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THE HYPOCRISY  
OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

AND IT'S GLOBAL RISKS

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SPECIAL NEWSLETTER  
OF THE CHINESE EMBASSY  
TO GERMANY



## ESSAY OF THE AMBASSADOR

»THE DIVERSITY OF WORLD CIVILIZATION DICTATES THAT DEMOCRATIC FORMS ARE NOT UNIFORM AND MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SPECIFIC NATIONAL CONDITIONS«

China recently concluded the National People's Congress and elected a new leadership. This has enhanced China's governance capabilities and given new momentum and stability to China's development. It has also a vivid practice of Chinese democracy. The country has developed and implemented a comprehensive set of institutional procedures and participatory practices that have transformed the "whole-process people's democracy" from a value concept into a tangible organizational form, a workable governance mechanism, and a social way of life. All of this is deeply rooted in China.

China's democratic system, which is different from Western democracy, has brought stability, prosperity and harmony to the country, and it has paved the way for a "Chinese path to modernization." This is proof that democracy, as a common value of humanity, can take different forms in practice. The diversity of world civilization dictates that democratic forms are not uniform and must

take into account specific national conditions. It is not expedient to impose a particular democratic form on other countries without taking into account their particular cultural circumstances.

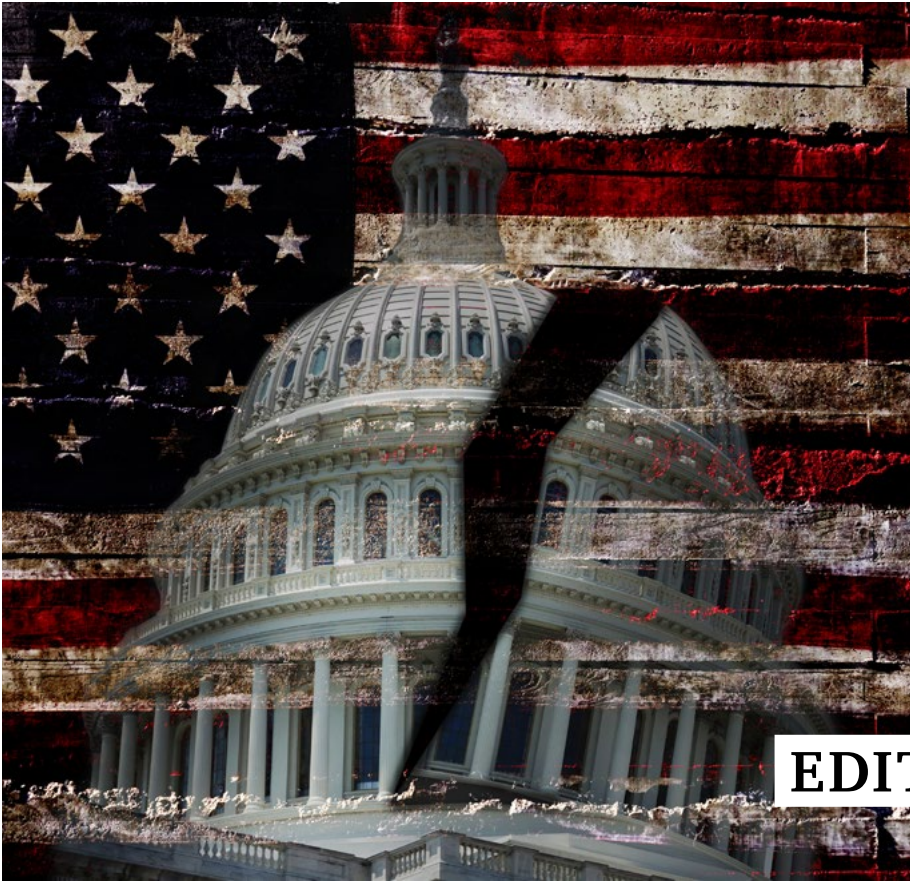
We have observed with concern that certain nations, despite domestic divisions and social problems, still strive to "export" their model of "democracy". But they also use their model of democracy as a justification to impose unilateral sanctions, extra-territorial jurisdiction, and military intervention against other countries. This hegemonism under the banner of democracy is at odds with global peace and development trends and is one of the driving factors that has contributed to the current crises and unrest in the world.

China's governance system may not be perfect, but the country has maintained a self-critical and open attitude and continuously improved its system. China also strives to promote exchanges and mutual learning in the international community without trying to export its own system. The

"Global Civilization Initiative" proposed by President Xi Jinping advocates inclusive coexistence and mutual learning among different civilizations, which includes respect for different cultures and supports their right to individual development paths. This initiative meets the needs of the international community and has been well received by world leaders. The trend toward multipolarity and democratization in international relations is a global phenomenon and a common desire among people of all nations. In a world of turmoil, stability and hope are more important than ever. China remains committed to promoting global peace, prosperity and the progress of human civilization with new ideas and solutions.

**Wu Ken**

Chinese Ambassador to Germany



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## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

American democracy is in decline, and this has serious consequences for world politics. With the storming of the Capitol, it became evident that political polarization in the U.S. has reached critical limits, leading to fault lines across American society. Republicans and Democrats are blocking vital legislative processes and rendering the country ungovernable. Fake news dominates public discourse, and several states have become outright one-party states within the state. In many places, the foundation of democracy in the United States is being undermined. The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, drug use is getting so far out of control in many places that there is already talk of zombie cities, and gun violence is escalating nationwide. The question is how long social peace can be maintained with such conditions and how this is compatible with fundamental human rights.

Domestic polarization and tensions significantly influence the decision-making process of U.S. foreign policy to the detriment of the entire international community. In order to gain votes internally, diplomatic relations are sabotaged with a great media show, while externally, the global security architecture is shaken. Long-term and strategically sensible decisions are hardly possible in Washington anymore. Demonstrations of power, protectionism, hegemony, sanctions, and containment are the buzzwords that dominate the campaign and U.S. foreign policy, especially concerning China. Amid the battle roar, no one remembers the wise words of Henry Kissinger, who once said, "In dealing with China, the United States must ensure that geopolitical matters are not influenced by domestic political struggles or public opinion." Experts consider current U.S. foreign policy "hysterical" and speak of a completely irrational "mob diplomacy."

The U.S. exports this internally divided democracy threatened with disintegration - often with violence - to other countries and to other cultures. These are essentially hegemonic efforts masquerading as democracy, driven by the fear of losing global supremacy. What is to come out of this other than wars and catastrophes such as those in Afghanistan or in Iraq? These are not our words, by the way, but the assessments of distinguished authors, including Foreign Affairs, which we have included in this special newsletter for the first time in this form.

We hope you enjoy reading it.

The editors



2 YERAS AFTER:

## AMERICAN DEMOCRACY REMAINS IN DANGER

Since the riots at Capitol Hill two years ago, the United States has increasingly struggled with political polarization and a decline in democratic norms. [The Brookings Institution](#) and other think tanks have analyzed this process and identified the driving factors responsible for the decline of American democracy.

**Polarization:** The growing divide between Republicans and Democrats makes it difficult to find common ground on important issues. This leads to a gridlock and a situation in which laws are no longer passed.

**Disinformation:** the increasing importance of social media and the proliferation of fake news make it almost impossible for Americans to distinguish between fact and fiction, weakening trust in institutions and undermining the democratic process.

**Voter suppression:** efforts to restrict access to the ballot, particularly for minority groups, have undermined

the principle of "one person, one vote." Such action is often justified with claims of electoral fraud.

**Gerrymandering:** the manipulation of district boundaries in favor of one political party results in the creation of seats that are impossible for the opposing party to win.

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»AMERICAN DEMOCRACY IS UNDERMINING ITSELF AND BECOMING A BREEDING GROUND FOR EXTREMISM«

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**Money in Politics:** the influence of financial power and interests in American politics is increasing, with wealthy donors and special lobbying groups exerting significant influence over elected officials.

The US Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to abortion against the majority's will, raising

according to [The Guardian](#) several fundamental questions about the state of democracy, not the least of which is that of partisanship in the appointment of judges. Court rulings are increasingly partisan and ideological.

[The Economist](#) sees these conditions not only at the federal but also at the state level, calling it "Petri dishes of polarization." The number of states in which one party controls both legislative chambers and the governor's seat has nearly doubled in the last 30 years. This leads to a new politics of confrontation between blue and red states, where a true culture war has erupted over everything from classroom discourse to gun purchases. The end result is that American democracy undermines itself and becomes a breeding ground for extremism.



## THE DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY: STATE FAILURE FOSTERS SOCIAL TENSIONS

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»GUN VIOLENCE IS AN ONGOING ISSUE IN THE UNITED STATES THAT VIOLATES PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO LIVE UNHARMED AND TARNISHES THE COUNTRY'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD«

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The decline of American democracy has led to a deterioration in the country's ability to govern. The consequences are social instability and tensions that are evident in an increase in inequality between rich and poor, drug abuse, and gun violence.

**Economic polarization:** The United States is the largest economy in the world and the most economically polarized among Western nations, with a Gini coefficient of over 0.4. Despite massive fiscal and financial stimulus, the rising inequality of income and wealth distribution has not been eliminated. On the contrary, the rich are getting richer and the poor are increasingly struggling to survive. This chronic disease of American society not only threatens social peace, but it also strikes at the very pillars of democracy and human rights.

**Drug abuse:** the U.S. is home to 4% of the world's population but

accounts for 12% of the world's drug use. All government actions to combat the problem have been ineffective. A comprehensive approach is needed, including policy reform, increased funding for education, prevention and treatment, and better access to health care.

**Gun violence:** Gun violence is an ongoing issue in the United States, violating people's right to live unharmed and tarnishing the country's human rights record. The interplay of gun culture, individual rights, interest groups, and partisan politics blocks any attempt to address this problem. The Declaration of Independence emphasizes life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as inalienable rights, with the right to life being the most important. However, the escalation of gun violence has shaken the American dream and has led to public reflection now on the state of human rights in the United States. Some U.S. politicians, however, have shown apathy

toward the American people's right to life and have limited themselves to empty rhetoric and blaming the human rights situation in other countries. They must take responsibility for this problem in their own country and finally take action to allow the American people to live in freedom and without fear of gun violence.



# US-POLITICS NO LONGER STOPS AT THE WATER'S EDGE

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»THE CURRENT U.S. DOMESTIC POLITICAL POLARIZATION IS ALSO JEOPARDIZING THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING PROCESS AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER«

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The adage "politics stops at the water's edge", which states that the formulation of important foreign policy decisions should not depend on domestic politics, has long held true in international relations. However, the current U.S. domestic political polarization is impacting the country's foreign policy decision-making process, which increasingly follows a reckless and aggressive approach. Both U.S. parties are pursuing **protectionist policies** characterized by tough measures to curry favor with domestic voters at the expense of long-term strategic considerations and the interests of the international community. The resultant uncertainty and instability risk damaging the global security architecture and the world economy.

In addition to the more aggressive approach, the polarization of U.S. foreign policy is producing an isolationist posture in the administration and a concentration of power with the president. Congressional control at home has diminished, which at the same time has a negative external impact on the order of world politics. The effects go beyond institutional erosion to weaken U.S.

international alliances and cooperation. This adversarial approach to foreign policy can have far-reaching implications for global governance and security.

Major efforts are needed to bridge the domestic political divide and to restore consensus on key foreign policy issues. This will require a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between domestic and foreign policy and an increased willingness to engage in constructive dialogue and compromise.

The United States has a long history of trade protectionism, but current policies are more extreme than ever.

The recently introduced IRA bill is particularly troubling because it represents a significant departure from the 30 years of global free trade since the end of the Cold War. Its implementation is believed to not only harm U.S. consumers, but also severely disrupt the international trading system and negatively impact European interests. Unfortunately, the present IRA bill is largely influenced by domestic political battles, **with both the Biden and Trump administrations pursuing protectionist policies** to protect their own partisan interests.



# AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA IS "HYSTERICAL"



**H**enry Kissinger once said, "In dealing with China, the United States must ensure that geopolitical matters are not influenced by domestic political struggles or public opinion." Unfortunately, that has not happened. Persistent U.S. misperceptions and strategic misjudgments of China have led to "being tough on Beijing" as "political correctness." U.S. diplomacy is no longer able to maintain rational and professional relations with China. Instead, China is economically stymied and contained, and subjected to political pressure. This approach not only violates the rights and legitimate interests of many other countries, but also hinders global cooperation on critical issues such as climate change. Ultimately, the U.S. is only harming itself and its credibility.

The "balloon-incident" also falls into this category. At the Munich Security Conference, Wang Yi, a member of the CCP Politburo, outlined how the U.S., for domestic political reasons, is hyping an off-course Chinese research balloon into an international incident. This hysterical act is an abuse of force and a clear violation of established

practices and relevant international conventions. In the end, it was a staged farce.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister **Qin Gang** has pointed out that U.S. competition with China for self-advantage and confrontation endangers the future and interests of humanity. Containment and suppression benefit no one. They will not make America great, nor will they stop China's rejuvenation. Good relations between China and the U.S. are critical to the future of the world.

Voices are growing in the U.S. and Europe for a pragmatic U.S. policy toward China. Mark Leonard, director of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), warned of the danger of "mob diplomacy" and pointed to the Biden administration's attempt to maintain its moderate stance, which critics and social media interpreted as weakness. As a result, Blinken canceled his trip to Beijing and the U.S. military shot down a Chinese research balloon. The need to show strength makes reasonable diplomacy difficult.

*The New York Times* has shown that only military-industrial interests and politicians who use China as a scapegoat for domestic problems benefit from antagonistic relations. It urges the U.S. government to normalize relations with China.

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**»IF THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT HIT THE BRAKE BUT CONTINUES TO SPEED DOWN THE WRONG PATH, NO AMOUNT OF GUARDRAILS CAN PREVENT DERAILING«**

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## WEAPONIZING DEMOCRACY FOR HEGEMONIC GOALS

In the past, the United States has promoted democracy abroad by imposing its system on other countries. Scholars refer to this as "**liberal hegemony**", because America exports its democracy primarily to strengthen its own national security interests. With this "weaponization" of democracy in the interest of hegemony, not only are the nations involved bullied, often the goal is missed entirely. In Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S.-enforced "democratic transformation" has led to disasters.

[\*Foreign Policy\*](#) also criticizes the way the United States has attempted to install democracy in other countries and cautions that democracy cannot be imposed from the outside. Rather, respect for other cultures and recognition of one's own systemic boundaries would be necessary for cooperation with other nations.

The United States has a history of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, sparking conflicts, and selectively applying international law to serve its interests. It has overused the concept of national security, abused export controls, and imposed unilateral sanctions on other nations. While portraying itself as promoters of democracy, the United States has used a violent approach that has been heavily criticized by the international community. Many countries are calling for a new model of relations based on dialogue. China also rejects hegemonism and interference in the affairs of other countries and calls on the United States to abandon its past practices.

One example of the United States' problematic behavior is its use of "**long-arm jurisdiction**" which

allows the United States to exercise jurisdiction over both allies and political enemies. By its very nature, U.S. long-arm jurisdiction has been an instrument for maintaining U.S. hegemony, including the subversion of other governments, since its inception. This has created tensions and threatened the international security system established after World War II. The United States must renounce its illegal "jurisdiction" measures and live up to its international responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.



# THE WESTERN-CENTRIC FALLACY OF THE "SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY"



The "Summit for Democracy" is a fallacy because the "competition between democracy and authoritarianism" proposed for it by the United States is a false narrative. It is based on a Western-centric and colonialist worldview and fails to recognize a shift in the view of much of the international community. Most of the world's countries believe that the greatest challenge is not to win the "democracy versus authoritarianism" contest, but to come together to address global problems such as climate change and the impact of the Ukraine crisis.

As German Chancellor Scholz noted, international multipolarity is an unstoppable trend. However, the United States is seeking to counter this historic development by divi-

ding the world into "democratic" and "non-democratic" factions based on its own geopolitical agenda. This approach risks plunging the world into a new Cold War characterized by dangerous confrontations bet-

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ween opposing camps - an approach that cannot be supported by the international community. To find a way out of the current geopolitical crisis, Europe must listen to the

perspectives of the countries of the global South and understand why its current position is untenable.

*Politico* writes, that the West is increasingly isolated. A recent survey by the [European Council of Foreign Relations](#) (ECFR) demonstrates that while the Ukraine conflict has united Western nations, at the same time the study reveals a wide gap between Western views on Russia and the war and the views of countries outside the continent.



The legacy of the Cold War has led many in the West to believe that the world is heading toward a bipolar structure dominated by China and the United States. President Biden has portrayed the conflict in Ukraine as a struggle between authoritarianism and democracy, using the defense of democracy as a unifying message both domestically and internationally. This has led to a return to "free world" leadership rhetoric in the United States. However, most non-Western countries do not share this division, seeing the world not as a bipolar era but as a multipolar era

with multiple centers of power. The West must work with international partners who have different views of the conflict if it is to achieve political success and help shape post-conflict geopolitics. To achieve this, the West must view countries like India, Brazil, and Turkey as partners in shaping the future order, not as actors it can convert to the "right side of history."

The United States is reluctant to give up its global supremacy and is afraid of a multipolar world. The U.S. prefers the advantages and prestige that come with its supremacy and longs

for the brief period when it had no rivals. As a result, the U.S. is actively working to reassert its leadership role, weaken Russia, and slow the rise of China. However, attempting to resist the trend toward multipolarity is likely to be costly and ineffective. Instead, the United States should prepare for a future with more multipolarity and not waste time and resources trying to reverse the trend.



# TABOO OR OPEN SECRET?

## HOW THE U.S. CONTROLS ONLINE DISCOURSE



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»HOW INSECURE MUST THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SUPERPOWER BE IF IT FEARS YOUNG PEOPLE'S FAVORITE APP SO MUCH?«

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**A**lthough the U.S. always stresses the importance of freedom of expression, there have been instances where the government has used its power to control social media or suppress speech deemed sensitive. U.S. politicians and media largely avoid discussions about these issues, leading to political taboos or self-censorship.

In the case of the attack on the Nord Stream pipeline, the situation remains unclear to this day, and the U.S. continues to be suspected of being the mastermind. The investigation is not progressing and is apparently being obstructed, while the U.S. media are very reluctant to report on it. China supports the United Nations in conducting an impartial investigation and holding the responsible parties accountable.

The "[Twitter Files](#)" released by Elon Musk show how Twitter

moderates content "at the direction of, in coordination and cooperation with the government." For example, Twitter ranks tweets and limits the reach of some accounts through a practice known internally as "visibility filtering." Twitter distinguishes this from shadow banning, in which "content is made undetectable to everyone except the person who posted it."

A file showed that Twitter's Site Integrity Team whitelisted United States Central Command (CENTCOM) accounts that were used for online influence campaigns in other countries, including Yemen, Syria and Kuwait. The whitelist ensured that these accounts did not reveal their affiliation with the military and appeared as normal users.

Despite its popularity with teenagers, [TikTok](#) faces a possible ban in the United States. The US government has claimed that the

app poses a threat to national security, but if that were true, the evidence would have been presented long ago. The real reason for the U.S. government's action is that TikTok's popularity challenges the U.S. monopoly on information about China and offers global audiences an authentic perspective of the country. This apparently does not fit the image of China that some U.S. policymakers have designed for their purposes. To quote the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, "How insecure must the world's biggest superpower be if it fears young people's favorite app so much?"



# THE REVERBRATION OF THE IRAQ WAR: OBSESSION WITH PRIMACY LEADS TO WAR



**T**wenty years ago, the U.S. military invaded Iraq, an illegal war of aggression even in the view of the [German Federal Court](#), which violated the United Nations Charter and international law and brought widespread devastation to Iraq and the region. Three lessons can be learned from this war.

First, the U.S.'s tendency to rely on military power in pursuit of geopolitical goals is the greatest threat to international peace and security. The pretext of "promoting democracy" does not legitimize war.

Second, the specter of the Iraq war still exists today, namely, the U.S. obsession with maintaining its supremacy and hegemonic status. The U.S. must approach geopolitical security issues with prudence and a sense of responsibility, or it could drive the world into conflict again.

Third, the lack of accountability for the U.S. war effort is an example of selective application of international rules that damages the credibility of the international rule of law. Maintaining the central role of the United Nations and the international rule of law is critical to preventing the strong from bullying the weak.

According to [Foreign Affairs](#), neoconservatives were overly optimistic about the ability of the United States to impose its will on Iraq and create a stable democracy. The Iraq war is a chilling example of the consequences of a foreign policy that follows a risky strategic calculus under cover.

The Iraq war also plays a role in the Global South's cautious view of the Ukraine crisis. Comparisons are drawn, double standards are seen, and it is remembered that there were hardly any pro-

tests by Western governments against America's invasion at the time. Germany was among the few exceptions.

The decision to invade Iraq was driven by a desire to secure global supremacy and prevent the rise of other nations. [The flawed logic that led to that war is still relevant and is being repeated with China](#). There is a growing bipartisan consensus to adopt a tougher stance on China, and the environment in Washington resembles the pre-March 2003 era when U.S. policymakers were eager to take on an adversary. In defending its preeminent position of power, the United States is risking significant consequences without factoring in how an intensified rivalry could make the world a less secure place.





## A UNITED WORLD

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