The China Ratchet

Extending Higgs's Model to Explore Foreign Policy

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In his 1987 work *Crisis and Leviathan*, Robert Higgs lays out a model of government expansion in the wake of crises (Higgs [1987] 2013). That model argues that self-interested government actors always seek to expand both the size and scope of their own powers, but they are often constrained by the preferences of the individuals over whom they govern and the potential policy options that currently exist within that system. Even rulers in relatively authoritarian systems must satiate the desires of those they govern on some level, lest they face increasing resistance or revolution (Yonk and Yang 2023). This constraint is relaxed, however, when periods of substantial crisis, real or imagined, emerge. What a crisis is varies broadly: natural disasters, war, economic turmoil, international conflict, or any event that causes the public at large to temporarily set aside their predisposition against the expansion of governmental authority in favor of government "doing something" to address the urgency of the crisis at hand (Higgs [1987] 2013).

This change allows the creation of new policies and powers that expand both the size of existing government programs and the scope of governmental authority as new programs are established in the opened policy space. When the crisis has subsided, however, these initial expansions of government power do not recede to the

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pre-crisis status, but rather remain at some expanded level, which is the essence of Higgs's *ratchet effect.*

Government programs created in response to crises are often instituted by a government's executive, bypassing the barriers of legislative deliberation, but their abolition conversely gets no such advantage. Government officials then have at least some nearly permanent expanded authority in the periods following crises.

We use Higgs's ratchet effect from *Crisis and Leviathan* to explore U.S.-China foreign policy from the 1970s to the present and extend it to capture the dynamics of a two-country model. We argue that in a two-country ratchet effect, each nation's interventionist expansions can serve as crises for the other, leading to a cyclical escalation in government size and scope across time and interaction. The self-reinforcing nature of these cyclical crises entails less opportunity for any significant unratcheting to occur, in contrast to the original formulation of Higgs's model, which argued that at least some unratcheting was likely.

In our expansion of the model, the initial crisis instigating this cycle may arise from either domestic considerations or from the actions of another party—such as the response to the Tiananmen Square protests or militaristic aggression. We then extend Higgs's argument to account for the iterative interaction that characterizes international relations and argue that iterative response of both parties reinforces the existence of crises and the continued expansion of government action. We use historical case analysis within a public choice framework to examine this phenomenon, and identify both the crisis and the ratchet that occurs in each of our historical cases.

Using this approach, we explore U.S.-China relations using the basic assumptions of public choice theory. Public officials of both nations are self-interested rational actors who pursue their desired ends with the means available to them and who are influenced by incentives they face, and the institutions they operate within. In looking at a two-country model, understanding why either country's leadership would choose to engage in the original instigating crisis is important, as that initial self-interested act, which is perceived as a crisis by the leadership of the other, is the start of an iterative series of responses.[1] This question is well-suited for public choice analysis, as the primary form of crises in international relations consists of direct or indirect military force, or the threat to use such force, decisions which are clearly influenced by the domestic politics and self-interest of those in power. These crises range from outright invasions of sovereign nations, to symbolic military exercises intended to merely demonstrate prowess, to industrial policy intended to bolster the domestic production of strategic inputs to military supply chains. All of these acts are costly, and public choice theory suggests that unless the anticipated benefit exceeds the cost, such actions would not occur. The costs of foreign

1. When we refer to the PRC or the U.S. throughout this paper, we are using shorthand to refer to the actions and interests of the individual rulers of the states themselves, which culminate in state action. Neither nation should be construed as hegemonic entities, and where it is of particular interest we discuss internal political conflicts between specific government officials and factions (Yonk and Yang 2023).

policy interventionism of this nature are in part determined by the opportunity cost of engaging in any particular intervention, and what the alternative use of the resources dedicated to interventionism could have been. The potential gains from engaging in foreign policy interventions for a political leader tend to favor both a greater number and intensity of interventions. This reality is demonstrated when external crises occur, which themselves provide additional incentives for an expansion of governmental activity in the foreign policy sphere. Even the maintenance of soft power within any particular region will require the exertion of influence via foreign policy. When one player suddenly changes its relative influence with respect to the other, it is likely that this will be perceived as a crisis by the other—giving rise to a ratcheting on the part of the former leader in its foreign policy in an attempt to reclaim its former status as the paramount influencer of the given region. We detail the dynamics of this process between the U.S. and China from the 1970s to the modern day.

The Tri-Polar World and Détente

The narrative of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is one of Chinese ascension, Soviet decline, and a dynamic U.S.-Sino relationship in response to these rapidly changing geopolitical circumstances. In applying our modified ratchet model to U.S.-Sino relations, we begin in the 1970s for several reasons. Although our two-country ratchet model could likely be productively applied to foreign policy relations in prior time periods—such as those posed by the Korean and Vietnam Wars, for example—the relative threat posed to the U.S. by the Soviet Union in these conflicts compared to the infant People's Republic of China (PRC) is likely to make an analysis of U.S.-Soviet relations more appropriate. From its establishment until the Sino-Soviet split, hostilities between the U.S. and the PRC are likely better understood as an application of anti-Soviet containment policy pursued by U.S. officials against the fledgling USSR-backed nation—in line with U.S. attempts to rebuff Soviet-supported communist revolutions in Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and elsewhere.

While drawing a precise line is difficult when analyzing relationships between complex nations encompassing millions of individuals with multifaceted aims and ends, the Sino-Soviet split and the U.S. recognition of the PRC in such a short time frame seem to indicate that both China and the U.S. began to view the communist nation as an emerging regional, and subsequently global, power capable of exerting its influence in pursuit of its own aims. The distinguishing characteristic of this time frame is not the absence of Soviet-posed crises, but rather the emergence of a China whose goals and actions were not predominantly aligned with, and that frequently were in direct opposition to, those of the Soviets. Although the U.S. and China viewed the USSR as a significant geopolitical threat until its ultimate collapse, the Soviet Union in this time frame faced a stagnating economy from which it would

never recover—and to which its eventual collapse is largely attributable (Easterly and Fischer 1994).

It is widely acknowledged that "economic strength is a major determinant of international power" (Central Intelligence Agency [1984] 2006). The capacity for any nation both to engage in international soft-power initiatives and to wage military conflicts is ultimately constrained by the size of the underlying economy that will have to pay for these programs. The latter half of the twentieth century saw the Soviet Union lose its economic position in competition with the United States, while the PRC gradually achieved it.

By the time Mikhail Gorbachev pursued political and market reforms in the late eighties, it was too late to prevent the Soviet Union's forthcoming collapse. In contrast, between 1971 and 1991, China's economy more than quadrupled in size, largely driven by the market reforms pursued by Deng Xiaoping after the full normalization of relations with the U.S. in 1979 (Dorn 2023). Regardless of whether U.S. officials anticipated the full degree of this rebalancing of power dynamics, it is clear that they desired to leverage the benefits of the additional diplomatic degree of freedom that a better relationship with China would provide them in the ongoing Cold War (Kissinger 2011). China desired deterrence against an increasingly possible Soviet invasion, which the threat of U.S. intervention would provide. The U.S. feared the prospect of a massively enlarged Soviet Bloc, which a successful invasion of China could give rise to (Kissinger 2011). The period of U.S.-Sino rapprochement throughout the 1970s sets the stage for the subsequent crises and ratchet effects that occurred.

The Sino-Soviet Split and Sino-American Rapprochement

In the early 1970s, U.S.-China relations were strained, characterized by decades of hostility and isolation following the Chinese Civil War (1945–49) and Communist Revolution in 1949, during which the U.S. had provided substantial economic and military support to the rival Nationalist faction. The U.S. had adhered to a policy of nonrecognition of the People's Republic of China, maintaining formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan) instead. These policies sought to isolate and weaken the PRC and contain the spread of communism abroad, especially with respect to communist regime change supported by the Soviet Union. However, after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, Sino-Soviet relations underwent increasing strain as the two nations diverged in their approaches to international engagement. In 1956, Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalinism before the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in his speech "On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences," especially with respect to the political purges enacted by Stalin's secret police throughout the 1930s. This denunciation was perceived by Mao Zedong to be an indirect attack on his own cultish persona, which he had developed under the mentorship of Stalin since

the establishment of the PRC.[2] This led Mao to launch his "Anti-Rightist Campaign" in 1957 to purge those from the PRC who were insufficiently supportive of his vision of Maoist-Leninism. In 1969, the USSR and China engaged in a seven-month-long border conflict that nearly escalated into a full war between the ideologically divided communist nations (Kissinger 2011). Even in areas of superficially shared policy aims, such as support for the North Vietnamese, they battled to outdo one another as they vied to be the primary de facto influence over the emerging communist state (Kissinger 2011). This seemingly irreparable deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations set the stage for the U.S. to seek to exploit this growing divide in furtherance of its own policy aims.

Nixon's Visit

The thaw in relations began with a series of secret diplomatic efforts, facilitated by National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger's secret trip to China in 1971. These negotiations set the stage for President Richard Nixon's groundbreaking visit to China in February 1972. This visit was a dramatic departure from the previous U.S. policy of isolation and non-recognition of the PRC. Nixon's visit culminated in the Shanghai Communiqué, in which the U.S. "acknowledg[ed] that all Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait maintained there was but one China and that Taiwan was a part of China" (Shanghai Communiqué 1972).

These diplomatic overtures marked the beginning of a paradigm shift in U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. government increased its diplomatic and economic engagement with China, leading to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1979 under President Jimmy Carter. This period saw the expansion of government programs aimed at managing the new relationship, including the establishment of embassies and the initiation of trade agreements. The U.S. perceived the Sino-Soviet split as an opportunity to counterbalance Soviet power, thereby reducing the perceived threat from Soviet ambitions abroad and opening the door for engagement.

Tiananmen Square Massacre

Beyond merely wanting to divide the two communist nations, U.S. officials' foreign policy calculus was heavily influenced by Modernization Theory.[3] This theory posits that as China (or any other country) implemented market reforms and became

2. Mao's cult of personality was arguably more intense and pervasive than Stalin's. After his death, his handpicked successor, Hua Guofeng, attempted to copy whatever Mao would have done if he had still been alive. "We will resolutely uphold whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made, and unswervingly follow whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave" (Kissinger 2011).

3. This Modernization Theory, which is a positive theory positing a relationship between economic and political liberalization, should not be confused with the similarly named Modernization Hypotheses critiqued by Higgs ([1987] 2013). The latter posits a normative justification for the development of increasing degrees of central economic planning and regulation in the advent of economic development and industrialization. As Higgs explains, the Modernization Hypotheses argue that economic development and industrialization give rise to increasing monopoly power, to which governments properly respond by engaging in increasing degrees of economic regulation and planning.

gradually integrated into the international community, its citizens would develop increasing preferences for liberal democracy at home—as well as sufficient wealth and the power it grants to achieve it through the body politic. Friendly engagement with China was not merely a relationship of convenience dependent upon mutual animosity toward the greater outside threat of Soviet imperialism, but also one aimed at influencing the gradual development of China into a more liberal order (Lipset 1959; Acemoglu et al. 2008; Kissinger 2011). While both the U.S. and China desired allyship to counterbalance Soviet imperialism, Mao took drastic steps to purge elements of both Western and traditional Chinese culture, which he perceived as contrary to his communist ideology. At the cost of severe political repression, widespread economic hardship, and millions of lives, Mao secured his own political dominance within the PRC while simultaneously deterring democratic reform and leveraging the benefits of warming relations with the U.S. (Yonk and Yang 2023).

In the aftermath of Mao's death, the end of the Cultural Revolution, and Deng Xiaoping's market reforms in 1979, the Chinese people's desire for democratic reforms did indeed swell. This did not, however, prove to be a sufficient condition for political liberalization in China. In 1989, China witnessed a massive pro-democracy movement that culminated in the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4. Thousands of students and citizens gathered in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, demanding political reform, freedom of speech, and other democratic rights. The PRC demonstrated, however, that they would not tolerate any substantial political liberalization that would threaten their hegemony over the one-party state (Time 1990; Amnesty International 1991).

The incident led to widespread international condemnation and forced a reevaluation of U.S.-China relations. The U.S. government faced immense public and political pressure to respond to the blatant human rights abuses committed by PRC authorities. The incident constituted a crisis from the perspective of U.S. officials as they navigated relations with the authoritarian regime (Kissinger 2011).

Ratchet Effect

The Tiananmen Square incident was a turning point that elicited a strong response from the U.S. public and officials alike. After a decade of sustained market liberalization, it represented a stark departure from the optimistic predictions of Modernization Theory. Though these reforms increased the desire for political reform, the PRC's martial repression of protesters demonstrated to the Western world that party leadership would not tolerate reform that would politically liberalize its own authoritarian system. The immediate U.S. reaction involved imposing economic and military sanctions to pressure China to respect human rights and political freedoms, which had been politically untenable previously. These included suspending military sales

and high-level diplomatic exchanges, and restricting dual-use technology exports.[4] While some sanctions were eventually lifted, many aspects of the punitive measures and the cautious stance towards China persisted, indicating a limited unratcheting of U.S. policy.

Subsequently, the U.S. began to incorporate human rights conditions into its trade policies and bilateral engagements with China. For example, the annual renewal of China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status became a contentious issue, with debates in Congress often centering on China's human rights record (Saunders 1995).

The massacre reinforced the perception of China as a potential threat to U.S. values and interests. This perception justified continued intervention in the minds of the U.S. public at large, and this demand for government action in the foreign policy sphere to counter human rights violations continues to the present day (Aitken 2024). The U.S. also increased its support for NGOs that promoted human rights and democracy in China, reflecting a sustained commitment to influencing China's internal policies indirectly (U.S. Congress 1990). The action space of generally acceptable foreign policy goals in the American mind was enlarged, resulting in an expansion of the scope of foreign interventions here described.

The incident, and the policy ratchet that followed, influenced the development of the United States' broader strategic policies toward China. The incident motivated a U.S. desire to strike a balanced approach that combined engagement with deterrence. This led to the formulation of policies that aimed to integrate China into the global economic system while simultaneously preparing to counter any aggressive moves by the Chinese government. The sustained military presence of the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region, including alliances with countries like Japan and South Korea, can be seen as part of this broader strategy to maintain regional stability and counterbalance China's influence (Lynch, Przystup, and Saunders 2020).

China's Counter-Ratchet

The Tiananmen Square Massacre, coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union, saw China's international influence deteriorate significantly in the short run (Gershaneck 2020). The Chinese Communist Party pursued multiple initiatives to strengthen its national position both domestically and abroad against possible future

4. "…on June 5 and June 20, [George H. W. Bush] suspended high-level government exchanges; halted military cooperation and sales of police, military, and dual-use equipment; and announced opposition to new loans to the People's Republic by the World Bank and other international financial institutions. American sanctions dovetailed with comparable steps undertaken by the European Community, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, and with expressions of regret and condemnation from governments around the world. Congress, reflecting popular pressure, pushed for even stronger measures, including legislative sanctions (which would be more difficult to lift than administrative sanctions imposed by the president, which were at the chief executive's discretion) and a law automatically extending the visas of all Chinese students currently in the United States" (Kissinger 2011).

pro-democracy protests and Western powers' influence. Domestically, it sought to promote a nationalist fervor through state-sponsored propaganda and public works projects. Premier Zhao Ziyang was placed under house arrest for the rest of his life for his support of the protest. Other pro-reform party members were jailed. These crackdowns proved effective in bringing the Chinese population in line—between 1995 and 2003, the number of Chinese that viewed China as "the most prominent nation in the world" rose from 17 percent to 40 percent (Kurlantzick 2007).

Abroad, the key elements of China's counter-ratchet were the diversification of its diplomatic and economic partnerships. Facing reduced engagement, at least temporarily, with Western powers, China sought to strengthen ties with countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Kurlantzick 2007; Yonk and Yang 2023). By cultivating relationships with developing countries, China sought to secure both economic opportunities and diplomatic support in the international sphere, thereby counteracting Western influence and sanctions. The PRC adopted a defensive stance in international human rights forums. It lobbied against resolutions critical of its human rights record, instead promoting a discourse on human rights that emphasized cultural relativism and economic development over political freedoms (Roberts 2024).

U.S.-China Trade War (2018–2019)

China's rise as an international power was meticulously and strategically governed by the figures who oversaw it. Perhaps fearful of repeating the mistakes that had led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Deng put forth a circular to top party officials outlining his foreign policy strategy: "observe calmly, secure our position, cope with affairs calmly; hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile, and never claim leadership" (Foreign Broadcast Information Service 1991). Deng simultaneously recognized the precarious position of China on the global stage as well as the potential for its long-term emergence as an international power if it could avoid direct conflict with its international adversaries in the short run. History has generally attested to the wisdom of this strategy. Since 1991, China averaged nearly 9 percent annual GDP growth rates (World Bank 2024a). In 2010, it surpassed Japan to become the second largest economy in the world by current US$GDP, and by 2016 it became the largest by GDP in terms of purchasing power parity (World Bank 2024b; World Bank 2024c)

Ratchet Effect

In 2018, under the administration of President Donald Trump, the United States initiated a series of tariffs on Chinese goods, citing concerns over unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft, and a large trade deficit (U.S. Trade Representative 2018).

This move marked the beginning of the U.S.-China trade war, a marked escalation in economic conflict between the two largest economies in the world. China retaliated with tariffs on U.S. goods, leading to a protracted and highly impactful trade war that disrupted global trade and economic stability. The cycle of ratcheting and counter-ratcheting is undeniable, and continued for several rounds before plateauing. The self-reinforcing cycle has allowed for almost no unratcheting to occur even under the subsequent administration of President Joe Biden, even though the tariffs could be removed as they had been in the past when the individual crisis had subsided (Bown 2023).

The U.S. perceived China's trade practices as a direct threat to its economic interests and technological leadership. The response from the U.S. government involved extensive economic measures, representing a significant expansion of government intervention. The Trump administration raised tariffs by 5 percent on approximately $550 billion worth of Chinese goods, targeting a wide range of products from electronics to clothing (U.S. Trade Representative 2019).

China responded with its own set of tariffs, targeting $110 billion worth of U.S. goods, including agricultural products like soybeans and pork, which were critical to Trump's political base (Koty 2018). The Chinese government also implemented measures to support domestic industries affected by the tariffs, such as providing subsidies and financial assistance to farmers and manufacturers. By the time a Phase One trade agreement, a limited unratcheting, was reached in February 2020, average U.S. tariffs on Chinese exports had risen from 3.8 percent to 19.3 percent, and average Chinese tariffs on U.S. exports had risen from 7.2 percent to 21.3 percent (Bown 2023). This reflects not only an increase in the size of existing tariff policies but also a widening of the scope of tariff policy. The percent of U.S. exports subject to Chinese tariffs skyrocketed from under 2 percent to over 58 percent, and the percent of Chinese exports subject to U.S. tariffs similarly ballooned from less than 1 percent to over 66 percent (Bown 2023).

The U.S. government's intervention went beyond tariffs. There was an increase in regulatory scrutiny on Chinese investments and technology transfers. The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) was strengthened to scrutinize and block Chinese investments that were deemed to threaten national security. For instance, the U.S. blocked the acquisition of semiconductor company Qualcomm by Singapore-based Broadcom, citing concerns over Chinese competition in the 5G technology sector (Reuters 2018).

The U.S. also targeted Chinese technology firms, with actions such as banning the sale of new Huawei and ZTE devices (Graham 2022). This move was part of a broader strategy to curb China's ambitions in becoming a global leader in advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and 5G networks. The increased regulatory measures reflected a significant shift toward protectionism and a more interventionist economic policy stance.

The U.S.-China trade war led to a sustained and expanded level of government intervention in trade and economic policy, exemplifying the ratchet effect. Even though the Phase One trade deal in January 2020 halted the cycle of escalation with respect to tariff policy, most tariffs and regulatory measures remained in place, indicating limited unratcheting of the expanded interventionist stance.

The trade war had far-reaching implications for U.S.-China relations and global economic dynamics. The tariffs and regulatory measures introduced during the trade war did not fully revert even after the signing of the Phase One trade deal. The deal required China to increase its purchases of U.S. goods and services by at least $200 billion over two years, but it left many tariffs intact, maintaining a high level of economic tension (U.S. Trade Representative 2020). The persistence of tariffs and regulatory scrutiny has led to a more protectionist and interventionist economic policy stance on both sides. The U.S. has continued to prioritize domestic industries and protect critical technologies from foreign influence, particularly from China. This approach has been reflected in policies such as the "America First" strategy, which emphasizes reducing reliance on foreign manufacturing and boosting domestic production.

The trade war also led to a noticeable shift in global supply chains. Many multinational companies began to relocate their manufacturing operations out of China to other countries, such as Vietnam, Mexico, and India, to avoid tariffs and mitigate risks. This shift has had long-term implications for global trade patterns and economic relationships (Bown 2022).

Moreover, the trade war has affected agricultural exports from the U.S. For example, U.S. soybean exports to China dropped by 75 percent in 2018 compared to the previous year, leading to significant financial distress for American farmers (Choe et al. 2019). The U.S. government responded with $61 billion in bailout packages for farmers affected by the tariffs between 2018 and 2020, reflecting the sustained government intervention in the economy (Steil and Della Rocca 2020).

The U.S.-China trade war of 2018–2019 exemplifies the ratchet effect in foreign policy and economic intervention. The crisis led to a significant and sustained expansion of government activities in trade policy, regulatory measures, and economic intervention. Though institutionally either state could have reverted to the prior level of intervention, the shifted political norms and incentives faced by both are such that neither is likely to do so independent of the other. Even though some measures were partially rolled back with the Phase One trade deal, the overall interventionist stance remained largely intact. The trade war has resulted in a more protectionist economic policy on both sides, reshaped global supply chains, and reinforced the strategic competition between the U.S. and China. This case study highlights how crisis-driven expansions in government intervention tend to persist, leading to long-term changes in policy and strategic priorities.

Conclusion

Our analysis of U.S.-China foreign policy through the lens of Higgs's ratchet effect, extended to account for the interactive dynamics of two entities, provides explanation of governmental expansion driven by international interactions. This extension of Higgs's model reveals that interventionist actions by one state often serve as crises for the other, initiating a cyclical escalation in the scope and scale of governmental intervention. This cyclical interaction ensures that the expansions in state power in the foreign policy sphere are seldom completely reversed, resulting in a permanent increase in governmental reach.

The initial rapprochement between the United States and China during the 1970s, motivated by mutual interests in countering Soviet influence, laid the foundation for subsequent bilateral engagements. Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972 and the formalization of diplomatic relations in 1979 under President Carter demarcated a new baseline of friendlier relations between the two nations as they sought to counter greater perceived threats from third parties.

The Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989 sparked the first major setback in this relationship. The United States' response to China's suppression of pro-democracy demonstrators, including the imposition of economic and military sanctions, resulted in a substantial and enduring expansion of interventionist policies centered on human rights. This incident revealed the limitations of Modernization Theory and integrated human rights considerations into the fabric of U.S. diplomatic strategy. Concurrently, China's response, characterized by heightened nationalism and the pursuit of diversified international partnerships, reflected a corresponding expansion in its governmental actions.

The U.S.-China Trade War presents another compelling case. Responding to the threat of a growing economic and geopolitical powerhouse unaligned with the Western world, the Trump administration initiated a trade war that underwent several cycles before plateauing. This economic contention disrupted global trade networks and entrenched protectionist policies on both sides. Even following the Phase One trade deal in 2020, many tariffs and regulatory measures remained in place, demonstrating the limited rollback of interventions once established.

These historical cases confirm the applicability of the ratchet effect to foreign policy, and the dynamic nature a two-country model has within the expanded theory. The cyclical nature of crises and interventions between the United States and China has led to a persistent escalation in governmental actions, reflecting a self-reinforcing dynamic that is characteristic of public choice theory. Despite this seemingly uninterrupted expansion, we find evidence both in the response to the Tiananmen Square crisis and in the more recent trade war that the process of unratcheting was present but interrupted by the response of the other country leading to "dual-ratcheting"

that further pushes the size of government and the scope in which it can act. This extended ratchet model offers valuable insights into the mechanisms of international relations, and a better guide for understanding geopolitical conflicts and their impacts on policy decisions both in the past and in the future.

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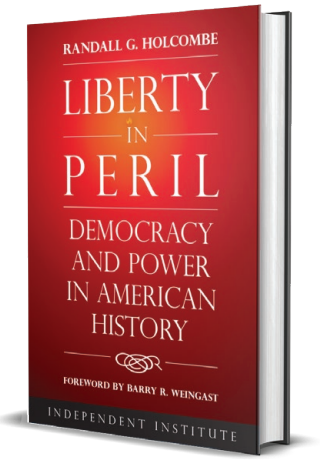
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