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# Up Our Game, Canada!

## Summary & Analysis of Michael Beckley's "*Rogue Superpower: Why This Could Be an Illiberal American Century*"

Michael Beckley's core argument is that demographic & technological trends will reinforce American economic & military dominance but also reduce its commitment to global liberalism

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# Purpose

- Summarize “*Rogue Superpower: Why This Could Be an Illiberal American Century*” by Michael Beckley
- Identify the benefits & disadvantages of the trends discussed in the paper

# Michael Beckley



- Associate Professor of Political Science at Tufts University & a Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute
- Previously worked for Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the U.S. Department of Defense, the RAND Corporation, & the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He continues to advise offices within the U.S. Intelligence Community & U.S. Department of Defense
- His research on great power competition has received awards from the American Political Science Association & the International Studies Association & been featured by numerous media including the Financial Times, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the New York Times, NPR, & the Washington Post
- Author of *Unrivaled: Why America Will Remain the World's Sole Superpower* & co-author (with Hal Brands) of *Danger Zone: The Coming Conflict with China*
- He holds a BA from Emory University & a Ph.D. from Columbia University

## A. Summary: “Rogue Superpower: Why This Could Be an Illiberal American Century”

Beckley proposes that the U.S. should:

1. Reduce dependency on multilateral alliances & pursue bilateral agreements that serve direct American interests
2. Strengthen domestic industries through automation, reshoring of supply chains, & trade restrictions
3. Limit economic reliance on trade partners, including Canada, by adopting stricter tariffs & economic leverage strategies
4. Prioritize military power & strategic deterrence over diplomatic engagement, making economic partnerships more transactional

# Three key components of the proposal

1. Reshaping U.S. foreign policy
2. Demographic & technological drivers
3. Rise of economic nationalism

# 1. Reshaping U.S. foreign policy

- Move away from multilateral institutions like the World Trade Association (WTO) & the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- Prioritize economic self-sufficiency over global trade agreements
- Use tariffs, financial sanctions, & economic coercion to achieve U.S. strategic goals

## 2. Demographic & Technological Drivers

- Aging populations in Europe & China will reduce their global economic & military influence
- U.S. will remain the only major economy with a growing working-age population
- Automation will reduce dependence on foreign labor & supply chains, making U.S. self-reliance more viable

### 3. Rise of Economic Nationalism

- The U.S. public increasingly supports trade protectionism & nationalistic policies
- The government may impose stronger domestic content requirements for industries such as energy, AI, & manufacturing
- Canada & other allies will need to rethink their economic dependence on the U.S. as trade restrictions tighten



## B. Analysis: “Rogue Superpower: Why This Could Be an Illiberal American Century”

- Beckley’s proposal accurately identifies emerging global trends, particularly the impact of automation, demographic shifts, & rising nationalism on U.S. policy
- Argument that the U.S. will prioritize economic & military dominance over multilateral diplomacy is well-supported
- Beckley’s approach assumes that unilateralism will strengthen the U.S. economy without significant downsides. The reality is that abandoning trade partnerships & increasing tariffs could backfire, leading to higher production costs, trade retaliation, & reduced global influence

# How the Proposal Benefits the U.S. <sup>1/2</sup>

## **1. Greater U.S. economic & security stability**

- By reducing reliance on foreign trade, the U.S. can protect its industries & workforce from external economic shocks
- Automation & reshoring strategies would secure critical industries, reducing vulnerability to supply chain disruptions

## **2. Stronger bargaining power in trade relations**

- A transactional approach allows the U.S. to negotiate better trade deals on a case-by-case basis, ensuring maximum benefit
- The U.S. can pressure trade partners to conform to its economic & regulatory standards, shaping global commerce

## How the Proposal Benefits the U.S. 2/2

### **3. Technological & military superiority**

- Investment in automation & AI-driven defense strategies solidifies U.S. military dominance, deterring potential adversaries
- Technological advancements will reduce reliance on foreign labor, making domestic production more cost-effective

### **4. Potential for a more self-sufficient North American market**

- If Canada aligns its trade policies with U.S. interests, it could benefit from a more integrated North American economy
- Increased investment in North American energy & defense could lead to stronger regional trade agreements

# Weaknesses of the Proposed Solution for the U.S. 1/2

## 1. Risk of economic instability due to isolationism

- Over-reliance on domestic production could reduce economic efficiency, increasing costs for American consumers & businesses
- Limiting international trade cooperation may slow innovation & reduce economic competitiveness

## 2. Weakened global alliances & geopolitical risks

- A more unilateral U.S. could lead to weaker diplomatic ties, reducing its ability to rally allies against economic & military threats
- Countries like China & Russia may exploit divisions between the U.S. & its allies, reshaping global power dynamics

## Weaknesses of the Proposed Solution for the U.S. 2/2

### **3. Potential for increased economic friction with Canada**

- The U.S. retreat from multilateral trade agreements could jeopardize Canada's access to U.S. markets
- If the U.S. enforces stricter economic policies, Canada may be forced to diversify its trade relationships, reducing reliance on U.S. markets
- Increased tariffs & trade barriers could harm Canadian industries dependent on U.S. exports, leading to economic slowdown
- If U.S. protectionism intensifies, Canadian exports could face higher tariffs & non-tariff barriers, harming industries like energy, automotive, & agriculture

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