

# The Decline of the International Liberal Order in an era of Power Competition

## Outline

### I Introduction

Thesis statement: Although skeptics deny the decline of the International Liberal Order due to its substantial economic strength and deep strategic alliances, several indicators, such as internal fragmentation, the rise of emerging powers, and a shift from multilateralism to multipolarity, suggest that the International Liberal Order is undergoing a profound decline in an era of intensified power competition.

it is hard to understand as it does not convey any sense

### II Defining the Key word "Liberal International Order"

- a) Definition
- b) Evolution
- c) Core Principles

it can be defined in one sentence here



III

The Liberal World Order will Continue to Persist—a counter view

A) Possesses large economic prowess  
case in point: combined economy of US & EU

B) Maintains extensive global strategic alliances

IV

Factors Manifesting the Fall of Liberal International Order in an Era of Power-competition:

A- Rise of China and revisionist powers  
case in point: China's BRI

B- Internal governance fragility within  
drivess of Liberal order  
case in point: Governance and coordination  
failure during Covid-19

C- Unpredictable and unreliable US alliance  
case in point: US handling of Ukraine crisis

D- Continuous violation of the rules  
of Liberal order  
case in point: Trade war  
US military adventure in  
Iraq

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E- Growing influence of global South  
case in point: BRICS, SCO

F- Rise of populist and authoritarian regimes  
case in point: Hungary, Italy

G- Emergence of multiple smaller powers  
case in point: Turkey, KSA, India

H- A shift from multilateralism to multipolarity  
case in point: KSA Defence pact with Pakistan

I- Failure of the economic model of  
liberal world order  
case in point: Economic crisis of 2008

## V Implications of the decline of Liberal order on the world:

A- Absence of Leadership to tackle  
global challenges

B- Arms race and military competition  
leading to war

C- Victimization and exploitation of  
smaller states

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VI Pragmatic measures to ensure peace and harmony in the ~~absence of a liberal world order~~ :

A- Reforming the United Nations and other international institutions

B- Ensuring adaptive pluralism and inclusive multipolar governance

VII Conclusion



When President Xi Jinping left the Kremlin in March 2023, he told Vladimir Putin, "Changes are happening what we have not seen in a hundred years, and we are driving the change." This statement captured the self-confidence of rising powers and the strategic retreat of western influence in shaping global order. Since the start of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the western led liberal world order has faced several setbacks. However, the rapidly changing circumstances stir several questions in a rational mind: Is the liberal world order in decline in real? What holds the future in a multipolar world? Will the dominant powers let go of their influential position peacefully? It is imperative to note that substantial evidence such as the rise of revisionist powers, fragmentation within western states and the growing influence of Global South indicate the decline of liberal world order. Moreover, the rise of multipolarity, expanding populist and authoritarian regimes and

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persistent violation of the core principles of the Liberal order further prove the fall off of the existing order. Although skeptics deny the decline of Liberal order due to its economic strength and deep strategic alliances, several indicators, such as internal fragmentation, the rise of emerging powers, and a shift from multilateralism to multipolarity, suggest that the Liberal world order is undergoing a profound decline in an era of intensified power competition.

The Liberal order refers to the order rested on open markets, multilateral institutions, security cooperation, and democratic solidarity. After the Cold War, the order expanded from America to Eastern Europe, East Asia and Latin America through democratization, economic integration, and institution building. NATO enlarged, the World Trade Organization (WTO) emerged, and the G20 rose to prominence. Moreover, Liberal internationalism is not only a by-product of U.S.

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~~hegemony~~, but a long-standing approach to <sup>managing</sup> modernity's opportunities and risks. It is based on five convictions: openness, rules and institutions, security cooperation, reformability of international politics, and progressive orientation.

the idea of demise of liberal order is just under criticism

The ~~skeptics~~ are not convinced with the idea of demise of liberal order. They claim that the large economic prowess of the drivers of the liberal order makes it impossible to overturn them. For instance, the U.S. alone has a larger nominal GDP than ~~the~~ China and Russia combined. As per 2025 statistics, the U.S. has a GDP of around 30.6 trillion dollars which is much greater than that of China. Moreover, ~~America~~ and Europe are still the top business avenue for innovation. Thus, ~~the deniers~~ argue that the vast economic system prevents the fall of liberal order.

Additionally, another group

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of deniers contend that the ~~maintain~~ maintenance of extensive global strategic alliances will ~~preserve~~ the existing ~~international~~ order. For example, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a clear example of the most important US-Europe strategic alliance. The invocation of Article 5 after 9/11 proved the transatlantic unity. Furthermore, US-UK special relationship, US-EU strategic partnership, and military and economic agreements of U.S. with oil rich Arab states prove the substantial strategic alliances of the West across the world. ~~Therefore~~, the deeply interlinked networks of connection and coordination never let the ~~international~~ order to go stray.

~~Despite the view point of~~ opponents, the greater picture depicts contrasting realities. Ample evidence shows the decline of the liberal international order. To begin with, the rise of China and revisionist powers tops the list. Since the

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start of 21<sup>st</sup> century, China has made significant progress in economic size, military modernization and technological advancement. Although China still lies behind US in many sectors, it is rapidly catching up with US. Moreover, many of the revisionist states like Russia, Iran and North Korea are challenging the U.S. hegemony both politically and militarily. These evidences thus testify that China and other emerging powers threaten the liberal order.

Likewise, internal governance fragility within the drivers of liberal order also exposes the weakening ~~status~~ <sup>status</sup> of international liberalism. Political polarization, weakening institutions, and stagnant economy are clear sign of its decline. For instance, a study by Syracuse University Today reveals that the US has experienced a greater surge in ideological and affective polarization than comparable

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democracies, therefore, the democratic institutions in the US have been severely affected. Furthermore, governance and coordination failure during Covid-19 ~~was~~ revealed the biases and selfishness of western powers. These facts show how internal challenges are retreating liberalism.

In the same way, the world no longer trust the US due to its unpredictable and unreliable policies. After the fall of Soviet Union, the US became the sole power, and guardian of the liberal order. However, recent trends show otherwise. The US no longer take the responsibility to protect its alliances. For example, the handling of Ukraine crisis is noteworthy. President Trump not only backed off on protecting the sovereignty of Ukraine, but also publicly humiliated its president to ~~surrender before Russia~~. Similarly, the failure of the US to protect Qatar from Israeli aggression also uncovers the biases of the US. Hence, the growing irrelevance of

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the US undermines the status quo.

In the same vein, continuous violation of the core principles of liberal order erodes its significance.

The liberal order is based on certain fundamental pillars, ~~fall of any single pillar may ultimately lead to the fall of the order itself~~. To quote,

the US initiated trade wars and unnecessary military adventures are notable. In his first tenure, Trump

imposed certain trade policies and protectionist measures to curtail the growing economy of China. Moreover,

the U.S. invasion of Iraq for vested interests also tarnish the

liberal notion of non-intervention. Hence, liberal order cannot sustain unless its principles are valued.

In addition to this, Global South is flexing its muscles to leave a profound impact on the existing order. ~~Until the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. and its European alliances used single-handedly dominate global order~~. They expanded

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their influence by dominating global politics, controlling global economy, and enforcing their social and cultural values. However, much has changed over the last couple of ~~days~~ years. Smaller states are uniting in blocs like BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to skip from the vacuous tentacles of U.S led world order. Certainly, organizations like BRICS and SCO provide better space and opportunities to smaller states to grow economically and politically without external interference and conditions. Therefore, the rise of global south increases the chances of the decline of present world order.

Moreover, the rise of populist and authoritarian regime is another blow to the international liberal order. Liberalism is based on ~~democratic values, human rights, cooperation and coordination~~. However, all these values appear to be in danger amid the rise of populist and authoritarian leaders. For example,

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populism dominated by Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Hungary and by Giorgio Meloni in Italy is characterized by "Us vs them" rhetoric, nationalism, anti-immigration policies, and the promotion of illiberal democracy based on cultural conservatism. As a result, liberal order cannot sustain in the presence of populist leaders.

Furthermore, smaller states are not more ready to obey the dictations of the west that are not aligned to their national interests. Smaller states are trying to stand up on their feet, align their policies according to national interests and to maintain their hegemony in the region as dominant ~~power~~ regional players. For instance, Turkey and Saudi Arabia role in mediating talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a substantial evidence of the rise of smaller states. Moreover, India's refusal to stop importing Russian oil despite threat of U.S. sanctions is another example of smaller states refusing to compromise on national interest. Hence, regional

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states are getting stronger in shaping regional policies.

Likewise, the world is rapidly shifting from multilateralism to multipolarity. In the earlier days, states moved towards a single power for social, political and economic support. Nonetheless, modern states adopt a multi-vectoral policy to manage their affairs.

For example, countries cooperate with different powers depending on the issue; China for trade, the U.S. for security, Europe for regulations and Russia for energy. It is imperative to note that Saudi Arabia, despite being a close partner of U.S., signed a defence pact with Pakistan to rely on Pakistan for its security. Thus, the liberal order, based on multilateralism, is drifting towards multipolarity.

In the same vein, the economic model of the liberal order is no more viable. The economic liberalism is based on free markets, open trade, private property and minimal governance interference. However, modern states,

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especially after the economic crisis of 2008, do not rely on the economic model of Liberalism. Countries regulate trade policies and manage economies keeping in view state interests. For example, China's state-controlled capitalism, and U.S. protectionist measures are against free market and free trade. Thus, abandoning Liberal economic model is an indication of decline of Liberalism.

However, when the Liberal world order ultimately cease to exist, it leads to multiple consequences. First of all, it results in absence of Leadership to tackle global challenges. The present world is facing a plethora of challenges that cannot be addressed unless unified and strong measures are taken under the leadership of a united command. For instance, climate change and Artificial Intelligence regulation are the two major challenges confronting the world. They cannot be resolved by any single country. Furthermore, the U.S. withdraw from Paris Climate Agreement was a huge blow to unified efforts in controlling climate change. Hence,

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certain global challenges will continue to deteriorate in ~~absence~~ of unified leadership.

Similarly, a multipolar world gives space to arms race and military competition to war. Earlier, most of the smaller states relied on the U.S. for security. However, this has changed after Russian invasion of Ukraine. Countries from Asia to Europe are boosting their military powers. 25 out of the 27 EU countries increased defense budgets in 2024, with 16 raising spending by over 10%. The overall EU spending is projected to hit £381 billion in 2025, a 62.8% jump from 2020. Thus, an unprecedented arms race will be detrimental for the peace and harmony of the world.

Furthermore, amid declining liberal order, victimization and exploitation of small states will be more frequent than ever before. In the absence of a rule based world, smaller and weaker states are more likely

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to be victimized by ~~sm~~ power states. A explicit example of victimization of weaker states is Israel's aggression against Palestine, Iran, Qatar and many other countries. Additionally, the ongoing civil war in Sudan is believed to be sponsored by powerful external states for political and economic gains. Hence, small states cannot survive in the absence of a single ~~univ~~ global order.

In order to avoid such consequences, certain measures need to be taken to ensure peace and harmony in the world. First of all, reforming the United Nations and other international institutions is imperative to ensure that power is exercised responsibly. To begin with, the members of Security Council must be increased giving equal space to Asia, Africa and Middle East. Additionally, the veto power of the member states must either be abolished or diversified. Moreover, the decisions of international organization

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Like IMF and WTO must be impartial, binding and non-partisan.

Secondly, the world leaders must ensure adaptive pluralism and inclusive multipolar governance. Unlike the liberal order primarily resting on western values, thinking approach valuing diverse knowledge, perspective and practices while finding solutions, especially in tackling issues like poverty and climate change, must be embraced. Moreover, a global system be created where power is shared among multiple influential centers while ensuring all voices, especially from developing nations, have a real say in decision-making. Thus, with adaptive pluralism and multipower governance, peace and harmony can prevail.

To conclude, the liberal international order is in decline. Several factors such as the rise of smaller states, weakened western institutions and losing hegemony of the U.S. support

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the ~~exist~~ idea of decline of international liberalism; Similarly, the ~~emergence~~ of bloc ~~politics~~ and expansion of multipolarity ~~put in danger~~ the future of existing order. However, every change comes with certain consequences. In this case, decline of international order will create a leadership vacuum; therefore, leading to global challenges unresolved, and victimization of weaker states. ~~Any~~ ~~Anyhow~~, all is not ~~not~~ lost yet, measures like reforming international institutions, inclusive governance and power sharing ensure that the World is made a peaceful place to live. No doubt, the future of the new world order lies ~~in~~ the hands of global Leaders. If carefully ~~crafted~~, the new order will ~~pave the way for~~ towards progress and prosperity.

good work plz try to write more better analogies like this



## Precis 2022

The fear of human beings, concerning life and nature, compelled them to develop connection with Omnipotent Gods. In ancient Greece, unaware of methods to please Gods, people relied on soothsayers to deconstruct Gods' wishes. The soothsayers used various techniques, such as flashes of lightening and rolls of thunder to interpret Gods' wishes. However, in certain cases, human themselves were ~~directly~~ choosen by Gods to deliver the messages ~~directly~~ to the people. The oracles were often associated with multiple supreme power. For example, Apollo, entrusted with conveying Zeus's messages to mortals, also exercised influence through the oracles delivered at Delphi. Similarly, Dodona, the oldest oracular, assisted Zeus.

try to write in your own words

Title:

The Role of Oracles in Interpreting Gods' Messages

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