Another ‘American Exception’? American Order-Building and a Schmittian Analysis of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China in the post-Cold War Era and Beyond

by

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Abstract

This thesis develops a Schmittian analytical framework to examine the changes in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China from the early post-Cold War era to the Trump administration. Through a re-interpretation of specific Schmittian concepts, including the friend-enemy distinction and Großraum, I aim to answer the question of how to explain the U.S.’s threat perceptions of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) beginning from the end of the Cold War era and beyond via policy documents and presidential speeches provided by the American Presidency Project. The main argument developed throughout is that in spite of Schmitt’s controversial legacy, a re-invigoration of his political and international thought allows us to grasp changes in the U.S. threat perceptions of the PRC from initial engagement to a recognition of China as an existential threat through time that constitutes a state of exception in an exceptional period of history.
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Table of Contents
Abstract - i
Acknowledgements – ii
Introduction – 1

Part I: Constructing a Schmittian analytical framework of U.S. foreign policy
Chapter 1: American Order (Nomos) and Orientation - 12
Chapter 2: The Politics and Geography of Sovereign Thinking: Distinctions and Großraum - 26

Part II: A Schmittian Analysis of U.S. Foreign Policy vis-à-vis China & Order-building: Beyond the early Post-Cold War era (George H.W. Bush.-Pres.)
Chapter 3: Another American Exception - Beyond Neo-realist Conceptualizations of U.S. Foreign Policy Towards China in the post-Cold War Period - 49
Chapter 4: Schmittian Analysis of Obama Administration: ‘Pivot to Asia’ & Strategic Rebalancing Policy - 73
Chapter 5: Schmittian Analysis of Trump Administration: From Strategic Rebalancing to Strategic Competition – 86
Conclusion - 102
Bibliography - 105
Introduction

Carl Schmitt, a highly controversial figure in political theory, has left behind a complex and divisive legacy. Known for his radical ideas on sovereignty, decisionism, and the nature of political order, Schmitt's thought has been used across the ideological spectrum. His writings have found previous application in the analysis of U.S. foreign policy, particularly during the war on terror, where concepts such as the state of exception and the enemy were invoked to justify controversial policy actions such as the War on Terror. By applying a Schmittian lens to the study of U.S.-China tensions, it becomes possible to shed light on the underlying dynamics at play. Schmitt's emphasis on the friend-enemy distinction and the role of power struggles between sovereign entities in the form of the Großraum theory can elucidate the antagonistic nature of the U.S.-China relationship. Additionally, Schmitt’s focus on the importance of decisive action and the suspension of norms in times of crisis may help explain the confrontational and competitive posture adopted by the United States and China in their pursuit of geopolitical influence and dominance.

When House speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the self-governing island of Taiwan on August 2nd, 2022, it had seemed that tensions would inevitably escalate into military conflict between the United States and China. Her visit generated reactions from the Chinese foreign policy establishment, with Chinese President Xi Jinping suggesting: “Those who play with fire will perish by it.” In response to the ordeal, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) mobilized military ships and fired missiles across the median line of the Cross-Taiwan Straits, imposed embargos on Taiwan, and suspended dialogue with the United States on a number of policy areas including military affairs. In military drills dubbed ‘United Sharp Sword’, the PLA conducted simulated

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precision strike drills between April 8th-10th, 2023. Such drills included combat-readiness exercises to which the PLA described as “a serious warning against the Taiwan separatist forces’ collusion with external forces, and a necessary move to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity.”\textsuperscript{2} The military drills were seen as a response to Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen’s visit to California with current U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on April 5th. In the latest National Security Strategy released on October 12, 2022, by President Joe Biden elaborating on the nature of competition between democracies and autocracies in reference to Russia and China: “The most pressing strategic challenge facing our vision is from powers that layer authoritarian governance with a revisionist foreign policy. It is their behavior that poses a challenge to international peace and stability.”\textsuperscript{3}

Such critical junctures in the U.S.-China bilateral relationship such as Speaker Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan, President Biden’s National Security Strategy, Chinese military drills along the Taiwan Straits, and President Tsai Ing-Weng’s visit to the U.S. are indicative of a growing animosity on both sides that is characterised by great power competition. These tensions reflect a growing array of scholarly literature that highlights the dangers of great power wars as China reaches parity with the United States in a number of aggregate categories.\textsuperscript{4} In tandem with this, the international order is said to be undergoing fundamental changes affected by the global distribution of power\textsuperscript{5} as a result. As the unipolar world order led by the U.S. slowly ends in way


\textsuperscript{5} See John Mearsheimer’s the Great Delusion (2018); Graham Allison’s Destined for War (2017); Kenneth Waltz’s Man, The State and War (1959).
of multipolarity, the emergence of a new international order creates issues of interdependent competition where the United States and China are carving out “bounded orders that will compete in political, economic, and military realms.”

Yet this competition was not always apparent. Previous governments such as the Obama administration attempted to achieve convergence with China on a number of issues – particularly on trade and security as a means to achieve diplomatic cooperation on an array of common policy areas in 2009. In a press briefing before President Obama’s first visit to Asia in November 2009, former NSC Senior Director for East Asian affairs Jeffery Bader remarked:

The relationship is off to a good start. China is an essential player on the global issues that are the center of our agenda: global economic recovery; climate change; energy; North Korea; Iran; Non-proliferation issues generally; success in Afghanistan and Pakistan; arms controls. On none of these issues can we succeed without China’s cooperation. So we don’t see this relationship as a zero-sum one.

Such attempts to integrate China into the Western-led international order under the name of international cooperation were also pursued under the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, with the belief that if China had become a member of multilateral institutions such as the WTO in 2001, then China’s rise would be better managed as it rose within this order to eventually democratize. In response to the U.S. House of Representatives approval of normalizing trade relations with China on May 24, 2000, as a precursor to China’s approval for WTO membership, President Clinton commented: “Today the House of Representatives has taken an historic step toward continued prosperity in America, reform in China, and peace in the world. It

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will open new doors of trade for America and new hope for change in China.” Such logic demonstrated the mindset of U.S. administrations at the time, which believed that a liberalizing Chinese economy would act as a check on the CCP and its socialist political system. In reality, this did not come into fruition, and today U.S.-China tensions are as high as they have ever been.

After the end of the Cold War, the United States embarked on an ambitious project of order-building that entailed the spreading of liberal democratic political values such as human rights, democracy, the strengthening of institutions (multilateralism) and free market economics. Soon after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the notion of liberal hegemony was used to explain the effort of the U.S. foreign policy establishment’s attempt to spread these political values across as much of the world as possible once it became the unquestioned unipolar hegemon. As John Mearsheimer succinctly explains in the preface of the *Great Delusion* (2018): “The aim of this ambitious strategy is to turn as many countries as possible into liberal democracies while also fostering an open international economy and building formidable international institutions. In essence, the United States has sought to remake the world in its own image.” As the U.S. embarked on this project of order-building, it was confronted with a myriad of issues throughout history ranging from a post-World War II economic recovery, Cold War tensions, the War on Terror, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, nuclear proliferation, global economic volatility, growing domestic political polarization and continued military engagement in other parts of the world away from the mainland ranging from Afghanistan and Syria. By engaging in this task of imperial hubris that intensified under the George W. Bush administration, it had seemed that rather than creating

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a stable world order, the U.S.’s pursuit of universal values and law sowed more discord and discontent in the international system that was being inflamed by sectarian divisions.

Although the United States had originally tried to push China to rise within the liberal international order, China has increasingly become more assertive and ambitious in trying to push back against certain values of this order and promote an alternative model of governance based on a brand of neo-authoritarianism. Political thinkers such as Carl Schmitt were also similarly critical of U.S. ambitions and order-building projects promoting universal international law under the guise of liberalism. Schmitt’s work has generated increased interest in the Anglo-American world particularly after 9/11, especially when the Bush Administration launched its war on terror in conjunction with the passing of the Patriot Act. As a clear rhetorical shift emerges in U.S. foreign policy on its threat perception of China, Schmitt’s writings on world order and the history of state structures hold high relevancy in explaining foreign policy fluctuations amid increased geopolitical competition. Scholars have increasingly made use of Schmitt’s concepts and mobilized them to explain U.S. foreign policies in its war on terror against Al-Qaeda as unlawful combatants that fit outside the parameters of the ‘legal combatants’ category as stipulated in the Geneva Conventions.

While Schmitt’s Theory of the Partisan has been mobilized to analyze the War on Terror and American politics post-9/11, there has been little effort to transpose and use some of his foundational concepts to analyze U.S.-China tensions. Here, Schmitt can provide a useful contribution to conceptual studies of international order, as it remains a highly debated concept.

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subject to reform. By engaging with Schmitt's ideas, scholars can critically examine the foundational assumptions and normative frameworks that shape our understanding of international order. His emphasis on decisionism and the suspension of norms allow for a re-evaluation of the processes and mechanisms that establish and maintain order in the international system.

This thesis will address the critical question of how to account for fluctuations in the U.S.’s conceptualization of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as an enemy beginning from the end of the Cold War era and up to the Trump Administration. Contrary to a conventional analysis of U.S.-China bilateral relations through mainstream theories such as liberalism and realism, I aim to develop and operationalize a Schmittian analytical framework – emphasizing concepts of order, friend-enemy, and Großraum - to account for fluctuating changes in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China. Given that Schmitt’s historical-legal writings on world order and the history of the state are closely interconnected, this thesis will not propose a new interpretation of Schmittian concepts. Rather, it will rely on some of Schmitt’s earlier texts on the critiques of liberalism and parliamentary democracy along with his works on world order to demonstrate how they still hold explanatory value in assessing contemporary geopolitical phenomena.

To demonstrate the explanatory value of a Schmittian framework, the thesis will be divided into two parts. In the first section, I establish a Schmittian analytical framework of U.S. foreign policy. In the first chapter, I demonstrate how Schmitt’s conceptualization of order and orientation is formulated in his seminal book *Nomos of the Earth* (1950). This chapter also charts out the transition into a new post-*Jus Publicum Europaeum* order (*nomos*) characterised by American supremacy and shows how the concept of global linear thinking as envisioned by Schmitt is central to understanding this new world order and spatial imaginaries. From there, I analyze the notions of state centrality, bracketing, and land-sea separation to demonstrate the centrality of spatial
consciousness to situations of order transition. Then, I go over the theoretical and lexical origins of global linear thinking and *nomos* to demonstrate the transitional nature of these terms and how central they are to explaining the transition into a U.S.-led order beginning after WWII. From there, I explain how Schmitt envisions the transition into ‘American Universalism’ as a U.S.-led global order (*nomos*) beginning as early as the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 and the creation of the League of Nations based on Wilsonian principles of self-determination. By outlining this order transition by Schmitt clearly, we can observe how the Schmittian criticism of U.S. hegemony can accurately explain U.S. foreign policy decisions vis-à-vis the PRC as we witness another order transition that has the potential to spiral into geopolitical instability, just as Schmitt envisioned.

In the second chapter, I expose how Schmitt’s concept of sovereignty and *Großraum* (theory of territorially expanded states) can be applied within the context of international politics. This chapter will focus on how Schmitt conceptualizes sovereignty as the exception in determining the friend-enemy distinction. Schmitt’s *Großraum* theory will also be developed in this chapter to demonstrate how the U.S. as a prominent power exists within a large territorial space in which it essentially acts as a hegemon to radiate and spread its power capabilities in the South China Sea (SCS) and Indo-Pacific. For the purposes of this thesis, I define radiate as the ability for one state to spread its influence in the form of rules, norms and institutional arrangements in an attempt for other states to emulate its values and perceptions.

Based on these considerations I delve into an examination of the concept of order, deciphering the normative origins of the current rules-based international order that has been led by the U.S. since WWII. I argue that the concept of international order is still a highly debated concept amongst scholars and that Schmitt’s contributions to the debate can illuminate the inherent tensions that are present in great power competition from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy.
towards China. In that regard, Schmitt’s writings on international order make an important contribution to the study of what order is conceptually. From there, I devote a section to breaking down Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction as a politicized and polemical concept, highlighting that China has been regarded as an enemy from the American perspective despite initial attempts to include China under the fold of the LIO. I then outline the geographical and spatial dimensions that make up Schmitt’s Großraum theory of territorially expanded states and how it can be utilized to explain the U.S. project of order-building that intensifies after the end of the Cold War and end with a brief assessment of the possible limitations associated with the use of a Schmittian framework to explain U.S. foreign policy fluctuations.

The second section of my thesis then involves the operationalisation of this framework beyond the early post-Cold War era, where the U.S. beings to undergo foreign policy adjustments with regards to China and the Indo-Pacific region, utilizing the friend-enemy distinction and Großraum theory. The third chapter goes beyond a historical analysis of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China in the immediate post-Cold War period by focusing specifically on how Schmitt’s thinking has been used to analyze U.S. foreign policy, the war on terror, and the American project of order-building. Through an analysis of national security strategies under the Clinton, George H.W Bush, and George W. Bush administrations along with archival research collected from the American Presidency Project, this chapter mobilizes a Schmittian working framework to U.S. foreign policies enacted towards China to deconstruct the American order building project in the Post-Cold War era. I focus in particular on these three successive administrations, and on initial attempts to integrate China into the Western-led international order. This chapter also illustrates the way in which the American project of order-building in the early post Cold-War era is an applicable example of Schmitt’s Großraum theory and critique of American liberalism.
The fourth chapter applies this working framework to the Obama administration’s ‘strategic rebalancing’ policy and ‘Pivot to Asia’ policy beginning from 2011 to 2016. I focus on the increased subtleness and salience of the friend-enemy distinction applied to China by analyzing Obama’s 2011 address to the Australian Parliament. This address is especially important as it marks a shift in U.S. foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific region. From there, I examine increased naval activities and the forging of regional alliances/economic linkages in the Indo-Pacific to demonstrate that the concepts of Großraum and concrete order can help explain certain aspects of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China.

In the fifth and final chapter, a Schmittian analysis of the Trump administration from 2016 to 2020 is conducted by focusing on inherent friend-enemy contradictions in the administration’s rhetoric shifting from ‘America First’ to ‘Peace Through Strength’, along with a focus on Trump’s visit to Asia in November 2017. I analyze policy actions under Trump during this period by focusing closely on Trump’s concept of a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy’, the U.S.-China trade wars and increased naval military activities to show the increased portrayal of the PRC as an existential threat. Finally, the chapter concludes with a consideration of the American project of order-building more broadly under the Trump administration regarding Großraum & pushback against Liberal IR Theory to demonstrate the originality of my approach explaining U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China.

The methodological approach for my thesis involves the thematic use of secondary literature in the form of academic articles, official speeches made by U.S. senior officials obtained from the American Presidency Project/departmental resources, and primary sources published by Carl Schmitt. In the first two chapters, I rely mainly on the use of Schmitt’s writings, including Nomos of the Earth, to construct my working analytical framework. In the second half of my thesis,
I rely on various state department documents and policy speeches by senior officials and past U.S. presidents as materials to conduct an analysis. Examining discourses allows us to trace the language constructions behind pivotal events that are a fulcrum in international politics which can facilitate a meaningful comparative analysis between Schmitt’s political thought and U.S. foreign policy actions.¹³

¹³ Jack Holland, Selling the War on Terror: Foreign Policy Discourses after 9/11. (New York: Routledge), 2013, pg.4.
Part I: Constructing a Schmittian analytical framework of U.S. foreign policy
Chapter 1: American (Nomos) Order & Orientation

Introduction: A Eurocentric Spatial Order - State Centrality, Bracketing & Land-Sea Separation

In order to gain a better understanding of the applicability of a Schmittian framework to U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China in the post-Cold War era, a nuanced interpretation of Carl Schmitt’s thinking on international law and geopolitics is necessary. The starting point of the present inquiry is found in Schmitt’s *Nomos of the Earth*, in which he proposes a narrative of the foundations for the emergence of the first successful global order of international law – the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* from the 16th century to the beginning of the 20th century. For Schmitt, the European state in the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* is the focal point of analysis, where land-appropriating European powers perceived their status as equal, legitimate and sovereign. As Schmitt articulates:

> Everything that mankind has developed thus far in what is called international law, consists of one singular accomplishment of continental European jurists and governments in the 17th and 18th centuries, an accomplishment that was perpetuated in the 19th century: The rationalization and humanization of war.\(^{14}\)

For Schmitt, this bracketing and rationalization of war which prevented conflicts of total annihilation was the biggest source of success for interstate European international law for nearly 300 years. This interstate structure was highly Eurocentric, where the sovereign state was conceived of as the innovator of a new spatial order, as the new legal subject of international law. As Schmitt elaborates: “Essentially this state was a unified, self-contained area of European soil that became recognized as a *magnum homo* [great man]; only now it was in form a legal subject and a sovereign “person.”\(^{15}\) As evident in Schmitt’s writing, international law is seen as a process

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\(^{15}\) Schmitt, 2003, pg. 145.
of historical and legalizing reforms, where radical shifts in spatial consciousness occurred as evidenced from the dismantling of the old spatial order of Medieval Europe (Respublica Christiana) where wars were based on naval mandate and feuding Christian princes.\(^\text{16}\)

Yet the separation of firm land and free sea was one of the most important principles of the Jus Publicum Europaeum. The firm land was further separated into five sub-soil statuses: State Territory, Colonies, Protectorates, Exotic Countries with European Extraterritoriality, and Free Occupiable Land.\(^\text{17}\) This separation of surfaces of the Jus Publicum Europaeum were important for the distinction between land and sea wars as each had its own concept of enemy (Justus hostis), war and plunder.\(^\text{18}\) The further distinction of the five soil statutes was important for defining colonial wars, as the bracketing of war was applicable only to European land wars fought among sovereign states, including the territoriality of African and Asiatic lands with European possessions. In hindsight, Carl Schmitt’s theoretical work in Nomos of the Earth represents a clear break from previous schools of thought in how geopolitics, international war and territorial wars were envisioned. In contrast to the Medieval Europe era where theological systems were predicated with religious connotations on the basis of a just cause (justa causa), any conflict between European sovereign states that viewed each other as equal was legitimate as long as both viewed one another as just enemies (Justus hostis). Such procedures of territorial change in European international law were developed by Great Powers at major peace conferences in the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) and 19\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries – examples of which included the Vienna Conference of 1815 established during the concert of Europe era.\(^\text{19}\) As Schmitt explains, this logic of conquest based on papal

\(^{16}\) Hooker, 2009, pg.78.

\(^{17}\) Schmitt, Ibid, pg. 184.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Ibid, pg. 185.
mandates were rendered obsolete, marking a critical transition in how the world order would be conceptualized and who was to lead it as the main arbiter, in the form of interstate European international law.

Although Schmitt’s *Nomos* is theoretical at its core, some scholars have posited that Schmitt’s articulation of the history of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* is also a history of modern colonialism. Even though the justifications of war had moved from just cause (*justa causa*) to just enemy (*justus hostis*), Schmitt’s conceptualization of international history shows that this form of Eurocentric international law was viewed in a superior perspective as a product of ‘occidental rationalism’. As Andreas Kalyvas explains:

Many of Schmitt’s arguments reflect and reproduce the assumptions and biases of the Eurocentric paradigm. Moreover, his conservative anti-liberal loyalties, fascist sympathies, unapologetic Nazism, and his virulent antisemitism may very well explain the presence of some of the concepts and themes that he deployed in his numerous writings on international law and informed his geopolitical turn from the domestic to the global during the late 1930s.

Despite the debates in secondary literature regarding the degree of his fascist sympathies during the Weimar era, it is important to note the connection between Schmitt’s writings on the domestic political situation during the Weimar Republic era in Germany and his writings in the geopolitical sphere as they inform his doctrinal thinking. Numerous remarks are made in *Nomos* where Schmitt celebrates this new age of international law as ‘the product of an intellectual and scientific culture’, presenting it as ‘the necessary and legitimate outcome of a presumed European superiority’. Part of this cultural superiority and Eurocentrism Schmitt espoused was associated with his focus on

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21 Kalyvas, 2018, pg. 36.
the colony in international law. The spontaneous historical articulation of the history of international law along with European colonies as outlined according to the principle separating the firm land and free sea are decisive factors that determine the spatial structure of international politics according to him. As part of this spatial consciousness transformation, the concept of global linear thinking was critical in initiating this reformation process of spatial structures.

1.1: Global Linear Thinking & Orientation (Nomos): Theoretical & Lexical Origins

Other central concepts that are critical to Schmitt’s understanding of geopolitics include global linear thinking and nomos. For Schmitt, global linear thinking represents a critical juncture in terms of the re-drawing of civilizational lines between European sovereign states and non-European lands as it becomes one of the biggest manifestations of occidental rationalism. As Schmitt explains: “The struggle among European powers for land appropriations made necessary certain divisions and distributions. These sprang from what I call global linear thinking, which represents a chapter in the historical development of spatial consciousness.”24 The concept had been critical in delineating amity lines amid processes of spatial consciousness as a result. Yet instead of 1648 when the Peace of Westphalia was signed, enshrining the principle of state sovereignty after the thirty years religious wars where clear territorial demarcations begin to emerge, Schmitt traces the first attempts to divide the Earth as a whole beginning from 1492 after the discovery of the Americas, where the discovery of a new world marked the start of a new ‘modern age’ kept apace with the development of geographical maps.25

From the process of drawing out amity lines with the Earth as a globe, Schmitt begins to trace how this spatial transformation accelerated by global linear thinking occurred after the

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25 Ibid.
subsequent discovery of the Americas. The first example where he discusses such manifestations of thinking emerge from the *rayas* dividing the new world between the Spanish and Portuguese empires beginning with the signing of the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 and later on the Treaty of Saragossa (1526).\(^{26}\) Schmitt is also quick to note that the *rayas* were not global lines that separated an entity from a non-entity regarding land and sea appropriations and were more internal divisions within the *Respublica Christiana* of the Middle Ages.\(^{27}\) The second manifestation of global linear thinking includes the secret clauses contained in the Canteau-Cambresis treaty of 1559 between the French and Spanish Empires, involving the French declaration by Cardinal Richelieu on behalf of the French king in 1664, and the Spanish-English treaty of November 1630 which disavowed the 1559 amity lines as reference points.\(^{28}\) The third manifestation of global linear thinking Schmitt identifies is the Western Hemisphere, which he notes is especially crucial as it was the first time a global line had been fixated on the ‘New World’ rather than between the powers of the ‘Old World’. This line was enshrined in the Monroe Doctrine of December 2\(^{nd}\), 1823, which stipulated that European great powers would not intervene in the affairs of other Latin American nations nor would be tolerated by the United States since it was considered to be in its own sphere of influence.\(^{29}\)

Schmitt notes that this line drawn by the United States was different from previous amity and enmity lines, being a line of self-isolation rather than a line of distribution or an agonal line.\(^{30}\) Such lines created distinctions between zones of peace and zones of war where conflict was regulated along established treaties where no rules would apply beyond the established lines. Here

\(^{26}\) Ibid, pg. 88-89.
\(^{27}\) Ibid, pg. 92.
\(^{29}\) Stirk, 2011, pg. 277.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
it is important to highlight that Schmitt conceptualizes global linear thinking not as a static un-evolving concept applicable to a fixed number of actors. Yet appropriation, division and production were a constitutive process of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* when closely scrutinizing the lexical origins of the *nomos*.

In *Nomos of the Earth*, Schmitt describes the lexical origins of the word *nomos* and dedicates a whole chapter to its meaning. Moving away from his theory of the exception, Schmitt, in this particular period of his life in the late 1940s and early 1950s, begins to focus on the notion of concrete order and orientational thinking. Here, the emphasis should be put on the close intertwining of the legal and political. Schmitt’s idea of space stands in close proximity to his idea of the political as this embodied, concrete, relationship of amity and enmity. He initially defines *nomos* as follows: “[t]he Greek word for the first measure of all subsequent measures, for the first land-appropriation understood as the first partition and classification of space, for the primeval division and distribution, is *nomos*.”

Schmitt highlights the Greek origins of the word *nemein* which means both ‘to divide’ and ‘to pasture’, looking closely at how the word is re-produced in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* which outlined modern laws of orientation and order. In particular, he mentions the distinction Aristotle makes between the concrete political order as a whole (*Politieia*) and individual *nomoi* and how this relationship constitutes a “spatially conceived, concrete measure.”

Schmitt makes numerous connections between the articulation of Greek etymology and philosophical writings.

*Nomos* is essential in outlining the connection between order and orientation beginning from the political mobilizations of human society during the era of Greek antiquity. While *nomos*

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32 Ibid, pg. 68.
as a concept was more concerned with land-appropriation, it becomes central in articulating the emergence of world orders and spatial structures as a constitutive process of international law. As succinctly captured by Schmitt “Nomos is the immediate form in which the political and social order of a people become spatially visible – the initial measure and division of pastureland, i.e., the land appropriation as well as the concrete order contained in and following from it.”\textsuperscript{33} Here, Schmitt makes the connection to order more apparent in addition to noting nomos being “the measure by which the land in a particular order is divided and shared”\textsuperscript{34}, constituting a concrete spatial unity.

For him, nomos is preoccupied with firm land appropriations creating concrete changes in the spatial ordering of the Earth. Notions of space and spatiality matter for Schmitt to highlight the relationship between materiality and the concrete nature of order. When Schmitt articulates the concept of nomos in relation to international law, one can observe the theological-historical connotations to which Schmitt fixates the term.\textsuperscript{35} In the part V appendix of the Nomos of the Earth, he highlights the term’s evolution in a span of 3000 years which had rendered retaining the big picture of its meaning difficult to maintain, causing confusion over the term’s evolution. As he writes:

\begin{quote}
[t]he confusion reached its pinnacle in the theological sphere, where it can be detected in the history of one of Philo’s of Alexandra’s successful claims. Nomos became the Greek translation of the ‘law’ of the Old Testament, and simultaneously the counter-concept to the gospel of the New Testament and of grace.”\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

While the nomos as a term does undergo a number of transitional meanings from concrete spatial orders to outlining the process of land-appropriations, the way in which Schmitt mobilizes the term

\textsuperscript{33} Schmitt, Nomos, pg. 70.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} This is in reference to Schmitt’s thesis about the secularization of political concepts – The idea that the form and content of political and social concepts are theological but have been through a process of desacralization over time.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, pg. 343.
presupposes that there are a number of geographies in which the term manifests itself in and that the question of a new global nomos is political from the beginning. Schmitt’s reconstruction of nomos involves the unveiling of violent underpinnings of law that jurisprudence shields from view.\textsuperscript{37} Specifically, although subjects such as geography, mathematics, cartography and other technical subjects of knowledge production are neutral, Schmitt acknowledges that they nonetheless can be instrumentalized in highly political ways, particularly with respect to the concept of the Western Hemisphere in the construction of a new nomos.\textsuperscript{38} These geographies of nomos as a result have generated an interest in the spatial dimensions of his work.\textsuperscript{39} For Schmitt, the nomos created under the Jus Publicum Europaeum equated civilization with European civilization, where European interests were safeguarded and European colonial powers were open to appropriating unclaimed space. When looking at the geographical characteristics of the nomos and orientation articulated by Schmitt, which are political in nature, we observe a unique historical transition from Greek antiquity, pre-Global international law, the international law of Medieval Europe (Respublica Christiana) and finally into the Jus Publicum Europaeum.

In addition to Schmitt’s numerous references to the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 as a critical juncture in the transition into a new global nomos, he notes the Berlin Conference of 1885 and the League of Nations as epochal events in the transition away from the interstate Eurocentric order. In conjunction with the relativization of Europe, he outlines that the:

United States assumed a decisive position when on April 22, 1884, it recognized the flag of the International Congo Society, which was not a state. This opened the door to the confusion, whereby an


\textsuperscript{38} Schmitt, Nomos, pg. 88.

international colony was treated as an independent state. The core concept of the traditional interstate European international law thus was thrown into disorder.40

Here, Schmitt explains the transition from one global nomos into another characterised by disorder and chaos thereby bringing an end to 300 years of relative stability to the world order into a new nomos with the United States now being the ‘center’ instead of Europe whereby the new world replaces the old world. In essence, we can decipher, through the meaning of nomos and global linear thinking, the spatial understanding of U.S. foreign policy and the liberal international order. It also helps us to demonstrate how the growing literature on U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China and conceptualizations of international order can be examined with a Schmittian lens.

1.2: A New Clear-Cut Global Nomos?: Towards American Universalism & Re-drawing of Spatiality

As mentioned previously, Schmitt notes the emergence of a new global nomos and orientation when thinking about international order. Specifically, a transition from the state centrality of the Jus Publicum Europaeum into a new spaceless universalist law characterised by American superiority. Whereas the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 still prohibited European great power intervention in the domestic political affairs of the Americas, the world order was still considered to be very much under the influence of European international law due to collective agreements concluded by the European great powers. It was not until after 1890 that the “European guarantor powers individually had consented to this procedure, instead of collectively and fundamentally answering the question as they had sought to do at the Congo Conference.”41

Schmitt explains the process of the European ‘Old World’ no longer being the center of this nomos as the United States takes up the position as the ‘unfaithful hegemon’ under the guise

40 Schmitt, Nomos, pg. 217.
41 Ibid, pg. 224.
of a liberal pluralistic ideology. He recognizes the Monroe Doctrine as the first blow that is part of the continuing process of the disintegration of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*, carving up the Earth again with a new global line, attached firmly to the Western Hemisphere and the greater space of the United States.\textsuperscript{42} It was only until after the First World War and the creation of the League of Nations according to Schmitt that the United States becomes a concrete spatial threat as it raised claims to a doctrine of world interventionism.\textsuperscript{43} Paradoxically, in light of Schmitt’s nostalgia for the Eurocentric spatial order, Schmitt’s writing in the *nomos* did not advocate for a return to the territorial distinctions of international European public international law.\textsuperscript{44}

In what ways did Schmitt envision what this U.S.-led *nomos* would look like and how does it represent another manifestation of global linear thinking? This is a question highly pertinent to U.S. foreign policy and liberal hegemony. From one perspective, it is important to acknowledge that Schmitt’s critique of a U.S.-led global order on the basis of ethical and legal universalist claims do not rely on the assumption that it has replaced the previous Eurocentric order, but is rather motivated by the fact that it does not constitute such alternative order.\textsuperscript{45} As David Chandler suggests: “Schmitt’s concern is not whether power or universalism, in themselves, are bad or good but that the separation of international law from power-political relations is destructive of order.”\textsuperscript{46}

This interpretation of an American-led *nomos* that Schmitt articulates stands in contrast to other reductionist and authoritative uses\textsuperscript{47} of Carl Schmitt’s work when applied to explanations of American superiority in the world order. Take the example of Schmitt’s defensive and offensive

\textsuperscript{42} Kalyvas, 2018, pg. 42.
\textsuperscript{43} David Chandler. “The Revival of Carl Schmitt in International Relations: The Last Refuge of Critical Theorists?1.” *Millennium* 37, no. 1 (2008), pg. 44.
\textsuperscript{44} Chandler, 2008, pg. 44.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, pg. 40.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, pg. 40-41.
interpretations of the Monroe Doctrine. His defensive interpretation of the doctrine was more positive since it had established a sphere of influence that succeeded the *rayas* and amity lines of the French and British Empires by creating a new global partition and thus having the ability to undertake land-appropriations on its own in the Western Hemisphere.\(^48\) Specifically, the Monroe Doctrine as one of the first pillars of the U.S.-led global *nomos* consisted of three simple principles: 1) independence of states in the Americas; 2) the non-colonization of this space by European Great Powers; 3) the non-inference of extra-American powers in this space, or of the USA in extra-American spaces.\(^49\) Therefore, Schmitt was not explicitly against American global hegemony upon this interpretation. It was not until his offensive interpretation of the doctrine that Schmitt had become more critical of American superiority over the European ‘Old World.’ Extending liberal logic into international law and the notion of sovereignty would increasingly become more problematic as his principal concern became the extension of rights of sovereignty to European colonial possessions overseas.\(^50\) In other words, when the United States attempted to radiate liberal universalist values throughout the territorial surface of the Earth and moved beyond the defensive characteristics of the Monroe Doctrine and into the European ‘old world’ did it alter spatial dimensions and dissolved “into an empty humanism, an abstract universalism, spaceless, lacking boundaries, and territorial differentiations.”\(^51\)

Even when an Asiatic power such as Japan was accepted into the Eurocentric spatial order, which further contributed to the unraveling of the Eurocentric system of international law, Schmitt viewed this shift towards American universalism as destabilizing and producing no global

\(^{49}\) Stephen Legg, 2011. Pg. 110.
\(^{50}\) Chandler, pg. 45.
\(^{51}\) Kalyvas, pg. 41-42.
equilibrium. We can see a shift towards American boundless universalism during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, which represents another critical juncture. In contrast to previous peace conferences during the Jus Publicum Europaeum (1648, 1713, 1814-1815, 1856, 1878, 1885), Schmitt notes that the conference was not a European one.\textsuperscript{52} As noted in the Nomos of the Earth: “There almost was no treatment of the problem of freedom of the sea, of the spatial order of the Earth since the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815).”\textsuperscript{53} Once the defeated Imperialist German Empire had its possessions put under mandate pursuant to the Versailles Treaty in addition to war concessions (War Guilt Clause Art. 231 of Versailles Treaty), the United States and the rest of the world sought to create and determine a new spatial order of Europe.\textsuperscript{54} This redivision emanating from the Paris Peace Conference led to the creation of the League of Nations under the guise of Wilsonian principles of self-determination. In Schmitt’s view, this created a continuous spiral as the modern European sovereign state as the main ordering subject was dissolved fully with U.S. involvement in a European war decided at first amongst European great powers, and the emergence of the League of Nations in its wake.\textsuperscript{55}

Finally, one other variant of the U.S.-led nomos includes the creation of a security zone. After a brief exploration of the Western Hemisphere being demarcated by the Monroe Doctrine which had created a new line in public history, Schmitt briefly explains the Panama Declaration of October 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 1939, which prohibited warring states from undertaking hostile acts within a specified security zone stretching 300 sea miles wide from both American coasts into the Atlantic

\textsuperscript{52} Schmitt, Nomos, pg. 240.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, pg. 241.  
and Pacific. This security zone is only given cursory treatment by Schmitt “because the presupposed neutrality of the American states vanished” as it contributes to the compounding of the spatial order for modern international law.

**Conclusion**

This chapter introduced Carl Schmitt’s conceptualization of international law and geopolitics based on spatial concepts. Schmitt's idea of global linear thinking, as exposed in his work *Nomos*, provides a thought-provoking perspective on the U.S.'s increased influence in international affairs. As explained earlier, global linear thinking refers to a progressive vision of history that seeks to establish a universal order based on a singular set of values. In the context of U.S. influence, this can be seen in the projection of American values, norms, and institutions as a template for global governance and the promotion of liberal democracy. This aligns with Schmitt's concept of *nomos*, which denotes the spatial ordering of the world based on a particular political, legal, and cultural framework. The U.S.'s increased influence in international affairs reflects an attempt to shape the *nomos* of the Earth by asserting its vision of global order and challenging alternative conceptions. However, Schmitt's analysis also raises questions about the potential consequences of such global linear thinking, including the erosion of diversity, the exclusion of alternative perspectives, and the exacerbation of power asymmetries.

Finally, the last section of this chapter outlined the transition to a U.S.-led global *nomos* to show how Schmitt envisioned the U.S. as a global hegemon, and how this model can be applied to contemporary U.S. foreign policy. As the United States is currently undergoing increased military

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57 Schmitt, Nomos, pg. 282.
and diplomatic tensions with the PRC, a new global *nomos* based on differentiated spatial divisions is being re-drawn. But what does this exactly entail with regard to an extension of world politics and other geographical spheres? How exactly would these ideas radiate? How closely intertwined are his criticisms of American liberalism to his conception of geopolitics?\(^{58}\) I will examine these questions in the next chapter, where I analyze Schmitt’s political and geographical sovereign thinking in conjunction with his friend-enemy distinction and theory of *Großraum*.

\(^{58}\) I aim to address this further in chapter 2 as I elaborate further on Schmitt’s geopolitical thinking and connections to American order-building.
Chapter 2: The Politics and Geography of Sovereign Thinking: Order, Distinctions & Großraum

Introduction

The U.S. pursued an ambitious order expanding project shortly after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 – a process dating back as early as the post-WWII era when such institutions were being built in accordance with conditions stipulated by the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 and principles of liberal internationalism. Although such projects of order-building were evident during the Cold War, the USSR’s dissolution marked a new chapter with the emergence of American unipolarity. There is ample scholarly literature reflecting scenarios of order-building after major wars\(^\text{59}\), each with their own emerging circumstances affecting the structural balance of power in the world system. The disintegration of the USSR represents one of the latest critical junctures where the structural balance of power was so altered that it triggered the constitutive process of establishing new organizational rules and norms that had major implications for world order. As seen in historical scenarios such as the 1815 Congress system and 1945 at the end of WWII, powerful states after critical points pursue order-building projects in a plethora of ways once they have displaced other hegemons in the system. As G. John Ikenberry states in *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (2008):

> The winning postwar state is newly powerful—indeed, in some cases it is newly hegemonic, acquiring a preponderance of material power capabilities. The question is: what does this state do with its new abundance of power? It has three broad choices. It can dominate—use its commanding material capabilities to prevail in the endless conflicts over the distribution of gains. It can abandon—wash its hands of postwar disputes and return home. Or it can try to transform its favorable postwar power position into a durable order that commands the allegiance of the other states within the order.\(^\text{60}\)


In accordance with Ikenberry’s point, the U.S. pursued the third option—to transform its favorable power position and command the allegiance of other states in order to create a durable world system based on multilateral institutions.

Although originally confined to one half of the bipolar Cold War system, the demise of the USSR effectively globalized the principles of liberal internationalism that were heavily tied to American financial, military, and diplomatic power. Whereas the early post-WWII liberal order was a confined transatlantic regional community, the Post-Cold War liberal order in contrast has a much wider reach. Contemporarily however, Francis Fukuyama’s *End of History* thesis did not come into fruition. Instead of much of the world converting into liberal democracies as a result of the demise of Soviet communism, great asymmetries in power distribution occurred which were marked by geopolitical instability and sectarian conflicts. Ironically, the unravelling of the U.S.-led liberal international order can be traced back to the dissolution of the USSR as more states with diverse perspectives and ideologies began to become more integrated into a newly emerging world order. Despite the previous tripartite alliance in the post-WWII order between the United States, Western Europe and Japan, previous bargains and institutional arrangements became more fragmented which created issues of governance for the new world order in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Post-Cold War era brought into play new and complex geopolitical issues ranging from climate change, weapons proliferation, terrorism, cybersecurity as well as the growing challenges associated with interdependence. It is difficult to reach a consensus over such issues, as states

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63 Ikenberry, 2018, pg. 18-19.
that were newly exposed to such liberal democratic principles had divergent approaches and different levels of development that proved difficult to reconcile.

As I will show in this chapter, the idea of the United States’s attempt to turn the world into its own image based on free market and liberal democratic principles is a politically charged and geographically spatial ideal that can be compared with and fits into Carl Schmitt’s theory of *Großraum*.64 As already evident in its policy vis-à-vis the War on Terror, the U.S. policy of classifying the nature of competition between liberal industrial states, non-state entities, and autocracies also fits into Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction as outlined in *The Concept of the Political*. According to a February 2021 Pew Research Center survey where 2,596 U.S. adults were surveyed, 89 percent of respondents perceived China as a competitor or enemy rather than as a partner.65

A majority polled also supported the idea of taking a firmer approach to bilateral relations particularly on the issue of human rights. In the 2021 U.S. Interim National Security Strategic Guidance signed by President Joe Biden, claims about China are more assertive as the guideline notes that China “is the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system.”66 Even outside of the U.S. foreign policy establishment, it is evident that the broader American public is beginning to view the nature of geopolitical competition with China within this friend-enemy dichotomy envisioned by Schmitt. In an article written for *The Atlantic* on December

64 Here it is important to note that although certain elements of the Großraum theory fit neatly, my intention is not to demonstrate that the U.S. is a ‘Reich’ in the same sense Schmitt uses the term during the period that the Nazi regime is in power.


2022, both Eric Schmidt and Robert O. Work made the case that “[t]he best way to deter such a war [U.S.-China War] is for the U.S. military to restore its technological superiority over potential adversaries.” Here, we can observe the increased salience of China’s portrayal as an existential threat amongst U.S. officials, along with an opposition oscillating between the notion of China as a ‘competitor’ in economic terms which Schmitt suggests is a part of liberal logic, to ‘enemy’ as a more fundamental, political notion.

This chapter demonstrates the connection between the Schmittian theorization of the political and spatial geography, focusing in particular on the Indo-Pacific region. By sovereign, I refer to Schmitt’s understanding of the term in chapter 1 of Political Theology (1922) where he defines the sovereign as ‘he who decides on the state of exception’. In this section, I also aim to analyze the empirical construction of the U.S.-led world order along with an articulation of how Schmittian concepts can contribute to discussions of the American project of order-building. Whereas in the previous chapter, I outlined Schmitt’s ‘nomos’, I aim to outline in this chapter more empirical debates on the notion of international order and how Schmitt contributes to it. Next, I aim to propose a theoretical analysis of Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction and how it influences his sovereign thinking about international politics, framing it within the changing threat perceptions of the U.S. towards China.

Although Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction was elaborated before he wrote on international law and politics, it remains useful to issues pertaining to international politics and contributes to developing an analytical framework. After outlining its evolution as a political

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concept, I analyze the application of the friend-enemy distinction to U.S. foreign policy and the War on Terror and how it fits into a theoretical framework that serves to explain U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China. Next, I outline spatial dimensions of Carl Schmitt’s theory of *Großraum*, clarifying theoretical origins of the concept and its history, along with an explanation of its main tenets and finally conclude with an empirical contribution. The friend-enemy distinction and *Großraum* are important concepts to focus on in particular, as it can examine how states identify adversaries and competitors within specific regional contexts. The friend-enemy distinction helps identify the political actors involved in great power competition, while *Großraum* theory helps contextualize the dynamics within specific regional spaces. Finally, I aim to highlight possible limitations associated with how Schmittian concepts – the friend-enemy distinction and *Großraum* in particular – can be applied to U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China and articulations of American order building.

2.1: *What Is ‘Order’ in the Post-WWII era? A Brief Empirical Analysis & Schmittian Contribution*

Several scholars have attempted to develop an empirical definition of the term international order and a rules-based international order. ⁶⁹ Due to the limited scope of this thesis, a comprehensive analysis of the empirical definitions of international order will not be developed. Rather, I aim to examine specific empirical attempts to define international order in the post-WWII era as the U.S. emerges out of its isolationist stance and how Schmitt contributes to such debates. John G. Ikenberry has written extensively on the institutional logic behind the creation of the American-led hegemonic order since the end of WWII. Such an international order was created

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for two reasons: (1) To preserve post-war peace through the creation of multilateral institutions such as the UN, IMF, WB and (2) to remove the U.S. out of its protectionist position in the world economy and promote free trade and market-oriented economies. As Ikenberry states:

In the shadow of the Cold War, the United States became the “owner and operator” of the liberal capitalist political system—supporting the rules and institutions of liberal internationalism but also enjoying special rights and privileges. It organized and led an extended political system built around multilateral institutions, alliances, strategic partners, and client states. This order is built on strategic understandings and hegemonic bargains.70 We can see the emergence of an ‘American’-dominated nomos as the functioning of the liberal international order is dependent upon the preponderant power of the U.S. Generally, the liberal international order has been empirically defined as a set of agreements, laws, and customs based on ethics, equality and justice along with the preservation of national sovereignty. However, due to the increasing confrontation with the PRC and the U.S. still raveling from the effects of the 2008 global financial crisis, the universalist generalist logic that founded the liberal international order is becoming increasingly contested, and has been contested historically during the Cold War era and the Non-Aligned Movement. The fact that American military power has become overstretched in other regional theatres such as Iraq, Syria, along with faltering banking systems show the signs of American fatigue within the rules-based international order and a struggle for leadership as exemplified in the foreign policies of the U.S. and China. This has created a vacuum for other states including China to contest this definition of international order as a means to re-draw the organizational structure of international politics in an illiberal direction.

Other empirical definitions of order focus on more defined and concrete elements. One of the most common characteristics of an order are that it is predictable, stable, and legitimately

followed by other smaller states who will eventually submit to the rules of the game. Randall Schweller, in *Maxwell’s Demon and The Golden Apple: Global Discord in the New Millennium* (2014), applies principles of thermodynamics (natural science) to the international system. By using the concept of entropy – a measure of unpredictability and chaos – Schweller explains that as entropy rises, the international system becomes more unpredictable and unstable.\(^{71}\) Schweller points to five reasons behind rising entropy in contemporary world politics: decolonization, unipolarity along with the absence of constraints, a post-unipolar era that will not be ushered in by a new hegemonic war, the emergence of multiple power centers, and globalization that will dissipate to exert homogenizing pressures.\(^{72}\) The emergence of international order along with variants of liberal internationalism come out of critical factors including major wars that can determine the organizing principles of the order.

Similarly, Schmitt was concerned with questions of world order, stability and predictability, which makes his contribution relevant to definitions of order particularly in the age of multipolarity. As outlined in the previous chapter, Schmitt was primarily concerned with the question of the foundations of international law and with the fact that the shift towards 20\(^{th}\) century liberal constitutionalism would undermine the conditions of a stable and legitimate world order. This is evident from Schmitt’s explanation of the *Respublica Christiana* in the *Nomos*, where wars based on naval mandate and successive land-appropriations along with equal recognition amongst empires led to a stable world order. Here, we can clearly see how Schmitt’s historical synopsis of international order in the *Nomos* reveals a certain Schmittian influence on empirical definitions of order. From ideas of *nomos*, global linear thinking, and *Großraum*, such empirical

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\(^{72}\) Schweller, 2014, pg. 44.
conceptualizations of order possess structural similarities with the Schmittian conception and are useful to think critically about order-building and grand strategy amid growing concerns of multipolarity and the uneven distributions of power in the international system.

In this regard, Schmitt's conception of international order diverges from traditional perspectives. International order is not solely based on shared norms, institutions, or legal frameworks. Instead, he emphasizes the centrality of political power, decisionism, and the friend-enemy distinction in shaping international order. For Schmitt, order emerges through the establishment of a sovereign political entity that can effectively define and defend its interests against external threats. The key element in this conception is the ability to identify the enemy, as the friend-enemy distinction is seen as the defining factor in politics, both nationally and internationally. In Schmitt's view, international order is contingent upon the ability of sovereign entities to engage in power struggles and assert their interests vis-à-vis others. Thus, his conception of international order challenges a liberal understanding that prioritize consensus, cooperation, and shared values, instead emphasizing the role of conflict, competition, and the exercise of political power in shaping the global political landscape.

2.2: Friend-Enemy Distinction: The Predominance of the State & A Political Concept

*The Concept of the Political* was first published in 1927 and appeared in three editions just before the fall of the Weimar republic as Germany was undergoing a constitutional crisis with profound political, social, economic, and cultural repercussions. More broadly, Schmitt’s seminal work became a topic of discussion on both the left and right, despite the fact that he was a member of the Nazi party and had joined the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) on the same day as Martin Heidegger on May 1st, 1933.
Schmitt’s work on the nature of the political remains a central reference among radical French leftist thinkers, including Chantal Mouffe, who uses Schmitt’s conception of the political in her agonistic theory of democracy to advocate for the transformation of the current neo-capitalist socio-economic order. On the right, Schmitt’s conceptual distinction has been used to legitimize illiberal democratic governance practices underpinning Euro-sceptic movements in EU member states such as Hungary and Poland. Since liberalism suppressed the question of sovereignty and depoliticized state affairs that were reducible to principles of market efficiency and individualism, Schmitt’s stance was largely shared by founders of German Ordo liberalism including Hermann Heller who favored a more ‘authoritarian brand’ of liberalism that moved away from the laissez-faire tradition of economic liberalism, but was still critical of fascist movements, particularly in Italy.

Upon reflection, Schmitt’s work provided the theoretical basis for the critique of a ‘post-political’ liberal ideology that espoused abstract-universalist principles and highlights limitations of adhering to a normative world order. Such thinkers agreed with Schmitt’s assertion that parliamentary democracy was the root cause of the crisis in the Weimar republic, which a liberal democracy based on consensus and deliberation had failed to maintain during the Weimar republic era. Schmitt places a large emphasis on the predominance of state sovereignty as a result. As reflected in Political Theology, Schmitt contextualizes this further by emphasizing that ‘the sovereign is he who decides on the exception’, alluding to the idea that the exception of severe economic or political disruption is exactly the exception that makes relevant the question of

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The sovereign authority appears by being able to act in exceptionally dangerous circumstances that cannot be circumscribed within the form of law. This demonstrates Schmitt’s understanding of the state as being highly political, insofar as the state of emergency exposes the limits of the law in liberal democracies, the state’s main purpose being the making of a decision that is highly political.

How is the political defined in particular? In *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt expounds on the ambiguities surrounding definitions of the state. He suggests that “these definitions and images anticipate too much meaning, interpretation, illustration, and construction, and therefore cannot constitute any appropriate point of departure for a simple and elementary statement.” For Schmitt, the notion of the state is captured in his famous dictum ‘The concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political’. To understand the state, one needs to understand what “the political” means. Schmitt attempts to de-construct and properly contextualize the meaning of the political, referencing the term’s appearance in professional legal literature. In essence, Schmitt criticizes attempts to attach the political to social or legal considerations by making it secondary to other concerns. What he wants is a measure or standard of the political that cannot be subsumed under other considerations.

It is against this background that Schmitt defines the political in the following terms: “The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced to is that

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78 Schmitt, *The concept of the Political*, pg. 19.


between friend and enemy.”  

This definition mobilizes a specific criterion rather than an exhaustive definition of substantial content such as those articulated in Hans Morgenthau’s *La Notion du Politique*. He suggests that all spheres have a fundamental criterion; beautiful and ugly in aesthetics, good and evil in morality, etc. Here, Schmitt is answering the question of what the distinctive criterion is for the political as a distinct sphere from other realms. More specifically, this enemy “need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions. But he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger.” He thus suggests that the good/evil distinction does not apply to the political. The political may also derive its energy from diverse human endeavours, whether it be moral, religious, economic and other antitheses. Rather than use these terms in a normative way, Schmitt emphasizes that these concepts form a concrete and existentially grounded definition of the political, contained in an antagonism and its polemical character.

This is particularly evident when he elaborates on the impending consequences of extreme enmity that entail the ‘real possibility of physical killing’, where war is the ‘existential negation of the enemy’ that is ultimately a concrete decision made by the state. The ‘other’ is always a threat to the existence of the political collectivity. In other words, the presence (and construction) of the enemy creates the identity of the in-group, and in turn constitutes the ultimate threat to its existence. Schmitt’s emphasis on concreteness becomes more evident in *Legality and Legitimacy* (1928), where he puts forth the idea that any concept of law must be grounded in some form of legitimacy that is political in nature. In essence, all systems of law are without inherent force and

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82 Ibid.
83 Ibid, pg. 27.
84 Ibid, pg. 33.
always depend on a prior political and sovereign decision. The Weimar Constitution in particular is one example Schmitt expounds on, highlighting the dichotomous division between its proclaimed value neutrality one the one hand, and its excessive value commitments on the other, as the parliamentary legislative state’s system of legality entangles itself in contradictions through substantive constitutional guarantees. 86 In other words, this division/tension between liberal commitments and supposed liberal neutrality meant that this particular legalistic regime was unable to fully justify its own values as stipulated in the constitution.

2.3: Friend-Enemy Distinction: ‘War on Terror’ & The Case of U.S. Foreign Policy Vis-à-vis China as a Theoretical Framework

Now that I have established and summarized the theoretical origins of the friend-enemy distinction, a further explanation of how the friend-distinction is relevant in framing U.S.-China tensions is necessary. As highlighted in the latest National Security Strategy released by President Biden in October 2022, threat perceptions regarding China are becoming more distinctive based on the competitive nature of economic relations and ambitious diplomatic activities. Yet a more nuanced understanding of how Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction applies in the case of U.S. foreign policy and the war on terror is necessary in order to properly situate how such an event is applicable to U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China beginning from the early post-Cold War era.

The September 11 attacks constitute one example where the U.S. administration under George W. Bush encountered a situation that was so severe in its economic and political disruption that it constituted a state of exception. The statements and posture of the Bush administration such as the passing of the Patriot Act implied a vision of the international order where law is merely

‘one policy’ among other considerations and is not legally binding—except when applied to the enemy in which case notions of legality adopt a polemical nature. The attacks demonstrated that warfare was not only limited between state actors such as those in the 18th and 19th centuries but non-state entities as well.

These are inextricably connected to an American neoconservative understanding of American foreign policy and American power. Prominent figures such as Richard Perle — board member of the Defence Policy Board at the time — advocated for such a position to use hard power in exceptional circumstances, who had remarked in the Guardian two days after the Invasion of Iraq: “What will die is the fantasy of the UN as the foundation of the new world order. As we sift the debris, it will be important to preserve, the better to understand, the intellectual wreckage of the liberal conceit of safety through international law administered by international institutions.” This reveals the evangelical and exaggerated thinking behind the use of American power, and the inherent contradictions between liberal internationalists and American neoconservatives in U.S. foreign policy. Whereas the Post-WWII liberal international order had attempted to espouse liberal democratic and market capitalist ideals, the Bush administration in the face of such a political and economic disruption was willing to contradict abstract-universalist norms in order to confront what it believed to be an existential threat to the American sovereign, delimiting a ‘zone of exception’. The attacks had reached such a level of severity that the crime paradigm and attendant norms were no longer beyond challenge. Although the case can be made that the U.S. was not abiding by abstract-universalist norms (i.e., an aggressive foreign policy in

South America during the 1980s), the unique element of the 9/11 attacks lie in the fact that the existential threat was on American soil.

The Bush administration’s passing of the Congressional Joint Resolution 23 two days after the September 11 attacks in which President Bush authorized all ‘necessary force’ against those who aided in the terrorist attacks proved to be a critical moment of decision where the sovereign (i.e., those making up the representative body of the House and Congress) placed the U.S. on a war footing.\(^90\) This represents a clear case in which the connected concepts of the sovereign and friend-enemy distinction based on Schmitt’s antithesis is decided on and can become normalized. The Bush administration’s interpretation of the Joint Resolution in terms of what a ‘wartime President’ is permitted to do is what made this foreign policy situation exceptional. President Bush claimed to be acting legally while abandoning all normal restraints associated with American constitutional law, enacting policies and legislation based on the sovereign as commander in chief.\(^91\) Post-9/11 foreign policy is also applicable to the classification of Al-Qaeda fighters under the Geneva Conventions regulating warfare.

Although one can still argue that the Bush administration was within its jurisdictional authority to persecute detained fighters in the war on terror for unlawful combat under Article 4 of the third Geneva Conventions, there are additional stipulations considered to be exceptional in the case of U.S. foreign policy. The Geneva Conventions mandate that the controlling state (once the appropriate war paradigm is determined) determine the status of a detainee by setting up a ‘competent tribunal’.\(^92\) With the creation of military tribunals that rendered obsolete the strict application of questioning of enemy combatants and maltreatment, the Bush administration’s

\(^90\) Ralph, 2009, pg. 635-636. 
\(^91\) Ibid, pg. 636. 
\(^92\) Ibid, pg. 637.
maintenance of a detention policy based upon the sovereign authority of the President under the Patriot Act was an exception, where a concrete friend-enemy political distinction was made, thus creating a zone of exception. The decision on the situation of exception as per Schmitt’s definition of sovereignty arises out of a pre-existing determination of friend-enemy, which in this case were Al-Qaeda combatants.

Such a concrete example of friend-enemy distinction is also relevant to U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China, where the United States in another critical historical moment decides on a state of exception based upon a friend-enemy distinction as geopolitical tensions continue to rise as seen by attempts to contain the PRC. As evident from the publication of *Nomos of the Earth*, Schmitt’s work became increasingly interlinked with a spatial understanding of the global order based upon regional spheres of influence and power blocks. U.S. foreign policies therefore fit neatly within a friend-enemy dichotomy as scholars reflect on structural changes occurring in the global order. Despite current tensions mounting between both sides ranging from the trade wars under the Trump presidency, increased competition in technological innovation, and tensions in the SCS, U.S. foreign policymakers did not always conceptualize China as a clearly defined enemy nor have relations escalated to total war. These relations have ebbed and flowed between three distinct periods of pragmatism (1940s-1960s), normalization (1970s-1980s), and accommodation/tensions (1990s-early 2000s).

The time period from the early post-Cold War era to now in 2023 marks a contrasted shift in U.S. discourse not seen since the era of Mao Zedong who employed an anti-imperialist rhetoric

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to condemn U.S. interventionist policies in Southeast Asia. Specifically, in an effort to fight off Japanese imperialism and expansionist policies in Manchuria, the United States and China together did not recognize the occupation of Manchuria in 1936 and provided aid, weapons and applied economic sanctions. Relations began to change when Chinese communists under Mao Zedong came to power in 1949. At the time, the United States did not recognize the CCP as a legitimate government due to the U.S.’s support of Chinese nationalists who became unpopular after the civil war.

The conceptualization of the ‘other’ as an enemy became more pronounced under McCarthyism. With normalization beginning to occur under the Nixon administration, relations once again changed. In a 1971 national television address, Nixon remarked that “[t]here can be no stable and enduring peace without the participation of the People’s Republic of China and its 750 million people.” Such remarks and subsequent visits by Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon produced a noticeable shift in American rhetoric and public opinion as this shift demonstrated the persuasive power of American presidents in terms of redefining international politics and U.S. foreign policy as a sovereign head of state. Relations once again flared up after the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989. The mutual distrust between both sides reappeared, as animosity based upon ideological differences emerged. As Xing Lu explains:

Americans perceived the government crackdown upon the student democratic movement as a massacre that offended American values of freedom, liberty, and justice, especially as they watched on TV the demolition of the ‘goddess of democracy’ statue erected by students as a replica of the statue of liberty.

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96 Xing Lu, 2011, pg. 346.
In response, President George H.W. Bush implemented a series of sanctions that involved the suspension of economic aid and loans to the Chinese state, further cementing a threat perception concerning China. Xing Lu’s analysis shows a profound conceptualization of China as the ‘enemy’ in Schmittian terms, insofar as it is framed as opposing the fundamental values of the U.S. Despite a policy of accommodation under the Clinton administration, the United States began to view China as a looming threat economically. In their 1997 book *The Coming Conflict with China*, Bernstein and Munro predicted that China “will be a predominating force as the world takes shape in the new millennium, and, as such, it is bound to be no longer a strategic friend of the United States but a long-term adversary.”97 This clearly shows how Schmitt’s framework of the enemy corresponds to the U.S. narrative of China as a fundamental enemy since it constitutes a severe political disruption to the point that American administrations, particularly under Trump and Biden, have taken extraordinary measures to confront Chinese clout.98 All in all, as the complex fluctuations of U.S. foreign policy towards China demonstrate, there is a grounding in threat perceptions of China in accordance with a realist understanding of the friend-enemy distinction. I will demonstrate this further in the next chapter, focusing on how U.S. threat perceptions in foreign policy change in the post-Cold War era and beyond.

2.4: *Großraum*: Spatial and Geographical Dimensions of Schmittian Sovereign Thinking & The U.S. Project of Order-Building

Schmitt’s theory of *Großraum* (territorially expanded states) can also be transposed to the American project of order-building that received more impetus after the dissolution of the USSR.

98 In chapter 4 and 5 I will expand more specifically on these extraordinary measures as evident from select policy actions and policy speeches.
Großraum as a theoretical concept was brought about by Schmitt to provide a spatial dimension to answering the question of the political. The Großraum order required three central elements. First, it requires an assertive global hegemon – a ‘Reich’ – that would guarantee internal stability within the order, reserving itself the right to sovereignty due to its ability to define a clear enemy. This Reich serves as the locus of political authority. Second, a ‘political idea’ revolved around the Reich’s consolidated identity and the Großraum’s organized criterion of order. Lastly, a clearly defined space was needed to prevent other ‘foreign powers’ that would be banned from intervening in its internal affairs.⁹⁹

The Monroe doctrine of 1823 serves as one example of a clearly defined space. Yet Schmitt develops his theory against the backdrop of Nazi foreign policy with expansionist aims beginning from 1938-1939. As he had articulated in Nomos, in place of modern interstate European international law came universal American-influenced international law after WWI. By outlining a theory of expanded territory, Schmitt wanted to counter abstract international law with a law that did not refer to abstract norms but arose out of ‘historical and geographic circumstances’.¹⁰⁰ These ideas founded by the Reich (empire) would radiate in accordance with the order specified by the Großraum and exclude interventionist powers. In addition, Schmitt envisions a plurality of Großräume that would be opposed to a liberal economic policy based on global markets and open trade, specifically directed against the economic globalization espoused by Great Britain and the United States.¹⁰¹

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 ¹⁰¹ Hohendahl, 2018, pg. 73.
Beginning from 1939 onwards, these subsequent tenets that made up the theory of *Großraum* and the German Monroe doctrine was used by Hitler to justify expansionist policies under the guise of the homogeneous German *Volk* (people) who also made up an essential part of the international order. The restructuring of the European order that would transcend universalist international law became a concrete task in line with German foreign policy determined under the guise of national socialism.\textsuperscript{102} With subsequent annexations taking place in Western Europe from 1940 onwards, the autonomy of these states became relegated under the notion of dependent satellite nation-states with political decisions emanating from Berlin concerning their autonomy.\textsuperscript{103} This historiography of the evolution of the theory is critical, as it demonstrates how Schmitt’s understanding evolved over time as the Nazi regime continued its westward and eastward territorial expansions along with its alignment of the criticism of U.S. foreign policy. Schmitt’s idea of a specific *Großraum* was referring in particular to the territorial makeup of the European continent, so he uses the term in a specific context that goes beyond his works on the nation-state in the 1930s.

The theory of *Großraum* and its rooted decisionism\textsuperscript{104} can be transposed to U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China; in particular, how notions of liberalism resulted in a politics of difference and exclusion based upon normative values. Although the application of the theory would be less relevant to the physical expansion of spatial geography, the ideology that lies behind creating multilateral institutions supported by American power (with the U.S. at the centre of authority but not necessarily a Reich) and then subsequent attempts to spread such power through multilateral

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, pg. 75.  
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{104} Decisionism, as articulated by Schmitt, centers on the idea that political power ultimately rests on the ability to make decisions, especially in critical and exceptional situations. According to Schmitt, the sovereign authority is the one who possesses the power to make decisive choices and political ideals, hence why I connect it to the theory of *Großraum*. 

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Institutions (radiate) to other parts of the globe shows similarities with Schmitt’s formulation of the theory. As seen in the rhetoric used by American presidents such as George W. Bush in the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, interventionist policies were justified in the name of humanitarianism and issues of national security, which can be understood in analogy with the theory of *Großraum* to acknowledge the use of force.

In relation to the case of U.S. foreign policy towards China, one can interpret the case of Taiwan and tensions in the SCS related to the nine-dash line as two examples of a Chinese form of a Monroe doctrine (Chinese *Großraum*), where under no circumstances do Chinese officials accept interference in the internal affairs of the offshore island and SCS as it is considered to be part of China. As Chinese foreign minister Wang Xi remarked at the 2022 U.N General Assembly, Beijing would “take the most forceful steps to oppose external interference.” Diplomatic visits such as those conducted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi under the ideal of preserving Taiwanese democracy with a Schmittian analysis in accordance with the theory of *Großraum*, further demonstrates how the U.S. as a declining yet relevant hegemon attempts to spread/radiate political ideals and power capabilities in the SCS and Indo-Pacific regions. Along with the decisionism attached to such policies, the clear support amongst American civil society and the civilian population reflects broad homogeneous support, with homogeneity being another essential component for Schmitt’s theory. This will be further analyzed in relation to specific policies enacted under subsequent American administrations vis-à-vis China in the second half of my thesis.

2.5: The Limitations of a Schmittian analysis of U.S. Foreign Policy

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Despite the empirical value of a Schmittian analysis, one has to note possible limitations of using a Schmittian framework, regarding the friend-enemy distinction and theory of *Großraum* in particular. For Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction, there is the limitation of not specifying how such a friend-enemy division occurs in international relations. Since it is mostly a state-level analysis of how the sovereign decides upon the exception, this international framework is lacking in Schmitt’s understanding of international law and politics. There are also important limitations associated with the theory of *Großraum*. Firstly, *Großraum* as a theory of contemporary international politics remains highly underdeveloped. As noted by some scholars such as Roberto Orsi:

Schmitt explicitly recognized that the above summarized concepts [*Reich & Großraum*] were simply initial reflections, early drafts of conceptual constructs which should have been refined and further elaborated by legal theorists in the years and decades to come, had Germany prevailed, in the broader context of an international law overhaul.106 Orsi also points out that the concept of *Großraum* is inseparable from the *Reich* and that “one does not need *Großraum* to envision a core-periphery dynamic to explain the way in which political violence appears to be geographically distributed.”107 While Orsi may be correct in stating that the concept needs to be readapted and modified in order to be a viable empirical tool through which to analyze geopolitical phenomena, I disagree with his assertion that its application to China or Russia as its own *Großraum* makes little sense. One can note previous historical instances where boundaries were delineated according to spheres of influence – including the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact signed between the USSR and Nazi Germany, where we see one case of two world powers agreeing to spheres of influence amid increased conflictual tensions due to WWII.

107 Orsi, 2021, pg. 309.
As mentioned earlier, the Monroe Doctrine also stands out as another important example. As I demonstrate in my next chapter, the theory of *Großraum* can apply to the U.S. attempt to radiate universalist ideals across the globe, which leads to increased tensions in the Indo-Pacific region. By incorporating the concept of *Großraum* within a Schmittian framework, a deeper understanding of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China can be achieved. It provides a lens through which to analyze power dynamics, regional rivalries, and exceptional measures employed by the U.S., filling certain gaps in neo-realist analysis that may primarily focus on state behavior and power balancing as I attempt to show in the next chapter.

**Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the theoretical origins of Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction and how this has influenced his sovereign thinking about international politics. Through an explanation of the concept of the political, I demonstrated how this dialectic can be applied to U.S. foreign policies relating to the War on Terror and U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China. The theoretical tenets of the *Großraum* theory of territorially expanded states, along with a brief synopsis of how it applies to increased tensions on U.S. foreign policy towards China and the American project of order-building, highlight the utility of Schmittian concepts applied to elements of U.S.-China relations. I have presented in this section possible limitations associated with a Schmittian analysis. The next chapter will go beyond a historical analysis of U.S. foreign policy in the immediate post-Cold War era, analyzing the emergence of another American exception. This will entail a clear focus on the rhetoric and policies of the Bush and Clinton administrations as an example of an American exception and *Großraum* that can be linked to early criticisms of American liberalism.
Part II: A Schmittian Analysis of U.S. Foreign Policy vis-à-vis China & Order-building: The Post-Cold War era and Beyond (George H.W.Bush.-Pres.)
Chapter 3: Another American Exception - Beyond Neo-realist Conceptualizations of U.S.

Foreign Policy towards China in the post-Cold War Period

Introduction

Now that a clearer understanding of Schmitt’s polemical ideas of international order, global linear thinking, friend-enemy distinction and theory of Großraum are articulated, I now aim to demonstrate how Schmitt’s theories can be used to reconnect neo-realist understandings of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China to realist tenets. By applying a Schmittian lens, political theorists can critically examine and challenge the assumptions made by neo-realism, such as its focus on rational behavior and systemic factors. By focusing on the friend-enemy distinction and Großraum in particular, political theorists can explore how state sovereignty and the identification of enemies shape state behavior and interactions. This helps to uncover the ideological, normative, and identity-based factors that influence international relations. Indeed, there has been ample scholarly literature written by neo-realist scholars elucidating the inherent tensions between the U.S. and China as well as U.S.-China relations since the early 1970s when U.S.-PRC relations were normalized.108 Only by examining U.S. foreign policy discourses by presidential administrations beginning from the early post Cold-War era does one gain a better understanding of how this transition in the U.S. foreign policy establishment occurs over time along with its spatial dimensions.

Although the source of tensions presumably emanates from China’s rapid economic growth beginning from the late 1970s under Deng Xiaoping’s liberalizing economic reforms, initial American perceptions of China viewed its economy as rapidly growing and still in a transitory

stage that had common objectives and differences when it came to the adherence of liberal values such as human rights. President George H. W. Bush, in a trip to Tokyo to attend Emperor Hirohito’s funeral in February 1989, acknowledged that when it comes to U.S.-China relations:

We've passed the day on the U.S.-China relationship where anyone talks about "playing a card." That was a term that was highly offensive to the Chinese, and properly so. And our relationship, the China-U.S. relationship, stands on its own in terms of cultural exchange and trade and on common strategic interests, and on the way we view most of the world -- not all of it, because we have some big differences with them on some areas. But what I want to do is to strengthen that and to build on those common perceptions and to make them understand that we will never take for granted this relationship and that we will never do anything in dealing with the Soviets that would inure to the detriment of our Asian friends, be they Chinese, be they ASEAN, be they Japanese.109

Bush thus highlights the pragmatic need for building a productive U.S.-China bilateral relationship that is imperative for a stable East Asian regional security architecture. By highlighting the policy areas where cooperation remains the highest (i.e., cultural exchanges, trade and common security), there was a clear indication through the discourse that China was not clearly defined as a ‘enemy.’ This fits into Schmitt’s description on the friend-enemy distinction in *The Concept of the Political*, in which he highlights that at times it may even be advantageous to engage in ‘business transactions’ with an adversary. Although such economic ties were emphasized as a means to highlight progress in relations, normative values determined under the guise of the LIO were what continued to set the U.S. and China apart, even though China has rhetorically stayed committed to institutions associated with the U.S.-led international order and pushback on normative values of universal liberalism and human rights.110 As a result, discussions have coincided with a transition to a multipolar and realist world order measured by relative power capabilities between both states as a rising power (China) challenges an established hegemon


(U.S.). Although U.S. foreign policies have been explained previously by scholars under the guise of a Schmittian analysis within the context of the ‘War on Terror’, this chapter shows that a Schmittian lens can also be applied to the case of U.S.-China relations. Moreover, a critical question to consider is: how can we explain abrupt policy and discourse shifts in relation to U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China beginning from the early post Cold-War era to dissolution of the USSR in 1991?

In this chapter, I show how the application of a Schmittian framework fills in the gaps of neo-realist understandings when explaining U.S.-China tensions and U.S. foreign policy towards China, through an emphasis on geography and international order rather than material capabilities. In particular, I focus on Schmitt’s understanding of international order, great power competition and multipolarity with an emphasis on the notion of multiple Großraume and technological advancements he elaborates on in Land and Sea (1942). I make the claim that neo-realist theorists may benefit from reconnecting with some of the roots of a realist approach as embodied in Schmittian thought. I conclude with a Schmittian analysis of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China beginning from the George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations via an analysis of policy documents and speeches released by U.S. institutions such as The White House. In this section, I outline how beginning from the post Cold-War era, initial attempts are made on the part of American administrations to integrate the PRC into the LIO. It should be noted that all discourses involve a rhetorical dimension that has to be taken into account. I am essentially arguing that there is something Schmittian in how we analyze those speeches: the change in vocabulary and the insistence on specific words (e.g., collaboration rather than confrontation) can participate in an effort to mask what Schmitt sees as the conflictual reality of politics.\footnote{See Armen Avanessian, Irony and the Logic of Modernity. Vol. 3. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, Inc), 2015.}
previously, Schmitt was very critical of liberalism precisely on the grounds that it sought to mask the concrete – and thus inimical character of politics.

3.1: Neo-realism and Carl Schmitt: International Order, Growing Great-Power Competition, enmity, & Multipolarity in Relation to U.S.-China Tensions

Contemporary neo-realist theorization of U.S.-China tensions has pushed aside certain elements that are prominent in Schmitt and should be rehabilitated in a neo-realist framework. Neo-realism is one IR theory in particular that has been used in explaining geopolitical phenomena including the case of the increasingly competitive nature of U.S.-China tensions. At its core, neo-realism/structural realism is but a variant of realist thought that emphasizes security competition, inter-state conflicts, and difficulties of achieving diplomatic cooperation in the international order as factors that lead to an anarchic international system.\textsuperscript{112} Neo-realism defines the structure of the international system in terms of three defining elements: organizing principles, differentiating units, and the distribution of material capabilities.\textsuperscript{113} Neo-realism thus provides a robust explanation for the state of war in international relations and has overlapping elements with realist thought, including the idea that international politics is based on a self-help system along with the priority of survival and statism. I focus here on neo-realist thought insofar as there has been an abundance of literature that explains the continuous struggle for power between the U.S. and China.\textsuperscript{114} In particular, the distribution of capabilities is one of the most important variables in determining how many great powers may exist at a certain time period. Whereas neo-realists such

\textsuperscript{114} For a discussion of these debates see Matthew Kroenig, The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2020 & Brandon Yoder, The United States and Contemporary China-Russia Relations Theoretical Insights and Implications. (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan), 2022.
as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer fixate attention on power maximization, a Schmittian perspective can provide a more nuanced explanation of international order.

Kenneth Waltz’s 1979 *Theory of International Politics* was essential in establishing how the distribution of material power capabilities matters in understanding outcomes in the international political system. In other words, rather than focusing on Hans Morgenthau’s human-nature focused realism where humans are susceptible to violence and chaos, neo-realist thought focuses specifically on the structural intricacies of the international system that form the constitutive elements of an anarchic system, which in turn de-centres the realm of international politics where power distribution becomes hierarchical. As Waltz states:

> [t]he parts of a hierarchic system are related to one another in ways that are determined both by their functional differentiation and by the extent of their capabilities. The units of an anarchic system are functionally undifferentiated. The units of such an order are then distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks.\(^{115}\)

Waltz later explains how structural changes within the international system are modified in accordance with changes in the distribution of material capabilities across the international system’s unit-level variation.\(^{116}\) This as a result has significant implications on how states may behave in the international system – pursuing strategies of either buck-passing and band wagoning for middle to low-power capability states, or revisionist responses that result in paranoia or a rising power syndrome for the ruling power. Since states, in particular great powers, are concerned with the capabilities of other states, the possibility that states may use force to advance its national interests becomes apparent, as it causes all states to worry about their survival. Waltz asserts: “Because power is a possibly useful means, sensible statesmen try to have an appropriate amount

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\(^{116}\) Waltz, 1979, pg. 107.
of it. In crucial situations, however, the ultimate concern of states is not for power but for security.”\textsuperscript{117} Thus, neo-realists are concerned with maximizing power as a means to an end, which in this case is security and survival.

Although neo-realists generally agree on the fact that balances of power will recurrently form in different manifestations, an offensive realist perspective advanced by John Mearsheimer, which is another variant of neo-realism, outlines a differing perspective on how power dynamics operate in the international system and hence behave differently. For Mearsheimer, states maximize power in such a way that they “understand that the best way to ensure their survival is to be the most powerful state in the system.”\textsuperscript{118} Since states are uncertain about the material capabilities of other states, this generates a power dilemma, where states in a self-help system, particularly great powers, will maximize their power as much as possible to become a leading military power. Neo-realist scholars such as Stephen Walt, Graham Allison and many others have written extensively on how a neo-realist lens applies to the international system and growing great power competition between the U.S. and China as tensions escalate. This has led to a narrative of grand strategies pursued between both states, as they both compete to become the predominant power by means short of the use of force. Neo-realist theory, therefore, similar to a Schmittian analysis of growing U.S.-China competition, is rooted in material terms. This does not necessarily mean that war or the use of force is inevitable between both great powers per say. As Rosh Doshi in his seminal book \textit{The Long Game: China’s Grand Strategy to Displace American Order} states:

\begin{quote}
Beijing feared Asian regional forums might be used by Washington to build liberal regional order or even an Asian NATO, so China joined them to blunt American power. It stalled institutionalization in regional organizations that included the United States; wielded institutional rules to constrain US freedom of maneuver; and hoped its own participation would reassure wary neighbors otherwise tempted to join a
\end{quote}


US-led balancing coalition. China also worked with Russia to erect regional institutions in Central Asia to guard against US influence within the region.\(^\text{119}\)

As mentioned in the second chapter, such policy initiatives established by the United States, such as increased institutionalization in the Indo-Pacific along with increased militarization, when explained through a neo-realist lens, can match with a Schmittian offensive interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine.

However, where a neo-realist approach may omit the geographical elements of how such order-building occurs, a Schmittian framework can help fill in these gaps because *Großraum* explains how material capabilities can radiate. These increased encroachments in the name of abstract liberal universalism along a regional ‘Chinese sphere of influence’ exacerbate tensions leading to increased competition as was seen in Chinese blunting attempts. Despite its critical insights, one should note the conceptual limitations of a neo-realist lens in explaining contemporary geopolitical phenomena. For instance, both Friedman and Starr point out a weakness in Waltzian structural realism or neo-realism, which is the:

\[i\]nability to explain social transformation results largely from his [Kenneth Waltz’s] preclusion to progress, state interaction, and/or unit-level processes from his conceptualization of structure. While these models usefully underscore the need to emphasize the causal link from behaviour to structure, they inadequately attend to the social structural context within which this social construction occurs.\(^\text{120}\)

In essence, the self-help thesis supported by neo-realists emerges from a conjunction of anarchy and agency insecurity as part of an agent-structure nexus that does not take into account the

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socialization effects of how the feeling of insecurity occurs among agents – namely nation-states.¹²¹

Limitations become even more evident when using other prominent IR theories such as social constructivism that emphasizes the evolution of norms, ideas, and human consciousness to demonstrate how they influence the way actors interpret international politics, thus highlighting the role of normative structures in shaping perceptions.¹²² Revisiting Schmitt’s thought better addresses these limitations. For instance, the theory of *Großraum* helps provide an account of the socialization of great powers into a territory defined space. Similarly, the friend-enemy distinction used by the U.S. for China allows them to socialize and build a consensus with countries in the Indo-Pacific under the idea of a ‘resurgent’ China increasingly posing a threat to the region.

For the purposes of this thesis, I do not aim to compare and contrast the merits of neo-realism in explaining increasing U.S.-China tensions in relation to other mainstream IR theories, such as liberalism and social constructivism. Rather, I seek to demonstrate how neo-realist explanations of U.S.-China tensions along with the American project of order-building beginning from the early post-Cold War era can benefit from a Schmittian analysis in terms of reconsidering elements that they have pushed aside or neglected. For instance, neo-realists such as Waltz argue that states are security maximizers. A limitation within this framework is that an adequate explanation of the process of recurrent power maximization is lacking. Schmitt’s thought is important to factor into this discussion insofar as his theory of *Großraum* can serve to explain how the distribution of capabilities looks like at a more macro-level with an emphasis on spatial

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By unraveling the interconnected relationship between international order, multipolarity, great power competition, and political geography, a more nuanced comprehension of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China can be achieved. This additionally shows that there is a historical parallel to note between 1950s Schmitt and contemporary neo-realists in their explanations of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China and U.S.-China tensions more broadly.

Neo-realism conceptualizes international order in an anarchic and hierarchical sense derived from the Waltzian tradition. As outlined in *Nomos of the Earth* in relation to the role of theology in international law, Schmitt’s conceptualization of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* is hierarchical since he envisions European interstate international law as superior as it is a concrete spatial order that brackets war and more effectively delineates boundaries. One of the most prominent proponents of liberalism and the liberal international order, jurist Hans Kelsen, notes that “what we call society or community, is either the factual coexistence of individuals or a normative order of their mutual behaviour.”123 While liberal internationalists such as Kelsen believe that notions of international order reflect the popular will of human consensus or the ability of states to agree on a set of norms, both Schmittian and neo-realist understandings of the term ‘international order’ would contest this. As I explained in earlier chapters, Schmitt dismisses the normative values of modern constitutionalism as arbitrary and rationalizes this from the premise that order – or some form of international normative order – comes from a higher form of legitimacy beyond legality that is concrete, emerging only through the exception.124 This

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conception of international order is strongly elitist, with authority deriving from legitimacy, highlighting the supremacy of power over normative values.

Another prominent neo-realist, Stephen Walt, also formulates a similar critique of the liberal international order. He notes that liberalism had failed to anticipate the events of the end of the Cold War, and had some trouble explaining this phenomenon due to its inherent assumption that institutionalism within the international order will invariably lead to cooperation that does not further take into account new ideas such as ‘common security.’  

Great power competition is another critical concept that is factored into Carl Schmitt’s conceptualization of international relations when addressing the limitations of neo-realism. As Schmitt explained in the Nomos, the essence of European international law was the bracketing of war. He thus claims that it was the recognition of one great power by another great power was ‘the highest form of recognition in international law.’  

In other words, this recognition of great power status had an important socializing effect on the spatial structure of the order of international law. As states gradually increase their capabilities, the issue of status becomes more paramount. This in turn leads to a heightened sense of enmity as a rising state seeks to challenge the status quo of the established ruling power. This socialization aspect in relation to the state-structure nexus that neo-realism struggles to reconcile with can be useful for neo-realists to visit when explaining great power competition.

Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction was more so focused on state structure. I argue that this antinomy is central in the narrative of U.S.-China tensions and U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis the PRC more broadly, and that Schmitt allows us to see in hindsight that this enmity was always

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126 Schmitt, Nomos, pg. 190.
127 Ibid.
present. For instance, John Mearsheimer argued that the U.S. should do whatever it can to slow China’s rise, as it is considered a threat to American permeance in the Indo-Pacific region.\textsuperscript{128} Lastly, there has been considerable debate about the move towards multipolarity in realist scholarly literature – that is, the idea that the international order will comprise of the rise of multiple regional powers (i.e., BRICS). Schmitt’s theory of \textit{Großraum} similarly envisions multiple \textit{Großräume} that are the key to achieving stability in the international order as spheres of influence that are clearly delineated but go further than neo-realism in explaining the behaviour of great powers as both the U.S. and China consider themselves great powers trying to radiate different normative values.

In addition, while Schmitt examines the industrialization of seafaring in \textit{Land and Sea}, the question he raises is in relation to the role of technology and its capacity to transform human culture. Indeed, Schmitt’s ideas on how technological advancements such as those made in shipbuilding complement the neo-realist focus on how such technological development can lead to a state’s increase in capabilities. This is evident from changes identified by Graham Allison, when speaking about great power competition between the U.S. and China.\textsuperscript{129} While there is a similarity in treatment in Schmittian and neo-realist analyses, a Schmittian framework can contribute to explain how technological advancements between two great powers may lead to increased competition. As I demonstrate in the next chapters, improved naval capabilities explain the rise of the importance attached to sea powers. That is one element of U.S.-China tensions that neo-realists may miss, but on which Schmitt insists in earlier texts like \textit{Land and Sea}. In the book,


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he states that “world history is a history of the battle of sea powers against land powers and of land powers against sea powers.” Of course, there are classical realist accounts of U.S.-China tensions, which closely scrutinize how state behavior is shaped by historical lessons, politics, ideology, ideas, and that states make decisions influenced by factors of fear, hubris and vulnerability in the context of high uncertainties regarding the material capabilities of other states. As I aim to show, there is an increased sea and land-based power projection from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China particularly in the Indo-Pacific region as evident from rhetorical discourse, national security, strategic and relevant policy documents released by the state department. Such power dynamics will have significant implications for the region’s security architecture in the long-term that neo-realists will need to pay increased attention to along with its socialization implications.


I now turn to the application of three Schmittian concepts (American Order, friend-enemy distinction, and Großraum) to subsequent American administrations. One main limitation to note of is the fact that U.S.-China relations have extended as far back as the early 1900s when the U.S. under the William Taft administration had formulated the early stages of its ‘One China Policy.’ Due to the sheer volume of scholarly literature on U.S.-China relations, the scope of my thesis will be limited to the George H.W. Bush administrations to President Trump. I intend to show the

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potential contribution of a Schmittian conceptualization of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China, U.S.-China tensions, and the American project of order building more broadly.

When George H. W. Bush was first elected president in November 1988 by defeating Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis, there were a number of geopolitical developments underway. From nuclear proliferation, revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, and the fall of communism at the tail end of the Cold War, the U.S. was primed to enter a new era that would eventually herald the rise of a ‘unipolar’ power that saw the end of the totalitarian era. This was encapsulated in his inaugural speech on January 20th, 1989, where he remarked:

For a new breeze is blowing, and a world refreshed by freedom seems reborn. For in man's heart, if not in fact, the day of the dictator is over. The totalitarian era is passing, its old ideas blown away like leaves from an ancient, lifeless tree. A new breeze is blowing, and a nation refreshed by freedom stands ready to push on. There is new ground to be broken and new action to be taken. There are times when the future seems thick as a fog; you sit and wait, hoping the mists will lift and reveal the right path. But this is a time when the future seems a door you can walk right through into a room called tomorrow.133

As this quote shows, the newly elected George H.W. Bush administration was anticipating the eventual demise of communist ideologies, as their predominance began to recede amid continued institutional decay in Central/Eastern Europe. Such newfound confidence in U.S. order-building had significant implications for the global distribution of power, international order, and for China’s regional environment. A Schmittian framework can help break down these subsequent elements. As outlined in the previous chapter, *Großraum* consists of three central characteristics – a *Reich* (an assertive global hegemon), a political idea, and finally a clearly defined space that would prevent foreign powers from intervening in the internal affairs of that global hegemon. With regards to the first criterion, the United States under the George H.W. Bush administration was a highly assertive global hegemon; of note are its successive victories from the exploitation of Iraq’s

military in light of the invasion of Kuwait, as well as the performance of a strong U.S. dollar. U.S. GDP also accounted for 21 per cent of global GDP in 1990.\textsuperscript{134} This was just one indication that the U.S. had achieved its status as a global hegemon, which was also the case during the Post-World War II era.

Domestically, economic reforms enacted under Bush such as the cutting of the budget deficit and disciplining future spending played an additional role in this newfound confidence as a global hegemon.\textsuperscript{135} With regards to the second characteristic, it is evident even from Bush’s inauguration speech that the United States had in mind a particular political idea (i.e., liberal democracy and liberal internationalism) through the form of increased institutional ties. Later on in the speech, Bush remarks that nations of the world are “moving towards democracy through the door to freedom. Men and women of the world move toward free markets through the door to prosperity.”\textsuperscript{136} This passage demonstrates a clear political idea along with aspirations to radiate them globally through rules, norms, and institutions. In relation to the last criterion, I aim to demonstrate that the idea of a clearly defined space is more ambiguous. Although there is the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 as pointed to earlier, there is intense contestation over the supremacy of the international order and who ultimately delineates these boundaries. Yet given the U.S. global hegemonic status during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the U.S.’s sphere of influence was solidified as there was no remaining superpower that could challenge its predominance.

In the context of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China during this time, the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre marked a critical period in U.S.-China relations. In response to the ordeal, the


\textsuperscript{136} Bush, inauguration speech, 1989.
U.S. cut off military sales to China amid its harsh crackdown on Chinese students. Yet what is more significant with regards to this event is that it marked a rupture in U.S.-China relations. Despite this, the Bush administration continued to pursue an engagement strategy with the PRC, but this did not necessarily mean that the U.S. reiterated its own normative values regarding China. In a press conference one month after the massacre Bush had remarked:

Yes, it does; it certainly does. Concern is universal. And that's what I want the Chinese leaders to understand. You see, we've taken this action. I am one who lived in China; I understand the importance of the relationship with the Chinese people and with the Government. It is in the interest of the United States to have good relations, but because of the question that you properly raised, we have to speak out in favor of human rights. And we aren't going to remake the world, but we should stand for something. And there's no question in the minds of these students that the United States is standing in their corners.\footnote{Bush thus reiterates commitments to speaking out in favor of human rights along with a further separation of normative values. Within a Schmittian framework, one could object to the appeal to universalist values that are not grounded in anything concrete. Indeed, Schmitt argues that the concept of the political should be grounded upon an existential distinction rather than a normative one. Normative here is understood in the legalistic sense of what Hans Kelsen proposes versus the very concrete idea that those legal norms do not carry any weight unless they are embodied and enacted by a political will. Despite the George H.W. Bush administration’s insistence on not trying to remake the world, subsequent policy victories along with condemnation, military responses, and economic sanctions in response to the 1989 Tiananmen massacre represent the early stages of the U.S.’s threat perceptions regarding China. This becomes further entrenched under the Clinton administration as its project of order-building extends to the Indo-Pacific via the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) & Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

When Bill Clinton first came to office, the U.S. continued an ambitious engagement strategy in the Indo-Pacific. This was reflected further in a May 1994 press conference on the issue of delinking the granting of Most-Favored Nation (MFN) status to human rights abuses in the country, when Clinton remarked:

"The question is, should we delink, or should we continue to do this on an annual basis? I believe the answer to that is no. And I believe the answer to what we should do is to pursue a broader strategy of engagement. I think that is where we are now. And I think that it is far more likely to produce advances in human rights as well as to support our strategic and economic interests."  

As his press conference shows, Clinton, much like H.W. Bush, continued to pursue a strategy of engagement with the PRC. This was characterised by the ‘One-China policy’ that divorced U.S. economic relations with China over its human rights record, even though republican members of Congress believed that Clinton’s engagement policy was against U.S. interests in the face of a growing Chinese threat. The Clinton administration went even further by granting China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status and supported China’s admission to the WTO.

This demonstrates a further existential friend-enemy distinction regarding the Chinese state. Even though an engagement policy was enacted, U.S.-China tensions were still high at times during this period. One such brief crisis in the relationship included the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis where China believed that Taiwan was moving away from adherence to the one China policy under Taiwan’s Lee Teng-hui, so the PLA launched a series of missiles in waters surrounding the island between July 1995 and March 1996 as a form of coercion. To support Taiwan, the Clinton

administration deployed a fleet of carrier ships to international waters along the Taiwanese Strait and stopped China’s military threats to regional stability.\textsuperscript{140} Despite tensions along the Strait contemporarily, regional flashes of conflict extend back as far as the mid-1990s despite the engagement policy. As will be noted in the next chapter, technological advancements in the Indo-Pacific region coupled with regional security alliances point toward the increasing role of naval sea power. Mobilizing Schmitt allows us to see how such innovations would change the nature of warfare.

Another critical event during the Clinton presidency was the May 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade as the U.S. discovered that the embassy was being used for the transmission of Yugoslav army communications during the Yugoslav civil war. In response to the ordeal, the Chinese government issued a statement condemning the U.S.’s act as ‘barbarian.’ What these events also bring to light is the changing rivalry surrounding U.S.-China relations. Even though there had been cooperation in the economic realm, great power competition had still continued to be a prominent feature in the bilateral relationship from the perspective of geopolitics and political geography. Although the U.S. at this stage was more concerned with trying to build formidable institutions in a way that would eventually bring China into the fold of the LIO, challenges in the relationship still persisted geopolitically. Under the Clinton administration, the U.S. attempted to further the policy of institutionalizing ties in the Indo-Pacific region during the 1990s. In this section, I show in particular how Chinese political blunting of regional institutions in the Indo-Pacific – during the Clinton administration in particular – is a useful case study to examine through a Schmittian lens. This case illustrates the process of American order-building as

one global power encroaching upon a sphere of influence (*Großraum*) of another regional power, in this case China. This case of American regional institutionalism can be interpreted as an offensive interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine as Schmitt would describe.

One such institution that begins this process was the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation established in 1989. Even before the organization’s first summit was due to be held in Seattle in 1993, there was significant pushback from Chinese policymakers vis-à-vis the project of American order-building. Just weeks before the first summit in Seattle, the U.S.-led expert working group on APEC prepared a report that proposed the eventual creation of a “Asia Pacific Economic Community.”

In response to the report, China’s first ambassador to APEC, Wang Yusheng stated that “[w]hen we saw the report’s eye-catching title, [Towards an Asia Pacific Economic Community], we cannot help but be surprised, how did this come about? Could this really be? Can we agree with it? What should we do? A series of problems all emerged.” Such strong reservations from Chinese policymakers against APEC, a regional multilateral organization focused on institutionalization, demonstrate how U.S. foreign policy was being interpreted as an offensive strategy being pursued by a global hegemon. This is comparable to John Mearsheimer’s interpretation of liberal hegemony and the re-making of the world in ‘America’s image.’

In sum, the working report and the use of the term “community” was interpreted as evidence that Washington was trying to establish a U.S.-led organization in the Indo-Pacific as Asia’s most important regional body at China’s expense. China therefore stalled the institutionalization of APEC to blunt U.S. order-building in Asia as it considered such attempts as

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an encroachment on its sphere of influence.\textsuperscript{143} Mobilizing Schmitt’s theory of \textit{Großraum} can be illuminating in this regard. Given an increase in American influence after the Cold War, a number of states such as China experienced post-Cold War anxieties associated with American hegemony. This in turn led to further destabilization and blunting strategies being pursued by the PRC in response to American order-building. Even though a friend-enemy distinction in the Schmittian sense may not be initially visible, the emphasis on economic liberalization, economic growth, and industrialization associated with U.S. foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific is comparable to Schmitt’s emphasis on business relations with the enemy in the sovereign sense.\textsuperscript{144} This is further demonstrated in President Clinton’s remarks to the Seattle APEC Host Committee on the need to establish sound economic frameworks in Asia:

We're also determined to work with China to eliminate its trade barriers and to raise the issue of our continuing concerns over human rights and weapons sales. I look forward to doing all that when I meet with President Jiang today, in an effort to put our relationship with China on a more constructive path but still one that deals with all of these issues that are important to the United States.\textsuperscript{145}

President Clinton emphasizes bilateral business relations in the form of relaxed trade barriers along with an emphasis on liberal democratic abstract norms that have been repeated in U.S. foreign policy discourses. Later on in his speech, Clinton elaborates on hard power capabilities and regional security by remarking that “our security in this new era clearly requires us to reorder our military forces and to refine our force structure for the coming years.” He continues:

But our national security also depends upon enlarging the world's community of market democracies because democracies make more peaceful and constructive partners. That's why we're leading

\textsuperscript{143} Doshi, 2021, pg. 102.
\textsuperscript{144} Here I mean that economic collaboration does not entail the negation of a fundamental existential rift between both political entities, the evidence of cooperation provided is not antithetical with the thesis of a fundamental friend-enemy distinction being present.
an ambitious effort to support democratic and market reforms in all the nations of the former Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{146}

By referencing the restructuring of military forces and enlargement of territory, one can note similarities in relation to a geographical and territorial understanding of international relations. As mentioned in relation to the George H.W. Bush administration, such references to liberal democracy and free-market economics fit neatly into Schmitt’s second element of his \textit{Großraum} theory, namely having a radiated political ideal. Upon a closer examination of the discourse at the APEC Home Committee in Seattle, the third characteristic of a clearly defined space is highly relevant if interpreted as a Chinese \textit{Großraum}. China had also opposed further institutionalization of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) while supporting the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) for further institutionalization, as it excluded the U.S.

In essence, by opposing institutionalizing the ARF and APEC while supporting it in the case of the APT demonstrates that the PRC was attempting to use the APT as a means to construct a “exclusive non-Western view of Asian regionalism.”\textsuperscript{147} Through the promotion of new norms such as a ‘New Security Concept’, the aim was to undermine U.S.-led regional coalitions that was considered to encroach upon a Chinese sphere of influence (\textit{Großraum}) which in this case was the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea. This becomes more evident under the George W. Bush administration as relations evolve into the early and mid 2000s.

\textbf{3.4: A Schmittian Analysis of George W. Bush Administration: Engagement, Military Buildup, & China’s Admission into the WTO}

Under the George W. Bush Administration, the U.S. continued to pursue a strategy of engagement vis-à-vis China while simultaneously continued to pursue a more interventionist

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{147} Doshi, 2021, pg. 123.
foreign policy strategy as a unipolar power. Unlike contemporary national security strategies that begin from the Obama administration, there is no mention of China’s increasing capabilities nor any recognition of China as a potential adversary. In Bush’s September 2002 National Security Strategy, common themes of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), rogue states, and counterproliferation were highlighted. This was also evident in its description of attempting to develop a cooperative relationship with former adversaries such as Russia:

Having moved from confrontation to cooperation as the hallmark of our relationship with Russia, the dividends are evident: an end to the balance of terror that divided us; an historic reduction in the nuclear arsenals on both sides; and cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism and missile defense that until recently were inconceivable.\(^{148}\)

By referencing the transformation from confrontation characterised by a Cold War mentality to cooperation with adversaries, the National Security Strategy emphasized the need for compromise in order to address new challenges that have emerged from rogue states and other non-state actors such as terrorist organizations. As both the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations show, the U.S. was still interested in pursuing positive trade relations with China as part of its grand strategy. Thus, Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction was not overtly evident as China was not viewed as an existential threat at this time according to American policymakers.

In contrast, Chinese policymakers began to view the U.S. more and more as an existential threat as it began to pursue a strategy of Sea denial in the early 2000s. As Doshi explains: “China overinvested in three capabilities that are useful primarily for denial as part of its blunting strategy: submarines, missiles, and mines. It built the world’s largest submarine fleet, the world’s largest stockpile of sea mines, and the world’s first anti-ship ballistic missile.”\(^{149}\) The increase in military expenditures and change in military doctrine demonstrates the limitations of the U.S. engagement

\(^{149}\) Doshi, 2021, pg. 82.
policy, as economic liberalization did not necessarily result in China upending its communist political system as U.S. foreign policymakers envisioned under H.W. Bush. In addition, the prominent presence of neoconservatives and emphasis on American hard power such as during the American invasion of Iraq solidified the pursuit of American attempts to re-shape the international order as a global hegemon, solidifying an existential threat recognition from the perspective of China. At the same time, other state officials have interpreted the U.S. pursuit of an engagement policy during this time as a means to prevent the ‘long arm’ of communist governments gradually controlling the U.S., and how the American people would live under the communist system in the long-term.\textsuperscript{150} Thus, despite the pursuit of engagement, there was still great distrust amongst some officials within the Bush administration regarding adversaries as an existential threat.

A critical moment in U.S.-China relations during this period was the admission of China into the WTO in 2001. From the American perspective, China’s MFN status along with admittance into the WTO was a further attempt of integrating China into the LIO and make it ‘play by the rules’ of the system. Yet this did not come into fruition as China did not fully open its markets to external competition. The policies enacted that led to China’s WTO membership had two unintended consequences for the U.S., namely that it increased the speed of China’s rise and decreased U.S. strength, resulting in inevitable great power competition. According to Scott Lincicome, China’s WTO entry had led to a net loss of 300,000 American jobs and an increased trade deficit with China, increasing from $81.2 billion in the 1990s to reaching $279 billion in 2008.\textsuperscript{151} All in all, with these policy setbacks, the growing political perception of American popular opinion vis-à-vis China began to rapidly deteriorate, resulting in a growing threat

perception of China. Chinese policymakers, despite gaining such institutional advantages, did not undergo democratization and continued a blunting strategy to counter the project of American order-building in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. hoped that by integrating China into the rules-based system, it would lead to economic reforms and the assumption of responsibilities within the LIO.

However, China's actual implementation of liberalization measures fell short of expectations, as it did not fully open its markets to external competition. Schmitt's theory of *Großraum* helps explain how the admission of China into the WTO inadvertently accelerated its rise and posed challenges to U.S. interests. The policy setbacks resulting from China's WTO membership, such as the increase in China's economic strength and the negative impact on American jobs and trade deficit, intensified the competition between the U.S. and China. These developments contributed to a growing threat perception of China within the U.S. political landscape. Furthermore, Schmitt's concept of the friend-enemy distinction and the pursuit of power can illuminate the contrasting perspectives of the U.S. and China during this period. While the U.S. pursued engagement as part of its grand strategy, seeking to shape the international order as a global hegemon, Chinese policymakers began to view the U.S. as an existential threat. The U.S.'s military interventions and emphasis on hard power, such as the invasion of Iraq, solidified this perception from China's perspective. This divergence in threat perception further fueled the dynamics of great power competition between the two countries.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how a Schmittian framework can focus on certain elements that a neo-realist understanding of U.S.-China tensions and U.S. foreign policy towards China may miss. In particular, I analyzed the understanding of international order, great power competition and multipolarity envisioned by both Schmitt and the neo-realists, with an emphasis on the notion
of multiple Großraume, including the case of a Chinese Großraum in the Indo-Pacific region. Next, I used a Schmittian lens to examine U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China beginning from the George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations via presidential statements and policy documents released by various U.S. foreign policy institutions. These developments are critical in explaining the way in which, from the post Cold-War era, attempts were made on the part of American administrations to integrate the PRC into the LIO, and how a Schmittian framework can account for this. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, the friend-enemy distinction, theory of Großraum and Schmitt’s thinking on international politics have become more entrenched and relevant as a result of China’s growing economic strength and subsequent American administrations’ policies. It is after the 2008 global financial crisis that more hawkish policies are pursued by the Obama and Trump administrations as threat perceptions regarding China change drastically.
Chapter 4: Schmittian Analysis of Obama Administration: ‘Pivot to Asia’ & Strategic Rebalancing Policy

Introduction

The Obama administration continued to pursue an engagement policy in 2009 with regards to the PRC. Whereas the U.S. in the first decade was fixated on issues of global terrorism stemming from the 9/11 attacks, the beginning of the second decade of the 2000s marked a discernable shift in American foreign policy. Prior to 2011, the Obama administration, although stressing the need for the U.S. to be more cautious about China, believed in engaging with the country strategically via multilateral arrangements rather than with unilateral hard power.152 Starting from 2011 onwards in an announcement to the Australian parliament, the Obama administration expressed the need for the U.S. to confront Chinese economic and political clout in the East Asia region in the form of multilateralism and diverting policy resources away from the Middle East.153 As Obama remarked at the Australian Parliament in 2011 announcing the Pivot to Asia policy:

This is the alliance we reaffirm today, rooted in our values, renewed by every generation. This is the partnership we worked to deepen over the past 3 years. And today I can stand before you and say with confidence that the alliance between the United States and Australia has never been stronger. It has been to our past--our alliance continues to be indispensable to our future. So here, among close friends, I'd like to address the larger purpose of my visit to this region: our efforts to advance security, prosperity, and human dignity across the Asia-Pacific.154

ASEAN was one particular multilateral institution the Obama administration expanded through entrenched military cooperation and regional summits on pressing security issues. Amid increased 21st century Chinese naval expansion, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA)’s bolstering of naval

153 Cruz De Castro, 2018, pg. 185.
capabilities in the East and South China Seas via light class frigates and anti-ship missiles can be seen as an attempt by the PRC to preserve its sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific to prevent foreign navies (e.g. U.S. Navy) from occupying maritime territories. These examples fundamentally show a distinct friend-enemy distinction where both sides are attempting to extend their military reach in an attempt to preserve their hegemonic status.

This chapter is divided into two main sections: the first section analyzes policy statements by President Barack Obama, scrutinizing the increased salience of the friend-enemy distinction from 2011 to 2016. Policy documents I focus on in particular include the National Security Strategy released in February 2015 and his speech to the Australian Parliament in Canberra in November 2011. This period and documents in particular illustrate the changing threat perceptions of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China. Through a careful examination of policy speeches, this masking of polemical attitudes from the part of American liberalism can be observed more clearly. The second section mobilizes Schmitt’s theory of Großer Raum to show how increased naval activities in the Indo-Pacific demonstrate the U.S. attempt to radiate universalist values and influence in the area. This is a crucial step in highlighting the geographical salience of U.S.-China tensions as they continue to escalate during this period.


Through the Obama administration’s various policy statements and addresses beginning from 2011 one can note an increased salience of a friend-enemy distinction vis-à-vis China. As part of its strategic rebalancing policy, the U.S. first needed to divert resources away from the Middle East. For example, in the 2015 National Security Strategy, Obama stressed the reduced number of American troops from 180,000 in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2008 to fewer than
In Section V on International Order, the National Security Strategy stressed the need for developing “a constructive relationship with China” and that it “promotes security and prosperity in Asia and around the world.” Although the National Security Strategy notes that it rejects the notion of the inevitability of competition, a closer reading of the policy document nonetheless highlights China’s increasing military modernization strategy pursued by the PLA and expanding geopolitical presence in Southeast Asia.

As part of its pivot to Asia and the strategic rebalancing strategy, the Obama administration had sought to maintain some form of a constructive relationship with the PRC while at the same time attempting to uphold universalist liberal values such as human rights, the rule of law, liberal democracy and the strengthening of civil society. An example of this are the agreements signed with China on limiting greenhouse gas emissions in order to jointly combat the effects of climate change. This reflected a critical juncture in the U.S.-China relationship, as U.S. foreign policy makers had believed at this point that the integration of China into the liberal international order was still possible. Yet as neo-realist scholars have pointed out, this was a strategic policy failure, and an increased salience of a friend-enemy distinction began to slowly emerge among U.S. foreign policy elites. Jinghao Zhou’s seminal book *Great Power Competition as the New Normal of China-U.S. Relations* (2022) argues that it was problematic for the U.S. to pursue a strategic rebalancing and engagement policy with China because the Obama administration did not have an understanding of the CCP’s political structure.

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How does this relate to Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction outlined in previous chapters? As demonstrated earlier, there are similarities between the theorization of great power competition and a Schmittian analysis focused upon multipolarity, political geography and international order. In the 2011 speech made to the Australian parliament, Obama states that the U.S. would not allow China to amend and re-write trade rules for the Asia-Pacific region and remarks that trade rules must be established by the U.S.\textsuperscript{159} I would argue that the selective language used is one example highlighting Schmitt’s criticism of liberalism – that it represents a masking of the concrete and agonistic character of geopolitics.\textsuperscript{160} This brings to light the utility of analyzing such discourses, which cannot be easily brushed aside and should be taken into consideration. By underlining a ‘constructive relationship with China’ in contrast with language describing a confrontational relationship between both powers, one can note the choosing of a vocabulary that eschews the reality of geopolitical tensions between the two states. Obama’s insistence on engagement should not be taken at face value; rather, a closer analysis of terminology through a Schmittian critique of liberalism helps unveil how this language of cooperation is used to mask other motives, in this case, national security concerns related with the economic rise of China amid heightened geopolitical risks.

In Obama’s 2011 Australian Parliamentary address in Canberra, he also highlights the U.S.’s profound interest in the rise of a peaceful and prosperous China.’\textsuperscript{161} This speech in particular is important because it highlights a discrepancy between discourse and the reality of power interests. Additionally, it represented a significant shift in American grand strategy. Upon

\textsuperscript{159} “Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament”, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, November 2011.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
a close analysis of the speech, the mentioning of a peaceful and prosperous rise along with reference to instances of cooperation in the form of reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and nuclear non-proliferation harken back to Schmitt’s conceptualization of the friend-enemy distinction’s toleration of some form of limited relationship between both entities. Yet, as Schmitt outlines in *The Concept of the Political*, the extreme case of conflict remains possible, a point which is similarly argued in neo-realist analyses of U.S.-China tensions. Obama’s reference later on in his speech on speaking ‘candidly to Beijing about the importance of upholding international norms’ demonstrates the tension between cooperation and confrontational language. Such rhetorical language in the Schmittian sense highlights a fundamental gap between intentions and actions on the part of the Obama administration. More explicitly, it highlights quite effectively a Schmittian critique of the discrepancy within the liberal doctrine between a discourse of peace and the unrecognized latent possibility of conflict. Identifying this discrepancy from a Schmittian point of view matters because it can help uncover hidden meanings behind policy documents and policy speeches and the rationale behind U.S. foreign policy decision-making that can seem convoluted at times.

Lastly, in the 2015 National Security strategy, China is mentioned a total of ten times in different sections of the strategy. China’s mention in the document ranges from topics such as air and maritime security, climate change, capacity building to prevent conflicts, and strategic rebalancing towards the Indo-Pacific and Asia. Parallel to Obama’s 2011 speech to the Australian parliament, contradictory rhetoric is used to mask the polemical and antagonistic aspects of U.S. foreign policy under the Obama administration. The strategy rejects the ‘inevitability of

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162 Schmitt, The concept of the Political, pg. 27.
confrontation’ with China and states that it wants to develop a relationship with China in such a way that it “delivers benefits for our two peoples and promotes security and prosperity in Asia and around the world.”\textsuperscript{164} Similar to the 2010 National Security Strategy, which focused on the central themes of security, rules-based international order, prosperity and values, the 2015 National Security Strategy highlights the goal of establishing a global security posture while protecting the core national interests of American citizens. As Obama’s national security adviser Susan E. Rice remarked in February 2015 on the national security strategy itself to the Brookings Institution:

The first element of our strategy is to secure the U.S., our citizens, our allies and partners through a dynamic global security posture in which we employ our unique capabilities, forge diverse coalitions, and support local partners. This approach builds on a more secure homeland and a national defense that is second to none.\textsuperscript{165}

The emphasis of these two themes on ‘cooperativeness’ and ‘prosperity’ while also highlighting notions of developing capabilities and creating coalitional alliances represents a tension between the intentions announced.

From a Schmittian perspective, one can read the establishment of a global security posture as an offensive interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, where the Obama administration, through the forging of diverse coalitions, infringes upon a Chinese \textit{Großraum} while simultaneously using cooperative language regarding the masking of motive so as not to increase geopolitical tensions. This highlights some Schmittian criticisms such as those in \textit{Nomos of the Earth}, where the attempt to radiate liberal universalist values resulted in an ‘empty humanism’ not founded on a concrete territoriality as there is a lack of transparency with regards to political motives involving U.S.

foreign policy vis-à-vis China. The rhetoric used in these respective speeches and documents shows this gap between discourse and actions. More specifically, the Chinese *Großraum* is analogous to Chinese "Tianxia" - everything under heaven. This is a Confucian concept that has been historically mobilized by the CCP as a way to conceptualize Chinese centrality in the world order. In accordance with the concept of Tianxia, you have the world on one side, and China as a privileged "middle kingdom" mediating between the two entities on the other. Geographically, this worldview manifests itself as periphery societies subordinating themselves and paying tribute to the imperial core being China, hence a spatial analogy to *Großraum*.


Under the Obama administration, there was an increase in the shift of naval resources and naval activity through U.S. forward-deployed forces. Such developments were also being done at a time when the U.S. was still weathering the effects of the 2008 global financial crisis even though China’s economy recovered more quickly than the U.S.’s. The specific actions that the Obama administration employed as part of its strategic rebalancing policy included a reinforcing of the Seventh Fleet to expand the U.S.’s geo-strategic influence from Northeast to Southeast Asia and to help build-up the military capabilities of small states that border China to protect their maritime and air spaces.

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The first component of this policy action would involve the shifting of 60% of the U.S. navy’s ships to the Indo-Pacific, including six aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines in 2015-2016.\textsuperscript{169} The U.S. would also position its most modern amphibious assault ships such as the \textit{U.S.S. America} along with deploying two additional destroyers to Japan; and home-port all three of its newest class stealth destroyers (The DDG-1000) with the Pacific Fleet.\textsuperscript{170} In April 2016, the U.S.’s Third Fleet deployed three Arleigh Burke-class destroyers to operate in the Western Pacific as a surface-action group under the Third Fleet Forward Initiative.\textsuperscript{171} Finally, in July 2015, the then U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced a new US Maritime Security Initiative, which was intended to upgrade the maritime capacities of Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines by providing them with a sum total $425m in security assistance over the next 5 years until 2020.\textsuperscript{172} The logic behind this increased military buildup was premised upon the idea to ensure that the security needs of these countries were met, and that new opportunities for maritime security collaboration were explored.\textsuperscript{173} In other words, the rebalancing strategy and increased naval build-up activities were centered around great power projections with a form of containing Chinese assertiveness particularly in the South China Sea.

The U.S. also pursued formidable regional alliances in the Indo-Pacific region as well. This entailed the active involvement of the U.S. regional multilateral initiatives such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ meeting as a few examples. Such forging of closer relations is evident from visits by U.S. senior officials to the Asia Pacific. For instance, in

\textsuperscript{169} Cruz De Castro, 2018, pg. 191.
\textsuperscript{171} Wyatt Olson, “Initiative Gives 3rd Fleet Greater Autonomy in Western Pacific,” Stars and Stripes (2016), pg. 1–2.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
November 2012, President Obama visited three of the Southeast Asian continental ASEAN states, namely Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand, to formulate and implement a formal code of conduct in the South China Sea to resolve the ongoing maritime dispute.\textsuperscript{174} In another instance of formalizing regional alliances, U.S. administration officials such as Secretary of State John Kerry in the second half of 2014 reiterated at multilateral ASEAN summits the importance of maintaining the strategic rebalancing policy. Obama and Secretary Kerry at the time had come to the conclusion that through multilateral institutions such as ASEAN, all states regardless of size could work together for East Asian security and prosperity.\textsuperscript{175} Lastly, one more initiative pursued by the Obama administration included the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Although initiated by the Bush administration in 2008, the TPP was a project to make up the economic linkages of the strategic rebalancing policy that would involve multiple countries including Canada, New Zealand, Chile, Singapore, Australia, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, and the U.S. Despite the aim being to attract foreign investments and eliminate trade barriers, the TPP did not come into fruition under Obama’s term as a way to confront China’s economic influence in the region.

A Schmittian analysis of such policy initiatives can help bring to light the gap between rhetoric and policy implementation. Starting from 2015, the U.S.’s strategic placement of successive fleets in the Asia Pacific demonstrates one instance of global linear thinking, where the U.S.’s foreign policy shift beginning with Obama can be interpreted as a re-drawing of civilizational lines and the threat to the sovereign is no longer necessarily non-state actors such as Al-Qaeda, but rather growing Chinese primacy in the Indo-Pacific. As Schmitt points out in \textit{Land and Sea}, the bolstering of new technological and advanced weaponry such as the Arleigh Burke-

\textsuperscript{174} Cruz De Castro, 2018, pg. 193.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
class destroyers and modern amphibious assault ships in the Indo-Pacific demonstrate an increased innovation in warfare technology. At a more philosophical level, we can understand that Schmittian thinking has tremendous influence in Chinese strategic thinking during this time as the U.S. shifted military assets in the region. As Xie Libin and Haig Patapan note on a Schmittian influence in contemporary China:

The political use of Schmitt’s philosophical concepts such as the friend-enemy distinction, decisionism, and absolute sovereignty as ideational tools or weapons in political struggles allows us to understand the nature of political struggles taking place in contemporary China. To this extent, Schmitt fever is a sort of mirror to the fundamental alternatives China faces in its future direction.\(^\text{176}\)

Thus, it can be noted that a Schmittian logic guided the CCP’s military wing the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to increase its technological and military capabilities in an attempt to reinforce a Chinese *Großraum*. Despite the shift of military assets amongst the U.S. and its allies, China was not intimidated by the policy. Rather, China confronted U.S. military strategic authority by fortifying critical several land features in the South China Sea, conducting large-scale military exercises, using coast guard vessels to assert Chinese maritime ambitions, the building of artificial islands to re-establish Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), and expanding the naval activities of the PLAN – also known as the “Near Seas Active Defense” doctrine, which dates back to the mid-1980s and called for the PLA to form layered defenses in the first-island chain of the Asia Pacific to prevent a potential adversary from threatening China in the sea.\(^\text{177}\) Ever since its inability to blunt against U.S. naval hegemony in the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, the PLA in particular has

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In sum, we can note that China’s response to the U.S.’s increased naval activities, forging of regional alliances and organizations, along with attempted economic linkages such as those attempted via the TPP illustrate the instance of a Chinese hegemon trying to create a clearly defined space in the Indo-Pacific in order to push back against other hegemonic powers to prevent them from interfering in the internal affairs of concrete political spaces. We can also note the geographical and territorial component associated with the Obama administration’s rhetoric and policy actions; the strategic rebalancing policy also sought to reassure allies and its security partners (i.e. including through the Five Eyes Alliance) as a means for coordinated effective response options against regional Chinese expansionism. Through these tightened relations, the U.S. sought to re-affirm values associated with American liberal institutionalism as a means to differentiate itself from China in the region, creating a solidified friend-enemy distinction amid geopolitical tensions.

Yet as China increases its military ambitions vis-à-vis the U.S. under the Obama term, we can observe a potential disequilibrium in how both perceive each other in the friend-enemy distinction spectrum. As I discuss in the next chapter, this distinction and geographical tension between both powers became more polarized amid the continued American project of order-building under the Trump administration. We can already observe that the Obama administration’s strategic rebalancing policy is interconnected with U.S. order-building as evident from these policy actions in an attempt to remain engaged with regional partners in East Asian via ASEAN-
orientated institutions. Such rhetorical focus on order was also reflected in the 2015 National Security Strategy. In addition, such policy actions demonstrate a clear gap between a conciliatory rhetoric and the policy practices undertaken by the administration. This changes dramatically under the Trump administration’s ‘America First’ policy, strategic competition policy, and opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership as relations become more polarizing and entrenched.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has showed the inherent contradictions of U.S. foreign policy as an American *nomos* in ways that Schmitt would highlight. The rhetoric used by the Obama Administration under the guise of a strategic rebalancing policy and simultaneous naval activities in the Indo-Pacific precisely show that there are contradictions in an ideologically oriented liberal foreign policy espousing American internationalist values that is viewed as two-faced. On the one hand, upon an analysis of specific terminology, it seems that Washington wants to work with Beijing in order to manage environmental, economic, and security issues at the regional and global level. Yet at the same time the U.S. is alarmed by China’s rise and would like to preserve its status of primacy. In accordance, the U.S. pursues various policies to stunt China’s rise in order to socialize the region within an established ‘American nomos’ or in a territorial sense ‘Großraum’.

Lastly, this chapter briefly argued that a Schmittian analysis can contribute to highlight the American project of order-building more broadly under Obama. U.S. foreign policy shifts beginning from Obama can be interpreted as a re-drawing of civilizational lines, where the threat to the sovereign is no longer necessarily non-state actors but rather a growing Chinese primacy in the Indo-Pacific. I argue that Schmitt’s conceptualization of international relations is relevant to this period as it focuses more on a theorization of order. Neo-realists may neglect the socialization processes underlying a hegemon’s interaction with other surrounding states within a delineated
sphere of influence. Such global linear thinking can be applied to the foreign policies of the previous Trump administration as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. More specifically, a move upon a Chinese Großraum where China becomes more ambitious regionally in order to prevent foreign interventions against other hegemons such as the U.S. This becomes more evident, as the U.S. under Trump undergoes a policy shift from strategic rebalancing to strategic competition, where the friend-enemy distinction and the concept of Großraum become even further entrenched.
Chapter 5: Schmittian Analysis of Trump Administration - From Strategic Rebalancing to Strategic Competition

Introduction

This last chapter offers a Schmittian analysis of the Trump administration’s China policy amidst the transition from a strategic rebalancing to strategic competition policy. This shift first began in 2017 in an attempt to further contain China as an ambitious power in the Indo-Pacific as the U.S. reconfigured much of its technological and military capabilities. This period marked a heightened contrast in comparison with the Obama administration that still attempted some form of pragmatic cooperation with China. Although one needs to note that this friend-enemy distinction from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy is not necessarily with the Chinese state broadly per say but is rather with the Chinese Communist Party under Xi Jinping adopting authoritarian measures under the guise of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics.’ Here it is important to note that Xi Jinping came to power in 2012; the change from the Obama administration to the Trump administration also comes with a change from previous CCP leader Hu Jintao to President Xi. Various scholars also drew attention to the increased tensions of U.S.-China relations during this period within the framework of normative principles that took aim at the CCP. According to American political scientist Francis Fukuyama:

What Americans need to keep in mind is that their enemy and rival right now is not China, but a Chinese Communist Party that has shifted into high-totalitarian mode. We are not dealing with the China of the 1990s or even the 2000s, but a completely different animal that represents a clear challenge to our democratic values.179

We can also see this enmity in Chinese domestic politics become more apparent under the Trump administration. Chinese scholars including Cai Xia noted that since both economic superpowers have two fundamentally different political systems that are difficult to reconcile, they cannot coexist since cadres within the CCP believe that amicable relations are not possible with ‘American imperialist wolves.” Such remarks are indicative of an increased salience and recognition of a friend-enemy distinction that move beyond mere economic competition and a small-scale regional conflict between two superpowers.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first part, I argue that there is a fundamental contradiction in language used by the Trump administration during this period and in practice regarding U.S. policy positions vis-à-vis China along with policy actions through the 2017-2020 period. To make my case, I outline the policy rhetoric in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China under Trump between engagement and increased competition starting from when he first visited Asia in November 2017, his 2017 National Security Strategy and 2018 National Defense Strategy. The implications of Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction are even more apparent due to the fact that the strategic competition policy frames China as an existential threat to the American-led liberal international order that aims to show neo-authoritarianism as a formidable alternative to the current system. The notion of friend and enemy envisioned by Schmitt is related to political perception, as it highlights how the U.S. begins to conceptualize the CCP as an existential threat looking to upend the values and norms of the U.S.-led liberal international order, such as liberal democracy and consensus-based decision-making in multilateral institutions. This process becomes more entrenched under the Biden administration later on under his term. As outlined in chapter two, Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction underlies the concept of political contestation,

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which features his own politicization of territorial space, where the friend-enemy distinction is spatialized via the connection of antagonists to the qualities of certain spaces.\textsuperscript{181}

This contradiction in rhetoric becomes increasingly clear in a shift of policy discourse focusing on ‘America First’ to ‘Peace Through Strength.’ This contradiction shows a politicization of territorial space particularly in the Indo-Pacific, where the U.S., through the building of multilateral alliances, is spatializing a polemical relationship in the form of antagonism towards the PRC. Conversely, we can see increased enmity from the Chinese perspective as the U.S. aims to maintain its regional dominance in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in the South China Sea. In reference to Schmitt’s famous dictum: “There are neither political ideas without space, nor – vice versa – spaces or spatial principles without ideas.”\textsuperscript{182} In the second section I then turn to a Schmittian analysis of policy actions under Trump, focusing mainly on The Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, Trade Wars & Increased Naval Activities during this period. Finally, I apply Schmitt’s theory of \textit{Großraum} to the American project of order building under the Trump administration.

\textbf{5.1: Schmittian Analysis of the Trump Administration: Friend-Enemy Contradictions – Trump’s visit to Asia in Nov. 2017 & From ‘America First’ to ‘Peace Through Strength’}

During November 2017, President Trump visited five different Asian nations (Japan, the Republic of Korea, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines). During his visit, President Trump made a number of policy statements from November 3\textsuperscript{rd} to 14\textsuperscript{th}, including unveiling a comprehensive strategy of engagement in the Asia-Pacific. As emphasized by senior administration officials, one
of the main goals of the Asia trip was to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the region. This entailed an emphasis on free-market principles that would usher fair and reciprocal trade along with highlighting the importance of “robust international engagement in defense of national security and economic prosperity for the American People.”

We can observe how Trump’s Asia visit was a critical juncture in U.S.-China and U.S.-Southeast Asian relations. To put it into a general context, the Asia trip was the longest tour of South Asia than any U.S. president at the time since George H.W. Bush’s to Asia in December 1991. Trump’s numerous policy speeches highlighted different interrelated themes meant to demonstrate the U.S.’s commitments to the region and compete with China for a formidable hegemonic position. Through the promotion of high-standard principles and free-market economics as an overarching theme, cooperation in other critical sectors such as energy and defense were emphasized in different parts of the tour. In Japan for instance, President Trump reiterated American commitments to enhancing Japan’s defence capabilities to defend against possible aggression from other states such as North Korea. In a speech to American troops stationed at Yokota Air Base in Japan, he stated:

Like your predecessors, you—our brave warriors—are the last bulwark against threats to the dreams of people in America and Japan and all across the world. You are the greatest hope for people who desire to live in freedom and harmony, and you are the greatest threat to tyrants and dictators who seek to prey on the innocent. History has proven over and over that the road of the tyrant is a steady march toward poverty, suffering, and servitude. But the path of strong nations and free people, certain of their values and confident in their futures, is a proven path toward prosperity and peace. We cherish our cultures, we embrace our values, and we always fight for what we believe in.

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Although President Trump, as part of his electoral strategy, had campaigned on the principle of ‘America First’ while promoting protectionist policies such as criticizing other states of free-riding and insufficient burden-sharing, he simultaneously advocated for increased competition against adversaries such as North Korea and China by referencing the histories of ‘tyrants’ in conjunction with values of freedom and harmony as the above quotation illustrates.

Similar messages were also conveyed in Trump’s visit to South Korea with regards to deterring North Korean aggression and nuclear ambitions. Thus, through a Schmittian lens, one can point to instances of contradiction in policy speeches that emphasize the achievement of peace through strength and defense capabilities. The accent on the notion of shared cultures and the embrace of values suggests an increased engagement with critical U.S. allies in the fight against ‘tyrants’ while at the same time espousing liberal universalist values that had been established from the post-1945 international order. Amid the emphasis on protecting American interests as purported by the Trump administration starting from 2017, there are a number of contradictions to note between official policy statements and speeches on China. Despite the developing consensus on a policy shift to strategic competition with the PRC, there is an inherent contradiction in the friend-enemy classification, of which Schmitt is quite critical of in relation to his views of liberal constitutionalism and the masking of confrontation – that is, the inconsistencies in Trump’s more positive and personal relationship with President Xi and official U.S. policy regarding the PRC which is more negative. To reference a speech made by Trump in China during a Business event in Beijing with President Xi on November 9, 2017:

Both the United States and China will have a more prosperous future if we can achieve a level economic playing field. Right now, unfortunately, it is a very one-sided and unfair one. But—but—I don't
blame China. After all, who can blame a country for being able to take advantage of another country for the benefit of its citizens? I give China great credit.\textsuperscript{185}

Trump highlights an unfair economic playing field between the U.S. and China mainly due to the U.S.’s burgeoning annual trade deficit with China and unequal trade between both states. Yet despite this, the above excerpt from President Trump suggests that deteriorating relations is not the fault of the PRC, but rather the fault of the policies pushed by previous administrations. Highlighting the need for a level economic playing field fits neatly into Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction in relation to how two adversaries can still develop business relationships.

At the same time, an analysis shows us an inherent contradiction between President Trump’s rhetoric, actions, and policies. To note one example, the U.S. in the beginning of 2017 pursued a transactional foreign policy with President Xi Jinping before the Asia trip. This entailed having direct communication links between both presidents, including when President Trump had a phone call with President Xi in February 2017 to “honor the one China policy.” After that, both Presidents had an early summit in Mar-a-Lago, Florida in April 2017 where positive bilateral relations were developed, and Trump had shown high respect to President Xi Jinping. Trump’s former chief strategist Steve Bannon even remarked that there isn’t a world leader that Trump respects more than President Xi.\textsuperscript{186} Such remarks and actions highlighted a concerted effort from the Trump administration to have a smooth beginning to its relationship with the PRC, as Trump

sought to get China on board regarding the imposition of sanctions on North Korea and stopping Pyongyang’s nuclear ambitions by holding back a tough trade policy on China.\textsuperscript{187}

A Schmittian lens is useful in particular because although there are remarks by President Trump that highlight the ideal of common values and principles, there is also the determination to protect such allies from the neo-authoritarianism that characterises states such as China. The actions and rhetoric of President Trump, from remarks made in Beijing during the November 2017 Asia trip to Trump’s personal relationship with Xi Jinping, which undermines the characterization of the PRC as an enemy of the U.S., fit neatly into a Schmittian criticism of American universalism and the lack of transparency in policy actions. One of Schmitt’s main criticisms of liberalism was that it undermined the question of sovereignty insofar as it was unable to adequately distinguish between the friends and foe of a sovereign state in politics. Schmitt was also quite critical of liberalism due to its inconsistencies in making this distinction. This is captured well by Weixing Hu:

\begin{quote}
There are still gaps and confusions in the Trump administration’s policy. On one hand, Trump himself wants to treat President Xi as a friend, and needs China’s cooperation on North Korea and other international issues. On the other hand, his administration began to increasingly define China as a strategic power rival.\textsuperscript{188}

Thus, a Schmittian analysis captures these contradictions well as criticisms of U.S. primacy and U.S. foreign policy become increasingly reflected in the academic literature. Despite some of these inconsistencies, it was still clear that U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China was moving into a policy of strategic competition in terms of treating the country as a strategic rival which also fits into a Schmittian friend-enemy framework. It thus helps us understand the seriousness of the threat
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{187} Weixing Hu, “Trump’s China Policy and Its Implications for the “Cold Peace” Across the Taiwan Strait.” China review18 no.3 (2018), pg. 64.
\textsuperscript{188} Weixing Hu, 2018, pg. 65.
posed by strategic competition between the U.S. and China. Even though liberal internationalists such as G. John Ikenberry believe that it is possible to integrate China into the LIO\textsuperscript{189}, these analysts do not explain increased tensions including technological decoupling well as compared to a Schmittian analysis. In the December 2017 \textit{U.S. National Security Strategy} for instance, China is considered one of the U.S.’s ‘strategic rivals’ that ‘challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity.’\textsuperscript{190} In the security strategy, we can thus observe the use of a strong language that frames China as an increasingly existential threat as antithetical to the values of the U.S.-led liberal international order. In fact, they represent such an adverse threat to the U.S. and its allies that it triggered a fundamental shift in policy rhetoric. As the \textit{National Security Strategy} states:

These competitions require the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades—policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false.\textsuperscript{191}

This is a clear example of a rhetorical shift in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China where the PRC is characterised as such a threat that a rethinking in strategy is necessary. The reference of past policies and their perceived failures due to erroneous assumptions that engagement would render states such as China potential trustworthy partners highlights this heightened state of tension and illustrates the applicability of Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction. As explained in the second chapter, Schmitt’s friend-enemy classification was based on the idea of maintaining a spatialized state sovereign in relation to the domestic sphere of the political. The distinction nonetheless can

\textsuperscript{191}National Security Strategy, 2017, pg. 3.
be used to demonstrate a critical juncture in U.S. foreign policy, where the U.S. is currently reconstructing a state of exception to highlight the need for containing the influence of authoritarian regimes such as the PRC under President Xi Jinping. Despite American liberalism’s emphasis on toleration, rights and individuality, the increased economic power of China highlights an exceptional situation that constitutes a threat to the U.S. sovereign from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy. This is demonstrated by the use of terms including ‘competition’, ‘challenge’ and ‘erode’ in the national security strategy document.

Much of the same language is similarly used in the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. In the report, China is described as “a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbours while militarizing features in the South China Sea.”\textsuperscript{192} The strategy also called for a long-term strategic competition with states such as Russia and China as one of the principal priorities for the Pentagon due to the sheer magnitudes they pose to U.S. security and prosperity.\textsuperscript{193} We can also note instances of an increased friend-enemy distinction vis-à-vis China as a revisionist state presented as a possible existential threat to the very viability of the U.S.-led liberal international values. From a Schmittian perspective, the friend-enemy distinction represents an increasingly interlinked spatial understanding of global order based upon regional spheres of influence and power blocks. This is further supported by the defense strategy’s reference to the maintenance of “favorable regional balances of power in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere.”\textsuperscript{194} One can note the use of Schmittian language in the form of an offensive interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, as the U.S.

\textsuperscript{193} Defense Strategy, 2018, pg. 4.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
constructs a state of exception centered around the friend-enemy distinction vis-à-vis China, resulting in a ‘Peace Through Strength’ dialogue. All in all, through an analysis of speeches and documents under the Trump administration, we can observe the contradictions including an increased salience of the creation of the figure of an enemy under the Trump administration. As I will demonstrate in the next section, the contradiction of policy actions become apparent in cases such as the Trade Wars and crackdown on Huawei 5G technology.

5.2: Schmittian Analysis of Policy Actions under Trump - The Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, Trade Wars & Increased Naval Activities

The free and open Indo-Pacific strategy action along with the U.S.-China trade wars and increasing naval activities show an inconsistency between discourse and policy implementation. I chose to frame the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy plan separately as elements of the strategy include notable policy actions initiated under the Trump administration. To briefly contextualize, the strategy – as part of Trump’s visit to five Asian nations – outlined measures to solidify the U.S.’s regional influence in a way that would enable regional development and prosperity in the region. One such policy included the launching of a Strategic Energy Partnership between Japan and the U.S., which supports universal access to affordable energy while agreeing to cooperate to offer high-quality infrastructure investment options in the Indo-Pacific region.¹⁹⁵ Between the U.S. and Vietnam as part of the strategy, a three-year plan of action for defense cooperation was concluded as a means to increase bilateral naval activities between the two states and involves the formal transfer of U.S. Coast Guard commissioned vessels to the Vietnamese Navy.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.
Such actions of the Trump administration’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy illustrate a contradiction between how the U.S. tried to develop a somewhat more positive relationship with the Xi regime under Trump despite the increased diplomatic tensions. Such policy actions represent the U.S.’s attempt to further consolidate and centralize its partnerships in Southeast Asia as it seeks to further democratize the region via multilateralism. To return to a Schmittian framework of analysis, Schmitt was first and foremost concerned with political and social unity over individualism and had predicted the eventual transformation of the international order. In reality, it can be noted that there is an effort to increase engagement while also simultaneously advancing a strategic competition policy with China, reflecting the effort from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy to contain the regional influence of China and maintain hegemony.

According to Schmitt and with reference to the domestic state itself, the people in the form of a homogeneity is a gathered one, a hypostatized people willing to be represented.197 Through this figure, Schmitt uses the expression of ‘political unity’ as a reference to the state necessary to its survival.198 By critically analyzing the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy initiated by Trump, we can note an attempt of increased centralization centered upon the idea of democratization as the U.S. attempts to form some sort of homogeneity around a existential threat that is the PRC via increased military engagement and multilateral initiatives. This creates an increased salience of China’s categorization as a ‘enemy’ that doesn’t fully rule out the threat of physical force. In other words, Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction can be applied to notions of theorizing state sovereignty.

198 Schmitt, Concept of the Political, pg. 45.
Increasing trade wars and increased naval actions in the Indo-Pacific represent another instance of a recognition of China as an existential ‘enemy’ from the view of U.S. foreign policy makers. Due to the eventual break-up of the linkage policy with China as a way to deter Pyongyang’s nuclear capabilities and ambitions, President Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum targeting “China’s economic aggression.” The memorandum entailed directing the U.S. trade representative to level tariffs on $50 billion worth of Chinese imports, which was following a seven-month long investigation into China’s intellectual property theft.\(^{199}\) In response, China promptly implemented retaliatory sanctions against U.S. exports destined for China, commencing a trade war that would have significant implications on the international economy as both states gradually instituted extraordinary measures to form a ‘state of exception.’ This is due to the fact that much of ensuing trade wars are bilateral sanctions on one another that transcend international economic law.

Increased military activities under the Trump administration are another important policy action. This is evident from the language and statements used by officials within the administration such as former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson who stated that “China should not be allowed access to islands it has built in the Contested South China Sea.”\(^{200}\), referring to the Chinese army building artificial islands within the area in order to boost its naval hegemony. From a Schmittian perspective, the U.S.’s increased freedom of navigation operations (FONOP), satellite monitoring, and telecommunications activities, especially under the Trump administration, demonstrated America’s perception of China as a non-liberal state, where acts of aggression in the form of hard


power are considered to be unlawful acts that are counter to the liberal international order based on the rule of law, democracy and pluralism. Yet the deeper intention was to maintain American hegemony.

5.3: American Project of Order Building Under the Trump Administration regarding U.S. Foreign Policy vis-à-vis China: Großraum, Global Linear Thinking & Pushback Against Liberal IR Theory

Lastly, I briefly examine how the American project of order-building under the Trump Administration relates to Schmitt’s concept of Großraum and global linear thinking along with addressing why a Schmittian analysis can help explain the limitations of liberal IR theory in relation to U.S.-China tensions. As stated earlier, Großraum is concerned with the ideal of territorially expanded states. Although a number of examples can be referenced to when the Trump administration pushed forward isolationist policies and criticized transatlantic institutions such as NATO, U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China was nonetheless concerned with maintaining its hegemonic status. The concept of global linear thinking is also applicable, as it explains the process of historical development of spatial consciousness. Even though Schmitt uses the term to explain the re-drawing of civilizational lines between European sovereign states and non-European states in the Nomos of the Earth, U.S. political, military, and economic efforts in the Indo-Pacific under Trump’s strategic competition policy constitute a concerted effort to re-draw geopolitical lines, where the threat to the American sovereign is a growing Chinese power that is more ambitious under Xi Jinping. In that sense, the U.S. attempts to uphold the principles of the liberal international order. This is illustrated by the PLA Navy’s efforts to build artificial islands in the South China Sea. In sum, American policymakers continued drawing a red line towards the PRC in the region, signalling a sharp contrast from years of cautious U.S. handling of China’s assertive pursuit of territory claims in the South China Sea, to being more decisive and displaying signs of willingness
to use hard power mechanisms. The language of cooperation used in discourses effectively highlights Schmitt’s denunciation of the hypocritical character of the liberal language of politics.

A Schmittian perspective also has added value in addressing the limitations of liberal IR theory when explaining U.S.-China tensions from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy. In essence, liberals believe in the building of multilateral institutions as an alternative to the use of force. Yet it is also essential to note cleavages within liberal IR theory between more interventionist and pragmatic approaches. An interventionist liberal policy advocates for a more activist foreign policy through the formation of strong international institutions, and a pragmatic conception which places importance on toleration of other power positions and non-intervention.

From this division, it can be argued that the U.S. pursues a form of a liberal interventionism foreign policy based on strong multilateralism and ambitious naval policies particularly in the shift to a policy of strategic competition. However, I argue that there are inherent limitations in how liberal IR theory can account for fluctuating changes in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China. One of these limits include U.S. efforts to contain states that are neo-authoritarian such as China under the guise of abstract liberal values. Although states such as Japan can be considered to be liberal democracies, others such as the Philippines are highly authoritarian and ripe with corruption. From the Indo-Pacific Strategy, from increased naval activities and the stress on the importance of values in Tromp’s policy speeches, liberal IR theory struggles to explain the U.S.’s strategic competition policy as well as China’s increasingly authoritarian state structure despite its economic dynamism.

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Additionally, several agreements that the U.S. has achieved in the Indo-Pacific such as those during the Asia trip of 2017 were concluded with states that do not necessarily espouse liberal democratic values. A more contemporary example would include the 2021 summit for democracy organized by the Biden administration in order to promote democratic values worldwide. Although it was meant to bring together and support democracies worldwide, many scholars have argued that the summit is in fact about the U.S. attempting to counter the anti-liberal democratic tendencies of both China and Russia, trying to discourage their bids for regional hegemony as the LIO comes under threat.\textsuperscript{203}

**Conclusion**

I proposed a Schmittian analysis of the Trump administration’s foreign policy towards China. In contrast to the Obama administration’s strategic rebalancing policy, the Trump administration opted for a more confrontational policy with China via a strategic competition policy. Yet, there were a number of tensions between discourse and actions. This is seen from Trump’s Asia visit in November 2017 and the attempt to develop positive personal relations with President Xi Jinping. A Schmittian lens also exposes the policy actions of the Trump administration such as those outlined in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, escalating trade wars, and increased naval activities. In addition to pointing out contradictions with regard to presidential speeches, increasing trade wars since 2018, and continued naval activities in the Indo-Pacific represent another instance of an increased salience of categorizing China as an existential ‘enemy’, that corresponds with Schmitt’s friend-enemy dichotomy. Lastly, I analyzed the American project of order-building more broadly in relation to the concepts of *Großraum* and

\textsuperscript{203} See Stephen Walt’s work in the Economist and Graham Allison’s ‘Destined for War: Can America And China Escape Thucydides Trap?’
global linear thinking and pointed to the limitations of a liberal perspective in explaining U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China, mainly due to its inability to adequately explain great power competition.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have shown how the elaboration of a Schmittian framework of analysis can be used to highlight specific features of a contemporary geopolitical phenomenon, mainly U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China. In the first two chapters, I sketched a working Schmittian analytical framework through an interpretation of Schmitt’s conceptualization of order, global linear thinking, friend-enemy, and Großraum to account for changes in U.S. foreign policy towards the PRC. In particular, my thesis also covered empirical efforts to define what order is. Critically analyzing a Schmittian conceptualization of order helps provide a nuanced understanding of his contribution to the re-thinking of order in the field of international relations. A Schmittian analysis also allows us to fill in conceptual gaps within neo-realist interpretations.

In the second half of my thesis, I focused on the application of this Schmittian interpretive grid to the successive American presidential administrations, from George H.W. Bush in the early post-Cold War era to the Trump administration. The aim was to examine the fluctuations in changes of how the U.S. perceives China as more of an existential threat over time. As demonstrated in those chapters, the U.S. initially attempted to integrate China into the liberal international order, but ultimately failed as China’s economy and military capabilities continued to grow. Given that there is considerable literature on the topic of order transitions due to states such as China promoting alternative models of governance, a Schmittian analysis contributes to the increasing body of literature focused on great power competition. To illustrate this, I used archival evidence from the American Presidency Project in order to offer a Schmittian-oriented

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analysis of speeches and policy statements by U.S. presidents and senior administration officials. Lastly, my thesis demonstrated some of the limitations associated with a liberal approach to understanding U.S.-China tensions. I argued that it cannot adequately account for the contradictions in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China.

The future of U.S.-China tensions will have important implications on international politics. As recent events such as balloon sightings over the U.S., tensions in the Cross Taiwan Straits, and the ongoing technological decoupling under the Biden administration demonstrate, relations between both states will continue to be tense. One relevant example is the ratified AUKUS submarine deal between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. in 2021. Discussed over a period of months, the agreement envisions a diversity of diplomatic and technological collaboration, ranging from cyber-security to artificial intelligence. Such agreements reinforce the need for the use of a Schmittian framework. In this perspective, going back to Schmitt is worthwhile, insofar as these agreements constitute attempts to further undermine an existential adversary – a non-liberal state – to thwart a future attempt for regional influence at the exception of following the conventional norms of the liberal international order. Some aspects of U.S. foreign policy as demonstrated from the diverting of resources to the Indo-Pacific and increased naval activities are best illustrated by Schmittian concepts. Further research is needed to assess the extent to which a Schmittian framework applies to the Biden administration’s policies vis-à-vis China. However, it is important to note that given Carl Schmitt’s association with the Nazi regime in 1933 and anti-Semitic views in German academia, he remains a controversial figure in international law. Despite the limitations of certain Schmittian concepts such as Großer Raum, which were developed in late 1930s and are considered to be outdated terms by some scholars, my thesis shows that

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Schmitt’s concepts can nonetheless be adapted in such a way as to explain increased U.S. military activities in the Indo-Pacific. A Schmittian framework could also be potentially useful to account for other phenomena, such as Russian foreign policy.\textsuperscript{206} Research on Schmittian influences in Russian historiography and Russian foreign policy is another possible avenue of research to pursue which can help shed light on the current Russia-Ukraine war.

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