



FROM LIBERAL TO LIBERAL GLOBAL ORDER: IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN SECURITY

Date: November 26, 2021

Disclaimer: This briefing note contains the encapsulation of views presented by the speaker and does not exclusively represent the views of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies.

KEY EVENTS

On November 26, 2021, Dr. Antonio Sanchez Ortega, Assistant Professor at the University of Granada in Spain, presented *From Liberal to Liberal Global Order: Implications for Western Security* at the 2021 CASIS Vancouver West Coast Security Conference. The key points of discussion were the changes that the great powers have made on the understanding of basic rules in the international arena and the Liberal Global Order is seeing its relative decline. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period with questions from the audience and CASIS Vancouver executives.

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

Dr. Ortega focused on how the Liberal Global Order is currently under threat as a result of its misuse by other states for their own ulterior motives. The use of Conservative Internationalism by revisionist powers, such as China and Russia, which use to further their own goals at the cost of the rules and guidelines of the Liberal Global Order was also discussed.

Question Period

During the question and answer period, Dr. Sanchez Ortega touched on how the United States is the pillar that helps sustain the Liberal Global Order, with no other national entity able to replace it.

BACKGROUND

Presentation

During the presentation, Dr. Ortega touched on the Liberal Global Order and how both internal and external factors are weakening it. Since the creation of the Liberal Global Order in the post-Cold War era, it has been neglected and misused, which has led to a lack of legitimacy. As a result, other states such as China and Russia, have been attempting to change it.

By applying the Liberal Order to the Global Order, the application of Liberal ideals was pursued globally, with an attempt to reshape the world to the Western liberal model. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to a unipolar global system, by which the United States was the sole global hegemon, having a free hand to change the Global Order to align more with its own liberal ideologies.

Western countries have in their own part degraded the Liberal Global Order as a result of their interventions in other states. Dr. Ortega referenced the interventions in Kosovo, Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan to demonstrate how the Liberal Global Order is losing due to the intervention of Western states in these countries. Western states have intervened in other nations under the guise of democracy and human rights, but these interventions did not do any good to affirm Liberal Order, Dr. Ortega argued. They often use the concept of Responsibility to Protect as a crowbar for intervening in other states to suit their own interests; however, they fail to uphold this responsibility with conflicts in states they have no interest in. This, in turn, has disrupted the perception of the concept further degrading its ability to be used legitimately. Dr. Ortega asserted that the growth of China's power has resulted in a betrayal of the Liberal Global Order. The growing rivalry that China poses to American interests has caused the United States to shift away from expanding the Liberal Global Order, and instead, they have created an increased focus on countering China.

International orders require great powers to sustain them, but great powers can also tear them down. With the retreat of the Liberal Global Order, other systems have begun to replace it, and other international orders have begun to increase in prevalence and importance, which has also reduced the influence and reach of the Liberal Global Order. Dr. Ortega referenced the growth in Transformative Revolutionary Internationalism, which is the ideological imperative of a revolutionary transformation of the international system. Another international order gaining popularity is Mercantilist Nationalism, which does not aspire to overthrow the international order, but instead, consolidate the power of the state

at the expense of the economy. The last order gaining traction is Conservative Internationalism, which is pushed by China, Russia, and their allies. This order supports Westphalian sovereignty and is against political liberal goals in the global system. It does not want to overthrow the Liberal Global Order, but aims to alter the way states interact, whereby international organizations cooperate only at the consent of the state they are in/cooperating with.

Dr. Sanchez Ortega concluded his presentation by arguing that the Liberal Order as a Global Order will not exist in the future. The increased competition between China and the United States will create a realist order, acquiring new allies that might not align with the Global Order views. Dr. Ortega argued that in this new order, the great powers will be facing each other in many areas but there will also be strong cooperation in others, becoming a similar order like the one at the beginning—a Western order. There will be an increased importance of hard power within states and geopolitical competition around the world, and the new world order will see an increase in the likelihood of intra-state conflicts.

Question Period

When asked about the possibility of other aligned powers that could step up to the role that the United States is leaving behind, Dr. Ortega asserted that the European Union could not take on the role in the same way that the United States has. Since the European Union has problems with its own member states, it cannot act externally to shore up the Liberal Order. Dr. Ortega stipulated that it is possible the European Union can maintain order internally, but that it often looks West for help from the United States when dealing with external matters.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

- The Liberal Global Order is receding due to internal and external influences.
- The lack of a true global hegemon has led to superpowers prioritizing competition over maintaining the Global Order.
- Increased competition between China and the United States will shift the Global Order to a more realist one, where hard power has increased importance.
- The Liberal Global Order in its current form will no longer exist in the future, being replaced by a Global Order that still allows for cooperation but places more emphasis on geostrategic competition and alliances.

Question Period

- The European Union does not have the ability to replace the United States in maintaining a Liberal Global Order.
- While the European Union can act to maintain the internal Liberal Order, it often asks for help from the United States when it pertains to external maintenance of this Global Order.



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