Multilateralism, SDG implementation and policy responses

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Is Multilateralism on the Wane? What about SDGs?

- Possible signs:
  United States as the hegemon of the liberal world order
  1. withdrew from the Paris agreement
  2. withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership
  3. withdrew from UNESCO
  4. withdrew from the Iran deal
  5. withdrew from an International Court of Justice (ICJ) protocol and pulled out of a 1955 friendship treaty with Iran
  6. did not sign the UN Global Migration Compact
  7. is leaving the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty

However, so far it is only the USA that is disappearing from the world’s map

=> walking away from multilateral agreements does not weaken multilateralism; it only isolates and decreases the influence of the USA
While it is true that the existence of a hegemon increases the likelihood for the provision of international public goods and the establishment of international organizations (regimes)

For example, the USA as global hegemon a) played a major role in creating and maintaining open and stable monetary, trade, foreign aid, and environmental regimes; b) gave other states the incentive to abide by the regime principles, norms, and rules

It is equally true that the provision of such international public goods/IOs could continue if other major states desired it! (coalition of willing)

But

If others start challenging and undermining international organizations and their norms, then the international system, as we know it, might collapse.
The EU, for its part, clearly has a strong multilateral desire, but it is weakened by internal divisions. If it were to overcome them, it could be the champion of multilateralism we need; for now, however, it is too divided.

China would put its weight behind a multilateral world order, but China’s leaders seem prepared to use multilateral structures only when it suits them.

Coalitions can be built to address particular issues or on a regional basis; but preserving – let alone deepening – the existing system of global governance and the successful achievement of SDGs will be impossible without US support.