Unraveling America the Great?: The Radical Conservative Challenge to the Progressive Foundations of Pax Americana

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry

As a presidential election season heats up, calls to "make American great again" are frequently heard from conservatives. In their view, the Obama Administration has conducted a foreign policy of retreat, excessive accommodation, and lowered ambitions—thus diminishing America's power, reputation, position, and special role. America has become less great at home, too, they argue, because of the growth and influence of the Federal government into the lives of Americans. So, domestically, major parts of the conservative movement have committed themselves to shrinking the size and role of government in American life through tax reductions, elimination of Federal agencies, cuts in social welfare spending, and reduced regulation across the board. In foreign affairs, many conservatives voice skepticism – even hostility – to many traditional American liberal-internationalist institutions and regimes, including the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, most arms control arrangements, the Law of the Sea, and more.

There is, however, a profound inconsistency – indeed a deep contradiction -- between radical conservative anti-governmentism and anti-internationalism and the stated goal of restoring and extending the American position in the world. Already the influence of this conservative agenda in American domestic politics and foreign policy over the past several decades has been significant in reducing American influence, prestige, and global leadership. Going further in these directions threatens to further diminish, not restore, American greatness. What is less obvious but actually more important is that there is also a profound inconsistency,

indeed a glaring contradiction, between radical conservative anti-government advocacy and American greatness in the world at large.

What the radical conservatives fail to realize is that the greatness of United States during "the American Century" rested upon progressive liberal foundations, both domestically and internationally. These conservatives seem to have forgotten that the America that won World War II, fought the Cold War, and brought unprecedented peace, prosperity, and security to the international system was the America brought into existence by what many historians refer to as the Third Founding: the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal.

This new American order built on the basic principles of the Founding and the Union victory in the Civil War, but it also creatively recast the role of government both at home and abroad. FDR's Administration was the pivot of this Third Founding, which grew out of the progressive programs of Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and was later extended by the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon Administrations. These progressive foundations, nurtured by Republican as well as Democratic administrations, are taken for granted by advocates of American global pre-eminence, and dismantling them is a recipe not for renewed American greatness but for a shrunken and less influential America. Instead of American leadership, a further realization of the radical conservative movement's programs will make the United States more isolated than great, and more ostracized than a leader. To reinvigorate American greatness requires the extension and updating, not the abandonment, of the domestic and international liberal-progressive agenda.

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The Liberal Foundations of Pax Americana

It is striking that despite the magnitude of Franklin Roosevelt's accomplishment, at home and abroad, his name is rarely voiced in contemporary depictions of American foreign policy traditions. For example, in Walter Russell Mead's influential formulation of America's four foreign policy traditions – Jeffersonian, Hamiltonian, Jacksonian, and Wilsonian – Roosevelt is invisible, thus, in effect, ending the creative periods of American foreign policy with the first two decades of the 20th century. Yet over the now near century since the end of the Wilson era, Franklin Roosevelt is by far the most consequential foreign policy president. It is during the long and momentous twelve years of his presidency that the United States confronted what historians rank as two of the three greatest crises in the history of the republic: the Great Depression and Axis world aggression. In responding to these perils, Roosevelt fundamentally reconfigured the size and role of the Federal government in American society and economy, as well as laid the foundations for the postwar era.

At home, the Roosevelt revolution forged the modernized government that re-established economic growth, political legitimacy, and social peace. Abroad, the Roosevelt Administration, in winning World War II, established the United States as the pre-eminent great power in the international system, and started putting into place the panoply of international organizations and regimes that make up the postwar liberal international order. The old order of domestic laissez-faire and international isolationism was replaced by an active welfare state with a mixed

economy, and a robustly outward-looking and active internationalism. It was this America – prosperous, ideologically attractive, and powerful – that waged and won the Cold War and reorganized the global system.

Roosevelt led a revolution, but it was a conservative modernizing revolution, one that sought to realize founding American goals in the conditions of the 20th century. What fundamentally distinguishes Roosevelt's new liberalism – both domestically and internationally – was its objective of making the animating principles of liberal capitalist democracy viable in a new era marked by the industrial transformation of economy and society, as well as the emergence of high levels of global interdependence, vulnerability, and interaction. In sum, the Roosevelt revolution was not a transformation of the goals or principles of the American republic, but rather a pragmatic attempt to adapt them to a world that was increasingly industrial and global.

The New Deal at home led to what the historian Elizabeth Borgwardt calls a "New Deal for the world," articulated in the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms. The realization of liberal and democratic aspirations domestically and the creation of a competent and active government were all of a piece with the international agenda to establish American leadership, advance liberal democracy, extend market capitalism, and promote international peace. The logic of the link between domestic progressivism and liberal internationalism was captured in Wilson's oft-quoted imperative of "making the world safe for democracy." FDR and other progressives recognized that the survival of limited government and democracy within the

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United States would be severely threatened in a world dominated by non-democracies, particularly the modernized autocratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian great powers. Similarly, the Great Depression had taught that American economic prosperity was intimately linked to the world economy, and therefore international economic cooperation was necessary to sustain American prosperity. America's ideological appeal as leader of the Free World coalition was based in large part on its domestic achievement of widely shared prosperity and capacity to solve the complex problems of industrial society.

The Roosevelt Administration was the decisive pivot in the construction of a New America. However, it had both predecessors and successors whose combined accomplishments across the 20th century defined America in its period of rise and pre-eminence. Roosevelt built on earlier progressive agendas and incomplete accomplishments, most notably those of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. In turn, Roosevelt's foundations were extended by Presidents of both parties after his death. In Teddy Roosevelt's New Nationalism and Wilson's New Freedom, the first steps were taken to equip the Federal government with the capacities to deal with the many festering problems produced by America's rapid post-Civil War industrialization and urbanization. During the first two decades of the 20th century, these two progressive presidents – one Republican and one Democrat – started assembling a modern American government, with measures such as the Federal Reserve, anti-trust and child labor protections, the Federal income tax, and food and drug regulation. Internationally, TR asserted America's claim to membership in the great power club, with the Great White Fleet and the construction of

the Panama Canal. At the same time, he promoted the use of international arbitration and led in creating the World Court. Internationally, Wilson offered a vision of a liberal democratic, free market, and anti-imperial world order to replace the fading *ancien regimes* of Europe, as well as to combat the rising appeal of Bolshevism. At the same time, he promoted the League of Nations, thus establishing an ambitious template for building international organizations to keep the peace.

In the divided American constitutional order, successful presidential leadership is vitally dependent on forging coalitions in Congress and between the different regions of the country. Within Roosevelt's New Deal coalition, the solidly Democratic South played a pivotal role and defined important possibilities and limits to the scope of change. Throughout the long electoral supremacy of the Republican Party, stretching from Lincoln to Hoover, America pursued a path of economic development behind ever heightening tariffs. But the South had long opposed high tariffs and the Roosevelt Administration's commitment to free trade was the realization of this region's long frustrated agenda. But, on the other hand, as Ira Katznelson has recently argued in *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time*, the South's unrelenting commitment to racial domination and segregation severely limited FDR's ability to realize progressive civil rights agendas. In many ways, the South's commitment to an ethnically and racially based identity and culture in opposition to the liberal civic nationalist identity originating in the North, and seemingly triumphant with the Union victory in 1865, continues to define limits of American

progressivism, while also providing a fertile electoral base for conservative opposition to the broader New Deal agenda.

The order FDR forged out of the cauldron of depression and war was the American regime for the rest of the 20th century and beyond, and his successors in both parties made important extensions and modifications. In the fractious give-and-take of American politics, it is easy to overlook the key fact that, at least from Truman though Nixon, American politics was centrist and that the center was the New Deal order at home and abroad. Roosevelt's successors, while often differing on the rate and direction of new initiatives, all built on and extended the essential vision that came out of the Roosevelt era. While it is obvious that Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson were the heirs to this New Deal, Eisenhower and Nixon in truth shared more in common with their Democratic contemporaries and with FDR than they do with contemporary radical conservatives.

Across many vital policy domains, post-Roosevelt Presidents proffered important initiatives whose cumulative effect was to advance the foundational ideals of the New Deal. In civil rights and equality, postwar Presidents all advanced initiatives to redress the legacies of slavery and institutional racism, including Truman's integration of the armed services, Eisenhower's use of Federal troops to enforce court-ordered desegregation, Kennedy and Johnson's landmark civil and voting rights legislation, and Nixon's support for school integration. In the area of immigration and ethnic diversity, Presidents of both parties achieved successes in reducing discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds and opened immigration to

the non-European world. The centerpiece of this postwar commitment was the landmark Immigration Reform Act of 1965, which has produced what Michael Lind refers to as the third American nation – "global America" – symbolized in the election of Barack Obama, the son of an African from Kenya and an American from Kansas.

In the area of economic equality and opportunity, postwar Administrations brought widespread income equality, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, with measures such as the GI Bill, the maintenance of progressive taxation of income and capital, as well as Medicare and Medicaid. In science and technology, postwar American leaders of both parties continued and expanded Federal support for science and technology, with initiatives such as National Science Foundation, NASA, the Defense Education Act, as well as the NIH and the War on Cancer. In infrastructure, FDR's successors continued the Federal government's leadership role in building and expanding investment in transportation, with programs such as the Highway Trust Fund, the National Defense Transportation Act, and support for urban mass transit. In the area of conservation and environment, Presidents of both parties continued to score accomplishments in the conservation of resources and the protection of the environment, through measures such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Drinking Water Act, the EPA, OSHA, the Environmental Impact Statement process, and the regulation of toxic wastes, acid rain, stratospheric ozone depletion, and greenhouse gases. The cumulative effect of this myriad of Federal actions and programs was to make an America that better realized its animating principles and that led the world in responding to the problems of advanced industrial society.

Tearing much of this down, as radical conservatives professedly seek, will destroy, not renew, American leadership and greatness.

Underlying the various policies and programs that FDR and his successors put in place in building the America of the American Century was a very distinctively American style of politics. It was experimental, trying new approaches and adjusting them on the basis of experience; pragmatic, dealing with realities as they were and trying to move incrementally forward; and politically moderate, avoiding extreme rhetoric while looking for common ground. The great economist, John Maynard Keynes, noted this distinctive approach during the early New Deal in an open letter to FDR, saying that "you have made yourself the trustee for those in every country who seek to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing social system."

This way of conducting politics and policy was particularly well-suited to grapple with the structural uncertainties of rapid change and complexity, but it was given a clear direction because it was anchored irrevocably in a commitment to the basic regime principles of the American founding of liberty, democracy, and limited government. When Roosevelt came into office amid economic distress and political anxiety in 1933, neither he nor his advisers had a clear understanding of what had happened or needed to be done. Naturally enough, therefore, they made a few mistakes. But they set out to do what seemed necessary and appropriate with measures calibrated to the specifics rather than derived from a general ideology. Across the decades that followed, this experimental and pragmatic liberal democratic progressivism was not

only successful in addressing many severe problems but it also served as a model for the reconstruction in Europe and parts of East Asia that had been ravaged not only by war and depression, but also by intemperate politics and extreme ideologies. If America loses this political sensibility it loses its true and best nature and betrays its distinctive political genius.

The Centrist Tradition of American World Leadership

In foreign affairs, American success has also been marked by a strong bipartisan internationalist tradition that built on and operated with the international vision that Roosevelt and his immediate successor, Harry Truman, articulated during World War II and the early Cold War. Between the late-1940s and the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the centerpiece of American foreign policy was the waging of the Cold War. From the establishment of NATO through the re-unification of Germany, a strong centrist bipartisan consensus prevailed on the paramount importance of American leadership in the global struggle against communism. To be sure, there were disputes – at times bitter – about particular policies and events but, overall, the Cold War gave the American political order, at home and abroad, a bipartisan center of gravity. Cold War liberals and Cold War conservatives alike shared a common core of commitments and values that bounded their disagreements even extending into the domestic arena.

Operating within this centrist internationalism, postwar Presidents from both parties promoted a variety of initiatives, inside and beyond the United Nations, for international

organization, trade and economic cooperation, human rights, arms control, and a variety of regimes to protect the global environment. This progressive agenda predated the Cold War, and was both partially facilitated and partially stymied by the global struggle with the Soviet Union. The establishment of the United Nations and the building of international organizations has been a distinctive feature of American leadership and greatness. From the 1945 San Francisco conference through the functional issue-area organizations and conferences, the United States played a pivotal role in convening the community of nations to identify problems and forge international solutions.

A hallmark of Pax Americana has been its commitment to economic openness and the promotion and regulation of international commerce to support and universalize the economic foundations of liberal democracy. Starting with Roosevelt's Reciprocal Trade Act of 1934, postwar Presidents have led successive rounds of trade liberalization through the GATT and WTO, stabilized the international monetary system through the IMF, and encouraged development and trade with the World Bank and the Export-Import Bank.

In the human rights arena, all postwar Presidents have taken steps to extend and universalize the great principles of human rights enshrined in the foundations of the American project. Among the American-led milestones are Eleanor Roosevelt's catalytic role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Nuremberg and Tokyo War Crime Tribunals, and the outlawing of extreme human rights abuses such as genocide and torture.

Unraveling America the Great?: The Radical Conservative Challenge to the Progressive Foundations of Pax Americana

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry

A distinctive feature of the period of American pre-eminence has been the importance of international arms control, a longstanding internationalist project that acquired new salience with the development of nuclear weapons. Despite the demands of global competition with the Soviet Union, American leaders of both parties actively promoted the mutual regulation of nuclear weaponry as a national and global security imperative, with a long line of initiatives such as Truman's Baruch Plan, Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace and Open Skies, the U.S.-Soviet treaties negotiated during the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon years, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the sweeping arms reduction treaties of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush at end of the Cold War.

American leaders have also sought to build durable international orders for the global commons. The United States played a decisive role in catalyzing the Outer Space Treaty, the Law of the Sea Treaty, and international regimes for telecommunications and air travel. Another facet of the American internationalist program during the period of its greatest influence was its leadership in forging international treaties and regimes for the protection of the environment. The United States was a decisive leader in establishing regimes to combat pollution of the ocean, stratospheric ozone depletion, the protection of endangered species and wildlife, and the abatement of gases contributing to global warming. In sum, liberal internationalist foreign policy helped make America great, not by raw dominance but through the creation of an international order consistent with fundamental American values and responsive to international and global problems affecting all humanity.

Unraveling America the Great?: The Radical Conservative Challenge to the Progressive Foundations of Pax Americana

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry

All of these international accomplishments rested upon a domestic political coalition that spanned the broad centers of both parties. A decisive juncture in the formation of this coalition was the intra-Republican Party debates and rivalries preceding the 1952 presidential election. In early 1952, the leading candidate for the Republican nomination was Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, who was not only an outspoken opponent of FDR's New Deal and Truman's Fair Deal, but also a strong critic of American participation in the UN and the formation of NATO. Dwight Eisenhower, whose public prestige was unmatched but whose party affiliation was unknown, offered to support Taft rather than run for the presidency if Taft would support NATO and the UN. As Jean Edward Smith recounts in his magisterial biography *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, Taft refused to make this crucial commitment and Eisenhower jumped into the race. He rapidly clinched the nomination and went on to win a landslide victory over the Democratic candidate, Adlai Stevenson. Eisenhower's two terms firmly establish that most Republicans, as well as most Democrats, supported the preservation of Roosevelt's order.

At home as well as abroad the Eisenhower Administration marked not the rejection of the New Deal but its moderation and selective extension. Ike was a fiscal conservative to the bone and was a relentless deficit hawk. During his eight years in office, the U.S. government stopped running the large deficits that had funded the economic recovery of the 1930s and the war mobilization of the 1940s, and which had evoked so much conservative anxiety. But with the Federal commitment to build the interstate highway system, expanded government support for science and education, and support for moderate steps to expand the civil rights of African-

Americans, Eisenhower continued with the priorities of the Roosevelt project. Overall, Ike operated within the framework of Roosevelt's Third American Founding rather than as a Republican radical seeking to dismantle it.

Eisenhower's internationalist initiatives, too, such as Atoms for Peace and Open Skies, continued the effort, difficult as it was in the Cold War context, to build an international order conducive not just to American interests but also to its values. This mixture of moderate progressivism and conservatism at home and abroad also marked the administrations of Ike's Vice-President and protégé, Richard Nixon, whose Administration advanced initiatives such as the founding of the EPA and OSHA, strong support for international family planning, major international arms control measures, and even proposals for a guaranteed annual minimum income for all Americans. Despite often vociferous partisan disputes within the parameters of the new America wrought by the New Deal and its expansive global role, the principles and programs of the Third American Founding enjoyed overwhelming public support, only challenged in its essentials by fringe movements and actors on the far Left and far Right.

Unraveling America the Great

The policies and programs that made American great have been and are under assault from an increasingly influential radical conservative movement within the United States. From the beginning of the New Deal and throughout the Cold War, Roosevelt's New America, both at home and abroad, was opposed by ultra-conservatives mainly in the Republican Party. But over

the past several decades, and particularly since the end of the Cold War, the radical conservative critique and movement have grown both in influence and in the breadth of their ambition to remake the American political order. The basic thrust of this agenda, particularly visible in the 2016 Republican Party presidential nomination race, is to dismantle much of the modern American state built by FDR and his successors, and to put the United States into full-fledged opposition to liberal internationalist organizations and regimes. The parts of the radical agenda that have already been realized over the past several decades have already hobbled American influence, tarnished the American brand, and undercut Washington's leadership in solving pressing world problems. Going much further down this path will effectively unravel Pax Americana.

On the economic front, the anti-governmental agenda of the ultra-conservative movement aims to eliminate the progressive taxation of income and capital, to greatly reduce the overall size of the government, and to aggressively rollback regulation of business. Since the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s, parts of this agenda have been realized, but not nearly to the extent sought by the contemporary radical conservative movement. Under the rubric of what Europeans refer to as "neo-liberalism," the theorists, commentators, and activists of the new conservative movement have formulated a comprehensive philosophy and program to elevate the market in virtually all domains and to radically diminish the large and capable government that Roosevelt and his successors built.

Unraveling America the Great?: The Radical Conservative Challenge to the Progressive Foundations of Pax Americana

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry

The postwar decades were marked by relatively high levels of income equality. Not only was the economy growing, but the fruits of American economic advancement were widely shared, producing a great expansion of the middle class and upward social and economic mobility. A major contributor to this era of relative income equality was progressive Federal taxation. For example, when Eisenhower left office in 1961, the marginal tax rate in the top bracket was 91 percent. The Kennedy tax cut started a downward trend, and by the end of the Reagan Administration it had fallen to 33 percent.

As a result of these and other tax changes, inequality in the distribution of America's wealth has rapidly risen, with the top 20 percent, top 1 percent, and top tenth of one percent reaping almost all of the gains of national output over the past thirty-five years. Economic equality of opportunity has greatly declined, leaving much of the population locked into stagnant, low-wage employment, thus undercutting their prospects for realizing the American dream. The sources of this change are multiple and subject to dispute by serious economists. In part, rising inequality has been fueled by the reduction in trade barriers and labor market competition from developing countries that have diminished industrial wages, not just in America, but across the developed democracies. In part, rising inequality stems from the decline of trade union strength and the success of union busting by conservatives. In part, rapid technological change has also favored capital and the expense of labor. In part, inequality is furthered by the great disparities in educational opportunities resulting from the highly uneven of funding of American primary and secondary education. The effects of these inequalities on

living standards would be far more pronounced were it not for federal transfer payments. As this erosion of American economic equality has accelerated, the radical conservative movement proposes that the Federal government do less rather than more to sustain the prosperity of the broad middle class. As their economic prospects dim, the willingness of the American public to support an ambitious American role in the world is understandably in decline.

A hallmark of the New Deal order was a new relationship between government and markets. The regulatory state aimed not to displace capitalism but to stabilize market activity. A particularly important part of the New Deal program was the regulation of financial markets to maintain stability and avoid the recurrence of a systemic crisis of the type that triggered the Great Depression. Under relentless pressure from conservatives and well-funded banking interests, as well as the support of the Clinton New Democrats, these regulatory restraints were successively dismantled during the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, the banking crisis and stock market crash of 2008 triggered the Great Recession which, like the 1929 crisis, quickly became global, resulting in a worldwide economic slowdown that has cumulatively cost the world economy several trillion dollars of lost output. For American global economic leadership, the crash of 2008 signaled that deregulation in the United States had become a source of global disruption, greatly diminishing the appeal of the American economic model at precisely the moment when rising authoritarian states – most notably China – were calling into question the competence and value of America's central role in managing the world capitalist system.

Unraveling America the Great?: The Radical Conservative Challenge to the Progressive Foundations of Pax Americana

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry

By the 1970s and 1980s and more recently, changing domestic and international economic developments, unanticipated by the architects of the postwar economic order, created a new set of problems that have scrambled the progressive political coalition. The rise of foreign competition, first from Europe and Japan and then from developing countries such as China, together with the decline of heavy industry and the rise of the service sector, created new problems and opportunities. Both the anti-governmental conservatives in the Reagan era and New Democrats in the Clinton era struggled to fashion responses, with the conservatives seeking to dismantle, and the Democrats attempting to repair and preserve, the New Deal order. In the case of transportation, deregulation made sense and was supported across party lines. In the case of finance, New Democrat bankers acted as allies of radical conservatism.

Nowhere more than in trade policy has the New Deal and postwar economic program and coalition been challenged. The succession of trade rounds that grew out of the Reciprocal Trade Act of 1934 has been astoundingly successful in transforming the American and world economies, producing global prosperity, but it has also has undercut the position of American labor. As a result, the domestic political coalition in support of further economic openness has fragmented, with the labor constituency in the Democratic Party now in opposition. In effect, the very scale of the success of the free trade project has undercut a crucial part of its domestic political support, and subverted the original goal of widely shared prosperity. For the American political system to continue to support economic opening, the next Democratic program of

progressivism must employ Federal power to ensure that the gains of the internationalized economy are more widely shared at home.

Not only did the New Deal regulate industry, in many areas it provided infrastructure and economic support for business activity through institutions like the TVA, rural electrification, and the Export-Import Bank. The modern ultra-conservative movement has increasingly set its sights on dismantling these agencies, arguing that they inappropriately "play favorites," privileging some companies at the expense of others and distorting the free market. The recent crusade by radical Republicans to abolish the Ex-Im Bank is a particularly revealing example of their anti-government agenda.

This bank, which has operated since 1935, provides loans to assist American companies of all sizes to export to world markets. Over the course of its long life, it has made money for the U.S. Treasury. If the Ex-Im Bank is closed, American exporters will be disadvantaged in competing with businesses abroad who are typically assisted more extensively by comparable export financing agencies. For example, Boeing, the largest single user of Ex-Im Bank financial credits, is locked in an intense global struggle for market share with the giant European firm Airbus, which receives generous support from European governments. It is particularly telling that the radical conservative movement would be assaulting the Ex-Im Bank at precisely the moment when China is setting up a well-funded bank to support infrastructure development, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Unfortunately, the ideologically pure agenda of the

radical Right is having the practical effect of diminishing American economic competitiveness at a time when rising economies are posing stiff challenges to U.S. economic leadership.

The New Deal order entailed a new fiscal state based on Federal taxation of income and capital, without which its accomplishments would not have been possible. A central objective of today's ultra-conservative movement has been to radically reduce Federal taxes, even if this means high Federal deficits. The animating fiscal philosophy of the contemporary radical Right is to "starve the beast." Or as Grover Norquist, the influential firebrand of the National Taxpayers Union, says, the aim is to shrink the size of the federal government to the point where it is "small enough to be strangled in the bathtub." The large tax cuts that Reagan engineered in the early 1980s not only dramatically reduced the progressivity of the Federal tax code, they also put the Federal budget into nearly a decade of unprecedentedly large peacetime deficits.

The extremity of the radical conservative anti-tax ideology can be seen in the recent struggle over the Federal excise tax on gasoline, which is a user fee that funds the construction and maintenance of highways and bridges. Rather than countenance a tax increase, and faced with the shutdown of ongoing road work projects all across the country, radical conservatives in the House of Representatives instead mandated the sale of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, an emergency standby capacity set up in the 1970s to provide a buffer against oil embargoes and price spikes. Even though the United States is no longer a net importer of oil, the price of oil is globally set and our allies and the world economy remain vulnerable to potential

oil market disruptions. In today's depressed oil market, to sell SPR oil now is fiscally irresponsible, however appealing to radical Right ideologues.

The United States almost uniquely among the countries of the world is populated by immigrants, first from Europe but increasingly from virtually everywhere. The immigrant character of the American people has given the United States special strengths even as it has periodically created tensions and backlashes. Roosevelt's New Order was significantly based on the rise to power of the European immigrant groups that arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Throughout the postwar era, and particularly after the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 and the surge of immigrants – both legal and illegal – from Mexico and Central America, the number of people living in the United States born elsewhere has risen to the highest level since the early 20th century. Unlike countries such as Japan which reject significant immigration, or European countries that have a difficult time assimilating newcomers, America's success in assimilating newcomers has been an important source of American economic growth and cultural vitality. A salient feature of the contemporary rightwing political landscape is a strong resurgence of nativist anti-immigrant sentiment, stereotyping, and scapegoating. While business-minded conservatives do not typically hold such views, the populist radical conservatives in the Republican Party, given recent voice by Donald Trump, have radicalized the anti-immigrant discourse in ways that are unprecedented in the mainstream of American politics since the 1930s. With talk of high walls and mass deportations, the American brand of open and multiethnic community, so appealing to much of the world, is being tarnished. In a period when rising

democracies all around the globe are increasingly vital American allies and partners in global problem-solving, the new nativism of the radical Right threatens to damage American soft power and leadership.

While much of the radical conservative agenda focuses on dismantling Roosevelt's New America at home in ways that will diminish American appeal abroad, the radical Right also directly targets much of the institutional fabric of Pax Americana built at great cost across the 20th century. The international order that the United State has played such a crucial role in erecting since 1945 is distinguished from orders built by other great powers in its emphasis on international institutions to solve global problems. Pax Americana was different and the America that built it was great because of Washington's leadership in building multilateral organizations and institutions.

While each of these measures evoked varying degrees of opposition, today's radical conservatives have developed a whole-cloth critique of all these organizations and regimes as impediments to American power, compromises of national sovereignty, and challenges to constitutional integrity. They have sought with increasing effectiveness to stymie every new international agreement, with the exception of trade deals, and have made it increasingly difficult for the United States to respond – let alone lead in responding to – emerging global problems such as climate change.

All across the horizon of international problem-solving and institution-building, the radical Right has diminished America's ability to lead. Nuclear arms control treaties, from the

Unraveling America the Great?: The Radical Conservative Challenge to the Progressive Foundations of Pax Americana

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry

SALT I of the Nixon Administration through the START II of the George H.W. Bush era, routinely garnered two-thirds ratification from bipartisan Senate coalitions. In contrast, the recent agreement with Iran was uniformly opposed by the Republican Party and goes into operation with the barest of political support necessary to make it effective. Similarly, the Law of the Sea Treaty, which was negotiated by the Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations, but then opposed by the Reagan Administration, provides the basis for international order in the world's oceans. As China increasingly asserts revisionist interpretations of "innocent passage," vital to American and allied military and commercial interests, and as Arctic marine resources are being allocated according to the Treaty's formulas, the United States finds itself in the extraordinary position of defending the provisions of the Law of the Sea—often at the behest of U.S. military leadership—despite having never ratified it.

On another front, the effort to adjust IMF voting shares to accommodate and include the interests of major rising economies, notably China, have been thwarted by the opposition of radical House Republicans. As for climate change, Administration efforts to forge a worldwide agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has been being systematically undermined by radical conservatives in Congress and in the states who wish to prevent the United States from meeting its share of the burden of response. As the recent breakthrough Paris accords indicate, a new looser style of global governance for climate change has emerged, but radical conservatives remain adamantly opposed even to this approach. William F. Buckley proclaimed decades ago that the objective of modern conservativism must be to "stand athwart history and say stop," and

with its wholesale opposition to the institutions and projects of the American international order, America -- if not history – is being stopped.

The Growing Radical Temperament of American Partisan Discourse

Infusing and underlying all of these challenges to the policies and programs of New Deal and post-New Deal America is a political temperament marked by extreme rhetoric, ideological rigidity, and hostility to compromise. Where Roosevelt's approach was pragmatic and experimental, radical conservatives have generated an alternative history that mischaracterizes American liberal progressivism as a species of European top-down and ideologically driven statism that aims toward a collectivist socialist order. Having conjured this imaginary menacing specter, radical conservatives fight every incremental measure as a decisive battle for the preservation of American freedom and the Constitution. With this radicalized mindset, they see compromise as surrender and reject incremental accommodations. The effects of this new style of radical conservative political warfare can be seen in the willingness with which these partisans have resorted to shutting down the Federal government and refusing to raise the Federal debt ceiling, thus threatening to bring down the entire system and inflict grievous damage to the international economy and American standing. So far the American order has survived these hits, but at some point such extreme tactics will do lasting harm by triggering a more general institutional and economic breakdown. This is an experiment in ideological extremism that the American order can ill afford, and which will diminishes American greatness.

Unraveling America the Great?: The Radical Conservative Challenge to the Progressive Foundations of Pax Americana

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Political extremism has never been completely absent from American political life. It appeared around the turn of the 19th century over the political fevers of the French Revolution, and again in the decade leading to the Civil War, when rhetorical extremism and the conversion of partisan politics into ideological warfare dominated American politics with baneful effects. The most recent turn toward political extremism can be traced through the shifting position of fringe movements from the 1950s into the mainstream of the Republican Party today. A good indicator of this odyssey can be seen in the evolution of one prominent political family, the Kochs of Kansas. During the 1950s, the family patriarch, Fred Koch, was a founding member of the John Birch Society, a group whose positions were beyond the pale of the American political mainstream. The next generation of the family, Charles and David Koch, retain the essential worldview of their father, but over the past decade have moved into a position of influence in the Republican Party, where their extreme libertarian and anti-government views have become mainstream.

Another indicator of the historical development of the radical Right in American politics is the ways in which its political style, world view, and ideologies are similar to the fevered political extremes clashing in Europe during the 1930s. As John Patrick Diggins argued in his book, *Up From Communism*, many of the leading theoreticians of the new postwar radical conservatism in the United States started their political careers on the far Left, but brought its style of politics with them as they migrated to the Right and, in doing so, set much of the tone and agenda for the new American radical right. This previously fringe and European-imported

ideological politics, represented in the worldviews of Ayn Rand and Friedrich Hayek, is the antithesis of the experimentalist, pragmatist, and moderate-tempered democratic political spirit that Roosevelt embodied and successfully employed in steering the American republic through the great storms of global depression and world war. And to the extent that this imported radical mindset now flourishes, it will surely unravel both the political order and the civil peace that Roosevelt and his successors forged.

Toward a Rooseveltian Renewal

Debates about American foreign policy rarely identify a Rooseveltian tradition. This absence obscures the indispensable role that FDR's New Deal and the global diplomacy of his Administration and his successors played in laying the foundations for American greatness, the Pax Americana, and the liberal international order. More than a decade into the 21st century, Roosevelt's pragmatic and experimental effort to adapt the principles of the American founding to the new global conditions remains more relevant than ever. To maintain and extend the American Century requires a renewed employment of the basic principles and worldview that have worked so successfully. The hallmark of the Rooseveltian approach was the connection between domestic progressivism and American international power and leadership. "Nation building at home" is not a threat to America's position in the world but is rather the indispensable foundation for its maintenance and extension. Nation building at home does not mean retreating from the world; it is the complement to an activist foreign policy, not a

replacement for it. This is a point on which formerly mainstream Republicans and most Democrats agree.

Obviously, the specific problems of the 21st century both at home and abroad are not the same ones that Roosevelt and his successors faced. But the best principles to tackle them are the same: democratic pragmatism, government-business collaboration, universal economic opportunity, social justice, and a commitment to building a peaceful and rule-based international order. Keeping America great requires the continuous forging of a political and economic order that is a model to the world because it is a success at home. And being able to do that requires the United States to remain fully engaged in an international role, for without it the social trust necessary to forging that domestic order may sink below minimal levels.

This international order and the political spirit that animated it are under sustained assault from radical conservatives who have gained oversized influence within the Republican Party. To the extent their agendas of anti-government libertarianism, sweeping deregulation, nativist populism, and visceral opposition to international regimes and collaborations comes to shape American policy, the United States will become less powerful, less of a model, and less able to lead. To the extent the radical conservative agenda prevails, the United States will find itself increasingly an outlier and a pariah rather than a model of success and a leader in solving problems. Good globalism begins at home. The United States, in addressing growing inequalities, converting its domestic energy systems from carbon fuels, reestablishing equal

political rights and economic opportunity for all citizens, and welcoming, not shunning, diverse immigrants, builds a democratic republic that remains great and capable of global leadership.

Renewing the Rooseveltian foundations of American success and influence in the world will also require the heirs of this American project to more effectively connect their numerous policy agendas to the timeless principles and political languages of the American political tradition. This means clearly stating that the progressive agenda is not a threat to freedom but rather the means to realize freedom in a contemporary world marked by new forms of economic activity and rising levels of global interdependence. And it also means clearly stating that the progressive program is not opposed to limited government constitutionalism, but is rather the means to make it effectively serve contemporary democratic needs and pressing practical problems. Unless progressives can recapture the flag and Constitution, their policy agendas for the maintenance and renewal of the American project will fall short – and the promise of a liberal democratic constitutional America will be at risk.