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Two great powers are now challenging the position of the United States as the leading power in the world system. As a powerful economic power with global ambitions, China has invested billions of dollars to increase its soft power. Due to recent failures in its conduct in democratic countries, China has turned to authoritative influence around the world, or a policy of sharp power. The policy of sharp power is based on subversion and intimidation, threats and pressure, while taking advantage of the open characteristics of democracy and the slow reaction of it in order to gain political influence and manipulate the target audience by distorting the information that reaches it. This policy is combined with China's global economic expansion in the global arena based on acquired marine power; following this policy China takes control of commercial ports around the world through their acquisition or construction, as a basis for its one belt one road initiative.

As a poor but well-armed power seeking to make its way back into the international arena, Russia adopted the dark power policy and behaves like a frightening bully: it has expanded its influence in the former Soviet Union states (Ukraine) and has increased its presence in its former client-states in the Middle East (Syria), using indiscriminate firepower against civilian populations and damaging civilian infrastructure. Moscow also operates cheap cyber warfare used by Russia to promote its global interests, such as its involvement in the recent elections in the US and France, and recently also sought to eliminate Russian spies in democratic countries, such as the recent attempt to assassinate the Russian spy and his daughter in England.

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Faced with these challenges, the current US administration has yet to develop a comprehensive and coherent global policy and is maneuvering between focusing at home (America first) and the restoration of a status of a superpower (make America great again), or in an integrated way “focus on home and return to superpower status”.

The American attack (in cooperation with France and the UK) against Syria’s chemical weapons development and production sites in April 2018 leads to a number of key conclusions. The United States is still the world’s leading superpower with unbalanced military power. The United States, also led by Trump, has the ability to quickly set up an international coalition to carry out an effective military operation. In this case, a coalition of three permanent members of the UN Security Council against Russian interests and ignoring China, the other two permanent members of the UN Security Council. Moscow has global ambitions but its capabilities are low. In its will, the US will dwarf Russia to its true dimensions while operating everywhere in the world, even in areas where Russia is present – in this case in Syria, but the message is clear: if it chooses, Washington will be able to act against the Russian presence in the Crimea or at least severely curtail its steps. Although China is a global economic power, its global military capability is immature and does not constitute a balance of great American military power. Therefore, its ability to use North Korea to advance its interests against the US is also limited.

The conclusions in the military context are numerous but can be summed up: Russia and China have not yet pushed the US out of the global arena and Washington is able to realize the goal of return for leadership, as defined in the US National Security Strategy Document of December 2017. The economic and moral chains are no less important tools America must regain its status as the first among equals. The United States has been built to a large extent by an international free economy and its supporting institutions (the IMF and the World Bank), and the American nation still serves as a moral beacon for many in the world. Therefore, America should not abandon these areas by re-establishing its status as the leading power. The question of whether President Trump can achieve this goal still requires proof.