

# US Decline is Ongoing, Yet America Remains the Undisputed “Military Master”

Despite widely held views, American regression has long been taking place.

By [Shane Quinn](#)

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Region: [Asia](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

*The United States’ decline can be traced as far back as 1949, when the world’s dominant power unexpectedly suffered [the “loss”](#) of China. It was a monumental early blow to US strategic planners, who were carefully executing dreams of unchallenged global dominance.*

**President Franklin D. Roosevelt** had been “aiming at United States hegemony in the post-war world”, as the prominent British historian **Geoffrey Warner** outlined. Roosevelt was to die less than three weeks before Adolf Hitler shot himself in April 1945, yet such visions were carried forward with zeal.

In 1948 the well regarded US diplomat **George Kennan** said,

“We have 50% of the world’s wealth but only 6.3% of its population. In this situation our real job in the coming period... is to maintain this position of disparity. To do so, we have to dispense with all sentimentality... we should cease thinking about human rights, the raising of the living standards and democratization” – and we must “deal in straight power concepts”, while not being “hampered by idealistic slogans” about “altruism and work-benefaction”.

Kennan was considered one of the moderate “doves” in US planning circles. This unheralded sphere of conquest was called the Grand Area. Unfortunately for Kennan and colleagues, by the following year [1949], China removed itself from US control in an outcome sorely felt to present.

It occurred when the resurgent Communist Party of China, led by **Mao Zedong**, overran American-backed Nationalists (Kuomintang) in mainland China. It was an irreversible rout which saw many US sympathizers flee to Taiwan, an island about 700km east of Hong Kong.

The outcome prompted critics of the **Harry Truman** administration to describe it as “an avoidable catastrophe”. It was preventable in that they felt the US military should have been called upon.

For if a country has unscrupulous aspirations of global dominance, “losing China to Communism” is undoubtedly a catastrophe. It is a revealing term to “lose” a nation with a population at the time of 550 million people – and whose capital Beijing (then Peking) is more than 11,000km from Washington. It stands as a revealing insight into imperialist planning, with similar dogmas prevailing to the current day.

As a young man Truman himself had written about [his disregard](#) for the “Chinaman”.

Consequently, China's exit from the US sphere of control grated severely. The American leader later wrote,

“As long as I am president, if I can prevent it, that cut-throat organisation will never be recognized by us as the government of China”.

By the end of World War II, the US had long been the world's richest country. The second global conflict finished off lingering effects of the Great Depression, with American industry increasing almost four-fold.

Critically, rivals like Germany, the USSR, Britain, China and Japan were all devastated from invasion, bombing or loss of life.

**Christopher Tassava**, Associate Director at Carleton College in Minnesota [writes](#),

“American leaders determined to make the United States the center of the post-war world economy. American aid or ‘Marshall Plan’ furthered this goal by tying the economic reconstruction of West Germany, France, Great Britain and Japan to American import and export needs, among other factors”.

With their key rivals further tied down to American financial power, the proceeding Cold War was directed against the USSR. In the Western mainstream this was framed as two equals going toe-to-toe - with the US defending earth from Communism's ravages.

In truth the US was always the much stronger state, enjoying unprecedented wealth, security and scope. It was a level of power that even Hitler, with his wild ambitions for the world, may not have envisaged.



Tanks in [Red Square](#) during the [August Coup](#), four months before the [USSR](#) collapse, 1991. (Source:

The Cold War comprised principally of efforts by both superpowers to implement and spread order in their realms of power. The US would control most of the world while the Soviets had to be content with eastern Europe. Things were to change before long, however.

In addition to “losing” China, by the 1950s south-east Asia was sliding from America’s grasp too. It eventually propagated the deadly conflicts in Vietnam and the rest of Indochina (1962-75).

Furthermore, there was the enormous bloodletting in the mid-1960s upon gaining control of “the greatest prize” that was Indonesia – [as described](#) by **Richard Nixon**. These Asian regions are still to recover fully from the effects of American-led aggression and influence.

By about 1975, the US share of global wealth had dropped to 25% – still huge – yet it stood at 50% a generation before. With Europe and Japanese-centric Asia gradually recovering and becoming less reliant on American influence, the industrial world was becoming “tripolar”.

In 1979, the US was dealt another hammer blow when Iranian nationalists overthrew the Western-backed dictatorship of the Shah. It is another “loss” that is continually felt, with Iran enduring almost unremitting American pressure ever sense.

Later, the Soviet Union’s demise in the early 1990s witnessed much nonsensical triumphalism from Western elites. There was talk of “a noble phase” and a final victory for “Western values” over the scourge of Communism.

In the post-USSR era, the old American pretexts of global defense from “Soviet aggression” could no longer be used to dupe the public. Now, the ruse put forward when illegally attacking other nations was “promoting democracy” and to defend “human rights and civilized values”, as **Tony Blair** put it.

The true reasons such as controlling resources and destroying independent nationalism remained unmentioned. Little attention was paid to the words of those like Harvard professor **Samuel P. Huntington**, who said in 1999 of the US,

“In the eyes of many countries it is becoming the rogue superpower”, and “the single greatest threat to their societies”.

These views were confirmed by various international opinion polls this century, on the subject of “the greatest threat to world peace”.

With Western politicians publicly appraising themselves for the USSR’s downfall, it was not long after that the US was losing control of Latin America too. Subjected to brutal US-initiated conflicts and dictatorships for decades, the Latin American people were making serious efforts to rid themselves of outside control.

Some of this American decline has plainly been self-inflicted. Estimates suggest the disastrous **George W. Bush-Barack Obama** wars in the Middle East [cost between](#) \$4 trillion to \$6 trillion. Even to the planet’s richest nation, no laughing matter.

One of **Osama bin Laden's** chief aims was to lure America into drawn-out conflicts, thereby inflicting financial ruin. Bin Laden continues to score victories from his watery grave. Now, current president Donald Trump is upping the ante in Afghanistan at a continued price. American troops are forecast to remain on Afghan soil for another decade.

It is worth remembering that the US still remains the unchallenged military master; no other country comes close to matching the might of its armed forces. The US military outlay will increase by over 10% to \$700 billion (its 2016 expenditure was \$611 billion). Also in 2016, China was second on the global arms list at \$215 billion.

The incoming price is unlikely to affect the super wealthy, but tens of millions of Americans will again bear the brunt of a long-held plutocracy.

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**Shane Quinn** obtained an honors journalism degree. He is interested in writing primarily on foreign affairs, having been inspired by authors like Noam Chomsky.

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