DEMOCRACY & DISORDER:
THE STRUGGLE FOR INFLUENCE IN THE NEW GEOPOLITICS

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THE NEW FRONTIER: DEMOCRACY IN EAST ASIA

THE MIDDLE EAST AND WEST ASIA[1]

EMERGING PLAYERS AND CONTESTED ZONES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the heart of the new era of geopolitical competition is a struggle over the role and influence of democracy in the international order. This dynamic has unfolded rapidly since the 2008 global financial crisis. Recent years have witnessed regional and global power plays by Russia and China. Their international efforts are usually cast as moves to establish spheres of influence, but they are broader than that. Competition between great powers is over nothing less than the future democratic character of the international system. Both Russia and China, using different means and with different strength, seek to achieve three objectives: to develop military and economic spheres of influence in their regions; to weaken democratic institutions and norms that challenge their own internal legitimacy; and to diminish Western dominance of the international order. To date, the West's response has been insufficient to the challenge.

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2019 marks the third decade of a world that has been largely free of the risk of direct great power conflict. Thirty years ago, the fall of the Berlin Wall and democratic openings across Central and Eastern Europe not only heralded the fall of the Soviet Union, but also symbolized the widespread appeal among citizens for a democratic model of governance. The quarter-century that followed was unique in world history: For the first time, democratic states dominated the structure of world power with neither a peer military competitor nor a rival model of governance with which to contend. The United States, in particular, stood unrivaled on the world stage, exercising global unipolar reach.

It is in vogue now to look back at the period of American hyperpower as one of over-extension and overreach, and to focus near exclusively on America's Middle East wars. As consequential as those were, the dynamics of that period were wider and more nuanced. It was an era that saw multilateralism flourish and wars of all forms decline (although terrorist acts did not). Global GDP rose and the percentage of the world's population living in absolute poverty declined steadily. There was cautious optimism about trends toward great power cooperation and away from proxy warfare—an optimism that was interrupted by 9/11 and the Iraq War, but not reversed.

This was also an era that laid the seeds of present-day challenges. Advances in technology and globalization, spurred by lower trade barriers, boosted global GDP but also led to the dislocation of middle-class livelihoods in many Western societies, sowing political tensions.

Now, in the wake of the global financial crisis, two critical dynamics have unfolded concomitantly. First, the powerful democracies of the trans-Atlantic community (the bulwark of the Western-led order) are facing political turmoil at home and setbacks in the liberal quality of their own governments.

Second, the democracies find themselves losing ground internationally to authoritarian powers bent on breaking the hold of the democracies on the character of the international order.

The concurrence of these two phenomena leads to this essential question: **What role will leading democracies, and democracy itself, play in the changing international order?**

Over the past year, 33 Brookings scholars examined the interplay between domestic and international challenges to democracy in critical countries and regions. The key findings of this project make for challenging reading for those citizens and policymakers committed to defending the space for democracy in international affairs, but there are also grounds for optimism and for mobilization.

At this crucial geopolitical juncture, democratic states are under increasing strain from an interconnected set of domestic challenges—political, economic, and cultural. Key regions and countries around the world are experiencing a recession in democratic liberalism caused by a culmination of long-term challenges including ineffective governance, economic inequality, and socio-cultural upheaval. Backsliding among advanced democracies across the West is most prominently a crisis of liberalism, as economic grievances along with identity-based struggles have resulted in the rise of populist movements on both the left and right of the ideological spectrum, some of which have authoritarian tendencies. In emerging and non-Western democracies, the internal challenges are more prominent in the service delivery realms, where governments prove incapable or unwilling to reduce corruption and violent crime. While all democracies—advanced and emerging—have always struggled with certain internal political, economic, and social weaknesses, such faults in the modern democratic state have become more acute in the wake of the global financial crisis.

The result is a prevailing perception among analysts and policymakers that, following decades of advancements, democracy's momentum has run its course. In fact, **not all trends are negative: The consolidation of democracy across parts of Asia and Africa means that globally, more people now live in democracies than at any point in history.** Still, several of the world's most powerful democracies have been sapped of strength at a critical moment in time.

Against a backdrop of economic and political tensions, illiberal and authoritarian leaders are gaining power through electoral processes and following an illiberal playbook to weaken liberal democratic norms from within. Today, a powerful contest of ideas runs not only across states but also through them, as illiberal and authoritarian-leaning individuals and parties are consolidating control within democratic systems. Current governments in Hungary and Poland and an increasingly authoritarian Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan represent the forefront of illiberal and neo-authoritarian challenges within the EU and NATO. The success of these illiberal forces in gaining power through electoral means highlights the separation of liberal principles—ideas that promote individual liberties, and legislative and judicial checks on the executive—from democratic processes such as elections that translate popular will into policy. Even more than a setback in democracy, their efforts are emblematic of a crisis of liberalism.

Worryingly for the Western institutions in which they operate, illiberal actors across the West and beyond at times appear to be forging a loose "nationalist international," with shared disdain for liberal domestic and multilateral arrangements. The illiberal playbook has also opened space for outside authoritarian interference; some political forces are acting with direct political and economic assistance from Vladimir Putin's Russia. The insidious nature of the challenge is that no single move in isolation appears to be an existential threat to democracy, and popular support behind these movements makes it difficult for defenders of liberal democracy to develop effective responses.

The interplay between internal strains and external efforts to exacerbate them has weakened the leverage of the political West. The phase when the United States and other like-minded states could enlarge the democratic community through democracy promotion efforts with manageable domestic and international pushback has ended. The global financial crisis and the rise of China have triggered a deep level of introspection within the political West. The world's most important shaping power, the United States, is in strategic disarray and appears to be withdrawing from its commitment to supporting and exemplifying democratic standards. The European Union, the other bulwark of the liberal order, has turned inward, facing domestic instability caused by characteristics inherent to a more open order, including economic integration, low trade barriers, and the free movement of people. The authoritarian powers, briefly scared by democratic uprisings in the Arab world and then Ukraine, have gained confidence that they can both suppress dissent at home and build competing networks of influence abroad, with limited effective resistance from the major democracies.

As a result, regions of contestation have emerged across the developing and industrialized world. It is a competition of influence that involves political, economic, and military tools—and it is increasingly digitalized.

In the developing and emerging countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, investments in infrastructure, energy, and technology are turning from tools of G-20 cooperation into tools of great power competition—with the West losing ground. In the Middle East, there has been a return to the kind of proxy warfare that so devastated the "third world" during the Cold War. In Europe, China's increasing economic engagement is softening the continent's resolve, especially at a moment of American unilateralism, and Russia has found vulnerabilities to exploit and to advance its direct political interference. In East Asia, China has shifted from a strategy of constraining American dominance to one of asserting Chinese hegemony. Geopolitics in the region, defined increasingly by Sino-U.S. rivalry, will test the strength of both consolidating democracies and advanced democracies.

Globally, tools for digital authoritarianism implemented by Russia and China present Western states with a new set of challenges, and ones that represent the future of competition. Moscow continues to deploy non-conventional tools such as cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns throughout Europe and in the United States. China's focus is primarily domestic, employing powerful digital tools to control and surveil its domestic population. But Beijing in the future may seek to export an authoritarian model, which is increasingly backed by technologies for digital censorship and monitoring. Advancements in artificial intelligence will only make the challenges more formidable in the years ahead.

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At a time when global democracy is challenged, the majority of those living under democratic governance live outside the West. Protecting the democratic character of the international order will therefore require new coalitions of democratic states beyond the traditional trans-Atlantic core.

To preserve the prospects for democracy in a changing international order will require serious effort along four lines:

- **Democratic renewal: A shared international agenda.** Instead of a posture of "democracy promotion," the West should join with other democracies in a shared agenda of domestic renewal both to shore up the essential foundations of democracy and to strengthen its international appeal. This requires a clear focus on economic inclusion.

- **Detoxifying identity politics and migration debates.** As part of this agenda of democratic renewal, governments and civil society must find ways to detoxify identity politics. This requires open debates on migration and a focus on local and urban integration, as well as eschewing the hateful rhetoric that ties migration to terrorism and violence.

- **Defending democracy in Europe and Asia.** To defend the space for democracy in both Europe and Asia, democracies need to push back on authoritarian powers' interference, respond firmly to illiberal developments within alliances and institutions, and build democratic cooperation across the Indo-Pacific. Given the centrality of Asia to the global interplay between democracy and order, we also propose a new "Dialogue of Democracies in Asia."

- **Deepening cooperation with non-Western democracies.** Across the board, but particularly in terms of support to nascent or emerging democracies in the developing world, both Western and non-Western democracies should advance democratic cooperation on aid, infrastructure, governance support, and crisis management, joining forces to compete more effectively with development models advanced by China that may prove to have adverse effects on democratic governments.

While the question of democracy in the Middle East and West Asia remains fraught with ever-changing instability and complexity, critical areas of focus include support for basic democratic institutions such as civil-military relations, parliamentary procedures, and free media in stable countries. While the legacy of America's Middle East wars and Russia's move toward proxy warfare may make this impossible in the short term, a strategy that puts ending civil wars at the heart of Western policy would, over time, increase the odds of stability and eventual progress toward government accountability and governance reform.

The trajectory of democracy and the state of the international order are two issue areas often debated separately, but they are intimately linked. If in the coming phase of contested international order, leading and emerging democratic states renew their political institutions and social contracts and forge a wide coalition for action, then we could see a period when strategic competition with China and a firm pushback against Russia will be blended with economic growth and focused cooperation. If not, we will enter a period characterized both by democratic retrenchment and a more turbulent, even violent clash between models. A new Cold War is not the worst potential scenario ahead of us, nor should it be the ceiling of our ambition. Between them, the world's democracies still have the intrinsic strength to shape and judiciously advance a values-based order that protects democratic freedoms.

PREFACE

Over the course of 2018-19, 33 Brookings researchers conducted analyses on the primary challenges to democracy in countries or regions of their expertise, and assessed the implications of these challenges for the international order. The result is the Brookings Foreign Policy program *Democracy and Disorder Project*, which aims to illustrate the interplay between domestic and international factors shaping the prospects for democracy in a newly contested international order. The project offers policy responses for preserving the role of democracy in international order.

This report provides an overview of the major thematic findings that cut across the countries and regions analyzed in this project. The 26 policy briefs that accompany it, and which are the major product of this project, outline the specific domestic and international dynamics at play and provide detailed recommendations for addressing them.

The policy briefs weigh the influence of long-building discontent with democratic performance, tied to ineffective governance and amplified by the 2008 global financial crisis; the salience of identity politics and critical debates over how to address high levels of migration into and throughout the West; playbooks followed by illiberal leaders to erode liberal democratic institutions from within; and the relationship between these factors and the growing assertiveness of authoritarian powers internationally. The findings pose a stark challenge to those wishing to defend and promote an international order that preserves democratic values, though it also finds points of resilience and optimism—especially in Asia.

The report concludes with four lines of responses that would make democracy competitive in an international order in which there is now a growing authoritarian alternative. We highlight the debate among Brookings scholars—and in the wider American policy community—as to how centrally the protection of democracy and freedom should figure in American grand strategy. The authors of this report, speaking only for ourselves, outline the key elements of a concerted strategy to preserve a values-based order among Western and non-Western democracies.

I. INTRODUCTION AND TOPLINE MESSAGES

What are the dynamics driving contemporary turbulence in several leading democracies, and what are the consequences for international order?

2019 marks the third decade of a world that has been largely free of the risk of great power conflict. Thirty years ago, the fall of the Berlin Wall and democratic openings across Central and Eastern Europe not only heralded the collapse of the Soviet Union, but also symbolized the widespread appeal among populations for a democratic model of governance over its communist alternative.

The quarter-century that followed was unique in world history: For the first time, democratic states dominated the structure of world power, with neither a peer military competitor nor a rival model of governance with which to contend. The United States, in particular, stood unrivaled on the world stage, exercising global unipolar reach.

It is in vogue now to look back at the period of American hyperpower as one of aggression and overreach. The truth is far more nuanced. It was a period in which wars of all forms declined (although terrorist attacks did not), global GDP growth rose, multilateralism flourished, and the percentage of the world's population living in absolute poverty declined steadily.

FIGURE 1. GLOBAL GDP GROWTH, 1990-2010 (2010 CONSTANT USD)
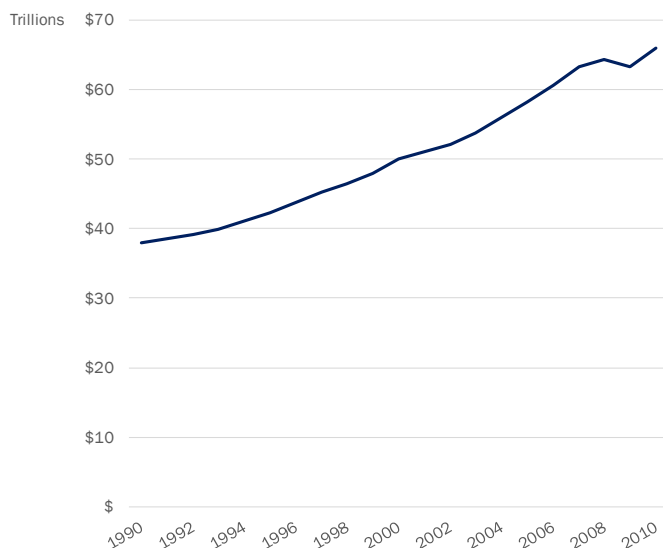
Source: World Bank

FIGURE 2. POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATIO AT $1.90/ DAY, 1990-2010 (2011 PPP, % OF POPULATION)
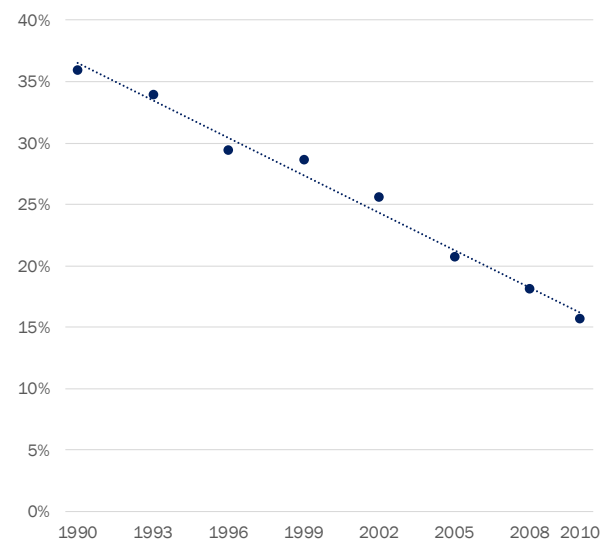
Source: World Bank

FIGURE 3. INCIDENCE OF WARS, 1989-2010
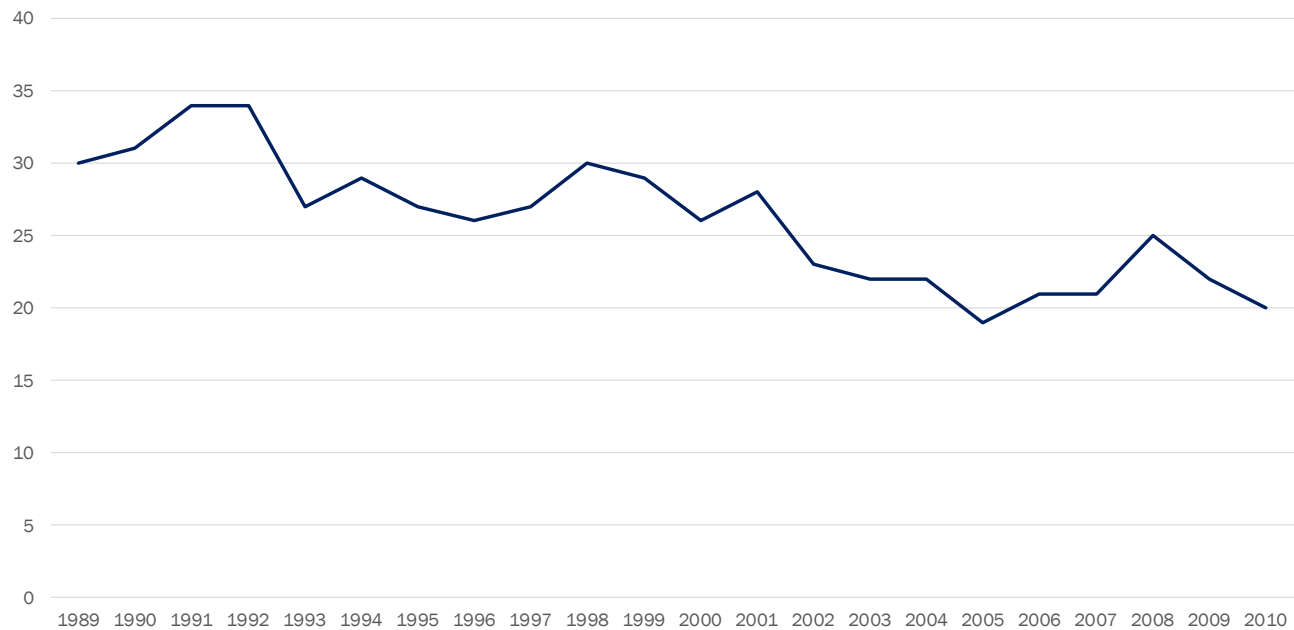
The number of wars indicated in this chart encapsulates both small-scale (wars with over 25 battle-related deaths per year) and high intensity wars (at least 100 battle-related deaths per year).

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)

FIGURE 4. INCIDENCE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS, 1990-2010
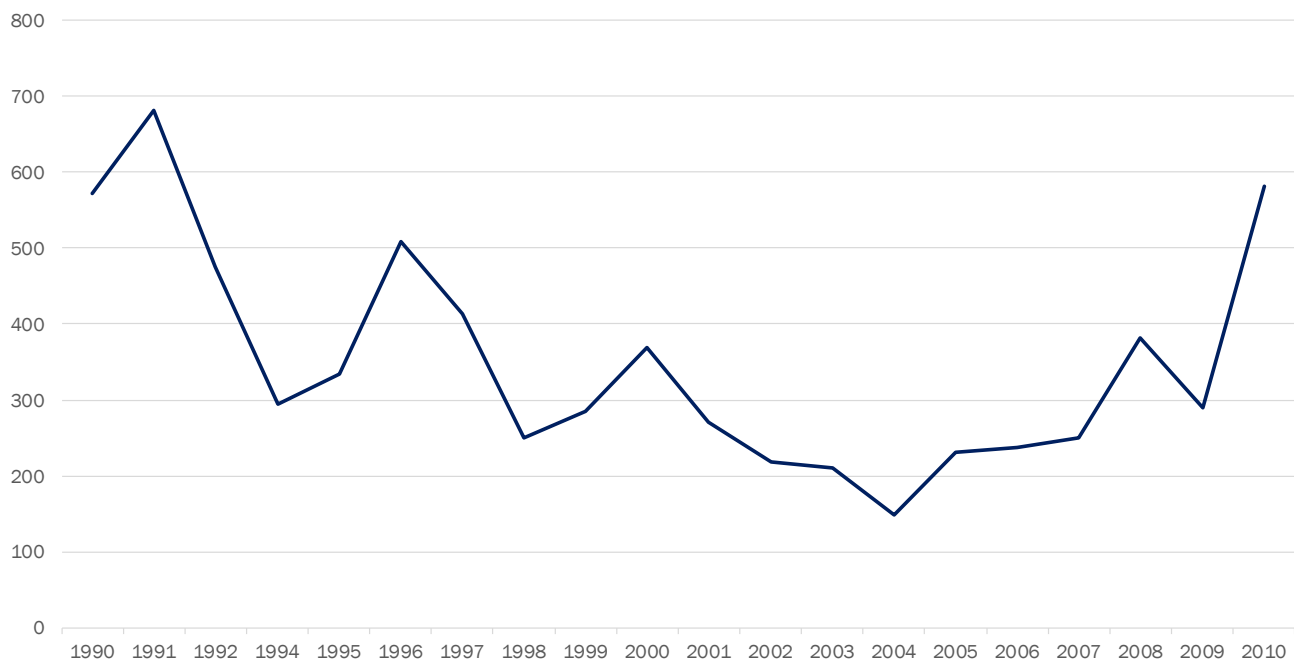
Source: Global Terrorism Database 2018

FIGURE 5. POPULATION IN DEMOCRACY, 1990-2010 (TOTAL PEOPLE)
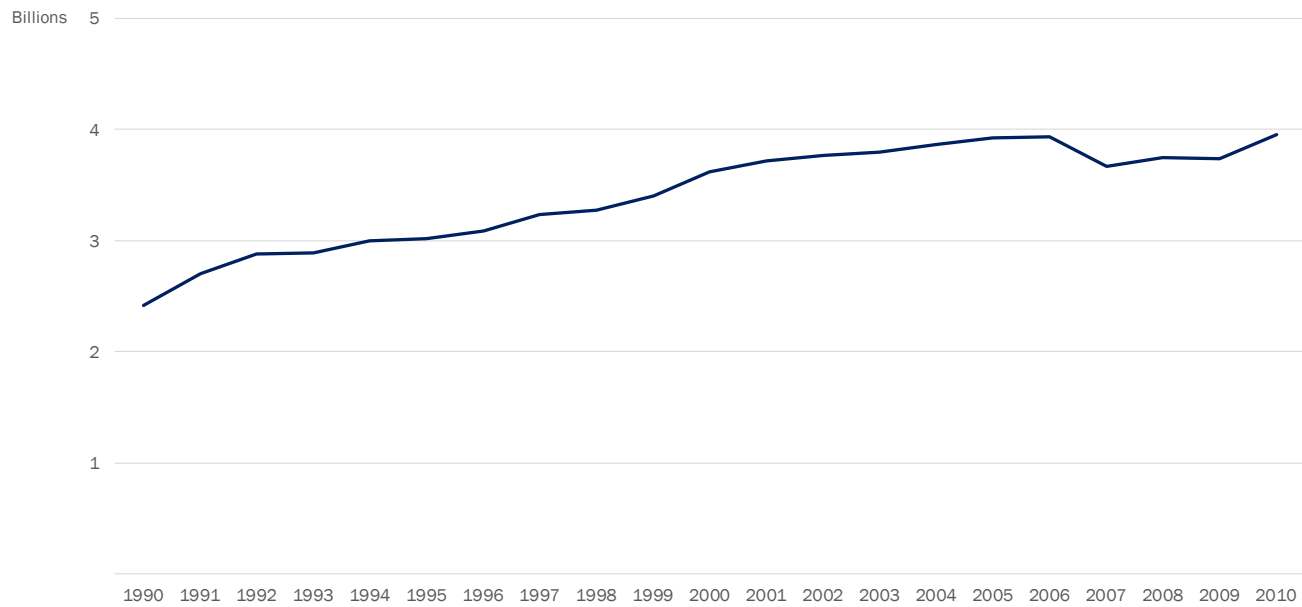
Source: Polity IV

It was also an era that laid the seeds of present-day challenges. Advances in technology and globalization, spurred by lower trade barriers, boosted global GDP but also led to the dislocation of middle-class livelihoods in many Western societies. Free flowing capital and deregulation in the financial markets exacerbated economic inequality throughout the West and pushed the world over the precipice of a global financial crisis in 2008. Efforts to integrate China into the global economy and trading system helped to lift millions out of poverty, but also strengthened an authoritarian state that has since shown little interest in opening its political system.

Now, in the wake of the global financial crisis, two critical dynamics are unfolding concomitantly. First, powerful democracies of the trans-Atlantic community (the bulwark of the Western-led order) are facing political turmoil at home and setbacks in the liberal quality of their own governments. Particularly consequential illustrations include the United States and Britain simultaneously choosing protectionism over the rules-based trading systems they once so energetically supported; and the rise to power of far-right populist and, at times, authoritarian parties in EU and NATO member states that favor nationalism and illiberal democracy over integration and cooperation. Importantly, non-Western democracies, especially in Asia, are weathering the storm better.

The second dynamic is that the democracies find themselves losing ground internationally to authoritarian powers bent on strengthening their own model of governance. China has shifted from carefully nurturing its growing strength to flexing its muscles in Asia and laying the foundation for growing influence internationally. Russia, geopolitically weaker yet not lacking in willpower, has doubled down on its efforts to destabilize NATO and the European Union, and reassert itself as a player on the global stage.

The concurrence of the setbacks in Western liberal democracy and enhanced Chinese and Russian assertiveness raises this fundamental question: What role will leading democracies, and democracy itself, play in the changing international order?[2]

In pursuit of answering this question, this project's topline messages are:

1. At the heart of the new era of geopolitical competition is a struggle over the role and influence of democracy in the international order.

Recent years have witnessed regional and global power plays from Russia and China. Their international efforts are being cast as moves to establish spheres of influence, but they are broader than that. Competition between great powers is over nothing less than the influence and role of democracy in the international order. Both powers, using different means and through varying levels of strength, attempt three objectives:

- to develop military and economic spheres of influence in their respective regions;

- to weaken democratic institutions and norms that challenge their own internal legitimacy; and

- to diminish Western dominance throughout the international order.

The lesser though significant challenge here is that Russia over the last decade, and particularly since Vladimir Putin's 2012 return to the presidency, has sought to use its outsized military and state-directed information operations to directly undermine or seek to undermine Western democracies. Russia has also attempted to build out its international presence, using instability in places like Venezuela and Syria, and its own appetite for risk, to try to re-establish itself as a global power. The deeper challenge is that China has begun to engage at a global level, building an expansive international network for influence, increasingly backed by technologies for digital censorship and monitoring. China has substantial appeal, both for its enormous success in fostering economic development, but also for its ability to retain political control while doing so. China is moving assertively to position itself for influence—economic, diplomatic, and in some areas coercive—in Europe, in Latin America, and in Africa.

At the same time, in East Asia, China has shifted from a strategy of constraining American dominance to one of asserting Chinese hegemony. There, however, China encounters both mature and consolidating democracies that resist its growing clout. Geopolitics in the region, defined increasingly by Sino-U.S. rivalry, will test the strength of both consolidating democracies in Southeast Asia and in more advanced democracies including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Chinese hegemony makes East Asia a critical region to watch in assessing democracy's future strength in the international order.

2. Democratic states are under increasing strain from an interconnected set of domestic challenges—political, economic, and cultural.

At this crucial geopolitical juncture, key regions and countries around the world are experiencing a recession in democratic liberalism brought on by a culmination of long-term challenges including ineffective governance, economic inequality, and socio-cultural upheaval. Backsliding among advanced democracies across the West is most prominently a crisis of liberalism, as economic grievances along with identity-based struggles have resulted in the rise of populist movements on both the left and right of the ideological spectrum, some of which have authoritarian-leaning tendencies. In emerging and non-Western democracies, the internal challenges are more prominent in the service delivery realms, where governments prove incapable or unwilling to reduce corruption and violent crime.

The result is a prevailing perception among analysts and policymakers that, following decades of democracy's "third wave," beginning in the mid-1970's and accelerated by the end of the Cold War, democracy's momentum has run its course. While all democracies—advanced and emerging—have always struggled with certain internal political, economic, and social weaknesses, such faults in the modern democratic state have become more acute in the wake of the global financial crisis. In the recession years that followed, the post-Cold War assumption that democratic progress and economic growth go hand-in-hand was shattered, and further exacerbated by the powerful economic and development model of modern China. The result has been a decade-long decline in the Western model of democratic governance. Still, the gloom can be oversold: When weighted by population, a larger share of the world is today living in democracy than at any previous point in history.

3. Illiberal and authoritarian leaders are following an illiberal playbook to weaken liberal democratic norms from within.

Today, a powerful contest of ideas runs not only across states but also through them, as illiberal and authoritarian-leaning individuals and parties are consolidating control within democratic systems. Current governments in Hungary and Poland and an increasingly authoritarian Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan represent the forefront of illiberal and neo-authoritarian challenges within the EU and NATO. The success of these illiberal forces in gaining power through electoral means highlights the separation of liberal principles—ideas that promote individual liberties, and legislative and judicial checks on the executive—from democratic processes such as elections that translate popular will into policy. Even more than a setback in democracy, their efforts are emblematic of a crisis of liberalism in the West.

Once in power, individuals and groups follow an illiberal playbook to exploit discontent in their own societies to further consolidate control. The playbook involves a set of tools and tactics aimed weakening judicial oversight; undermining the pluralistic and fair political system; and restricting independent media and open civil society.[3] Worryingly for the Western institutions in which they operate, illiberal actors across the West and beyond it at times appear to be forging a loose "nationalist international," with shared disdain for liberal domestic and multilateral arrangements. Some political forces are acting with direct political and economic assistance from Putin's Russia. The insidious nature of the challenge is that no single move in isolation appears to be an existential threat to democracy, and popular support behind these movements makes it difficult for defenders of liberal democracy to develop effective responses.

4. The interplay between internal strains and external efforts to exacerbate them has weakened the leverage of the political West.

The phase of the post-Cold War era when the United States and other like-minded states could enlarge the democratic community through democracy promotion efforts with manageable domestic and international pushback has ended. Instead, the global financial crisis and the rise of China have triggered a deep level of introspection within the political West. The world's most important shaping power, the United States— itself a revisionist power bent toward liberalism and democracy—is in strategic disarray and appears to be withdrawing from its commitment to supporting and exemplifying democratic standards.

The European Union, the other bulwark of the liberal order, has turned inward, facing domestic instability caused by characteristics inherent to a more open order, including economic integration, low trade barriers, and the free movement of people. Authoritarian leaders within the West challenge the very foundations of the liberal democratic model. Protectionist forces challenge key elements of the international order,

including the rules-based trading system and an alliance structure rooted in trans-Atlantic cohesion and American power. Given the trans-Atlantic community's role as the primary instigator and promoter of democratic progress in the post-WWII era, internal discord has significant consequences for democracy and the future character of the international order.

The West's ability to be the primary shaper of democratic institutions and norms will remain limited. While Western distraction may not lead to an inevitable backsliding of democracy globally, internal disarray among the world's most powerful democratic states leaves many unanswered questions about what countries, or coalitions of countries, will play a more active role in sustaining the pillars of the liberal order.

5. Regions of contestation have re-emerged between great powers across the developing world and in the industrialized world.

New patterns of competition for influence are emerging that combine military, economic, and political tools—and are increasingly digitalized. This is playing out differently in various regions. In the Middle East and Eastern Europe, Russia is pushing its political and military influence to change the state of play. On a grander scale, China's significant investments across the global south are providing smaller countries with new political, economic, and development options. Absent greater investment and willpower, America's ability to maintain preeminent power and international influence will dwindle.

Competition between democratic and authoritarian forces has also emerged closer to home. Digital authoritarian tools implemented by Russia and China present the Western core with a new set of challenges, and ones that represent the future of competition. Moscow continues to deploy non-conventional tools such as cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns throughout Europe and in the United States. China's focus is primarily domestic, employing powerful digital tools to control and surveil its domestic population. But Beijing in the future may seek to export an authoritarian model, backed by technologies for digital censorship and monitoring. China's current economic leverage over several European countries is inhibiting the EU from developing cohesive policies towards China. Advancements in artificial intelligence will only make the challenges more formidable in the years ahead.

There are also signs of resilience. At a time when global democracy is challenged, the large majority of those living under democratic governance live outside the West. As large democracies such as India, Indonesia, South Africa, and Nigeria have grown economically stronger, they are proving more resilient to external authoritarian influence despite facing evolving challenges to their democratic institutions at home. This mixed picture leaves the democratic trajectory among emerging powers—and their regions—an open question. The health of democracy in East Asia—the region at the forefront of dealing with China's assertive rise—is grounds for optimism. It also makes clear that protecting the democratic character of the international order will require new coalitions of democratic states beyond the traditional trans-Atlantic community.

II. BACKGROUND: WHY NOW? AND WHERE?

THE NEW IS DYING, THE OLD IS NOT YET REBORN

How did we get here? During the Cold War, the defense of the free world was an animating narrative of American grand strategy in Europe, and eventually in Asia. It largely aligned with America's forward posture in those two critical regions, especially as the Asian allies, with heavy doses of U.S. support, evolved into fledgling and then mature democracies.[4] Of course, defeating communism and deterring the Soviet Union's global agenda animated American strategy in every region. U.S. engagement in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America often involved engaging through means and with partners that were fundamentally misaligned with American values—sometimes brutally so.

The end of the Cold War ushered in a moment characterized by American hyperpower and Western dominance over the international order. While the first decade of that period was not quite the "New World Order" that President George H.W. Bush optimistically proclaimed, it did bring a large peace dividend after the dangers and misadventures of the Cold War. And it started a period in which the United States and the West had both a surfeit of power and financial resources, and no major or existential threats to preoccupy them.

It was a moment of surplus, when the West's attention could turn to issues like human security and global development, as well as ending civil wars in Africa and Latin America, which, during the Cold War, were considered the periphery of international politics. Proxy wars gave way to peacekeeping, and geopolitical aid competition gave way (in the main) to support for the Millennium Development Goals. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade widened its reach and reformed its decisionmaking, ultimately resulting in the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1995, and the entry into the global economy of such populous giants as India, Brazil, and China. Democracies flourished and new ones emerged in those regions that had been the terrain of bloody U.S.-Soviet contestation during the Cold War. And while the Bosnia and Kosovo crises laid bare some of the limits of great power cooperation in this phase, they did not result in proxy warfare or sustained conflict between major powers in the Balkans.

All of this was interrupted by 9/11 and by the ensuing war in Afghanistan. Had that war been managed more effectively and had the United States not chosen to launch a second front in Iraq, we would perhaps write differently the story of the second phase of the post-Cold War moment. In practice, the war in Iraq, and specifically the bungled occupation, ripped apart the Sunni Middle East and enmeshed the United States in a long, costly, and under-productive war. Repeated policy failures in Afghanistan squandered both Afghan and American lives and resources. The global war on terror then consumed American foreign policy for over a decade. Throughout, the exercise of American military power became conflated with democracy promotion in ways that have not been unraveled since.

Notwithstanding Washington's focus on these issues, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and against global terrorism were far from the only reality of the post-9/11 period. Countries that had stayed outside the Western economy during the Cold War opened up and joined what was becoming a genuinely global economy. Progress accelerated in the battle for poverty reduction, with more than a billion people being lifted out of poverty in countries such as China, India, Brazil, and Nigeria. Low-income countries became middle-income countries and emerging markets transformed into emerging powers. The world accelerated through what is now called the "third wave of democracy" and its spread across Africa, Latin America, and East Asia.

These changes brought a wider set of actors onto the world stage to help in the management of globalization and the international order. The instinct for cooperation and alignment of common interests among this changing set of actors was high enough that when this new order was confronted by its first major shock—the 2008 global financial crisis—the collective reaction was to collaborate. The G-20 mechanism was rapidly upgraded and mobilized. Democracies and non-democracies alike (except Russia) aligned their responses to the financial crisis. Although it is possible to look back and see errors of omission and commission in the reaction of the G-20 to the first phase of the crisis, overall, its response was highly effective at restoring global markets and staving off protectionist forces for the ensuing decade.

This collective response, though, did not prevent the economic and social earthquake that rocked through the economies of the West, shattering communities from western Pennsylvania to eastern Germany, and casting a deep pall on the process and politics of globalization. Popular resentment grew over the dislocating, and sometimes devastating, effects of the crisis and the lack of accountability among the elites that caused or at least failed to prevent it.

The aftershocks of the global financial crisis were then amplified by fallout from the ongoing disorder in the Middle East, itself intensified from 2012 onward by the wars and bloody counterrevolutions that followed the start of the Arab Spring the previous year. By 2014, the originally peaceful protest movements had given way to a bloody counterrevolution that was crushing dissent everywhere from Manama to Cairo, and above all in Damascus. The brutal crackdown helped spawn the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the ensuing fighting created a huge refugee wave that eventually spilled out of the Middle East into Turkey and into the European Union. A combination of terrorist attacks in Europe and the seemingly unmanaged refugee flows created fodder for far-right movements to attack centrist governments.

The effects of these simultaneous crises were not limited to the West; they had a deep effect in China and Russia as well. Both were hit financially by the crisis, to be sure, but the deeper effects were political and psychological. First, the global financial crisis exposed a set of key weaknesses in the West. The crisis taught Beijing that Washington was weaker than it had thought, and also a less reliable steward of the global economy than it had presumed. China became more regionally and globally assertive, taking advantage of this unanticipated weakness.

In the same period, Ukraine's 2014 Euromaidan revolution on the heels of the Arab Spring movements in the Middle East highlighted for Beijing and Moscow the continued danger of democratic movements challenging authoritarian regimes. In the years that followed, Russia struck back militarily, occupying and annexing Crimea and launching a military intervention in eastern Ukraine to inhibit its move toward Western integration. Beijing began a crackdown on intellectual, political, and religious dissent in China that would soon result in both a narrowing of the country's incipient rule of law and an appalling project of internment of Uighur Muslims in western China.

Any one of these challenges would have been hard to handle. Coming together, with each issue connected to the others, they have provoked a crisis of order and cast doubt on the central role of democracy within that order.

DEMOCRACY AT RISK? HISTORICAL AND EMPIRICAL BASELINES

On a global scale, indexes on democracy's strength worldwide highlight the cumulative effects of such developments over the last decade since the global financial crisis. In 2019, Freedom House recorded the 13th consecutive year of net decline in global freedom.[5] The Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem), the world's largest database on democratic indicators, finds that the number of countries making advancements in their liberal democratic character have declined every year since 2008, compared to the height of the third wave between 1993 and 1999, when over 70 countries advanced compared to only a handful of backsliders.[6] Other leading indexes support the argument that the international system may well be on the verge of a global democratic recession.[7]

Concerning trends among powerful states are central to the pessimism of policy debates. The United States in recent years has experienced declines in the fairness of elections, freedom of discussion, and effective oversight of the executive.[8] Crucial states such as Turkey are becoming fully autocratic, and the populist resurgence across Europe is garnering the majority of headlines on democracy's present challenges. In many cases, the backsliding among advanced democratic states is in their *liberal* character, as norms such as individual liberties, equality before the law, judicial independence, and checks and balances on the executive register significant declines.

But this is not a one-sided story, and this narrative downplays positive realities.[9] The crisis of liberalism stands in contrast to the number of electoral democracies around the world (those that maintain multiparty elections), which, on net, is holding relatively steady.[10] Global levels of democracy remain close to their all-time high, and the majority of the world's population (52 percent) lives under democratic governance.[11] Several powerful and large countries outside the political West including India, Indonesia, and Nigeria—collectively home to almost one-quarter of the world's inhabitants—have, for all their admitted troubles, remained democratically stable in recent years in terms of electoral procedures. Latin America as a region (except for Venezuela) has survived earlier authoritarian challenges to democracy that many skeptics thought it would not. In Africa, nascent democracy has spread to at least a third of the continent. Looking ahead, democratic progress or setbacks in African bellwether states including Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa will have a significant impact on democracy's future strength in the continent.

> **"With the inordinate focus on democratic backsliding in certain countries in the European periphery, successful cases of democratic consolidation in Africa and Asia are frequently overlooked." – Dhruva Jaishankar**

A longer-term perspective also paints a more positive picture, as there is still more democracy in the world than there was before the end of the Cold War. Democracy's post-WWII success has driven global economic growth, and the last seven decades have witnessed a profound rise of the global middle class. In 1950, less than 10 percent of the world's population was considered to be middle class.[12] Today, close to 50 percent of the world has approached this level of prosperity. While China has contributed much to this achievement, more than two-thirds of this progress has been in democratic countries.[13]

The combination of these positive and negative trends has led to considerable debates over the health of democracy worldwide. Overall, despite claims of a global "crisis" of democracy, we find that a more accurate depiction of the current state of democracy in the international order is one of stagnation. Democracy—its fundamental institutions and processes—have deepened in some countries, while it has receded elsewhere,

procedurally and according to its liberal characteristics. Yet for the future of the international order, which is a central focus of this project, backsliding in powerful Western democracies is a significant cause for concern due to their outsized influence on shaping the order.

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Given the diversity of democratic models—advanced and emerging—analyzed across the policy briefs in this project, having a baseline for assessing democratic backsliding is useful. Foundationally, a modern democratic system is a representative government that is responsive to the preferences of its citizens.[14] Once established, a state is considered fully democratic if it maintains elected officials; free, fair, and frequent elections; freedoms of expression, speech, and association; access to alternative sources of information; and inclusive citizenship (meaning that no adult permanently residing in a country can be denied rights that are available to others).[15] In addition to its institutional and electoral underpinnings, a democracy can also be judged on its liberal characteristics of ensuring respect for individual liberties and requiring judicial and legislative oversight of the executive, as indicated in Figure 6.[16] Political authority in liberal democratic societies is derived from the rule of law, which grants citizens the fundamental right to choose and challenge their leaders.

FIGURE 6. INDICATORS OF LIBERAL AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY
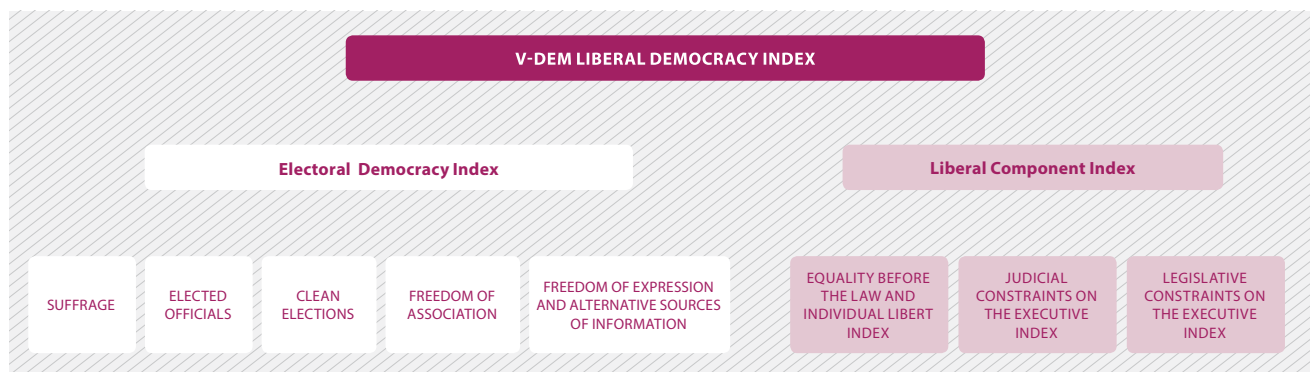
Source: Lührmann, Anna, Valeriya Mechkova, Siranne Dahlum, Laura Maxwell, Moa Ohlin, Constanza Sanhuza Petrarca, Rachel Sigman, Matthew Wilson, Staffan I. Lindberg. 2018. Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018. V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg.

Conventional wisdom has long held that democratic consolidation is a one-way street[17] and that democratic states, once reaching a certain level of GDP per capita, are immune to democratic breakdown.[18] This may no longer be the case, as trends over the last decade show that even wealthy and established democracies are not safe from retrenchment.[19] Unlike challenges facing emerging and transitioning democracies, which are more likely to result in collapse due to endemic corruption and the inability of governments to deliver basic security and economic services to their citizens, advanced democracies can suffer gradual setbacks in democratic rules and norms while maintaining stable and functioning institutions.[20] Thematic overviews of these internal and external challenges plaguing both advanced and emerging democracies—as assessed throughout the policy briefs—are discussed below.

III. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY

AN OVERVIEW

A series of internal and external factors, and the interplay between them, are challenging democratic states precisely at a new moment of contestation in the international order. Some of the relevant dynamics interplay directly, as when leaders adopt illiberal methods that echo Putin's playbook or rely on economic or technological support from Beijing. Some factors are not explicitly connected, but nonetheless exacerbate the difficulties of dealing with others. For example, long-term economic grievances can hinder a society's ability and willingness to cope with migration flows, leading to pressure in the political realm. On a geopolitical level, disarray within liberal democracies due to economic, political, and socio-cultural challenges can weaken their ability to resist a new push for global influence by authoritarian powers.

While this project does not proclaim to capture all of the complexities behind the current state of global democratic stagnation, comparative analysis and illustrations from the policy briefs offer four categories of dynamics affecting the trajectory of governance in both advanced and emerging democracies:

1. **Democratic non-delivery**: Long-term economic inequality, ineffective governance, and corruption are proving corrosive to support for democratic institutions. In many of the Western democracies our team examined, several internal factors created a baseline of discontent even before the global financial crisis inflamed economic and political tensions. Among several emerging democracies explored in this project, corruption, the violation of individual rights, and the inability of governments to provide basic security services to their citizens are among the primary factors driving democratic backsliding.

2. **Identity politics** have taken center stage in several democracies where populist movements have risen in prominence and power. These dynamics are particularly present in Europe and in the United States. While there are competing perspectives on the relative weight of economic and cultural factors driving democratic discontent, contributing authors highlight the interconnected nature between economic setbacks and complex dynamics associated with migration.[21] It is evident across several country studies that economic grievances readied the landscape for anti-establishment and populist messages when the migration crisis of 2015 provided further shocks to the system in Europe and elsewhere.

3. In both advanced and emerging democracies, illiberal leaders and political parties in power have responded to the combination of underlying discontent and identity mobilization by adopting an "**illiberal playbook**"—a set of tools used to gradually chip away at checks and balances and weaken judicial independence, independent media, and open civil society—while formally maintaining basic democratic and electoral processes. Authoritarian powers have taken advantage of the rise of illiberal actors to deepen their interference in Western democratic processes.

4. The shift away from democratic norms and institutions is made easier and more compelling by the geopolitical reality of a **competition for influence**. With movement away from Western economic and political dominance in the international system and toward more confident authoritarian states such as China, the international order is once again in a moment of increasingly ideological competition—in today's world, between authoritarian and liberal democratic powers. This competition is emerging as a major dynamic in the developing world and emerging markets, but is also influencing political discourse in the established democratic West.

Each of these dynamics offers insight into the discontent and disillusionment that is now evident across both advanced and emerging democracies. While each dynamic is assessed individually, taken together, they highlight the interplay of economic, socio-cultural, political, and geopolitical factors that have exposed the inability of democratic institutions—and the politicians who represent them—to satisfy their citizens' expectations for governance and develop effective options for response.

DEMOCRATIC NON-DELIVERY: ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, INEFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, AND CORRUPTION

The tide of popular support for populist parties and anti-establishment candidates across the West may have shocked many observers, but discontent with democratic political institutions has been gradually building over the last three decades.[22]

Liberal democracies are almost universally associated with market economies that are increasingly globalized. Advances in technology and automation, as well as cross-border capital and labor flows facilitated in part by free trade agreements, have led to a net increase in high-wage jobs especially in the service sector, but also to the decline and loss of jobs in manufacturing industries in advanced economies.[23] These changes, while disruptive to certain segments of society, are not comprehensively negative as long as the economy stimulates innovation and growth, provides for social mobility, and allows for broad access to the benefits of economic progress. But the unfilled gap between high-wage service industry job growth and the loss of manufacturing jobs has exacerbated inequality, including in subnational regions.

Rising inequality can have a corrosive effect on democratic institutions when it is not met with commensurate inclusive growth, and when policymakers appear unwilling or unable to mitigate the trend.[24] This is a persistent problem in many advanced democracies, including in the United States, where income inequality has been steadily rising since the late 1970s (see Figure 7). Low-income citizens are the least likely to vote, and high levels of inequality can result in diminished participation overall.[25] The result, over time, is that those who feel persistently unable to influence political and economic decisionmaking through traditional channels eventually question the legitimacy of the system itself.[26]

FIGURE 7. GINI INDEX OF MONEY INCOME AND EQUIVALENCE-ADJUSTED INCOME, 1967-2014
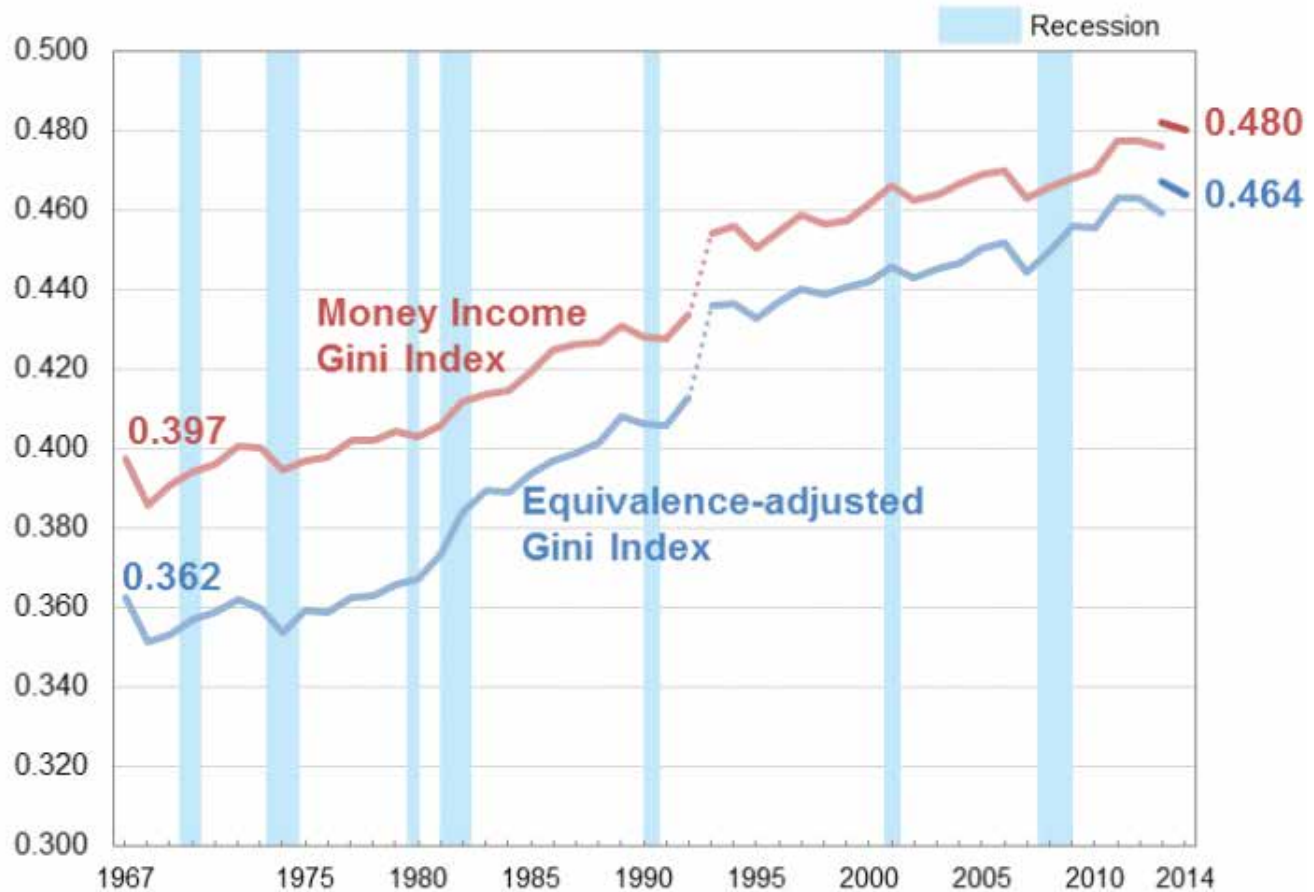
Note: The 2013 data reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions. See Appendix D of the P60 report, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014," for more information. Change in data collection methodology n 1993.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1968 to 2015 Annual Social and Economic Supplements

Exacerbating economic inequalities within democratic systems are financial crises. Empirical evidence indicates that financial crises have significant political effects. Historical analysis on the political fallout of financial crises in advanced democracies finds that far-right parties are the biggest political beneficiaries in the post-crisis environment. On average, right-wing votes increase by about one-third in the first five years following a crisis. This pattern was particularly pronounced after the Great Depression, and again after the global financial crisis in 2008.[27]

> **"The Great Recession that began in late-2007 represented a colossal failure of economic stewardship. As economies struggled to recover, the regions that failed to rebound lost confidence in mainstream parties and institutions, fueling the populist upsurge." – William Galston**

As a result of these dynamics, among others, trust in institutions such as mainstream political parties, elected officials, policy experts, the media, and civil servants has precipitously declined in established democracies in North America, Europe, and parts of Latin America and Asia. Declining trust has occurred alongside a decrease in voter turnout, weak party identification, and an openness to authoritarian alternatives such as military rule or strongman leaders unconstrained by legislative or judicial oversight.[28]

The erosion of trust in democratic institutions is driven by a key question of whether democratic governments can effectively provide security, welfare, and economic opportunity to their citizens. This is true not only in Western societies dealing with populist movements; polling conducted across Latin America, Asia, and Africa also shows that even where the normative endorsement of representative democracy is strong, citizens are less trusting in the actual efficacy of their democratic systems.

While economic inequality factors are behind democratic discontent in many advanced democratic states, the findings from this project align with the wider literature in suggesting that democratic backsliding in emerging and transitioning democracies is driven more by corrupt governance and poor service delivery that violates individual rights and is unresponsive to the basic needs of the average citizen.[29]

Democratic stability and good governance is best achieved through accountable, transparent, competitive institutions that allow for broad participation and that restrain and punish abuses of power. Rule of law complemented by state capacity to enforce the law and crackdown on corruption are important elements of maintaining legitimate governance in the eyes of citizens. This is a particularly difficult challenge in new democracies, where, as Francis Fukuyama writes, "Without the ability to govern well ... new democracies will disappoint the expectations of their followers and delegitimize themselves."[30] When institutions prove unable to achieve these goals, democratic instability can follow.

Entrenched conditions threatening the durability of democratic governments across regions include corruption, criminal violence, and sectarian divisions. Ironically, in emerging markets, elements of the challenge to democracy come out of the recent surge in GDP growth, and the creation of new middle classes—in some cases, at an explosive rate. Evidence from our studies in Mexico, Brazil, and India, and parallel work on Indonesia, highlights that citizens' expectations for good governance have risen as their countries' economic situations have improved.

> **"Finding ways to improve even the semblance of equality of opportunity will be a challenge among developed and developing democracies, particularly with the advent of technologies that contribute to productivity increases and capital gains at the expense of employment opportunities for the poor and middle class." – Dhruva Jaishankar**

The two largest countries in Latin America—Brazil and Mexico—represent important illustrations of how such concerns can percolate into the political sphere. Mexico's transition away from authoritarianism in the early 2000's led to subsequent peaceful transitions of power, but did not stem criminal violence, pervasive corruption, and a lack of accountability within Mexico's political system. These factors resulted in the country's July 2018 election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), a left-leaning populist already challenging Mexico's nascent democratic norms. Similarly, and despite Brazil's political and economic progress, there remain notably high levels of inequality, rising unemployment, entrenched political corruption, and violence. These factors have culminated in the October 2018 election of Jair Bolsonaro, a candidate with concerning authoritarian-leaning rhetoric, but who was elected on an anti-corruption platform.

> **"[The] toxic combination of high rates of crime, corruption, impunity, and inequality is exhausting the region's historic shift over the last three decades away from military control to civilian-led liberal democratic systems. Many components of healthy democratic governance—public campaign financing, independent media, strong checks and balances, rule of law, and civil liberties—are under stress or stagnant." – Ted Piccone**

These underlying performance questions are challenges even in places that have so far avoided a full populist backlash. India is a case in point. It is an impressive illustration of post-World War II democratization, given its evolution into a strong electoral democracy with a dynamic and pluralistic system. However, neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor his predecessors have stemmed endemic corruption nor long-standing communal violence and human rights abuses. India confronts major challenges to improve its performance on the inclusion of ethnic minorities in political processes that are taking on a stridently Hindu nationalist quality. Corruption among the political classes is also a significant concern in neighboring Pakistan, where citizens elected a populist candidate, Imran Khan, to be prime minister in July 2018 as a reaction against political elites perceived by the public as corrupt.

Similarly, though in a more nascent stage of development, Indonesia has made significant gains since the fall of Suharto's autocratic regime in 1998. But the country struggles with corruption, violence against minority groups, and separatist tensions. Indonesia will hold national elections in April 2019, at which point it will be clearer whether Indonesia can remain Southeast Asia's most consolidated democracy.

In sub-Saharan Africa, despite signs of progress in nations such as Nigeria (the continent's most populous country and an electoral democracy), many countries lack strong rule of law and maintain high rates of corruption, crime, and insurgency. As Ken Opalo has written for this project, even South Africa, a relatively strong democracy, has been mired in a corruption scandal implicating former President Jacob Zuma, which at its height tested South Africa's constitutional process. Dissatisfaction with the government's management of the economy and a lack of job creation has led to the establishment of a new populist party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).[31]

On the Korean Peninsula, contributing authors Paul Park and Jung Pak discuss the hundreds of thousands of South Korean citizens who protested in late 2016 and early 2017 demanding the resignation of then-President Park Geun-hye for charges of corruption. The protests resulted in a decision by the South Korean Constitutional Court to remove President Park from office. This was seen as a demonstration of democratic values and the power of individuals to effect political changes. However, as Park and Pak write, the protests were also manifestations of citizens' long-term frustration with the government's inability to address people's grievances effectively.

> **"While the proximate cause of the protest was the corruption scandals enveloping President Park, the protests involved a range of grievances stemming from pent-up anger and a sense of disempowerment that had been percolating under the surface for decades." – Jung Pak and Paul Park**

These examples make clear that despite democratic progress, political and social upheaval can emerge when governments prove unable or unwilling to address criminal violence, reduce corruption among elite classes, and provide equal access to services. Several policy briefs also show that ineffective governance is leading many citizens to value *output legitimacy* over *input legitimacy*—and vote for strongman leaders who say they will do what they must in order to get things done, regardless of whether their actions strictly abide by the rule of law or democratic norms.

IDENTITY POLITICS: CULTURE, MIGRATION DEBATES, AND THE RESURGENCE OF POPULIST PARTIES

Across the trans-Atlantic community, democracies are witnessing the rise of voting shares for populist and, in some instances, authoritarian-leaning leaders. Both right- and left-wing populist parties see themselves as taking back control of salient issues from out-of-touch elites operating through antidemocratic institutions. Highlighting their appeal, European political scientist Ivan Krastev writes, "They attract those who view the separation of powers (the institution perhaps most beloved by liberals) not as a way to keep those in power accountable but as a way for elites to evade their electoral promises."[32]

There is another compelling argument that cultural and identity-based factors influence voters' perceptions and affect support for populist parties in post-industrial societies. The "cultural backlash" thesis suggests that support for anti-establishment parties has emerged as part of a larger reaction against progressive cultural change, stemming from groups that see the erosion of traditional norms as threats to their privilege and status in society.[33] In some cases, cultural angst can take on a xenophobic tone, incorporating distrust toward outsiders and an anti-Muslim animus in particular.

Scholars Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris argue, "Hostile or intolerant attitudes towards migrants, ethnic and racial minorities, commonly directed against refugees, asylum-seekers, and guest-workers in Europe, especially towards Muslims, are expected to be an important source of resentment."[34] While views on immigration are only one element of a much broader cultural backlash against liberal and cosmopolitan values diffused throughout post-industrial societies, anti-immigration sentiments are often reinforced in populist rhetoric and used for political gain.

The interplay between economic discontent, cultural grievances, or identity-based factors varies from case to case. In Italy, societal challenges rooted in economic insecurity have been compounded by inflows of migrants and refugees. In Germany, the interplay is less certain. The global financial crisis hit Germany especially hard, but the Federal Republic also recovered quickly. The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party was founded in opposition to Germany's response to the eurozone crisis in the wake of the global financial crisis, but the more immediate trigger of the AfD's rise was Angela Merkel's decision to open the border to over 1 million refugees in 2015. Elsewhere in Europe, economic grievances and cultural angst are exploited by right-wing movements that espouse ideologies of nativism, nationalism, and xenophobia, many of which also share a common anti-Muslim animus.[35]

Occurring alongside Europe's worst refugee crisis since the 1940s, there has been a rise in support for populist parties that promise to stop the influx of migrants across national borders and advocate for stricter immigration control.[36] As William Galston writes, "Even as Europe's economic recovery gathered pace and unemployment declined, the populist surge continued. Indeed, it has gathered strength since 2015. It is now evident that populism also draws strength from public opposition to mass immigration, cultural liberalization, and the perceived surrender of national sovereignty to distant and unresponsive international bodies."[37]

We argue, therefore, that the economic drivers of democratic discontent are crucial, but not sufficient to explain recent dynamics. It is evident that the global financial crisis, the subsequent eurozone debt crisis, and Greece's potential exit from the euro amplified tensions in Europe and created receptive publics for anti-establishment messages; but a further spark was needed to provoke actual populist outcomes. The 2015 migration crisis provided just that. It amplified public concern over jobs and wages in the midst of massive

population flows across national borders. Concerns were further amplified and conflated with terrorist attacks in Western European cities including Paris, Brussels, Nice, and Manchester between 2015-17.

> **"In both the United States and Europe, terrorism has played into debates on migration, with fears of immigrants or refugees from Muslim-majority states running high. Social trust decreases after a terrorist attack. A Chatham House survey from 2017 found that in the 10 countries surveyed, over half the population 'agreed that all further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped,' with only 20 percent disagreeing—a remarkable consensus. A 2017 U.S. poll found that 60 percent of Americans supported the Trump administration's 'travel ban' that severely limits immigration from mostly Muslim countries." – Daniel Byman**

Notwithstanding this linkage, some political platforms based on stemming migration are not fundamentally illiberal. Contributing authors including James Kirchick highlight that liberal democracies are not obliged to open their borders to migrants in the same way that they are expected to protect the basic freedoms of their own citizens (though they should be expected to fulfill their obligations to refugees).[38] There are several characteristics of right-wing populist parties that pose a graver threat to democratic institutions across Europe. Hungary's Fidesz party and Poland's Law and Justice party are illustrative of the political movements that base their power on majoritarian ethnicities, intolerance for minority rights, and disdain for judicial independence and free media. While far-right groups represent disparate interests, one connective thread is their fear of and opposition to Islam or Muslims.

> **"Viewing Muslims as a problem but also as a proxy for broader cultural questions ties together right-wing populist parties. Parties that are suspicious of Muslims are unlikely to be interested in public diplomacy and engagement with Muslim publics, instead seeing authoritarian regimes as the best way to maintain order." – Shadi Hamid**

Contrary to the anti-immigration stance pursued by the far right, the European left has traditionally pursued a more inclusive approach on immigration. Political parties on the left historically welcomed immigration and attempted to play it to their electoral advantage.[39] Yet a decreased focus on tangible, pro-worker economic issues in favor of more seemingly universalist principles of diversity and inclusion have separated left-leaning groups from their traditional supporters. According to political scientist Ronald Inglehart, "Economies are growing, but political parties on the left linked to the working class have lost their social bases and, consequently, their ability to bargain for redistributive policies. This has allowed economic gains to be captured almost entirely by those at the top."[40]

THE ILLIBERAL PLAYBOOK

The underlying economic or performance dynamics of democratic discontent are one thing; and anti-trade or anti-immigrant sentiment among citizens through which that discontent is reflected is another; but for democratic systems to move toward deconsolidation still requires leaders or institutions to act or fail to act in specific ways. In Central and Eastern Europe, but also in other regions, illiberal forces are gaining power through democratic and electoral means and subsequently following an "illiberal playbook" to weaken liberal democratic institutions from within.

Democratic backsliding can occur through abrupt or incremental processes. On the more acute end, backsliding can result in outright breakdown into authoritarianism when it involves radical and complete collapse of democratic institutions. This has occurred in such former democracies or semi-democracies as Thailand and Venezuela, and more recently the Philippines, where political leaders blatantly disregard the rule of law, crack down on civil society, and carry out significant human rights violations.[41] But challenges within liberal democracies can also be more gradual, and certain liberal norms may grow weaker while basic democratic institutions remain intact.[42]

The material in the remainder of this section is covered in a cognate Brookings report, "The Anatomy of Illiberal States,"[43] which assesses how the illiberal playbook has been implemented by political leaders to weaken liberal democratic institutions in EU and NATO member states, foremost among them Hungary, Poland, and Turkey,[44] and with warning signs in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. These case studies highlight the ability of illiberal leaders to gain power through electoral means and are emblematic of an incremental form of democratic backsliding that can occur among relatively consolidated democracies. Figure 8 charts the countries' paths according to the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index.[45] Turkey scores lowest among EU and NATO member states on the index by a clear margin.

FIGURE 8. V-DEM LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX, 1989-2017
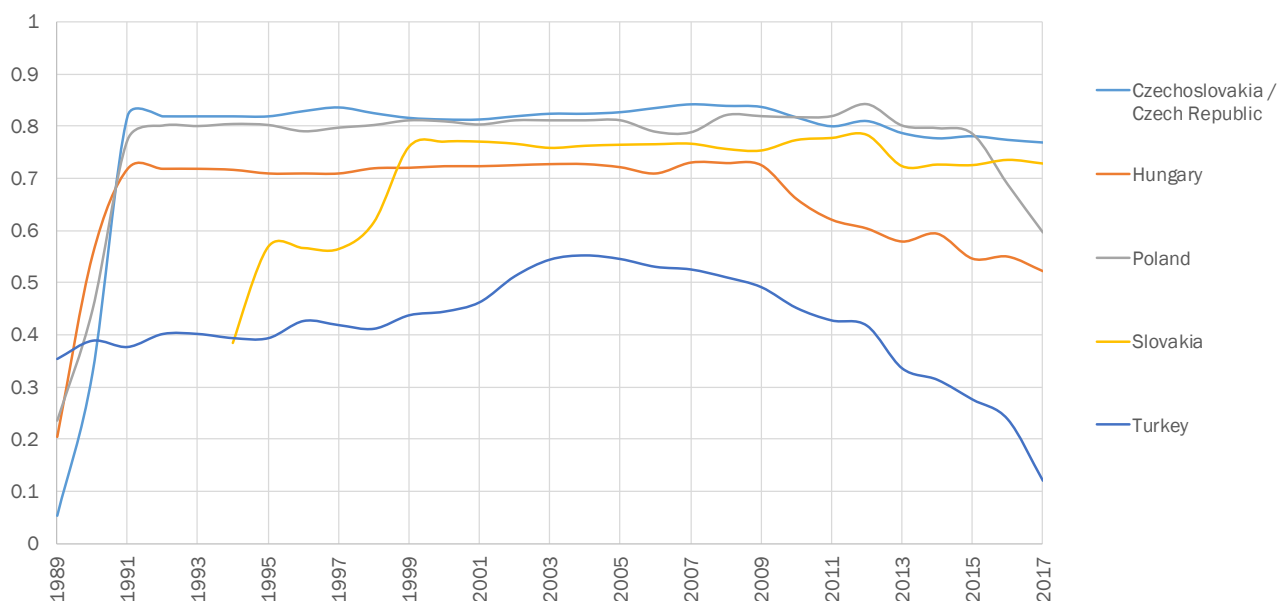
Source: V-Dem Institute, "Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018," 2018, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/3f/19/3f19efc9-e25f-4356-b159-b5c0ec894115/v-dem_democracy_report_2018.pdf.

FIGURE 9. V-DEM LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (2017) FOR EU AND NATO MEMBER STATES
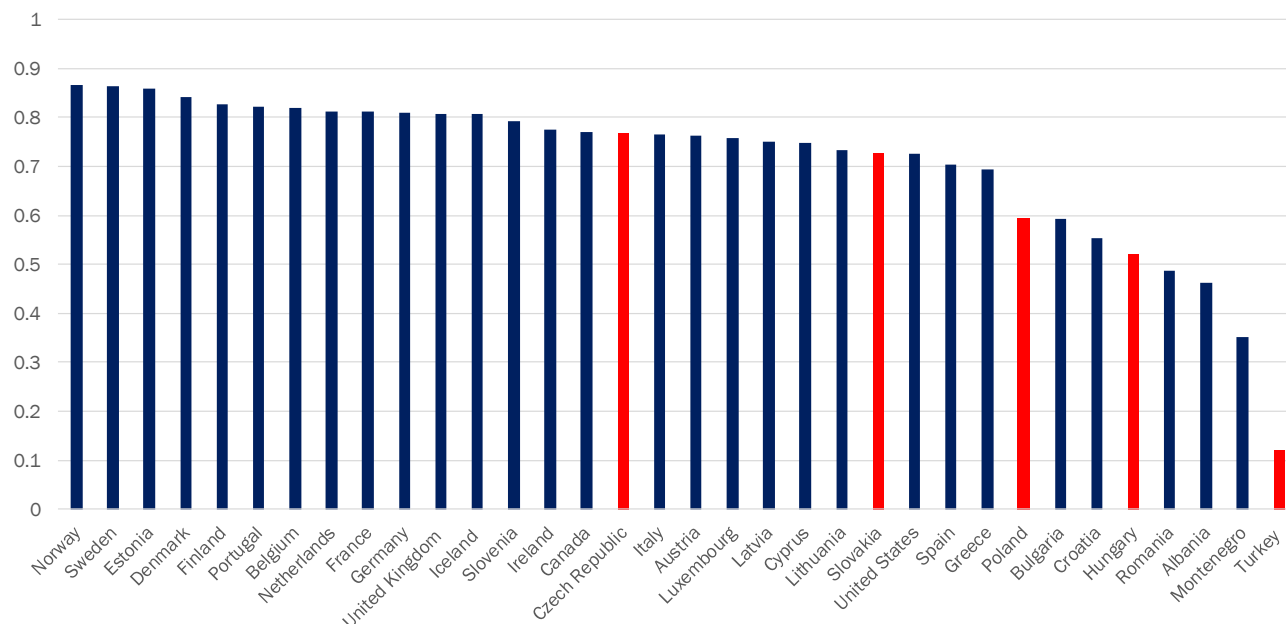
Source: V-Dem Institute, "Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018," 2018, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/3f/19/3f19efc9-e25f-4356-b159-b5c0ec894115/v-dem_democracy_report_2018.pdf.

The "Anatomy of Illiberal States" report documents how these actions are emblematic of the illiberal toolkit—a set of tactics illiberal leaders use to roll back checks and balances, media independence, judicial independence, and economic fairness, in order to strengthen their hold on power. To restrain judicial oversight, illiberal actors use constitutional referendums and amendments to control nominations to high courts. In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party, since returning to power with a constitutional two-thirds majority in 2010, have gradually undermined Hungary's democracy. In 2013, Fidesz passed a series of constitutional amendments limiting the power of the constitutional court and weakening judicial independence.[46] Similarly, Poland's Law and Justice party (PiS), after coming to power in 2015, passed laws to limit the power and autonomy of the nation's highest court, the Constitutional Tribunal.

In Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan moved to strengthen his presidential powers following the July 2016 attempted coup through a referendum in April 2017 (narrowly approved and held under unfair conditions) that eliminated the position of the prime minister and strengthened his authority as an executive president. The government has also clamped down on civil society, free speech, and intellectual freedom. Even prior to the coup, Prime Minister and later President Erdoğan and his party used their popular and parliamentarian support to implement several laws that undercut media freedoms and judicial autonomy.

> **"The consolidation of Erdoğan's de facto presidential rule began in April 2017 when Turkish citizens voted on a package of measures that eliminated the office of prime minister and gave new powers to the president including the right to issue decrees, propose the national budget, appoint cabinet ministers and senior officials, and appoint over half the members of the high courts." – Kemal Kirişci and Amanda Sloat**

The playbook also involves efforts to minimize viable political opposition, and illiberal actors in power use state resources to slant the playing field toward incumbents, harass opposition figures, and abuse anti-corruption measures as a façade to remove political challengers. They also install loyalists in positions of power to ensure that their flanks are covered.

Poland's Law and Justice party is an important example of this development. Melissa Hooper argues that "Shortly after taking power, Law and Justice purged the public administration and civil service, keeping only loyalists. This focus on loyalty above legality, and on centralization of control, have earned the government comparisons to a neo-Soviet leadership. While legislated changes have been incremental, the cumulative effect has resulted in structural transformation, likened by some to boiling a frog."[47]

Independent press is a critical target of the illiberal playbook. Political leaders consolidate the media landscape by purchasing communication platforms outright, abusing the tax system, or by legislating censorship laws in the name of national security. Using affiliated or friendly media outlets, they demonize civil society groups including NGOs as foreign actors. These tactics are rarely used in isolation, and illiberal leaders also empower loyal oligarchic classes and business elites through financial incentives and cronyism, while economically disincentivizing dissent.

> **"Hungary's public broadcasting and state news agency, nominally independent, have essentially become government mouthpieces. The strategic acquisition of private media outlets by government-friendly cronies over the past eight years have left the country's media landscape bereft of critical voices." – James Kirchick**

In each of these circumstances, the ruling governments gained power through democratic and electoral means—making their illiberal actions harder to delegitimize. Such forms of democratic backsliding that garner broad popular support are also more difficult to counter, as it means coping with illiberal actors and their mobilized supporters as they accrue power within the democratic rules of the game.[48]

Here too, we see that factors behind democratic deconsolidation—this time in the shape of the illiberal playbook—are not disconnected from other economic and cultural dynamics. In the context of economic uncertainty, demographic changes, and the growing salience of identity politics, these "antidemocratic parties are moving in from the margins because they are prioritizing the questions of basic material security that used to be the preserve of the postwar mainstream," writes Abby Innes.[49] In Hungary and Poland, Fidesz and PiS purport to stand for "the people," defending their states' Christian identities from Muslim refugees, despite the low numbers of Muslims in either country.[50] They also speak of taking back control from unelected bureaucrats in Brussels, despite being recipients of significant EU funds. Similar to President Erdoğan in Turkey, they maintain strong support in rural areas, appealing to strands of society that feel left behind economically and culturally by elites in the prosperous capitals.

Their success illustrates the schism between the foundational principles and institutions of liberal democracies. *Liberal principles*, political ideas that espouse the importance of individual liberties, minority rights, and the separation of power across levers of government, are being pulled apart from *democratic institutions*, processes that translate popular will into public policy through legitimate elections. The insidious nature of the illiberal playbook is that no move in isolation appears to be an existential threat to democracy; it is only when these actions are viewed in their entirety that the full anatomy of the illiberal state starts to become clear.

The illiberal playbook has provided openings for Russian illicit finance, corruption, and political influence. Today, Russia uses a 21st century toolkit of active measures to exploit vulnerabilities within states to the advantage of Russian interests. Democratic institutions and norms are not immune to its tools of influence, and Russian efforts seek to weaken open debate, hinder and confuse access to accurate information, and manipulate political discourse. Recent memories of Russian political influence include Moscow's

interference and disinformation efforts throughout the 2016 U.S. presidential election, attempts to influence the Brexit referendum, and ongoing financing and tactical support for far-right political parties throughout Europe, possibly including Marie Le Pen's National Front in France and the Five Star Movement in Italy.[51]

Although these efforts recently caused the United States and Western Europe to turn their attention to the problem of Russian political interference, it has long been an issue for states in Eastern and Central Europe. Indeed, nonconventional tools including cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, political influence, and illicit finance are central aspects of Russia's foreign policy that have been used to destabilize centrist parties and stir up ethnic minorities in neighboring states and further afield.[52]

A COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE

FIGURE 10. REVIVING THE SILK ROAD
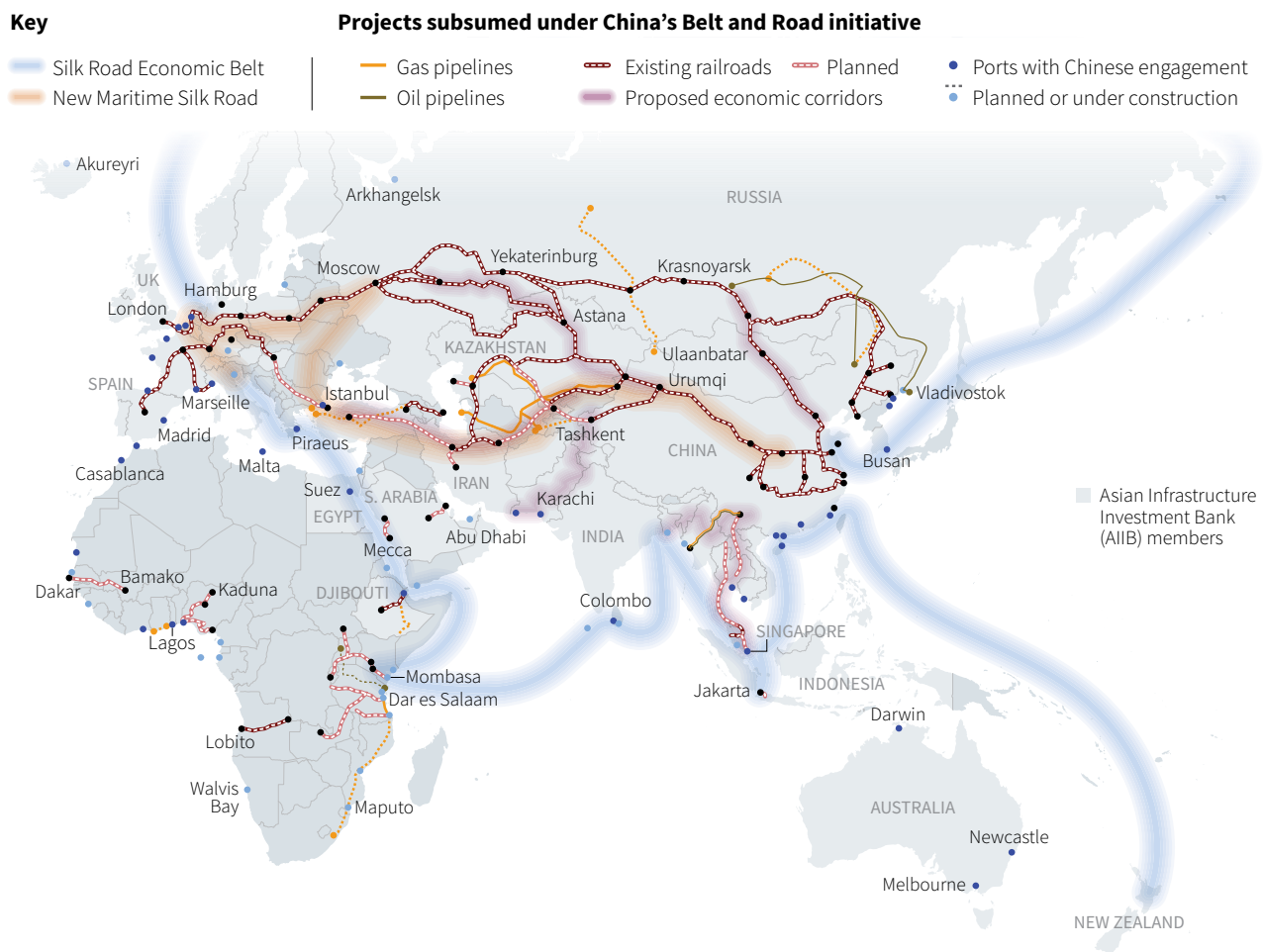
Source: Mercator Institute for China Studies.

C. Inton, 23/04/2018

REUTERS

In the last decade, shifts in the relative balance of power away from the United States and the overall dominance of the West, toward greater competition with emboldened authoritarian states, limits the ability of the United States and its like-minded partners to reinforce democracy outside of the West.[53] Importantly, this shift has significant implications for democracy, particularly in weaker and new democracies. The same leverage and linkages that small states maintain with Western powers,[54] which can open them to democratizing pressure, can

also exist with powerful authoritarian states. This could become increasingly true as China gains influence in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. Particularly in Asia, as Jonathan Stromseth and Hunter Marston note, China appears to be fostering a Sino-centric network of economic, political, cultural, and security relations.[55] Beijing relies on economic statecraft to advance its strategic objectives in the region (and globally) through a range of institutions and projects, most notably the Belt and Road Initiative. Meanwhile, Russia has opportunistically taken advantage of the West's lack of political cohesion to increase its direct interference in democratic countries, as well as to deploy military and diplomatic resources into unstable areas, complicating Western and multilateral efforts.

Stromseth and Marston acknowledge this shifting influence, writing that the evolving "pull of power" between Beijing and Washington could impact political trajectories of smaller countries in Asia, as "China offers a governance model that could appeal to leaders seeking economic growth opportunities without commensurate political liberties or constraints on their power."[56] Alongside China's rise, and following the Iraq War and the global financial crisis, America's countervailing influence and willingness to shape democratic trajectories have diminished. The evolving balance of international power between the United States and China, along with China's significant investments across the global south, provides smaller countries with new political, diplomatic, and economic options—though not without costs, as many of them are learning. As Figure 11 from the Pew Research Center shows, international publics are split when it comes to holding favorable or unfavorable views of China. Opinions have grown more negative in countries such as Australia, amid concerns over growing Chinese political influence. Elsewhere, and in countries including Indonesia and the Philippines, economic development from China is contributing to positive views.

FIGURE 11. GLOBAL VIEWS OF CHINA SPLIT, THOUGH POCKETS OF FAVORABILITY IN SOME REGIONS

Views of China

	Unfavorable	Favorable
Canada	45%	44%
UK	35	49
Netherlands	45	47
Hungary	47	43
Greece	48	43
Spain	48	42
Sweden	52	42
France	54	41
Germany	54	39
Poland	37	36
Italy	60	29
MEDIAN	48	42
Russia	21	65
Indonesia	32	53
Philippines	43	53
Australia	47	48
South Korea	60	38
Japan	78	17
MEDIAN	47	48
Tunisia	16	70
Israel	42	55
Kenya	17	67
Nigeria	17	61
South Africa	38	49
Brazil	33	49
Mexico	27	45
Argentina	27	41
25-COUNTRY MEDIAN	43	45
U.S.	47	38

Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q17b. Pew Research Center.

As Tarun Chhabra highlights, "China's economic statecraft, industrial planning, technology partnerships, and currency strategies all march in the same direction: reducing dependence on the United States, while maintaining others' dependence on China."[57] Yet the field of competition is complicated. Large and economically powerful countries with stronger institutions have the political and diplomatic weight to resist outside interference, leverage, and influence. Democratic momentum was spurred in recent decades by economic advancements

and global integration across Asia, Latin America, and Africa, in countries such as India, Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, and Nigeria. However, the momentum of their democratic consolidation has slowed—and in some national contexts reversed—by internal setbacks. As Chinese investment and infrastructure development increases alongside America's receding emphasis on democracy and human rights (and declining democratic standards at home), progress in these regions could be impeded. On the other hand, China is already encountering pushback against some of its efforts.

In some regions, notably Latin America and parts of Africa, we are also seeing the beginning of a return to Cold War-style aid competition. This time, the primary instrument of influence-making is infrastructure investment. The 1990s and the 2000s saw Chinese infrastructure and energy investments in the global south produce a number of positive economic results.

Now, China's strategy is bifurcated. Through instruments like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, China focuses on infrastructure, developmental outcomes, and return on investments. Through instruments like the Belt and Road Initiative, China is more predatory, seeking political influence and in some cases more tangible benefits such as military basing rights. The balance appears to be tilting in the wrong direction. As Stromseth and Marston note, whether China is taking proactive steps through its infrastructure projects to intentionally promote its governance model alongside its strategic interests remains an open question. What is clear is that Chinese economic support is uncritical of negative internal developments and human rights transgressions—such as the humanitarian crisis and allegations of ethnic cleansing carried out by the Myanmar government against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority—and could further incentivize countries to move away from liberalizing paths encouraged by Washington and other Western partners. Here, of course, the West is somewhat hampered by the reality of its own past practices in the developing world, which only rarely lived up to the rhetoric of its values and stated purposes.[58]

Ken Opalo, in his policy brief for this project, argues that in Africa, Chinese aid and development projects typically come with no conditionality on the quality of governance and are generally perceived to provide opportunities for corruption and fewer incentives to adhere to democratic norms.[59] Instead, China promotes its brand of hegemonic single-party rule by building strong institutional relationships between the Chinese Communist Party and ruling parties in African states.[60] One positive effect of China's economic engagement, Opalo notes, is that it has redefined what is possible in terms of public goods and services, which could strengthen the link between electoral politics and the lived experiences of Africans.

> "Through infrastructure projects across Africa, China has redefined what is possible as far as public goods and services are concerned, thereby strengthening the link between electoral politics and the lived experiences of Africans. At the same time, China has weakened the West's ability to incentivize African leaders to adhere to democratic norms. The balance of these competing influences will determine the net effect of Chinese economic forays in Africa." – Ken Opalo

Infrastructure investment and aid diplomacy are, once again, emerging as a source of geopolitical contest, with the political character and the geopolitical alignment of the countries in question becoming new areas for competition. The United States, Japan, and European actors are beginning to ratchet up their response, although those efforts are not yet coordinated.

The situation in the Middle East is worse. There, far from simple proxy competition through aid and infrastructure investment (though that is rife across the region as well), we have seen a return to actual proxy warfare, most violently in Syria. In the region as a whole, in the post-Arab Spring environment, countries are still searching for a

new democratic narrative while they navigate downturns, crackdowns, and the occasional possible bright spots, including a still nascent democracy in Tunisia. Meanwhile, authoritarian states including Saudi Arabia and Iran continue to fuel civil wars and violence in smaller neighboring states.

Proxy wars in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, and proxy political struggle in Iraq, have pulled the entire region into tense geopolitical competition (and vice versa). Russia has increased its engagement, and its propensity for risk combined with China's growing diplomatic confidence and assertiveness have blocked U.N. Security Council action to deal with civil wars. The cost of this is significant: Between 1990 and 2010, the Security Council acted on over 40 occasions to deploy peacekeepers to civil wars and conflict-torn states, to broadly positive effect.[61] Unfortunately, it seems that civil wars are turning back from being a zone of great power cooperation to being a zone of great power competition—at high human cost.

Competition for influence between the authoritarian and democratic powers is occurring in industrialized and developing regions, albeit in different ways. In Europe, the "pull of power" and the power of the purse are influencing internal politics and foreign policy. In particular, Chinese investments in Europe are creating incentives for political elites to avoid being overly critical of Chinese actions in the region and elsewhere. China is also operating through mechanisms such as the 16+1 framework, which promotes cooperation between China and 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and is leading to divisions in Europe over foreign policy and economic issues.

> "Russia and China are now turning the old and new connective elements of integration and globalization against Europe in different ways and to different purposes. Russian interference appears to be mainly cacophonous, opportunistic, and destructive; China's seems far more strategic as well as more politically and technologically sophisticated." – Constanze Stelzenmüller

The dynamic in Asia is different. Ironically, East Asia's democracies are simultaneously among the most resilient in the international system and the most economically integrated with China. In a best-case scenario, Japanese and Chinese cooperation on Belt and Road Initiative projects could lead to an improvement in infrastructure quality and governance across regions. Mireya Solís writes for this project that Japan has already launched a multifaceted connectivity agenda that offers infrastructure finance to diversify options for developing Asia, encourage China to improve the quality of its development lending, and embed the United States in the region's economic architecture.[62]

The dynamics of competition are shifting as technological innovation leads to an increasingly contested digital space. Authoritarian states outside the West—China and Russia, most notably—are developing and deploying tools of digital authoritarianism to undermine liberal democracies and control domestic populations. More cooperation therefore is needed among democratic states in the trans-Atlantic community and beyond to ensure that the digital domain is not co-opted by authoritarians at the expense of open societies.[63]

Injected into Europe's moment of strategic flux is a deeply unpredictable United States, which is treating the European Union more as a competitor than as an ally in a new era defined by strategic competition. Into the changing balance of power between the authoritarian and democratic great powers, President Trump in particular has created a huge degree of uncertainty. Trump has articulated a foreign policy best described as hyper-unilateral, though during the first half of his term, the policy team and the institutions around him slowed much of this, and often implemented an alliance-based policy that is at odds with the president's rhetoric and worldview. But the balance between the president and institutions has begun to shift in the favor of an unconstrained White House. This dynamic leaves Europe in a position of uncertainty at a time when powerful states are battling for influence throughout advanced and emerging democracies.

IV. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ORDER AND STRATEGIC RESPONSES

If both advanced and emerging democracies are reeling from a combination of political, economic, and cultural challenges, what are the implications for the international order?

If the present moment of democratic stagnation came at a point of relative stability in the international order, its implications would be less substantial. In fact, internal setbacks are occurring when the stakes could not be higher: China has begun to turn its economic weight into political influence, and to compete with the West at a global political level; Russian President Vladimir Putin is willing to take substantial risks and use the country's military and technological capabilities toward destabilizing Western democracies and the Western alliance; and the Middle East is in turmoil (partially of the West's making), with significant spillover effects for other regions.

In the decade since the global financial crisis, the international order has transitioned from a time when democracies had significant leverage, moved through a fleeting phase of global cooperation, and has landed in a reality characterized by an escalating contest between the powers, in which authoritarian states are making a concerted effort to weaken the role of democracy in international affairs.

The energy, focus, and unity of the West would be sorely tested by these challenges in even the best of times. Instead, right off the starting blocks, the West and the democratic world more broadly is de-energized, distracted, and in disarray. And in the face of an alliance-skeptical, unilateralist policy under President Trump, it is even more disunited.

What of the emerging democracies? This moment in history calls for rising democratic powers to play a greater role in preserving the international order. Were the West both stable and unified, and its leverage still high, one might have anticipated a gradual but growing contribution to the multilateral order by the democratic rising powers. Instead, early misfires during the Obama administration, uncertainty in American policy during the Trump administration, the high costs of getting caught in the crosshairs of U.S.-China tensions, and their own internal setbacks are combining to place sharp limits on these states' capacity and willingness to contribute to the defense of democracy either within their regions or globally. The silver—perhaps golden—lining here is that the least distracted of these countries is also by far the most consequential: India.

Indeed, it is notable that democracies in the Indo-Pacific and Asia are less troubled by the populist tide than their Western counterparts. Countries like India, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan were less damaged economically by the global financial crisis, or recovered faster,[64] and have limited exposure to the recent turmoil in the Middle East. At the same time, they are motivated to maintain the regional order because they are most directly challenged by China's assertive turn. Perhaps they have most to lose from uncertainty in American foreign policy, but Asia has also been the place where President Trump's initial anti-alliance rhetoric and instincts gave most ground to more conventional approaches to strategy (except on trade.)

For policymakers preoccupied with an increasingly contested international order, and rising uncertainty over democracy's strength in that order, what should be done to defend democracy and prevent further setbacks?

It almost goes without saying that unless the United States addresses and puts behind it the most acute of its democratic troubles, the odds for success in the strategy we lay out below diminish substantially. Former National Security Advisor Susan Rice had it right when, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, she acknowledged that "while U.S. leadership is necessary, it's rarely sufficient."[65] That necessary but insufficient power is still necessary. Although we admire Germany's willingness to contemplate a more expansive foreign policy in Europe and beyond, Japan's commitment to rules-based trade in Asia, and India's potential to maintain stability in the critical Indo-Pacific region, the fact remains that none of these actors, even combined, has the shaping power of the United States. A sustained shift of the United States away from its leadership in international security, its support to alliances, and its bent toward strengthening democracy would seriously weaken the prospects for other countries to play more engaged roles in upholding democratic institutions and norms.

The effects of America's division and lack of focus could be mitigated if Europe were united and willing to pick up the slack. However, that continent is also is facing deep divisions that threaten to pull it in diverging directions. Populist politics are eroding European unity and contributions to order at a critical time. In certain forms, populism is even more corrosive. As Thomas Wright argues, "In its democratic form, right-wing populism fundamentally challenges core principles of the European Union, including economic and political solidarity between the member states. In its authoritarian form, it rejects the most basic principle of the EU, which is the rule of law and democracy."[66] On the other end of the political spectrum, the weakness of the left is diminishing Europe's appetite for a values-based role in the international order. The effects of declining center-left political parties are not confined to the internal politics of European states. As contributors Célia Belin and Ted Reinert argue, "The main implication of the weakness of the Western European established left for geopolitics and liberal international order is that a group of parties that has (largely) served as champions of a values-based Western foreign policy, and drivers of deeper European integration, will hold power less frequently."[67]

Meanwhile, the U.K. , the most active major power and a bulwark of the multilateral order, is now distracted to the point of coming undone by the Brexit debate. And no country is more deeply concerned by the continent's fissures—or more relied upon to develop a European response—than Germany. Grappling with America's unpredictable foreign policy while at the same time dealing with a series of internal and regional shocks—from the eurozone crisis and Grexit to the war Ukraine, Brexit, and the refugee crisis—has upended what was an emerging argument in Berlin for a more capacious foreign policy. What Constanze Stelzenmüller describes as Germany's "voluntarist moment" has quickly been compromised:

> "Germany's options, in this dire new strategic environment, are limited. Building walls, repatriating supply chains, and generally turning itself into a Fortress Germany is not a realistic choice for the country, which shares borders with nine neighbors and is existentially dependent on its economic integration with the rest of Europe. Yet the temptation to turn itself into a Greater Switzerland that attempts to accommodate and juggle equidistant relations with all major powers—regardless of their illiberal nature or their active hostility—is very real."[68]

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The international system has always been divided between order-makers, order-shapers, and order-takers. The United States and the leading European democracies have gotten used to being the sole order-makers in the international system. Now, their capacity is diminished and others outside of the trans-Atlantic community have a growing capacity to shape the rules of the game. On the positive side, the Asian democracies have shown a willingness to protect key elements of the order and advance new trade regimes, as Japan did with its leadership of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (now known as TPP-11) after the United States backed away from the deal. More worryingly for democracy, China is now an order-shaper in its own right, and now has more than enough financial, economic, and diplomatic capacity to constrain Western influence in key multilateral institutions. Russia is more an order-breaker than an order-shaper. Though not quite powerful enough to fulfill that ambition, Moscow has shown a willingness to challenge the West and to violate the most foundational rules of the international order.[69] The result is a competition for influence—and competition over the success of the democratic model itself.

The actions and decisions—internal and in foreign policy—of the democratic emerging powers will do much to set the trajectory of democracy globally in the coming years. The ability of powerhouses such as India and Indonesia to deal with internal governance challenges and manage the rise of China alongside counter-globalization impulses in the West will shape the strength of democracy and order in their dynamic region and across the global south. Brazil's trajectory will shape Latin America's. Optimistically, Ted Piccone finds, "Middle power democracies ... have a potentially positive role to play if they can revive their once promising paths to sustainable democratic development. As they have demonstrably benefited from the upside of economic globalization and democratization, they should also become more responsible stewards and shapers of our interdependent system."[70] Whether they end up playing this role remains to be seen.

A key conclusion of this report is that a focus on the fate and strategic orientation of non-Western democracies must become a central question in American debates as well as broader discussions about the international order. The role of democracy in the international order is not just a question for the West. As Ken Opalo notes, "Global democratic resiliency will remain dependent on the lived experience of citizens in the world's emerging electoral democracies."[71] In this sense, it should not be overlooked that while there is serious democratic backsliding in countries like Hungary, with a population near 10 million, there is also important democratic consolidation in Indonesia, with a population of almost 265 million. Such internal dynamics are occurring at time when Indonesia must resist greater Chinese pressure, adding greater implications of Jakarta's democratic trajectory.

These trends across advanced and emerging democracies suggest that the best chance for preserving and advancing a democratic international order lies in the United States joining forces with an informal coalition of democratic states that is wider than the Western core, and adopting a multidimensional strategy, as laid out below.

RESPONSES: ELEMENTS OF A VALUES-BASED STRATEGY

Brookings scholars are a disputatious bunch, and their independence is essential to the Brookings model. Rather than smooth out the differences between scholars or gloss over the details of their recommendations, the most important contribution this overview report can make is to draw attention to the rich menu of ideas contained in this project's contributing briefs—even where they contradict one another, or where we as scholars may disagree. The briefs that form the basis of this project provide recommendations for dealing with democratic backsliding within countries and for strengthening democratic institutions and norms across them. The policy responses are specific to country and regional contexts.

Woven through this variation are several strands of argument that are germane across regions, and apply to both advanced and emerging democracies. Together they comprise four major lines of effort that respond to the basic drivers of democratic stagnation. In turn, these lines of action constitute the elements of what we believe would be an effective strategy for strengthening a **values-based order**.

In summary, the action lines of this strategy include:

- **Democratic renewal: A shared international agenda.** The West should adopt a shared agenda of democratic renewal that encompasses much-needed domestic reforms in the West. Instead of a posture of "democracy promotion," this strategy calls for renewing democracy to strengthen its international appeal and to build comparative advantages vis-à-vis a newly powerful model of authoritarian capitalism. Democratic countries across regions and of all income levels should work to preserve the fundamental building blocks of free societies: freedom of expression, independent civil society, commitment to basic human rights, free and fair elections, and a system of checks and balances within the rule of law. To be effective, these efforts must accompany policies of inclusive growth that tackle economic inequality.

- **Detoxifying identity politics and migration debates.** Drawing from the policy briefs, we outline a number of steps to advance substantive debates on migration, while limiting the extent to which debates over refugees and migration are poisoning democratic politics and empowering extreme parties. This needs to be matched with a focus on local and urban-level integration—as well as a posture that eschews the hateful rhetoric that ties migration to terrorism and violence.

- **Defending democracy in Europe and Asia.** We put forward a series of policies, many of them drawn from the policy briefs, to respond to the illiberal playbook in advanced democracies, as well as authoritarian powers' interference therein. These policies involve raising the cost to illiberal governments within Western institutions for violations of democratic norms. The briefs also contain ideas to build cooperation among democracies in the Indo-Pacific. We also propose the formation of a new "Dialogue of Democracies in Asia."

- **Deepening cooperation with non-Western democracies** across the board, but particularly in terms of aid and support to nascent or emerging democracies in the developing world. We outline steps by which the Western and Asian democracies in particular can join forces to compete more effectively with development models advanced by China that may prove to have adverse effects on democratic governments. Topics for this cooperation include joint infrastructure spending or shared standards; joint efforts to bolster democratic governance; and democratic cooperation on crisis management.

While the question of democracy in the Middle East and West Asia remains fraught, there are shifts in Western strategy in these regions that can, over the longer term, increase the odds of improving governance and stability.

(1) DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL: A SHARED INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

Several authors in this project argue that unless a given country starts to tackle its internal challenges, its ability to act with conviction in international affairs will be limited.[72] The critical importance of **strengthening basic democratic fundamentals**—on the rule of law, minority protections, free and fair elections, and free media—cannot be ignored, as these foundations represent the first line of defense against illiberalism and must be protected.[73]

This basic tenet of governance stretches across regions. Ken Opalo, writing about regional heavyweights Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, makes a simple but essential point: "To increase resilience, democracy must be shown to work."[74] Sharan Grewal, writing about Tunisia, highlights the importance of rule of law reforms and establishing stronger checks and balances on the executive, but also notes that "populist strongmen are more likely to be elected, and less likely to face popular resistance, when the public has become disillusioned with democracy."[75] Writing about a country at the other end of the spectrum in terms of GDP, Mireya Solís argues that Japan, already a strong democracy, still must work to enact political and economic reforms if it is to reinforce a rules-based economic order in Asia or outside the region.

> "To realize Japan's growth potential and narrow down socio-economic gaps, the Japanese government should double down on reform measures that include: deregulation that allows non-viable firms to exit the market, the expansion of entrepreneurship and innovation, and further inroads into the digital economy. Labor market reforms should ameliorate the sharp duality that fuels socio-economic gaps, reward merit-based compensation and flexibility in the workplace, ensure gender equality, and tap on the potential of foreign workers to ease labor shortages and promote diversity." – Mireya Solís

In both emerging and consolidated democracies, policymakers and citizenry have responded to weakened democratic institutions by increasing the use of direct democracy tools, such as referendums. As Katherine Collin notes, referendums have become associated with populist and authoritarian movements and declining liberalism, as governments use them to advance their own agendas. But this increasingly pervasive tool of democracy can be made more accountable if high standards for their use are modeled and adopted. Collin argues that discussions should focus on how best to **structure and manage referendums** to mitigate detrimental effects on democracy. Metrics of validity include quorum requirements, participation, and approval thresholds and double majority requirements.[76]

An agenda of democratic renewal also means **restoring the economic underpinnings** of citizen support for democracy. A message that rings throughout the policy briefs is that this requires making the question of inequality front and center in both domestic and international economic policy. Issues of inequality and corruption have weakened the West and have hobbled emerging democracies. The raw numbers are stark. According to Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, "Since 1980, the top 1 percent globally has seen twice as much of the gains from growth as the bottom 50 percent. Over that period, income inequality has been on the rise in most advanced economies. This is partly due to technology, partly due to global integration, and partly due to policies that favor capital over labor."[77] The directive for democratic polities is clear. As argued by William Galston, "It is past time to abandon a myopic focus on economic aggregates and focus on *inclusive* growth—that is, on the kind of economic policies that improve well-being across all demographic lines, including class and geography."[78]

A number of Brookings studies outside the scope of this project have highlighted possible pathways forward.[79] One such study promotes **pro-growth policies for left-behind areas**, including extending broadband access, providing investment capital for new and small businesses, and using both transport investment and regulatory policy to address the rural-urban imbalance.[80]

This is not only an issue for the United States and the EU, however, and the need to develop a stronger focus on inclusive growth is a commonality across regions and countries of varying income levels. For example, writing about Mexico, Vanda Felbab-Brown notes that while there is much that is problematic in President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's approach to Mexican governance, there is value in his insistence on policies that address economic and social conditions in marginalized regions (as well as tackling Mexico's out-of-control corruption).[81]

The myriad of recommendations put forward by scholars on strengthening basic political fundamentals across Western and non-Western democracies—whether backsliding or not—suggests **there is merit for Western democracies to put behind them the rhetoric of "democracy promotion" and accept that they need to be part of a shared agenda of democratic renewal**.

(2) DETOXIFYING IDENTITY POLITICS AND MIGRATION DEBATES

No credible account of the current democratic malaise in the West can ignore the divisive issue of migration and refugees—particularly in Europe. No issue has done more to spark the rise of contemporary populism, and finding a sustainable compromise would drain much of the bile from today's liberal democratic politics. Dismissing citizen concerns over immigration will only drive publics to support populist leaders who are willing to take their concerns seriously and act on them.

On the question of migration's impact on liberal democracy in Europe, James Kirchick starts with the essential point that **debating limitations on immigration is not an illiberal idea**. Indeed, it is not illiberal for a county to conclude that certain kinds or levels of immigration are placing excessive stress on its society and public welfare programs. Kirchick argues that the subject of migration is a reasonable element of democratic discourse and debate, and that proposing limitations on migration is a valid opinion within that discourse.

Many democratic societies have limited migration in past periods of economic turmoil or social unrest, and some societies considered fully democratic and broadly liberal have restrictive migration policies, like Japan. Moreover, Kirchick notes, "If a perception exists among European voters that mainstream political leaders are unable or unwilling to control immigration, and if this perception festers, then political forces that would upset Europe's postwar political, economic, and security settlement will gain strength."[82] Coming from a different political vantage point, William Galston agrees, arguing that "the defenders of liberal democracy should acknowledge that control of borders is an attribute of national sovereignty and that liberal democrats can have a wide range of views on the appropriate number and type of immigrants."[83]

Approaching the problem from a different angle, Jessica Brandt highlights the importance of focusing on the **integration of migrants and refugees** from the vantage point of cities and urban municipalities. She stresses that systems are needed to better address long-term social service needs of urban populations, including in middle- and high-income countries. Moreover, new city-focused responses must **enable a wide range of actors**—local authorities, business leaders, academics, philanthropists, and development agencies—to provide input on migration governance decisions that affect their communities.

In addition to a focus on city-level strategies of refugee and migrant integration, Daniel Byman—writing about the interplay between radicalization, migration, and democratic society—makes a compelling case for national leaders to enact a range of measures designed to promote better integration of migrant communities. He argues:

> "An array of actors, especially civil society organizations, need to play a role in integration. Part of this is simply to improve services in poorer Muslim communities. In addition, civil society organizations, especially ones that promote moderate Islamic leaders, can counter some of the deleterious effects of Saudi funding, bolstering alternative voices. Such efforts are particularly necessary with refugees. Few of the refugees coming in are radical: However, they and especially their children are vulnerable if they do not receive effective services, are politically demonized, and are nurtured by more radical Islamist organizations." – Daniel Byman

Accepting a legitimate debate over migration levels is very different from tolerating the anti-migrant and often anti-Muslim rhetoric that has frequently accompanied the discussion of late. **Manipulation of anti-migrant sentiment has been a powerful tool of the far-right** (though as Célia Belin and Ted Reinert acknowledge, the political left recently has hardly been free of anti-migrant or anti-Muslim sentiment). Our contributors see this strand of politics as far more threatening to liberal values than the migration question itself—though they have frequently been conflated, as seen in early moves by the Trump administration to halt refugee flows from Muslim-majority countries, and as is evident in Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's harsh rhetoric toward migrants. The fusion of religious and minority identification with fear-mongering is a classic authoritarian tactic, as well as a direct challenge to constitutionalism and the rule of law.

> "This line of effort will require stronger accommodation efforts on both sides. Critics of populist parties should be careful not to dismiss concerns over immigration out of hand. Reducing immigration levels, on its own, is not an anti-Muslim position, and it may help to make clearer distinctions between immigrants (Muslims or otherwise) and Muslims who are *already* citizens in a given country and are therefore legally as French, Dutch, or Swedish as any of their non-Muslim neighbors. All citizens have responsibilities to make a good faith effort to accommodate themselves to existing laws and social norms. But if Muslim citizens must do so, it also means that majorities have a responsibility to make their own accommodations, especially when it comes to the religious freedom and private religious practices of Muslim citizens—even if that private practice has public implications." – Shadi Hamid

In Europe, and to a lesser degree in the United States, these issues are bound up with questions of domestic radicalization and terrorism. And in **rebutting the overstated link between migrant communities and terrorism**, Daniel Byman argues that, "Political leaders should emphasize societal resilience, not fear, in their statements. Leaders might invite qualified Muslims to take high-profile jobs in their administrations, ensure Muslim leaders are regularly consulted, emphasize that most violence is small-scale and that the police are ably handling the problem, and otherwise stress inclusion and play down the psychological impact of terrorism."[84] Byman also emphasizes the value of intelligence-sharing across Western countries grappling with the social and political cost of terrorism, and the importance of targeting right-wing terrorism, to prevent a vicious cycle of radicalization and response.

Detoxifying identity politics and migration debates is both important for restoring broad public confidence in democratic institutions and for limiting the appeal of extreme parties. That will in turn improve the prospects for pushing back against illiberal actors within established democracies as well as authoritarian powers' ability to penetrate and manipulate Western divisions.

(3) DEFENDING DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE AND ASIA

There is little doubt that the health of European democracy is deeply consequential for the role and influence of democracy in the international order. In addition to the issues of democratic underperformance and migration debates, Europe confronts a **growing challenge of illiberal democracies**, with some governments adopting an illiberal playbook to undermine established institutions and the rule of law. The emergence of illiberal actors in Europe has also provided Russia important openings through which to disrupt democratic discourse. The poster child for the illiberal playbook is Hungary, but Poland is also scrutinized for many of the same transgressions. Indeed, so essential is this topic to the overarching question of the role of democracy in international order that it has been the subject of its own deep dive, in the Brookings "Anatomy of Illiberal States" report.

Illiberal and authoritarian-leaning states within institutions such as the EU and NATO are worrying because of their ability to weaken liberal norms and institutions from within, but their membership also gives these institutions leverage in responding.

The "Anatomy of Illiberal States" report and findings from the policy briefs for this series suggest a number of lines of response from the European Union, NATO, the U.S. administration, and the U.S. Congress. Recommendations include calling on both EU and U.S. agencies to increase funding for pro-democratic civil society organizations and for independent, investigative media organizations, especially in countries where checks and balances are under attack in Central Europe, with Hungary and Poland as priorities. The recommendations also suggest that the national courts of EU states refrain from honoring the decisions of courts that are not independent (such as the Constitutional Tribunal of Poland and the Constitutional Court of Hungary), and broader measures for **the United States and the EU to adopt rule of law conditionality** for access to funds and loans.

Given this peculiar moment in American politics, recommendations that would normally be targeted at the administration are instead aimed at Congress, where the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee have a responsibility both to raise awareness of the economic, political, and defense concerns posed by illiberal regimes to U.S. national security interests in Europe, and to press the executive branch on its policies for countering democratic decline in these countries.

Questions about the democratic character of members should also increasingly inform NATO deliberations. As the "Anatomy of Illiberal States" report highlights: "'Democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law' are founding principles of NATO. Democratic backsliding and corruption within member states pose threats to shared security and alliance cohesion." In response, **NATO should take several steps to arrest backsliding**—including developing a new strategic concept that elevates the Russian challenge to the alliance along with challenges posed by democratic backsliding within the alliance.

These ideas are essential to the prospects for a free Europe. It is worth highlighting that while they do not require undue escalation with Russia, they do require that the West not ignore Russian efforts to undermine democracy and security in the West. **Moreover, the growing tactical coordination between Russia and China on such issues should be at the very top of the U.S. national security agenda**.

At the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East, Turkey is a particularly challenging case. There, democratic backsliding is far-reaching, as is the steady erosion of liberalism and constitutionalism under President Erdoğan. Still, Amanda Sloat and Kemal Kirişci, recognizing the complex reality that the Erdoğan government has faced internal threats (though to our eyes, largely of its own making), **counsel a patient approach**.

"Despite [recent] challenges, U.S. policy should take care to prioritize the longer-term potential of the relationship. Turkey's strategic geography, NATO membership, and centrality to U.S. regional objectives require continued engagement. It also bears remembering that nearly half of Turkish voters do not support the country's current direction. The executive and legislative branches should continue engaging their counterparts and cooperating in areas of shared interest (including counterterrorism and Syria). Yet the United States should also widen the aperture beyond narrow security concerns, including expanding people-to-people ties, supporting civil society, and using the prospect of deeper trade and investment links to encourage better governance. It should also keep rule of law and human rights on the bilateral agenda, including private discussions with counterparts and frank public statements about worrying developments." – Kemal Kirişci and Amanda Sloat

There is an evident tension between this argument and the conclusions from the "Anatomy of Illiberal States" report to adopt much stricter enforcement of democratic and rule of law standards within NATO. The question of how to handle Turkey's changing governance character within the NATO framework is likely to be among the thorniest in American foreign policy in the coming years.

Turkey's case is made more complicated by President Erdoğan's recent rapprochement with President Putin of Russia and Turkey's decision to purchase S-400 missile defense systems from Russia that are not compatible with NATO defense systems. Illustrations of cooperation between the two powers should be balanced by the fact that this is a relationship filled with complexity and based on limited trust. However, regardless of whether Russia-Turkey relations sour in the near future, the question of illiberal democracy or backsliding takes on a different character when it comes into direct contact with Russia. In the West, and in the European theater in particular, Russia has directly interfered in democratic elections through information manipulation and perhaps other means, conducted disinformation operations designed to destabilize centrist political parties in Scandinavia and Central Europe, sought to stir up ethnic minorities, and could threaten the territorial integrity of the Baltic states. In contributions to this report and in the "Anatomy of Illiberal States" report, our scholars outline a number of steps that the West can take to defend democracies and restore the equilibrium in the realms of political and hybrid warfare.

The issue of authoritarian interference is the focus of much analysis at research institutions in Washington and around the world. Their efforts focus on assessing foreign influence and interference through cyber and information tools and developing strategies and mechanisms to protect democratic systems.[85] Rather than duplicate their efforts, this project has aimed to focus primarily on the domestic and geopolitical root causes of democratic weaknesses as well as the vulnerabilities within democratic societies for authoritarian powers to exploit. The policy briefs in this project also put forward recommendations and strategies for strengthening institutions and norms from within both advanced and emerging democracies, to inhibit authoritarian influence from gaining traction internally and momentum internationally.

In the years ahead, Russian and Chinese **tactics of authoritarian interference** will become increasingly powered by artificial intelligence. This project has devoted attention to the critical subject of digital authoritarianism in a policy brief by Chris Meserole and Alina Polyakova, which assesses how China and Russia are exporting new technology-driven playbooks to challenge democratic societies and enhance authoritarian rule. While China's focus is primarily domestic—employing artificial intelligence-powered tools to control and surveil their domestic population—it has begun to export these tools to authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and elsewhere. Russia's focus, meanwhile, has been to gain access to citizens' personal information and impose social control on its population. China and Russia's digital authoritarian toolkits vary in power and scope, but their objective is the same: to challenge the West's liberal democratic model of governance and enable rising authoritarians to repress opposition at home.[86]

"As Russia, China and other states advance influence through forms of "digital authoritarianism," stronger responses are needed from the U.S. and like-minded partners to limit the detrimental effects of their efforts. An initial step involves designating regimes as "digital authoritarian" if they routinely and purposefully employ mass surveillance without adequate safeguards and protections. Firms that supply digital authoritarian regimes should be sanctioned heavily—not just those in Russia and the United States, but also companies based in Europe. Concurrently, controls should be tightened over exports of sensitive technologies to China and other digital authoritarians.

Ultimately, the West will need to develop a democratic model of digital governance that can outcompete authoritarian ones. To do this, the technology sector and policymaking community in the United States and Europe will need to offer compelling models of digital surveillance that enhance security while still protecting civil liberties and human rights.

To advance this goal, a digital governance code of conduct is needed. A coalition of democratic governments, tech companies, and civil society should develop such a code, which would include an articulation of operating procedures for addressing social media manipulation, common terms of use across platforms, and shared rules on personal data use. Finally, greater public awareness of this challenge is needed. To build resilience against foreign influence operations in democratic societies, governments should invest in raising public awareness around information manipulation. This should include funding of educational programs that build digital critical thinking skills among youth." – Chris Meserole and Alina Polyakova

While the question of the illiberal playbook currently plays out primarily in the European space, the case of the democratically elected President Rodrigo Duterte's authoritarian style of politics and efforts to clamp down on civil society in the Philippines shows that it is also germane to Asia. And Chinese political interference operations in Australia and New Zealand, although different in character to Russia's in Europe, similarly constitute an effort by an authoritarian power to weaken democratic debate and processes in its region.

On the whole, however, East Asia's democracies are so far proving resilient and adept at reacting to China's changing regional strategy. Recent decades have seen an important spread and consolidation of democracy across East Asia. Australia, New Zealand, and Japan are of course mature democracies. India is too, though still grappling with some of the dynamics of poorer emerging democracies. Indonesia has seen important progress over the last decade and more, though its progress is still fragile. Moving forward, the future strength of their democratic institutions will be a significant determinant of democracy's global trajectory.

In Taiwan, China's political interests and territorial ambitions align directly against U.S. commitments to the island's democracy and security. Richard Bush and Ryan Hass write, "Taiwan faces a special and perhaps unique challenge in balancing democracy and security. Its only security threat is the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has long since declared the objective of 'reunification' to end Taiwan's de facto independence and self-rule, and has refused to renounce the use of force to achieve that goal."[87] In responding, they argue that United States must maintain "a consistent declaratory policy of not supporting Taiwan independence and opposing efforts by either side of the Taiwan Strait to alter the status quo."[88] U.S. efforts must be met by initiatives from Taiwan's political parties to build a centrist consensus in addressing challenges in economic competitiveness, energy, social welfare, and defense. The aim of both the United States and Taiwan should be to minimize the vulnerabilities in Taiwan's democracy and security that China would like to exploit.

To date, the U.S. response to China's growing presence in Asia has been to increase its military spending in the region and to adopt declarative policies around the Indo-Pacific. The United States launched its Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) policy in late 2017.[89] However, FOIP offers little economic content, following President Trump's withdrawal from the TPP. The United States will have to do more, including in the economic arena, to **expand cooperation among like-minded democratic countries in the region**.

> **"[The United States] should accelerate and expand implementation of its already announced economic initiatives for the Indo-Pacific region—especially the Infrastructure Transaction Assistance Framework, designed to assist recipient countries to better evaluate the terms and conditions of major infrastructure deals. The rapid growth of Chinese investment and lending has tended to increase corruption and shield authoritarian leaders from political accountability in Asia, and these initiatives could mitigate those effects while advancing U.S. policy goals.**
>
> **Second, the [United States] should work with allies and partners, multilateral institutions, and civil society groups to encourage good governance practices in the areas of transparency, accountability, and participation, since poor governance often leaves countries vulnerable to democratic reversals or decline. Good governance programs can have longer-term stabilizing impacts compared to democracy promotion initiatives, and are more readily accepted by Asian governments and societal partners." – Jonathan Stromseth and Hunter Marston**

We propose taking this one step further: The United States—once it has started getting its own democratic house in order—should work to convene a **Dialogue of Democracies in Asia**, an informal or formal mechanism that would see closer strategic dialogue between Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, and Indonesia. Other states in the region could be observers in such a group, and invited to join if and when their democracies are further consolidated. A mechanism like this would not replace current alliance structures, nor preclude security cooperation with non-democracies like Vietnam. But it could be a format for focused U.S. engagement and diplomacy, in order to build resilience among Asian democracies against challenges both foreign and domestic.

(4) DEEPENING COOPERATION WITH NON-WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

Turning to the question of democracies in the developing world, particularly in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, we continue the theme of deeper collaboration not just among the trans-Atlantic community (some formulations of which carry heavy baggage in the developing world), but with the non-Western democracies, foremost among them nascent order-shaping states such as India.

Across several regions, the West, and democratic states more generally, will also have to **strengthen their resolve in responding to China's expanding efforts** to translate its far-flung investments in the developing world and emerging markets into vehicles for political influence, and sometimes strategic re-alignment. As Ted Piccone finds in Latin America, "China … continues to build upon its growing investments in the region's natural resources sector to become a privileged partner for many of Latin America's biggest economies in such areas as transportation and power generation. The details, however, are largely unknown. Chinese lending by its policy banks is 'secretive, not disclosing which countries are borrowing, for which projects, and on what terms,' and is relatively immune to such risks as rule of law or political instability."[90]

Looking ahead, it would not be judicious to make outsized and exaggerated claims here. The topic of competition with China warrants detailed and thoughtful study, which is the topic of a major new project being undertaken by the Brookings Foreign Policy program starting in 2019. It is also important to have a clear-eyed view of what the West is up against in this domain. Chinese natural resource investments have done much to lift countries in the developing world out of poverty. Moreover, the West's continuing penchant for arrogance and intervention undermines the appeal of the West at a moment of declining leverage. Nor do we need to reach back to colonial days to find examples of terrible Western behavior in Africa and Latin America. Western scholars may have forgotten how, throughout the Cold War, the United States, Britain, France, and others bullied and bribed their way through parts of the "third world"—but the target countries of this behavior have not.

The combination of the West's history and China's money make this an uphill battle. As Ken Opalo writes:

> "China will continue to provide a stiff challenge to Western models of political economy (which arguably are more democratic). However, **it is not enough to champion democracy without addressing economic challenges facing many African states**. Clean elections are meaningless if they do not generate reliable public goods and services. As such, in addition to providing political models for African states, the West must also invest in economic development in the region. Only then will citizens see the material value of liberal democracy."[91]

At a time when talk of a "new Cold War" abounds, it is important to stress how different the character of current U.S.-China competition in the global south would be relative to U.S.-Soviet proxy battles in the "third world" then. The past three decades have seen important economic growth, democratic consolidation, and the emergence of important and capable regional institutions in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. It will not be easy for China to lure countries toward a different model without incurring costs and pushback.

It should be feasible to avoid a return to the worst behavior of the superpowers during the Cold War and a variety of forms of proxy competition (and in many cases proxy wars) that would trigger a race to the bottom in domestic governance. Avoiding such a downward spiral will become increasingly challenging— and all the more important—in an international environment where China's infrastructure and investment initiatives may continue to expand its authoritarian political and economic influence across the global south. Here, Chhabra assesses that "as China's relative power increases, U.S. and allied planners should prepare for a global environment that grows increasingly hostile to democracy and liberal values."[92] It is critical, therefore, in responding that **major advanced democracies can align themselves behind a "race to the top,"** combining resources and instruments to offer high-standard investments at scale to developing and emerging countries.

Japan in this regard is an important example. Building off of its recent important success in forging the TPP-11 agreement without U.S. involvement, Mireya Solís argues:

> "To address the deterioration of Japan's external environment, with the rise of U.S. protectionism, its increasingly transactional approach to alliances, and a more assertive China promoting a sphere of influence in Asia, Japan's policy responses should include staunch defense of the rules-based trading system and proactive supply of high-quality infrastructure finance (on its own or in collaboration with others in third countries) in order to avoid overdependence on BRI projects and to encourage a race to the top in connectivity standards, inclusive of the digital domain."[93]

We believe that this argument can be taken beyond Asia, and that there is a strong case for the world's largest democratic economies to join forces in establishing a joint infrastructure bank that can directly compete, with high-standards, with China's BRI investments. This mechanism could remain open to collaboration with the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank so long as that mechanism continues to operate by international standards.

Nations outside the region have already started promoting higher standards in trade and investment. In late 2018, the European Union adopted a new EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy as a development alternative to China's Belt Road and Initiative. It aims to promote development and investment alongside sustainability, labor rights, and business transparency and competition. Further European initiatives are needed to provide alternatives to China's massive investment and political, military, and economic engagement in the region, which is more likely to bring down governance standards.

In a similar vein, Ted Piccone stresses that in Latin America, democracies could work more closely together on crisis management. As an example, "to tackle the spiraling crisis in Venezuela, a core group of democratic states from the region, along with democratic partners like Japan, South Korea, France, and Germany, should launch a 'friends of Venezuelan democracy' group to support the Venezuelan opposition's demands for a return to democratic governance, coordinate actions to pressure President Maduro to negotiate in good faith, and push for high-level U.N. engagement."[94] While this specific recommendation may be overtaken by recent events, the underlying thesis remains important and could be adapted to help manage transition in Venezuela under a range of near-term scenarios.

Dhruva Jaishankar, covering India's growing interest in the role of democracy in the international order, also argues that **India and the West can increase their cooperation on support to democracy in the developing world**. He writes:

> "This might include cooperation in development efforts, improving electoral procedures, and capacity-building to strengthen bureaucracies, judiciaries, and civil society organizations. For example, Western governments providing financial and technical assistance to development initiatives led by non-Western democracies could help promote sustainability, transparency, and accountability in Asia and Africa. Similar efforts can be made to finance existing training programs conducted by democracies in the developing world for election authorities, government ombudsmen, legislative staff, and civil society groups from transitional states."[95]

This degree of cooperation would also help to translate our first line of argument—a shared agenda of democratic renewal—into effective foreign policy in the developing world.

Advancing the democracy debate in the Middle East and West Asia

We cannot completely neglect the question of democracy in the Middle East and West Asia, fraught as that question has become. Although these regions are the least democratic in the world, their fate matters not only to the trajectory of democracy internationally, but also to regional and global stability.

A vital response includes the strengthening of basic democratic institutions including civilian-military relations, parliamentary procedures, and free media in countries such as Pakistan. As Madiha Afzal writes, "One key issue remains Pakistan's military-civilian relationship, and the weakness of its political system. Any real progress on the civilian-military balance will have to come from within, and through a strengthening of its political system... [I]ronically, it is the stability the military provides that may enable Pakistan's democratic strengthening, through implementation of political and policy reforms."[96]

This also means including Israel in our first line of argument, a shared agenda of democratic renewal. Although Israel is a mature democracy, it is not an untroubled one, as Tamara Wittes and Yaël Mizrahi-Arnaud's essay for this project makes clear. They write of the rise of ethno-nationalist populism in political discourse, alongside specific laws and legislative proposals affecting civil liberties and democratic institutions in Israel, which are triggering concerns that the country is falling prey to the same sort of intolerant illiberalism now evident in countries like Turkey, Hungary, the Philippines, and Poland.

Across the region as a whole, the descent of the Arab Spring into counterrevolution and war, coming as it did in the wake of the Iraq War's triggering of a wider subregional breakdown, has diminished the prospects for democratic governance in the Middle East. If the West were still largely unchallenged in its order-making role, the recommendation here would be a simple one: Stop starting wars in the Middle East, and start stopping them.

Unfortunately, just as domestic politics in the United States have begun to make this a more viable formulation, Russia has engaged in a variety of destabilizing activities and proxy warfare in the region, which will make this job more challenging, even if the West were to adopt an enlightened policy. In every other region of the world, since the end of the Cold War, a unified U.N. Security Council has been able to help foster mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding efforts that have helped reduce the level of war. The Middle East has the deep misfortunate of experiencing its wave of wars at a moment when great power tensions make this unlikely.

Still, should the evolution of U.S.-Russia relations allow for it, wise U.S. policy would be to make the ending of civil wars the centerpiece of American and Western strategy. As Daniel Byman writes:

> "These wars are devastating for the region and provide fertile ground for radical groups to develop and prosper and then reach back to the West for recruits and operations. Once underway, it is often necessary for the United States to target terrorist groups there, particularly if they are believed to be planning attacks on the United States. However, earlier action would be more effective. Limiting the frequency, scope, and scale of such wars hinders the abilities of radicals to recruit by exploiting the civil war and makes it less likely that they can find a base within the war itself."[97]

Over time, a policy that makes ending civil wars the centerpiece of strategy would reap dividends in terms of counter-terrorism policy, but also on the agenda of democratic renewal.

Finally, we are inspired by Salam Fayyad not to abandon the hope for better governance for the Middle East's over 400 million citizens. Many of his ideas for regenerating hope for democracy in the Arab world are discussed in a transcribed interview for this project. While not all of these ideas are likely to succeed, it is impossible not to be moved by his refusal to give up hope or to settle for authoritarian and non-inclusive rule.

CONCLUSION

Today's dynamics of power indicate that the choices of two countries will shape the contours of international order more than others: the United States and China. The United States has weakened its hand in the democratic order, and therefore the order itself, by eroding its baseline support for allies and weakening its own standards of democracy, two critical assets in the global struggle for influence. China's growing capabilities and global reach provide Beijing with more opportunities to advance its goals. But China made a fateful choice in its 19th Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2017, away from the openness that could have encouraged the next wave of domestic economic innovation and technological dynamism, and toward consolidation of internal power and digital authoritarianism. In the short order, that increases China's freedom for action. In the long run, it may substantially undermine China's present strengths.

China will be without question a strategic competitor to the United States, and it would be foolhardy not to recognize that China's authoritarian success and its growing global economic and political clout represents a genuine challenge to democracies and to the role of democracy in the international order. Yet it would be equally foolhardy to turn Beijing into an enemy or to eschew any prospects for economic or other forms of cooperation where feasible.

An essential point that this reports highlights is that democracy itself will be an important battleground of the contest between the world's two most powerful shaping countries—a contest that will range across regions and issue domains. In the main, Europe will shape its own fate in that contest. It has yet to be determined how much the United States will help or hinder beyond this present moment of trans-Atlantic tensions. NATO will remain critical in the deterrence of Russia, but Europe's own approach to its democratic challenges and to its own security will be more important still. Above any state, Germany's decisions on how best to anchor Europe will be essential.

In Latin America and Africa, the consolidation of those regions' major economies and the trend toward democratic and market governance may mean that there is enough demand from citizens and enough internal space to push back on corruption and hold their governments accountable. In these regions, too, we may yet see these internal dynamics push both the West and China into a race to the top in terms of development assistance and infrastructure, rather than the race to the bottom or a destructive form of proxy competition for influence. But for this to be realized, the West needs to up its game substantially and deepen its cooperation with non-Western democracies.

Two other regions are likely to face more contest, and even conflict. In the Middle East, a new geopolitical dynamic pits Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Israel, the United States, and Russia against each other in competition for influence. This return to proxy warfare is more likely to exacerbate existing tensions than to produce a dynamic that leads to stability, good governance, or democracy. But the embers of democratic debate still flicker in the Middle East and there will be those that encourage them.

Asia will be the venue of the most vigorous contest. So far, its democracies are proving more resilient than their European counterparts, and the alliance dynamic there is proving strong, in part because the choices are starker. Asia, as the world's most populous region and economic power center, will be a more critical front in the interplay between democracy and the international order in the years ahead. The future trajectory, both internally and geopolitically, of the Asian democracies will shape the new contours of competition and cooperation in this key region. It is in East Asia, more than Eastern Europe, that the vital interplay between democracy and order will take shape.

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Policymakers in the United States, now and in the context of the 2020 presidential election, will have to take seriously the question of what role democracy should play in the international order, and therefore what role democracy should play in American foreign policy. This debate has already begun on both sides of the political spectrum in ways that defy traditional party lines. Take note of Senator Bernie Sanders, who argues for an international progressive front to "effectively combat the rise of the international authoritarian axis,"[98] and Senator Elizabeth Warren's argument that U.S. foreign policy must work to safeguard democracy at home and abroad because, "If we do not stand up to those who seek to undermine our democracy and our economy, we will end up as bystanders to the destruction of both."[99] These arguments are similar to those made by Senator Marco Rubio from the internationalist wing of the Republican party, who has argued repeatedly that U.S. policy in zones of new competition such as Latin America "must assist our allies in the region in building resilience against external actors like Russia and China and also internal threats."[100]

This debate will be critical, too, in Berlin, Tokyo, New Delhi, and beyond. It will matter a good deal whether Germany finds its way back to its "voluntarist moment," and whether Japan builds on its success in defending rules-based trade in Asia. The emergence in India in recent years of a quiet discussion on the importance of "values-based multilateralism" (code for gradual alignment with the democracies) is a positive if still nascent development—and one that Western policy should be receptive to.[101]

We believe that the leaders of these countries and others should work together to preserve the critical elements of a values-based order. Importantly, this is not a values-bound order. This strategy does not preclude tactical cooperation with China on areas of critical shared interest such as nuclear non-proliferation and climate change. Nor does this strategy rule out economic cooperation with China; nor could it, given the close economic ties of most of America's democratic allies in Asia. It acknowledges that the United States and the West can and should cooperate with non-democratic states when it is essential for the defense of vital security and economic interests. That there are contradictions and hypocrisies in this approach simply means that it is a strategy that exists in the real world of international politics.

This strategy falls short of establishing a Concert of Democracies, and deliberately so. The United States is hardly at a moment in its own history when it can credibly champion such an idea, nor are societies like Japan and India—or even Germany—genuinely ready to join a democratic alliance that concertedly seeks to challenge China. Yet ignoring the values base of the existing order—however flawed, however often honored in the breach—would be a historic error.

The trajectory of democracy and the shape of the international order have been debated separately, but are intimately linked. If in the coming period, democracies renew themselves and forge a wide coalition for action, then we will likely enter a period when strategic competition with China, and a firm pushback against Russia, will be blended with economic growth and focused cooperation. If not, we will enter a period characterized both by democratic retrenchment and a more turbulent, even violent clash between models. A new Cold War is not the worst potential scenario ahead of us; nor should it be the ceiling of our ambition. Between them, the world's democracies still have the intrinsic strength to shape and judiciously advance a values-based order that protects democratic freedoms.

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2 The term "international order" is used widely but often vaguely and has become the terrain of a political and intellectual debate. In the most basic terms, the question of international order is a simple one of which states have the most power in the international system. There are some who see an American desire to maintain primacy in the international system as dangerous or illegitimate; we have no hesitation in postulating that a world in which the major democracies retain a preponderance of power is preferable to one in which authoritarian states do. There are also issues of terminology around qualifiers to the order, such as "rules-based" and "liberal," which are used imprecisely. During the Cold War, the primary characteristics of the international order were American military primacy; the use of that power to deter Soviet aggression and defend treaty-based allies; proxy war and competition between the United States and the Soviets in the "third world," often at odds with American values and sometimes brutally so; and a rules-based trade and financial system in the West. After the Cold War, the primary characteristics of the order have been: continued American military primacy; the spread of the rules-based trade and financial system to the developing world and emerging markets; the spread of democratic and liberal norms to many countries in the developing and emerging world, albeit inconsistently; American security backing to a widening set of treaty-based allies; multilateral conflict management; and American unilateralism in the Middle East. The supply of global public goods during this period was backstopped by American power but supplied by a growing number of both Western and non-Western states, and the management of their interactions was undertaken by a combination of multilateral institutions and global summit mechanisms.

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21 This disagreement amongst the project authors mirrors the debate in the academic community over the weight of economic versus cultural drivers in support for populist parties. Many of the policy briefs for this project suggest that the economic-cultural distinction is not an either/or debate; rather, economic and cultural factors are interlinked in driving populist sentiment.

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23 There are competing bodies of research on whether automation has led to a loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector, particularly since 2000. For an affirmative argument, see Douglas A. Irwin, "The Truth about Trade: What Critics Get Wrong about the Global Economy," *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2016, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-06-13/truth-about-trade. For a perspective that questions this assertion, see Susan N. Houseman, "Understanding the Decline of U.S. Manufacturing Employment," (Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2018), https://doi.org/10.17848/wp18-287, and the related article: Susan N. Houseman, "Is Automation Really to Blame for Lost Manufacturing Jobs? What the Conventional Wisdom Gets Wrong," *Foreign Affairs*, September 7, 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-09-07/automation-really-blame-lost-manufacturing-jobs.

24 Claire Hendrickson, Mark Muro, and William A. Galston, "Countering the Geography of Discontent: Strategies for Left-Behind Places," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, November 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/research/countering-the-geography-of-discontent-strategies-for-left-behind-places/.

25 Research shows that income inequality can shape voting preferences and participation in democratic processes. Inequality can also foster political polarization. See Jonas Pontusson and David Rueda, "Inequality as a Source of Political Polarization: A Comparative Analysis of Twelve OECD Countries," in *Democracy, Inequality, and Representation: A Comparative Perspective*, eds., Pablo Beramendi and Christopher Anderson (New York: Russell Sage, 2008). Pontusson and Rueda argue that party polarization increases as left-wing parties usually responsive to low-income voters and right-wing parties typically more responsive to high-income voters move further away from the median income voter.

26 Frederick Solt, "Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2008): 48-60, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25193796?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents; Frederick Solt, "The Social Origins of Authoritarianism," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2012):703-713, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1065912911424287; Ronald Inglehart, "The Danger of Deconsolidation: How Much Should We Worry?" *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (July 2016): 18-23, https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/danger-deconsolidation-how-much-should-we-worry. Others such as Benjamin Page and Martin Gilens highlight that groups with access to economic resources ("economically-elite individuals") have more independent impact on policy change than average citizens. See Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 3 (September 2014): 564-581, https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/mgilens/files/gilens_and_page_2014_-testing_theories_of_american_politics.doc.pdf.

27 Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch, "Going to Extremes: Politics after Financial Crises, 1870-2014," (Munich: Center for Economic Studies and the Ifo Institute, 2015), https://www. cesifo-group.de/DocDL/cesifo1_wp5553.pdf. The research is referenced in: Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch, "The Financial Crisis Is Still Empowering Far-Right Populists: Why the Effects Haven't Faded," *Foreign Affairs*, September 13, 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ articles/2018-09-13/financial-crisis-still-empowering-far-right-populists; and, Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch,"The Political Aftermath of Financial Crises: Going to Extremes," *Vox EU*, November 21, 2015, https://voxeu.org/article/political-aftermath-financial-crises-going-extremes.

28 Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, "The Danger of Deconsolidation." Also see "2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Reveals Record-Breaking Drop in Trust in the U.S.," *Edelman*, February 12, 2018, https:// www.edelman.com/news-awards/2018-edelman-trust-barometer-reveals-record-breaking-drop-trust-in- the-us; and Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Dorothy Manevich, "Few political parties in Europe have widespread appeal," *Pew Research Center*, June 15, 2017, http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/15/ few-political-parties-in-europe-have-widespread-appeal/. This view that people are turning away from democracy and toward non-democratic alternatives is not uncontested. For a competing perspective, see Erik Voeten, "Are People Really Turning Away from Democracy?" *Journal of Democracy*, December 8, 2016, https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/media/Journal%20of%20Democracy%20 Web%20Exchange%20-%20Voeten_0.pdf.

29 For a wider discussion of the institutional determinants of democratic consolidation in transitioning states, see Larry Diamond, *In Search of Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

30 Francis Fukuyama, "Why is Democracy Performing so Poorly," in *Democracy in Decline?*, eds., Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 22.

31 Ken Opalo, "The Power of Demonstration: To Increase Resilience, Democracy Must be Shown to Work," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

32 Ivan Krastev, *After Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 75.

33 This thesis is promoted in Ronald F. Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash," (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School, August 2016), https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/trump-brexit-and-rise-populism-economic-have-nots- and-cultural-backlash. Diana Mutz makes a similar argument that traditional high-status groups (whites, males, and Christians) brought about by growing domestic racial diversity and globalization best explains the American public's support for Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. See Diana Mutz, "Status Threat, Not Economic Hardship, Explains the 2016 Presidential Vote," *PNAS* 115, no. 19 (May 8, 2018): E4330-E4339, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1718155115. Also see Eric Kaufmann, *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration and the Future of White Majorities* (London: Penguin Books, 2018).

34 Ronald F. Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism," 15.

35 Shadi Hamid, "The Role of Islam in European Populism: How Refugee Flows and Fear of Muslims Drive Right-Wing Support," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

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38   James Kirchick, "Center-Right Strategies for Addressing the Rise of the European Far Right," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

39   Célia Belin and Ted Reinert, "Mutations of the Left in Western Europe," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

40   Ronald Inglehart, "The Danger of Deconsolidation."

41   Pippa Norris, "Is Western Democracy Backsliding? Diagnosing the Risks," *Journal of Democracy*, March 2017, https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/media/Journal%20of%20Democracy%20Web%20Exchange%20-%20Norris_0.pdf.

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43   Alina Polyakova, et al., "The Anatomy of Illiberal States."

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45   "Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018," 4, 16.

46   Keno Verseck, "Hungary Steps Away from European Democracy," *Der Spiegel*, March 11, 2013, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/hungary-constitutional-reforms-signal-drift-away-from-democracy-a-888064.html.

47   Alina Polyakova, et al., "The Anatomy of Illiberal States."

48   Nancy Bermeo, "On Democratic Backsliding," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (January 2016): 16, https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/democratic-backsliding.

49   Abby Innes, "Hungary's Illiberal Democracy," *Current History* 114, no. 770 (March 2015): 95-100, http://www.currenthistory.com/Article.php?ID=1226. Innes argues that in Poland and Hungary, the social democratic left became "the most Blairite, pro-market center-left parties in the region ... appear[ing], programmatically, to vacate the leftist socioeconomic space entirely," before seeing their electoral support shattered and being replaced in the polls by the authoritarian conservative nationalists of PiS and Fidesz.

50   Hungary admittedly saw major flows of refugees through the country in the summer of 2015, as it was on the land transit route from Turkey and the Levant to the biggest European magnet country, Germany.

51   Rick Noack, "The European parties accused of being influenced by Russia," *The Washington Post*, November 17, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/11/17/the-european-parties-accused-of-being-influenced-by-russia/?utm_term=.ec89fd82210f.

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54 Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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56 Ibid.

57 Tarun Chhabra, "The China challenge, democracy, and U.S. grand strategy," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

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61 "United Nations List of Peacekeeping Operations 1948-2013," United Nations Peacekeeping, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/peacekeeping/en/operationslist.pdf.

62 Mireya Solís, "Japan's Consolidated Democracy in an Era of Populist Turbulence," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

63 This recommendation is referenced in Alina Polyakova, et al., "The Anatomy of Illiberal States."

64 Ben S. Bernanke, "Asia and the Global Financial Crisis," (speech, Santa Barbara, CA, October 19, 2009), https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/bernanke20091019a.htm.

65 Susan E. Rice, "Remarks by Susan E. Rice at New York University," (speech, New York, August 12, 2009), https://www.voltairenet.org/article161633.html.

66 Thomas Wright, "The Opening of Europe's Overton Window," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

67 Célia Belin and Ted Reinert, "Mutations of the Left in Western Europe."

68 Constanze Stelzenmüller, "Germany: Baffled Hegemon," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

69 The United States also violates the rules, of course, although strictly speaking, even in the invasion of Iraq, the United States did not violate Article II of the U.N. Charter—surely the most essential legal principle of the postwar order—as Russia did when it invaded and annexed Crimea. More to the point: America's violations of international law, even flagrant ones, have to be weighed in the context of the substantial extent to which the United States also upholds key elements of the multilateral order, contributes to global public goods, and carries a large share of the burden of treaty-based security. Russia does none of these things to balance its recent adventurism.

70 Ted Piccone, "Rising Democracies, Burden-Sharing, and the International Liberal Order," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

71 Ken Opalo, "The Power of Demonstration."

72 Variations on these recommendations for tackling the root causes of democratic malaise come from scholars working on advanced and emerging democracies, ones that are consolidating, and ones that are backsliding. In detail, their recommendations have greater specificity and respond to the very different conditions and trajectories of democracies in different regions and at different stages of their own history. From a strategic level, however, it is intriguing to see the commonality that runs through their arguments.

73 William A. Galston, "Can the Center Hold? Populist Challenges, Liberal Democratic Responses," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

74 Ken Opalo, "The Power of Demonstration."

75 Sharan Grewal, "Tunisian Democracy at a Crossroads," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

76 Katherine Collin, "Populist and Authoritarian Referendums: The Role of Direct Democracy in Democratic Deconsolidation," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

77 Christine Lagarde, "The Helen Alexander Lecture: The Case for the Sustainable Development Goals," (speech, September 17, 2018), https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2018/09/17/sp09172018-the-case-for-the-sustainable-development-goals.

78 William A. Galston, "Can the Center Hold?"

79 Brookings has a deep tradition of limiting scholars' writings and recommendations to their areas of core expertise and peer reviewed research. Thus, while many of the scholars who wrote policy briefs for this report point to economic inequality as an important driver of democratic discontent, this specific project does not have the depth or breadth to offer policy ideas in response.

80 Readers will also find important ideas on revitalizing the American middle class in works by Richard Reeves and on supporting sustained development for the global middle class in works by Homi Kharas. See Richard Reeves, *Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class Is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why That Is a Problem, and What to Do About It* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017); Homi Kharas, "The Unprecedented Expansion of the Global Middle Class."

81 Vanda Felbab-Brown, "The Ills and Cures of Mexico's Democracy," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

82 In his policy brief, Kirchick also outlines a number of ideas for strengthening EU-level management of migration—encompassing better border controls, quota management, and burden-sharing through the prism of EU solidarity. James Kirchick, "Center-Right Strategies for Addressing the Rise of the European Far Right."

83 William A. Galston, "Can the Center Hold?"

84 Daniel L. Byman, "Terrorism and the Threat to Democracy."

85 Important projects on this include the German Marshall Fund's "Alliance for Securing Democracy" program; the National Endowment for Democracy's "Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence" report; Freedom House's "Freedom on the Net: The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism" report; ongoing work by the European Values Think Tank; the Center for Strategic and International Studies' "Defending Democratic Institutions" program; Harvard University's "Defending Digital Democracy" project; and the Atlantic Council's "DisinfoPortal.org."

86 Chris Meserole and Alina Polyakova, "Exporting Digital Authoritarianism: How Russia and China are Weaponizing New Technologies," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

87 Richard Bush and Ryan Hass, "Taiwan's Democracy and the China Challenge," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

88 Ibid.

89 This strategy offered little in the realm of economics, given President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2017, although the United States has since announced economic initiatives aimed at improving digital connectivity and cybersecurity.

90 Ted Piccone, "Latin America's Struggle with Democratic Backsliding," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019); David Dollar, "Chinese Investment in Latin America Continues to Expand," *Brookings Institution*, March 20, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/research/despite-slowdown-chinese-investment-in-latin-america-continues-to-expand/.

91 Ken Opalo, "The Power of Demonstration."

92 Tarun Chhabra, "The China challenge, democracy, and U.S. grand strategy."

93 Mireya Solís, "Japan's Consolidated Democracy in an Era of Populist Turbulence."

94 Ted Piccone, "Latin America's Struggle with Democratic Backsliding."

95 Dhruva Jaishankar, "Deepening Democracy Through Diversity: Improving Cooperation with India and Non-Western Democracies," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

96 Madiha Afzal, "An Inflection Point for Pakistan's Democracy," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, February 2019).

97 Daniel L. Byman, "Terrorism and the Threat to Democracy."

98 Bernie Sanders, "A new authoritarian axis demands an international progressive front," *The Guardian*, September 13, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/ng-interactive/2018/sep/13/bernie-sanders-international-progressive-front.

99 Elizabeth Warren, "A Foreign Policy for All: Strengthening Democracy – at Home and Abroad," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2019, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-11-29/foreign-policy-all.

100 Marco Rubio, "The Jesse Helms Lecture at the Heritage Foundation," (speech, March 15, 2018, Washington, DC), https://jessehelmscenter.org/foreign-policy-lectures/.

101 For one illustration of a call for a "new aspirational India," see Syed Akbaruddin, "India's Increasing Role in Multilateral Relations and Its Global Interests," (speech, Cambridge, MA, May 9, 2016).

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