43.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Hanns Maull, "Hegemony Reconstructed? America's Role Conception and Its 'Leadership' within Core Alliances," in Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations*, 191.

30. Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations*

31. Stephen G. Walker, *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*, 144–45.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Hayden adapted Maslow's hierarchy of needs to international relations. Casey Hayden, "A Hierarchy of Needs in International Relations" (PhD diss., Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2009).
34. Thomas P. M. Barnett, "The Pentagon's New Map," *Esquire*, 29 January 2007, <http://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a1546/esq0303-mar-warprimer/>.
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39. Tanguy Struye de Swielande, *La politique étrangère américaine après la guerre froide et les défis asymétriques* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2003).
40. Harnisch, "Dialogue and Emergence," 40.
41. Bruce Jones, *Still Ours to Lead: America, Rising Powers, and the Tension between Rivalry and Restraint* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2014), 205.
42. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).
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44. Müller, "Habermas Meets Role Theory," 63.
45. Harnisch, "Role Theory," 13.
46. Kotter, "Leading Change," 59–67.
47. Heidi Hardt, *Time to React: The Efficiency of International Organizations in Crisis Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 75.

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