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<cn>7.<ct>American foundations, think tanks and the liberal international order

<fs:lrh>Handbook on think tanks in public policy

<fs:rrh>American foundations, think tanks and the liberal international order

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<p:a_no_indent>INTRODUCTION

<p:text>American think tanks and their corporate-foundation sponsors, as well as elite networks, have been highly significant in key moments of the life of the liberal international order: at its conception and creation in the aftermath of the First World War and inter-war years, throughout the Second World War and subsequent Cold War, from the end of the Cold War into the post-Cold War era and during the current crisis of the liberal international order. Liberal American think tanks and foundations are both symptoms and drivers of major domestic and global power shifts, and they play key roles in managing change and developing concepts for governing, new strategic approaches and policies. Their fundamental power-technology is the ‘elite knowledge network’ in and through which are created spaces for ‘thinkable thought’, that is, the construction of the boundaries of options for change, in which knowledge for use by policymakers is nurtured. Such elite networks house the core organizations and actors at the heart of what Antonio Gramsci calls ‘hegemonic projects’ that conceptualize, develop, maintain, manage or recalibrate imperial power, challenging extant ways of explaining how think tanks, foundations and power works in liberal-capitalist democratic societies. This chapter aims to elaborate and evidence the Gramscian case through consideration of three historical and contemporary instances. First, the transition from British to American racialized, elitist and imperial-hegemonic power through the roles of the (American) Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and (British) Chatham House (CH) in Paris in 1919 and up to 1945. Second, the roles of foundations and think tanks in the transition to post-Cold War ‘democracy promotion’ or what some term a strategy of ‘liberal hegemony’ to replace Cold War containment; and, third, a brief consideration of the politics and potential of the emerging Koch-Soros funded think tank – the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft (QI). Is the latter ‘saving’ or ‘burying’ the liberal international order?

<p:a_no_indent>ELITE KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS: THE ESSENCE OF POWER OF FOUNDATIONS AND THINK TANKS

<p:text>‘Elite knowledge network’ refers to a system of flows (of ideas, people, money), a technology of power embedded in, crystallizing and dynamizing the Gramscian concept of ‘hegemony’, indicating that cooperation and bridging divides between the state and private

elites, between politics and civil society, between the government and corporate elites – ‘power with’ other kindred interests rather than power as a zero-sum game – was the strategy that created the domestic bases of American hegemony. The big foundations, in this respect, are a central part that coheres the American foreign policy elites or establishment (Hodgson, 1972; Parmar, 2012), organically connected to, funding and enabling the think tank (and the university) to develop concepts, strategies and policies for governing the world.¶ The foundations have two main long-term strategic functions – internally and externally – to socialize and incorporate elites into a particular hegemonic project. The foundation networks’ internal functions relate to attracting, socializing and integrating elites into the network system by providing funds, knowledge exchange, money flows and inter-organizational connections. Academic scholars from prestigious universities and think tanks, for example, are increasingly socialized into these elite networks because large research grants from these foundations are often structured for producing policy-oriented academic knowledge and other politically moderating effects on political activities. External functions relate to knowledge produced by network members that are considered as legitimate and prestigious and that is taken seriously by all, especially policymakers. Elite networks also combat opposing ideas that challenge their conceptions of America’s global role (Parmar, 2019b).

American corporate-philanthropic foundations, especially the so-called Big 3 (the Carnegie, Ford and Rockefeller Foundations), have played significant roles in constructing and maintaining US hegemony through long-term close cooperation with the American state, strengthening a historically weak federal executive, and undermining and marginalizing ‘isolationism’ by promoting internationalism and interventionism. These major foundations are byproducts of the corporate giants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With hundreds of millions of dollars of donations – ‘scientific giving’ – the Big 3 championed positivistic ‘scientific’ knowledge that would be of practical use to policymakers, urban planners and state-builders. As such, these are organizations imbued with the modernizing and ‘scientific spirit’ of the Progressive Era: they invest in ideas and mobilize social-scientific knowledge to manage the potentially catastrophic political effects of large-scale socio-economic change: industrialization, mass immigration, urbanization and the attendant rise of radical political movements (Arnove, 1980; Eisenach, 1994). The Big 3 also pioneered management and social engineering to inaugurate a reformed economic and political order both domestically and globally. In other words, in the long term, they increasingly established formal and informal national, international and global institutions to promote American power underpinned by liberal internationalist thinking and sponsored

university and other programmes to educate and train generations of graduates for service and leadership within and of them. This chapter considers three examples over time to indicate the *elitist, racialized and imperial* character of the liberal international order (Parmar, 2016, 2018) that key think tanks and foundations conceived and built, and which is currently in a period of transition if not crisis, increasingly challenged by popular forces within core states and emerging powers demanding that power in international institutions be redistributed.

<p:a_no_indent>THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AND CHATHAM HOUSE: THE BEGINNING OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER

<p:text>The Royal Institute of International Affairs (known as Chatham House) and the CFR were initially conceived as two branches of a single Anglo-American Institute of International Affairs, with identical aims. They started life at the Paris Peace conferences of 1919 in the aftermath of bloody global warfare and the effective death knell of colonialism, and the rise of nationalism, democracy and social revolution. They championed the League of Nations as a key vehicle for an Anglo-American-led international order (Ledwidge & Parmar, 2018). They later became the two most prestigious think tanks of the inter-war period, acting as strong forces of elite consensus-building and spreading their ‘model’ to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and some parts of Europe (Parmar, 2004a). The two bodies were reformist, not revolutionary, and hoped to reconstruct the world without formal empires through a ‘new world order’ that more or less veiled their liberal internationalist imperialism and attendant elitist and pan-Anglo-Saxonist thinking (Bell, 2014; Mazower, 2009; Vucetic, 2011). They championed science and internationalism but were deeply imbued with theories of racial and class hierarchies through which Anglo-American and Western power and culture were seen as superior (Ledwidge & Parmar, 2018; Ledwidge et al., 2013; Parmar, 2002). Both organizations were part of the global elite network which bridges influential philanthropic foundations, elite universities, big financial and business corporations, and foreign policy establishments (Wala, 1994). Moreover, CH and the CFR were funded generously by three major corporate foundations – mainly Carnegie and Rockefeller, and, later, Ford, which benefit ‘existing elites by acting as “gatekeepers of ideas” through funding certain lines of research at the expense of others’ (Parmar, 2004b, p. 38). The Rockefeller Foundation, for instance, was the biggest donor to the CFR, investing approximately US\$700 000 between 1928 and 1945. In addition, many CFR leaders occupied positions on foundation boards of trustees. Needless to note, both think tanks attracted experts and academics who generated ‘useful knowledge’ for policymakers and helped with top-down public opinion management (Lippmann, 1922; Parmar, 2000).

CH and the CFR represented declining and rising hegemonic powers' elites, respectively, and drew their leaders and members from the upper echelons of their political, economic and social elites. The two shared a deep-rooted *elitism*, non-partisanship on foreign issues, socialization in 'muscular' Christian culture, and colonial-imperial and racist attitudes of Anglo Saxons' superiority (Parmar, 1995a, 2002, 2004b). Despite their language of liberalism, freedom, self-determination and internationalism, the two think tanks' terminology cloaked their aims of hierarchy, racism and imperialism. CH was the direct result of the Round Table organization's long-term strategy to re-imagine, continue and enhance its imperial-reform mission but with a veil of scientific impartiality. Their scientific elitism was exclusively reserved for an elite minority with 'training' and qualifications to 'correctly' assess social and global issues; and it fell to those elites – white, English-speaking elites – to make 'sound' policy and to 'educate' the masses. In this vein, the problem of the Anglo-Saxon race was a key factor in the mind of Paris delegates, and the movement for racial equality needed careful handling in the post-1918 crises of colonial power. Key CH founder Lionel Curtis proposed that, in order to best achieve the particular interest of several major powers, it was essential to design a national policy for advancing a *universal interest* through the conception of the interests of international society [emphasis in original] (Dockrill, 1980, p. 667). However, when Japan put forward a racial equality principle, Lord Robert Cecil, another leading CH founder and head of the official British delegation at Paris, considered the proposal threatening and outlandish. This was because pan-Anglo-Saxonist elites inherently upheld the idea of *white, English-speaking countries first*, with primacy over any other ethnic groups on the planet. Hence, 'racial thinking' (defined as anti-colonial and therefore anti-white) could potentially disrupt the world system, leading to a radical change 'from [whites'] racial confidence to racial fear' and any racial (that is, anti-colonial) conflict would ultimately undermine the imperial status quo (Furedi, 1998, p. 2).

CH and the CFR were central to the practical building of an Anglo-American alliance before, during and after the Second World War and, therefore, of the rationales and institutions of the post-war liberal international order. In the inter-war period the two think tanks actively repaired Anglo-American relations through a myriad of means including deep personal friendships and correspondence, and joint study groups on practical sources of friction between the rising and declining imperial hegemon, such as naval rivalries, trade practices, currency stabilization, war debts and economic competition (Parmar, 2002, pp.189–214; Parmar, 1995a, 1995b; Roberts, 2001). There were official and unofficial visits crisscrossing the Atlantic by think tankers such as historian Arnold Toynbee and American businessman

and foreign policy expert Whitney Shepardson, joint conferences to discuss North Atlantic relations, the future of India and imperial preference, as well as direct policy-related influence over official decisions, such as the 1940 destroyers-for-bases agreement. The British ambassador to the US from June 1939 to December 1940 was, after all, Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), a key leader of the imperial Round Table movement and of CH. The think tanks' foreign policy planners were integrated into their respective Foreign Office and State Department divisions for post-war foreign policy planning and, in that capacity, shared ideas about the foundational principles and institutions of the liberal international order with Anglo-American power at its heart (Shoup & Minter, 1977). The racialized, elitist and imperial character of the think tanks, their respective foreign offices and political leadership were fully displayed in their affinity and support for a 'federal union' of Britain, the US and other English-speaking states (Streit, 1939), the discussions about the inadequacies of the 'isolationist' or 'backward' masses and their need for elite guidance and mobilization, and of the superiority of white elites over colonial subjects.

CH and the CFR were at the very core of an Anglo-American establishment united behind a concept of a new world order based on Anglo-American power embedded within a system of international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the United Nations. They were strong supporters of the Marshall Plan and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) during the Cold War to 'contain' Soviet expansionism. Respectively, they challenged and undermined 'America-First isolationism' and 'die-hard imperialism' and built and managed what liberal internationalists refer to as the 'rules-based' liberal international order (Parmar, 2004b). It is that order's champions, in effect, that collectively celebrated the 'end of history' when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War ended (Fukuyama, 1992), opening the way to conceptual and political confusion and anxiety, before American liberal elites forged a new, aggressive but unstable, foreign policy consensus around democracy promotion.

<p:a_no_indent>AFTER THE COLD WAR: THE RISE OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY

<p:text>The Cold War's end also signalled the death knell of America's principal national security rationale and global strategy and the stated reasons for its military-industrial complex: The Soviet 'threat' was no more, logically making its 'containment' obsolete. American power, which had independent expansionist and hegemonic purposes, however, required a new rationale for continued global military power projection, particularly because of increasing domestic demands for a 'peace dividend' that would divert government

spending to the poor, to schools, to crumbling cities and towards health care. The American foreign policy establishment's replacement for containment prioritized democracy promotion, an old idea boosted by a newly discovered underpinning social science 'law' – democratic peace theory (DPT). DPT not only provided a rationale for continued US global intervention and extended military power projection, it also helpfully divided the globe into 'zones of peace' and 'zones of turmoil', the latter requiring pacification through democratization (Smith, 2006). Such were the sources of President Bill Clinton's 'democratic enlargement' and 'engagement' strategies in the 1990s, with democracy principally defined as 'market democracy', conflating a specific economic model as the essential foundation of political democracy. The major US foundations, particularly Ford and Carnegie, played key roles in developing the underlying theoretical underpinnings and in taking DPT into mainstream academia and disseminating its promise into party politics. In effect, such efforts made DPT the central strategic rationale for American post-Cold War national security, a broadly bipartisan project that extended into the post-9/11 era of regime-change wars (Parmar, 2013). It is this liberal hegemonic project – which critics suggest resulted in almost continuous American warfare around the world – 'The hell of good intentions' or the 'great delusion' – that today stands condemned by President Donald Trump. It is also critiqued by realists of various stripes and by a new think tank that promotes 'strategic restraint', an end to values-driven military conflict and 'endless wars' – the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft (Quincy Institute, 2019; Mearsheimer, 2018; Walt, 2018).

DPT gained widespread popularity among the liberal epistemic community – or organic intellectuals – and the state. The underlying thesis is that advanced liberal democracies do not go to war with one another mainly due to the governmental structural characteristics of democratic countries. Though traceable to the writings of Immanuel Kant, it was Princeton scholar Michael Doyle who helped bring the theory to initial prominence in the field of international relations. With a Ford Foundation research grant (1979–82) of over US\$400 000 (to support 'Research on the Future of the International Economic Order'), Doyle conducted the research that led to the publication of several articles outlining the DPT thesis (Doyle, 1983). That work coincided with and was boosted by President Ronald Reagan's speeches emphasizing the inherently peaceful character of liberal foreign policies and the formation in 1983 of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to promote democracy abroad. However, while Doyle fully appreciated the war-like features of 'liberal imperialism', including enthusiasm for waging wars on 'non-democratic' regimes, the Clinton administration 'securitized' DPT to justify continued US global leadership and

interventionism. In addition, *International Security*, a top-ranked policy-oriented journal at the Ford Foundation and Carnegie-funded Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (at Harvard) published a series of articles for the development of democratic peace from 1996. The Belfer Center is a university-based policy-oriented think tank with over 100 practitioners and scholars from government, military and corporations, including William Perry, Bill Clinton's secretary of defense, Robert Zoellick, president of the World Bank and former deputy secretary of state, historian Niall Ferguson and Paula Dobriansky, the Bush administration's under-secretary of state for democracy and global affairs. Other prominent academic journals, such as *World Politics*, also promoted the implementation of DPT and its securitization in the process of moving from a pure academic theory to American foreign policy (Parmar, 2013).

Stanford University's Larry Diamond, who served the George W. Bush administration, contributed to democracy promotion through serving on the Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict in the 1990s. Diamond also, since 1990, has co-edited NED's *Journal of Democracy* and translated DPT to the Progressive Policy Institute of the Democratic Party. He argued that, after the Cold War, the US had a golden opportunity 'to reshape the world', to secure national sovereignty and allow American interventions overseas to defend democracy (Diamond, 1991). Diamond flatly rejected President George H. W. Bush's new world order as too wedded to order, stability and the balance of power.

<p:a_no_indent>THE KOCH FOUNDATION AND THE RECALIBRATION OF AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY

<p:text>'Democracy promotion' under a banner of liberal hegemony, however, created numerous problems. US triumphalism after the Cold War has diminished significantly, and the great liberal dreams were sourced in a 'great delusion' (Mearsheimer, 2018) or created a 'hell of good intentions' (Walt, 2018). For example, since 1993, North Korea, Pakistan and India have all tested nuclear weapons. The US military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11, followed by regime change in Libya, were/are costly disasters that have weakened America's overall position. Liberal interventionism in the Middle East created several failed states and refugee crises in Libya, Yemen and even Syria. In addition, China's power and ambitions have grown steadily, Russia seized the Crimea and interfered in several other states, and America's relations with Moscow are worse than at any time since the end of the Cold War. According to Freedom House, 2017 marked the twelfth consecutive year of an overall decline in global freedom and democracy (Abramowitz, 2018). The European Union has also experienced destabilizing crises (Greece, Brexit). It is clear that there are very real

limits to American power. Mearsheimer notes that it is impossible to pursue liberal hegemony in a bipolar or multi-polar system. Hence, America's liberal dream and its grand strategy of primacy has been slowly eroding.

Powerful ideas constitute a crucial component of a hegemonic project. Given today's crisis of liberal internationalism, President Trump's 2016 electoral triumph, raised great hopes among foreign policy realists that he could overhaul America's decades-long grand strategy of primacy or liberal hegemony to a less interventionist one (offshore balancing or restraint), keeping the US away from spending its treasure and blood in avoidable wars (Layne, 2017). Realists like John Mearsheimer, Stephen Walt, Christopher Layne and others believe that it is a good strategy for America to rethink its alliance relationships by burden-shifting or risk-shifting rather than burden-sharing to get regional powers to carry as much of the costs and responsibilities as possible to save American lives and to husband its strength (Layne, 2017; Mearsheimer, 2018). Accordingly, Walt's presentation at a 2016 Koch-Brookings (Institution)-Politico-sponsored joint conference laid out a strategy of 'offshore balancing' and argued that the US should reduce its military spending, but maintain its military superiority in Europe and preserve sufficient resources to accommodate potential rising hegemonies in the three most strategic regions of the world (East Asia, Europe and the Persian Gulf) without getting involved in costly conflicts or wars (Rosen, 2018).

Walt's keynote is summarized in the Koch-Brookings-Politico conference report, arguing that such offshore balancing 'would maintain the United States' military superiority in the Western Hemisphere and also maintain sufficient military power to challenge potential rising hegemonies in Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf without becoming involved in conflicts that do not directly threaten the security of United States' (Charles Koch Institute, 2019).

This is essentially the line advanced in Walt's latest book, *The Hell of Good Intentions* (2018), in which he critiqued Trump for incoherence and lack of policy follow-through while broadly supporting the president's critique of the disasters of post-Cold War liberal hegemonic strategies. Trump is therefore viewed as a blunt instrument, widely reviled as a 'buffoon', but one who has correctly called out the liberal establishment's foreign policy disasters in (allegedly) trying to 'do good' in the world as opposed to taking care of 'vital interests'. This line of thought is echoed by liberal internationalist and democracy promotion scholar Tony Smith, who calls on the liberal foreign policy elite to curtail its imperial hubris and show more modesty and restraint (Smith, 2019).

It should be noted, however, that Koch has not created or in any sinister way suborned scholars – Walt, Mearsheimer (University of Chicago), Layne (Texas A&M University) and

others have been arguing the case for restraint and realism for years. The libertarian Koch complex is enabling a politically more significant platform funded with large grants that might broaden the debate and allow their ideas to achieve something approaching the heft of the liberal hegemonic establishment, funded by the Fords, Carnegies and Rockefellers for around a century or more. Given the elitist Kochs' success in funding so-called grassroots movements (Skocpol & Hertel-Fernandez, 2016; Skocpol & Williamson, 2016), this overt elite project seems designed to make respectable 'strategic restraint' and train new academic cadres for a more decentred, multi-polar world in which the US would *remain the dominant power in every region and domain*. This new faction at the periphery of the US foreign policy establishment, however, opens up new political possibilities for opponents of war and militarism and broadens the debate over what kind of global-imperial hegemon the US might become.

Given its backing by the Kochs' billions, this new force is one to watch. It appears to want to place Trump's 2016 campaign rhetoric against the liberal international order – NATO, etc. – on a sound political and intellectual footing. It will very likely outlast the Trump administration.

The key issue is, as Layne points out, although Trump wants (however erratically) to reshape America's grand strategy towards offshore balancing, it would be extremely difficult for him alone to break the post-1945 foreign policy establishment's consensus simply because there are so few qualified non-interventionist realists working at the National Security Council staff and assistant secretary levels of the administration. In order to re-order international politics they must partner with respected institutions to cultivate a cadre of future foreign policy officials who can think innovatively about US grand strategy and challenge the foreign policy establishment's foundational assumptions about America's world role (Layne, 2017). This is reiterated by Walt (2018). The Charles Koch Foundation, therefore, is funding scholarships and research and training programmes at top US universities to construct a new generation to support a realist, non-interventionist strategy – offshore balancing and restraint in order to counter the liberal hegemonic establishment – or 'The Blob' (Layne, 2017; Parmar, 2019a). Parmar (2019a) noted that, since 2015, just five elite universities (MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Tufts, Harvard, Notre Dame, UC (University of California) San Diego) have received more than US\$13 million from the Koch Foundation. These universities are now supporting some of the most distinguished US foreign policy scholars (who are often widely cited in elite publications such as *Foreign Affairs*, *The Atlantic* and *The New York Times*) to add strength to the Koch Foundation-affiliated think tank, the Cato

Institute's foreign policy programme countering liberal hegemony. The Koch Foundation has declared a US\$3.7 million grant to the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs collaborative programme, the Project on Grand Strategy, Security, and Statecraft, and MIT's Security Studies Program at the Center for International Studies in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. The programme is jointly led by leading scholars, Barry R. Posen from MIT and his Harvard counterpart, Stephen Walt, who will select and mentor a new generation of foreign policy elites (Gavel, 2017). Moreover, in 2015, Koch gifted US\$3.5 million to the University of Notre Dame's International Security Center, directed by foreign policy realist, Michael Desch. Desch notes that people will see Koch in the same way when they think of the John M. Olin Foundation and the Big 3. In May 2017 a new centre for strategic studies was set to be established at Tufts University's Fletcher School with another US\$3 million Koch grant, and another US\$3.3 million was awarded to UC San Diego's Center for Peace and Security Studies in August of the same year (Rosen, 2018; Steele, 2017). Rosen further noted that Ian Bremmer was approached by Koch, after publishing his book, *Superpower* (2016), to fund his Eurasia Group foundation with US\$1.19 million for an 'Independent America Project' in January 2018 regarding a more restrained foreign policy approach (Rosen, 2018).

Although the Trump administration and the Koch brothers disagree fundamentally over trade tariffs and immigration policies, they both gain far more by 'working in concert' for an agenda which benefits corporate elites and the wealthy (Edsall, 2018). The Koch brothers, as *New York Times* political correspondent Nicholas Confessore reported, spent close to US\$900 million on the 2016 presidential election campaign (Confessore, 2015). In return, the Kochs gained significantly in wealth and income, especially regarding tax cuts, and the evisceration of Environmental Protection Agency regulations. The network's main beneficiaries, in addition, include the Cato Institute, the Tea Party, the National Federation of Independent Business and groups rivalling liberal interest groups. As such, despite their disagreement and distaste, a functional Trump-Koch alliance has been extremely productive, and Trump is determined to cooperate further with the Kochs on the domestic and foreign policy fronts to serve the interests of American elites.

More recently, it is instructive to note that Charles Koch has teamed up with the liberal financier George Soros to establish a new 'anti-interventionist' think tank in Washington called the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft (QI). The Institute, which was launched in December 2019, promises to promote a foreign policy and security strategy based on diplomacy and restraint to end 'endless wars' and interventionism overseas. The QI was

named for America's eighth secretary of state and sixth president, John Quincy Adams, who urged in an 1821 speech that the US 'goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy', a statement cited on QI's website. The Institute argues that interventionism leads to horrific consequences, and America should set a foreign policy focusing on 'diplomatic engagement and military restraint' embraced by 'like-minded progressives and conservatives' (Quincy Institute, 2019). The Koch Foundation and Soros's Open Society Foundation each gifted QI US\$500 000. An additional US\$800 000 in donations has been received from other sources. QI aims at the funding of a further US\$3.5 million budget with which to attract policy experts who will produce research materials for public debates (Kinzer, 2019). QI's five co-founders include Suzanne DiMaggio, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; historian Stephen Wertheim; Andrew Bacevich, the conservative anti-militarist scholar; Trita Parsi, the founder of the National Iranian-American Council; and journalist Eli Clifton of *The Nation*. They have all criticized American foreign policy in recent years. A foreign policy of restraint based on realism at this point suggests fewer American wars than the strategy of primacy (Mearsheimer, 2018). Furthermore, big forces of history, as noted by Layne (2017), are re-shaping world politics, and 'American grand strategy eventually will have to adjust accordingly'. This is also supported by Parmar's recent analysis (RT, 2019); the new Koch-Soros think tank appears to represent a move to readjust and recalibrate the current interventionist foreign policy into a more restrained one in order to strengthen America's international position, not to relinquish it. Nevertheless, QI represents a degree of hope for a less militaristic and war-like American posture should the new think tank's positions be adopted by a future president.

<p:a_no_indent>CONCLUSION

<p:text>We have endeavoured to show that American think tanks and their closely associated foundations have been deeply embedded in the life of the liberal international order, and this process has been essentially characterized by their significant power-technology: the elite knowledge network. The three historical and contemporary cases, in a Gramscian sense, reveal precisely how influential American think tanks and foundations have developed, managed, maintained and recalibrated imperial and hegemonic power since the formation of American hegemony. CFR and CH were the very symbolic sign of marking the start of the US-led liberal order and continuing America's long-term strategic goal of embracing and protecting its pan-Anglo-Saxonist thinking with *elitist, racialized and imperial* characteristics but under the guise of scientific spirit by scientific elites. In addition, after the Cold War ended, these core foundations and think tanks have experienced tremendous rise and relative

retreat of liberal hegemony and of DPT in practical terms. Unlike the unipolar moment immediately after Cold War containment, the US, in the current turbulent multi-polar system, has been facing threats from different directions of the world and unable to carry the burden of spreading ‘global liberal peace’. The great liberal dreams have been falling into a great delusion or the hell of good intentions. Consequently, though not without intense struggle within the foreign policy establishment, American elites appear to be shifting away from liberal hegemony towards a restrained and less interventionist grand strategy, as indicated by the work of relatively new elite knowledge networks. The Koch Foundation and the emerging Koch-Soros axis via the new QI appear determined to strive for the maintenance and recalibration of America’s global superpower role and saving the liberal international order or, at least, maintaining America’s leading global position. Certainly the promotion of a more diplomatically led foreign policy and a radical reduction in the US’s global military footprint provides a significant new intervention in the politics of American think tanks.

<p:a_no_indent>NOTE

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1. It is clear that the traditional funding model has been challenged in recent times by the emergence of ‘philanthro-capitalism’ or outright corporate donations that frequently want value for money, rather than providing risk capital that might go nowhere. See Overby (2017) and Abelson (2018).