

# The Great Delusion:

## Liberal Ideals & International Realities

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# My Basic Story

U.S. pursued “liberal hegemony” after Cold War.

Main aim: remake the world in America’s image.

The policy failed miserably.

Why? Nationalism & Realism > Liberalism

# Outline

- What is Liberalism?
- What is Nationalism?
- What is Liberal Hegemony?
- Why Did the U.S. Pursue Liberal Hegemony?
- What is Liberal Hegemony's Track Record?
- Why Did Liberal Hegemony Fail?
- Liberal Hegemony's Future

# What is Liberalism?

# Liberalism's Bedrock Assumptions

- It is individualistic at its core. It assumes that the individual takes precedence over the social group.
- It assumes that individuals cannot reach universal agreement over first principles. Those differences are sometimes profound and can lead to violence.

# Central Question

How should politics be arranged to deal with this potential for violence?

# The Liberal Solution

- Individual rights – that are inalienable
- The norm of tolerance
- The state

# The Taproot of Liberal Hegemony

Individualism + Inalienable Rights = Universalism



# What is Nationalism?

# Nationalism's Core Assumption

Humans are naturally social animals. They are born into and heavily socialized into particular groups.

Individualism takes a back seat to group loyalty.

Aside from the family, the most important group in today's world is the nation.

# What is Nationalism?

A set of political beliefs which hold that a **nation** — a body of individuals with characteristics that purportedly distinguish them from other groups — should have their own **state**.

# Sovereignty

**Nations** place enormous importance on sovereignty or self-determination, which is why they want their own state.

**Nations-states** place enormous importance on sovereignty or self-determination, which inclines them in powerful ways to resist foreign interference.

# Nationalism > Liberalism

1. Human beings are primarily social animals.
2. Look at the planet: it is covered by nation-states. Liberal democracies have never even comprised 50% of the states in the system, and the number has been declining since 2006.
3. All liberal democracies are liberal nation-states.

# What is Liberal Hegemony?

# Liberal Hegemony's Goals

It is basically an attempt remake the world in America's image. It has three components:

1. Spread liberal democracy across the planet. \*\*\*
2. Integrate more and more countries into the open international economy. \*
3. Integrate more and more countries into international institutions.\*

# Benefits of Liberal Hegemony

- Eliminates significant human rights violations
- Makes for a peaceful world, thus eliminating the twin problems of nuclear proliferation and terrorism.
- Makes the world safe for liberal democracy.



# Why the U.S. Pursued Liberal Hegemony

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- Unipolarity made it possible to largely ignore balance-of-power politics and pursue a liberal foreign policy.
- The U.S. is a profoundly liberal country.
- American nationalism supplied an unhealthy dose of hubris to the equation. Think Madeleine Albright! Think “American Exceptionalism!”

# Liberal Hegemony's Track Record

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1. The Bush Doctrine & the Greater Middle East.
2. The Ukraine Crisis & U.S.-Russia Relations.
3. The Failure of “Engagement” with China.

# Why Liberal Hegemony Failed

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- The power of nationalism
- The power of realism
- Overselling of individual rights

# Liberal Hegemony's Future

# The End of Liberal Hegemony

Reason #1:

The Coming of Donald Trump



# The End of Liberal Hegemony

Reason #2:

The Rise of China

&

The Resurrection of Russian Power

# The End!

I look forward to your questions and comments!