

Council on Foreign Relations' Grand Strategy: China Must Be Defeated, The TPP Is Essential to Undermining China

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Wall Street's Council on Foreign Relations has issued a major report, alleging that China must be defeated because it threatens to become a bigger power in the world than the U.S.

This report, which is titled ["Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China,"](#) is introduced by Richard Haass, the CFR's President, who affirms the report's view that, "no relationship will matter more when it comes to defining the twenty-first century than the one between the United States and China." He says that the report he is publishing argues that "strategic rivalry is highly likely if not inevitable between the existing major power of the day and the principal rising power." Haass says that the authors "also argue that China has not evolved into the 'responsible stakeholder' that many in the United States hoped it would." In other words: "cooperation" with China will probably need to become replaced by, as the report's authors put it, "intense U.S.-China strategic competition."

Haass gives this report his personal imprimatur by saying that it "deserves to become an important part of the debate about U.S. foreign policy and the pivotal U.S.-China relationship." He acknowledges that some people won't agree with the views it expresses.

The report itself then opens by saying: "Since its founding, the United States has consistently pursued a grand strategy focused on acquiring and maintaining preeminent power over various rivals, first on the North American continent, then in the Western hemisphere, and finally globally." It praises "the American victory in the Cold War." It then lavishes praise on America's imperialistic dominance:

"The Department of Defense during the George H.W. Bush administration presciently contended that its 'strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor'—thereby consciously pursuing the strategy of primacy that the United States successfully employed to outlast the Soviet Union."

The rest of the report is likewise concerned with the international dominance of America's aristocracy or the people who control this country's international corporations, rather than with the welfare of the public or as the U.S. Constitution described the objective of the American Government: "the general welfare."

The Preamble, or sovereignty clause, in the Constitution, presented that goal in this broader

context:

“in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

The Council on Foreign Relations, as a representative of Wall Street, is concerned only with the dominance of America’s aristocracy. Their new report, about “Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China,” is like a declaration of war by America’s aristocracy, against China’s aristocracy. This report has no relationship to the U.S. Constitution, though it advises that the U.S. Government pursue this “Grand Strategy Toward China” irrespective of whether doing that would even be consistent with the U.S. Constitution’s Preamble.

The report repeats in many different contexts the basic theme, that China threatens “hegemonic” dominance in Asia. For example:

“China’s sustained economic success over the past thirty-odd years has enabled it to aggregate formidable power, making it the nation most capable of dominating the Asian continent and thus undermining the traditional U.S. geopolitical objective of ensuring that this arena remains free of hegemonic control.”

The report never allows the matter of America’s “hegemonic control” to be even raised. Thus, “hegemony” is presumed to be evil and to be something that the U.S. must block other nations from having, because there is a “traditional U.S. geopolitical objective of ensuring that this arena remains free of hegemonic control.” In other words: the U.S. isn’t being “hegemonic” by defeating aspiring hegemony. The report offers no term to refer to “hegemony” that’s being practiced by the U.S.

The report presents China as being supremacist, such as what (to quote again from the report) “historian Wang Gungwu has described as a ‘principle of superiority’ underwriting Beijing’s ‘long-hallowed tradition of treating foreign countries as all alike but unequal and inferior to China.’ Consistent with this principle, Henry Kissinger, describing the traditional sinocentric system, has correctly noted that China ‘considered itself, in a sense, the sole sovereign government of the world.’” America’s own ‘Manifest Destiny’ or right to regional (if not global) supremacy is not discussed, because supremacism is attributed only to the aristocracies in other countries, not to the aristocracy in this country.

Rather than the “general welfare,” this document emphasizes “U.S. Vital National Interests,” which are the interests of America’s aristocrats, the owners of America’s large international corporations.

This report urges:

“The United States should invest in defense capabilities and capacity specifically to defeat China’s emerging anti-access capabilities and permit successful U.S. power projection even against concerted opposition from Beijing. ... Congress should remove sequestration caps and substantially increase the U.S. defense budget.”

In other words: the Government should spiral upward the U.S. debt even more vertically (which is good for Wall Street), and, in order to enable the increased 'defense' expenditures, only 'defense' expenditures should be freed from spending-caps. Forget the public, serve the owners of 'defense' firms and of the large international corporations who rely on the U.S. military to protect their property abroad.

The report says that China would have no reason to object to such policies: "There is no reason why a China that did not seek to overturn the balance of power in Asia should object to the policy prescriptions contained in this report." Only a "hegemonic" China (such as the report incessantly alleges to exist, while the U.S. itself is not 'hegemonic') would object; and, therefore, the U.S. should ignore China's objections, because they would be, by definition 'hegemonic.' Or, in other words: God is on our side, not on theirs.

"Washington simply cannot have it both ways—to accommodate Chinese concerns regarding U.S. power projection into Asia through 'strategic reassurance' and at the same time to promote and defend U.S. vital national interests in this vast region."

The authors make clear that U.S. President Obama is not sufficiently hostile toward China: "All signs suggest that President Obama and his senior colleagues have a profoundly different and much more benign diagnosis of China's strategic objectives in Asia than do we."

Furthermore, the report ends by portraying Obama as weak on the anti-China front: "Many of these omissions in U.S. policy would seem to stem from an administration worried that such actions would offend Beijing and therefore damage the possibility of enduring strategic cooperation between the two nations, thus the dominating emphasis on cooperation. That self-defeating preoccupation by the United States based on a long-term goal of U.S.-China strategic partnership that cannot be accomplished in the foreseeable future should end."

The report's "Recommendations for U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China" urges Congress to "Deliver on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, ... as a geoeconomic answer to growing Chinese economic power and geopolitical coercion in Asia," but it fails to mention that the Obama Administration has already embodied the authors' viewpoint and objectives in the TPP, which Obama created, and which cuts China out; it could hardly be a better exemplar of their agenda. The authors, in fact, state the exact opposite: that Obama's objective in his TPP has instead been merely "as a shot in the arm of a dying Doha Round at the World Trade Organization (WTO)." They even ignore that Obama had cut China out of his proposed TPP.

Furthermore, [here is what President Obama himself told graduating West Point cadets on 28 May 2014:](#)

"Russia's aggression toward former Soviet states unnerves capitals in Europe, while China's economic rise and military reach worries its neighbors. From Brazil to India, rising middle classes compete with us, and governments seek a greater say in global forums."

He was saying that these future military leaders will be using guns and bombs to enforce America's economic dominance. This is the same thing that the CFR report is saying.

His speech also asserted:

“I believe in American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being. ... The United States is and remains the one indispensable nation. That has been true for the century passed and it will be true for the century to come.”

(That even resembles: “Henry Kissinger, describing the traditional sinocentric system, has correctly noted that China ‘considered itself, in a sense, the sole sovereign government of the world.’” Obama is, in a sense, saying that America is the “sole sovereign government in the world.”)

He made clear that China is “dispensable,” and that the U.S. must stay on top.

However, there is a difference between Obama and the CFR on one important thing: Obama sees [Russia as the chief country over which the U.S. must dominate militarily](#), and China as the chief country to dominate economically. But in that regard, he is actually old-line Republican, just like [his 2012 opponent Mitt Romney is](#). The only difference from Romney on that is: Obama wasn’t so foolish as to acknowledge publicly a belief that he shared with Romney but already knew was an unpopular position to take in the general election.

Furthermore, whereas the CFR report ignores the public’s welfare, Obama does give lip-service to that as being a matter of concern (just as he gave lip-service to opposing Romney’s assertion that Russia is [“our number one geopolitical foe”](#)). After all, he is a ‘Democrat,’ and the authors of the CFR report write instead as if they were presenting a Republican Party campaign document. No ‘Democrat’ can be far-enough to the political right to satisfy Republican operatives. The pretense that they care about the public is therefore far less, because the Republican Party is far more open about its support of, by, and for, the super-rich. Mitt Romney wasn’t the only Republican who had contempt for [the lower 47%](#). But even he tried to deny that he had meant it. In that sense, the CFR’s report is a Republican document, one which, quite simply, doesn’t offer the public the lip-service that Obama does (and which he politically must, in order to retain support even within his own party).

Perhaps on account of the CFR report’s condemning Obama for not being sufficiently right-wing — even though he is actually a conservative Republican on all but social issues (where China policy isn’t particularly relevant) — the report has received no mention in the mainstream press, ever since it was originally issued, back in March of this year. For whatever reason, America’s ‘news’ media ignored the report, notwithstanding its importance as an expression of old-style imperialistic thinking that comes from what many consider to be the prime foreign-affairs mouthpiece of America’s aristocracy — the CFR. The report’s first coverage was [on 2 May 2015 at the World Socialist Web Site](#), which briefly paraphrased it but didn’t even link to it. Then, two days later, [Stephen Lendman wrote about the CFR report](#). He briefly paraphrased it and passionately condemned it. He did link to the report. But he didn’t note the WSWS article, which had first informed the public of the CFR report’s existence — an existence which, until the WSWS article, all of America’s ‘press’ had simply ignored.

The present article is the first one to quote the CFR report, instead of merely to paraphrase and attack it. The quotations that were selected are ones presenting the report’s main points, so that readers here can see these points stated as they were written, rather than merely as I have interpreted them. My interpretation is in addition to, rather than a substitute for, what the report itself says.

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#), and of [Feudalism, Fascism, Libertarianism and Economics](#).

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